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A cura di Lorenzo Bosi e Stefan Malthaner

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Politics in Flux: Continuities and Transformations in Processes of Collective Action

Lorenzo Bosi, Stefan Malthaner

1. INTRODUCTION

Phenomena of collective action – of collective political conflict[1] – are neither uniform nor stable. They comprise institutional and non-institutional actors as well as routine, confrontational, or even violent forms of action. They take place in different arenas, change over time and involve individuals in different ways, roles, and trajectories. This variance and heterogeneity corresponds to a diversified research landscape, with separate fields of research specializing on different phenomena of collective action, such as social movement organizations, political parties, NGOs, interest groups, and armed groups. As these fields of research have generally preferred to affirm the boundaries between them and to highlight the special relevance and particular nature of the conflicts, actors, and forms of action that they study, the connections and continuities between these phenomena have been underresearched. This neglect is striking, for one thing, because many episodes of political conflict cannot easily be placed in one single category. They are shaped by interactions between very different types of actors, involve a range of different forms of collective action, and can shift between arenas and levels of conflict, such as labour struggles transforming into electoral conflicts, accompanied by disruptive protests and violent confrontations. Moreover, neither actors nor repertoires are stable and timeless entities, but are part of dynamic processes, adapt, and change over time. Social movements, for example, may institutionalise into political parties, bringing their goals to the electoral arena; while political parties may seek to draw on extra-institutional forms of mobilizations to increase their power. We encounter activists who, at the same time, prepare food for those in need, are on the forefront of public demonstrations for migrants' rights, and are elected representative within the institutions; and we see collective actors that present themselves in different ways in different arenas, depending on whom they interact with. The politics of collective action, in other words, are in a constant state of

[1] As simple as it is, with collective action we refer to a group of people acting together, in a context of socio-political conflict, to affect a common goal. It is neither restricted to specific types of collective actors nor to specific forms of collective action or types of socio-political conflicts.

flux, with different types of action, actors, and conflicts co-existing, interacting, shifting, and transforming over the course of episodes of political conflict.

In this article, we seek to build upon and further develop processual perspectives that highlight continuities and transformations of collective action across time and within specific contexts, and throughout individuals' and collective actors' trajectories. In particular, we aim to improve and expand theoretical and conceptual tools for capturing continuity and transformation, emphasizing the need for processual-comparative research to explore related phenomena in different social, political, and cultural settings and across time. We discuss methodological innovations that can help to analyse and explain continuities and transformations in processes of collective action, thus setting the stage for the papers that comprise this special issue and pointing out concerns and arguments that connect them.

2. PROCESS, CONTINUITY, AND TRANSFORMATION

The argument laid out in this article is not entirely novel, of course. It builds on processual approaches that have emerged in research on mobilization and political struggles over the past three decades (for an overview see Bosi and Malthaner, forthcoming). Because, even if continuities and transformations are under-researched aspects of collective action, they are inherent to the notion of process itself. After all, analysing processes means to describe and explain how things change over time, within a sequence of events, rather than looking for correlations between dependent and independent variables, within the imagery of a «general linear reality» (Abbott 1988). A process ontology is made up of events rather than substantial entities. Hence, processual research refers to tracing the dynamic of collective action in sequences of interactions, unfolding over time, among multiple collective actors. These temporal sequences are not linear and do not progress through fixed stages. They are open-ended, rather than being oriented toward static outcomes or shaped by deterministic general laws, because of changing contexts and contingency (Sciarrone 2021). By studying the ways certain types of actors, forms of action, and types of conflicts develop across stages, processual perspectives, to some extent, presuppose the existence of continuities between different phenomena (e.g. continuities between different forms on a continuum of action-repertoires), while at the same time relying (explicitly or implicitly) on the idea of transformation as the very essence of the processes that produce social change.

Processual approaches in research on social movements, for example, which emerged in the 1970s from a pointed critique of perspectives that portrayed protest as deviant behaviour resulting from social strains or the breakdown of social order, emphasized continuities between movements protest and institutional politics. They argued that protest is not separate from institutional politics, but merely «politics by other means» (Tilly 1978). Research on protest cycles subsequently traced the transformation – e.g. institutionalization or radicalization – of actors and forms of action over the course of conflict-episodes (Tarrow 1989, 1998; Koopmans 2004). Similarly, in research on political violence, processual approaches sought to explain phenomena such as clandestine political violence (or "terrorism") as the outcome of processes of escalation in collective conflicts, driven by interactions between protest movements and repressive state-actors as well as intra-organizational and ideational dynamics, resulting in gradual shifts towards increasingly radical perspectives, militant forms of action, as well as the formation of armed underground groups (Neidhardt 1981; Della Porta 1990, 1995; White 1993; Zwerman, Steinhoff and Della Porta 2000). Thus, rather than exceptionalizing and reifying political violence as a phenomenon sui generis, processual approaches connected it to a broader spectrum of non-violent and violent forms of political action and traced the way armed groups are formed by semi-clandestine networks of militant activists, noting the continuities between different forms of collective action and types of collective actors while also pointing out the transformations that this process entails and possibly produces.

Whereas these studies focused on particular processes within a limited range of phenomena, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly started their *Contentious Politics* project as a deliberate attempt to re-integrate the broader research landscape on collective action, which they saw as compartmentalized into sub-fields that focused on phenomena such as strikes, democratization, social movements, nationalism, ethnic mobilization, revolutions, or wars, which were studied in isolation (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 9; see also Tarrow and Tilly 2007; Aminzade *et al.* 2001). By conceiving of these phenomena as part of a common, overarching category of «contentious politics», they also sought to re-connect them at an analytical level, identifying similar, recurring causal processes and mechanisms, which could be observed across different types of collective actors, forms of collective action and types of conflicts. Thereby, *Dynamics of Contention* focused its attention on transformations across different forms of contentious

politics[2], referring not only to conventional categories of political struggle, such as «revolutions», but also distinguishing – and examining shifts between – «contained» and «transgressive» forms of contention, for example (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 7). *Dynamics of Contention* has been broadly discussed and – despite fierce controversy and partial rejection – has inspired a whole generation of scholars working on collective action, taking a processual turn. Yet, whereas some aspects of the book, such as process-mechanism explanation, have been taken up and further developed (see e.g. Demetriou 2009), studying continuities and transformations across types of collective actors, forms of collective action and types of conflicts remained a side-concern of process-scholars, including scholars in the field of social movement studies, who only slowly started to venture beyond their pre-defined field of interest (Della Porta and Diani 2015). One reason for this, one could argue, is the persistence of the fields' boundaries and priorities. Another might be the tendency in processual analysis to focus on explaining the outcome and identifying recurring causal mechanisms, rather than looking in detail at the process itself: at the micro-dynamics and transformations, and at the contingencies and hard-to categorize fluency that shape sequences of events and the interactions of actors involved.

There are a number of important exceptions, of course, among them research on the shared (and diverging) trajectories of social movements and revolutions (Goldstone and Ritter 2018; Beissinger 2022), as well as works on the relation between political parties and social movements (Goldstone *et al.* 2003; McAdam and Tarrow 2010; Heaney 2013; Della Porta *et al.* 2017; Hutter *et al.* 2018), nationalism and social movements (Beissinger 2002; Mees 2004), and direct social action and protest (Bosi and Zamponi 2015, 2020), as well as protest and litigation (Ellefsen 2016; Taylor and Tarrow 2024). Moreover, a number of studies on political violence have started to focus on processes that connect different forms of violence (and non-violent collective action) as well as the transformation of violence (see Alimi, Bosi and Demetriou 2012; Della Porta 2013; Bosi, Malthaner and Demetriou 2014; Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi 2015) and the transition to civil wars and out of these (Wood 2003; Viterna 2013; Shesterinina 2022).[3]

Our research-agenda on continuities and transformation in processes of collective action draws upon – and seeks to further develop – these lines of work and their conceptual contributions. Yet, within the various strands of "processual analysis" in research on collective action there are quite different understandings of what this perspective entails. In the following, we outline an understanding of processual analysis that, as we argue, lends itself to the study of continuity and transformations, which includes addressing the paradox question of whether categorical distinctions of different "forms" of collective action, types of collective actors and conflicts, are essential to processual analysis or whether they contradict its explanatory logic.

3. TYPES OF COLLECTIVE ACTORS, FORMS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION, TYPES OF COLLECTIVE CONFLICTS, AND TEMPORALITIES OF CHANGE.

As others before us (Aminzade *et al.* 2001; Goldstone 2003; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001), we seek to reconnect a research-landscape fragmented into different phenomena of what we have called "collective action", or "collective political conflict" – which we have presented as the more general category or phenomenon – by studying the processes that link them. This perspective implies that we conceive of these different "forms" not as phenomena *sui generis* – each with their distinct causes, requiring distinct explanatory models – but as manifestations of interlinked social and political processes that can be traced and examined within a common analytical framework. However, making the case for an integrated perspective on collective action does not mean abandoning analytical distinctions. In contrast to theories that explain generic and *amorphous* (form-less) phenomena like "rebellion" or "violence", by pointing to equally general "root-causes", our aim is to capture continuities and transformations in processes of collective action as a dynamic, *polymorphous* phenomenon.

Examining transformations and continuities, in other words, requires analytical distinction. Given that the ambition is not to build a case history of the social phenomena under analysis, but a case study which «goes beyond the case history in attempting a range of analytical purposes» (Pettigrew 1997: 33). At the same time, a processual perspective is incompatible with

[2] See McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001: 34; 55-71; 160-190;193-199)

[3] In addition to research on processes of radicalization/escalation leading to clandestine political violence, scholars have also started to recognize the fluent boundaries between violent insurgencies, civil wars, and other forms of mobilization and political violence; a fact that Sidney Tarrow had pointed out already in 2007, warning scholars from: «reifying the category of civil war and downplaying the relationship between insurgencies and 'lesser' forms of contention. Escalation to civil war from nonviolent contention or from less lethal forms of violence; transitions from civil wars to post-civil war conflict; co-occurrence between core conflicts in civil wars and the peripheral violence they trigger – none of these was exhaustively examined in these studies» (Tarrow 2007: 589).

any kind of reified or essentialized understanding of "forms" or "types". As phenomena of collective action are continuously changing, continuously in the making, and "forms" are merely analytical distinctions to capture patterns in a process. In other words, processual approaches do not deny the existence of particular types of collective actors, forms of collective action, or types of collective socio-political conflicts – and to some extent rely on conventionalized categories to capture transitions – but they suggest to unpack these categories to reveal the complex and contingent sequences of interactions that take place and contribute to the their development, as «it makes no sense to envision constituent elements apart from the flows within which they are involved (and vice versa)» (Emirbayer 1997: 289). In this view, entities (such as collective actors) are merely metaphors of ongoing processes, continually in a state of becoming. In fact, focusing on the processes of continuity and transformation requires a shift in focus away from the continuity and transformation of an object – a type of collective group, a form of collective action or type of collective conflict – and to continuity and transformation as processes. This is in line with Pettigrew's (1997: 341) suggestion that the language of states needs to be «superseded by an active language of becoming, emerging, developing, transforming, and decaying». "Unpacking" these categories also means to explore their empirical relevance as signifiers within collective processes: the ways in which individuals and groups develop a notion of themselves as a particular "type" of collective actor (an identity as a "movement" or a "party") and an understanding of what they are doing ("protest"), and the ways in which these forms of action are recognized and interpreted (as a form of collective action) by others. And it means to examine how academia has reified and inscribed explanatory paradigms into particular categories (such as "terrorism").

As a first step to capture and analyze the continuities and transformations addressed in the articles in this special issue, we suggest to distinguish between shifts/changes in forms of collective actors, forms of collective action, and forms of socio-political conflict. This distinction – basic as it is – is important, inter alia because the various sub-fields of research often define and denote their object of study by emphasizing one of these aspects; that is, by using a terminology of collective actors (i.e. research on "social movements", "political parties", "unions", etc.), forms of collective action (i.e. "protest", "political violence", "terrorism" etc.), or types of collective socio-political conflicts (i.e. "electoral politics", "labour conflicts", "revolutions", "civil wars", etc.). Yet, there is a tendency to conflate these aspects and conceive of these phenomena as coherent clusters of corresponding types of actors, forms of action, and conflicts. So, for example, the study of political parties focuses on conventional forms of action in institutionalized political conflicts, whereas movements are assumed to use extra-institutional forms of protest; and armed groups are examined as actors in violent conflict, but rarely are investigated in their overlap with social mobilizations or their involvement in conventional forms of action during non-violent phases of conflict. Moreover, individuals are often profiled as if having some specific characteristics that predestine them to participate in one particular form of collective action only, and one type of actor ("terrorists" are part of terrorist groups that use terrorism), rather than tracing their trajectories between and across different types of activism and conflict.

Collective actors are groups of people attempting to bring or resist change by acting in some concerted fashion. What defines the nature and shape of a collective actor – and its transformation – is quite variable: it can be its organizational structure (de-centralized, hierarchical, functional differentiation, etc.), level of resources, goals, collective identities held among its members, its legal status and recognition within a political system, its use of certain forms of collective action, a position in a specific conflict, or all of these. Social movements, for example, are conceived of as informal networks that share a distinct collective identity and are involved in conflictual relations with political opponents (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 20). Some qualities endure more than others, but there is no constituent that persists unchanged. For example, social movements can transform over time into formal, professional organisations pursuing political change (institutionalisation), becoming, as Snow et al. have put it: «more and more institutionalized, with some of them evolving (at least partially) into interest groups or even political parties» (Snow *et al.* 2004: 8). Movements can also fragment and radicalize, with some groups or social movement organizations transforming into semi-clandestine or clandestine armed groups (radicalization). This might happen within a wave contention or out of some transformative events. Following the de-escalation of a violent conflict during peace processes, for example, armed groups can transform into political parties (disengagement from political violence). Grassroot organizations and voluntary groups, finally, can politicise into social movement organisations during a period of conflict (politicisation); or, conversely, social movement organizations might professionalize and bureaucratize, adopting the forms of non-governmental organizations (NGOisation). Collective actors should then be viewed not as something made,

but as processes in the making. Individual activist roles and careers may mirror organizational transformations, shifting from movement activism to party politics, for example (institutionalisation at the activist level). In fact, individuals, collective actors and context are interdependent and can mutually construct each other. However, it is also true that individual activists' trajectories are not necessarily congruent with transformations at the collective level. Individual activists may continue within the same line of activism, moving to another group, for example (transfer processes), can participate in different collective actors at the same time (multiple participation), move to different roles (moving up in the group/organization), shift from being involved in non-violent forms of political participation to violent ones (radicalization process at the activist level), disengage from activism altogether (disengagement process), or not disengage from political participation as a whole, but only from political engagement in a group (abeyance process). As Ziad Munson (2008: 4) writes «becoming an activist is a dynamic, multistage process, not a singular event or discrete decision».

Forms of collective action are the means used by collective actors to accomplish their goals. Continuity and transformation, then, can be captured by identifying variance in the specific practices used, which range from lobbying, fundraising, litigation, advocacy, electoral campaigning, petitioning, and strikes, to demonstrations, blockades, sabotage, hackerism, rioting, and armed attacks, to name only a few. Or transformation can be captured by identifying shifts in the general characteristics of collective action on a continuum of conventional versus non-conventional, contained versus transgressive, non-violent versus violent, etcetera. Although the available means are infinite, collective actors have limited resources and multiple constrains (exogenous and endogenous) shaping their selection of tactics and forms of action. They draw on a limited set of "inherited forms" – a "repertoire" of collective action (Tilly 1978) formed during previous episodes of political struggles, which is then used and transformed by adapting it to new conflicts, opponents, and political arenas. Transformations in forms of collective action, therefore, can take place in different temporalities. Short-term change can occur suddenly, resulting from particular transformative events or innovation during intense episodes of mobilization. But forms of collective action can also transform more gradually, due to long-term external changes in cultural and political contexts, technologies, and repertoires of action. Forms of collective action are often associated with certain types of collective actors as an expression of identity (actor-centred readings), but at certain stages collective actors might decide to adopt forms of collective action that are not aligned with their identities, as collective conflicts might escalate and require the use of violent forms of action even from usually non-violent actors or because different practices might travel across countries, shaping different readings.

Continuity and transformation in the forms of collective socio-political conflict, finally, can be analyzed with respect to the configuration of actors involved (and the structure of the polity, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 11), the spaces and arenas of conflict (the bundles of rules and resources that facilitate and constrain certain types of interaction; Jasper and Duyvendak 2015), but also concerning the scale of contention and the nature of the cleavages and "stakes" of the conflict. The latter, obviously, is closely related with actors' goals and forms of action, as the shift from electoral conflict to social mobilization to revolutionary struggle is partly defined by the changing scope of collective actors' objectives (from making limited claims to overthrowing the political order). In other words, while change can occur non-simultaneously and in a contradictory manner, forms of collective actors, types of collective action, and forms of collective conflict are closely intertwined.

4. METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS TO STUDY CONTINUITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

The contributions in this special issue provide substantial analyses of dynamic phenomena of collective action, but they also reflect on methodologies and types of data: how can we observe continuity and transformation in dynamic processes? In the field of social movement studies, protest event analysis probably has become the most established methodology to explore shifts in forms of protest and other forms of collective action (Hutter 2014). But this approach only provides a partial and limited understanding of the dynamics of this phenomenon (Tilly 2008) – and the constant transformations of collective action, collective conflicts, and collective actors. As the following studies show, several qualitative methodologies and research strategies seem particularly helpful to advance this understanding: interviews (including life-history interviews) and ethnographic fieldwork, content analysis, or historical case-studies. They stress an ontology where processes rather than categories are the primary focus of attention What makes them particularly suited to the study of processes is that they capture time, unfolding events, duration and narratives. Stories recounted by participants, through which they make sense of the unfolding

processes as they experienced them, are valuable also with respect to the way they construct the temporality of processes: suspense, heightened times, critical junctures, and sudden turning points (Fillieule 2019). In addition, the shared definitions of a situation – accessible via interviews, fieldwork, and observations – allows us to form an understanding of how participants conceive the conflict, in which they engage, as well as the collective actors that they have joined and the context they are experiencing. Processual research, thus, focuses empirically on catching politics in flux through retrospective analysis of data, possibly collected with different techniques, but also through methods capable of observing the unfolding of process at different stages. The challenge, thereby, is not only to capture processual dynamics by tracing sequence, contingency, and change over time. This research program also has an inherent comparative component: How can we capture differences in various dimensions of collective action within the same episode, between t1 and t2? But also: how can we compare different episodes or processes of collective action? While we do not deny that developing a comparative framework based on well-known mechanism-process models that seek to identify causal regularities can be helpful (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001), our aim here is, first of all, to chart patterns and pathways of continuity and transformation in ways that recognize the fluid, evolving, and unexpectedly multi-faceted nature of phenomena of collective action, which are shaped by agency, contingency, and conjuncture as well as the specific historical and social context in which they unfold. This not just to tell idiosyncratic stories, but to provide analytical contributions capable of abstracting from the particular to the general.

5. PERSPECTIVES ON CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Takeshi Wada, Yoojin Koo and Yoshiyuki Aoki, in their article for this special issue, rely on a massive political event database (the 10 Million International Dyadic Events) to investigate whether collective actors' selection of the forms of collective action depends on their repertoires of contention or on the institutional regime characteristics. They find that what they call «tactical familiarity» (building on Charles Tilly's work) as well as continuities with previously used practices to have a major impact on collective actors' decision making and the forms of collective action that they adopt.

The following article by Mans Lundstedt, which draws empirically on the attacks on migrant accommodation centres in Sweden between 2012 and 2017 and builds on a critical discussion on temporality in processual approaches, deals in particular with the question of how forms of political violence can emerge in the absence of escalating conflicts. The author describes «the privatization of protest» as a type of path that does not emerge out of an immediate phase of social movement mobilization, but long after demobilization. He finds a set of mechanisms in the aftermath of local protest campaigns (frames, emotions, opportunities and relations) that can be traced back to the initial phase of protest and explain the emergence of violence.

David Slater and Patricia Steinhoff analyze a dozen ethnographic accounts of contemporary social movement groups engaged in collective action between the 1990s and 2021, and offer an article on the transformations in Japanese social movements since the period of the New Left. Drawing on social movements and memory studies, the authors underline that the transformation in this case is enacted by the contemporary collective actors themselves, which seek to distance their positions and identities from earlier collective actors of the late 1960s and early 1970s, because they feel that the negative perception of past activism might jeopardize their own struggles and delegitimize them.

Alessandra LoPiccolo analyses the use by different collective actors in Spain, between 2011 and 2021, of civic monitoring practices aiming at exposing power abuses and demand transparency in democratic systems. Using semi-structured interviews, documents and secondary sources, she adopts a Situational Analysis-approach to investigate hybridization processes within the civic field. A field that is not uniform, but ranges from cooptation to surveillance depending on the variance between collective actors (such as national and international NGOs, social movement organizations, alternative media, civic platforms, and other grassroots actors).

In her article, Carla Mannino examines how non-institutional actors shaped the nationalist conflict of self-determination in Scotland and Catalonia. Using a processual approach, Mannino traces how non-institutional actors between the 1980s and 2000s were agents capable of fostering transformative events which became catalysts for change in the organizational structures and cultural resources within the nationalist conflicts in both empirical cases. By developing a path dependent argument that underlines continuities and transformations, Mannino is able to link these mobilizations to the most recent contemporary episodes of contention in Scotland and Catalonia.

In her article, Stella Christou investigates the process of transformation of forms of action from differen-

tiation to convergence, within the Greek healthcare arena between 1983 and 2015. The author presents how collective actors combined direct tactics of healthcare and/or pharmaceutical provision with indirect protest tactics against the austerity regime in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2010, affecting political change in the country. This transformation led to the politicisation of issues regarding health and care to such an extent that SYRIZA drafted its healthcare agenda based on the movement's demands and promoted a healthcare reform in 2015.

Federica Stagni's article investigates how the composition of collective actors within a protest campaign transforms over time. She investigates this dynamic by looking specifically at the empirical case of protests in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem between 2000 and 2021, using protest event analysis and qualitative social network analysis to trace the evolution of these protests. Stagni's article introduces the concept of "backstaging mechanism" to point to the possibility that a section of a movement might step aside, leaving the stage to other groups of activists, when this helps the broader movement to increase their influence.

Maria Nicola Stragapede in her article focuses on post-movement life of Tunisian women who have left the country in the aftermath of their participation in the 2010-2011 revolution. Drawing on life history interviews conducted between 2021 and 2023, Stragapede is able to reconstruct the trajectories of these women and underlines continuities in their political activism, despite the shifts in the form of activism and the transformation of their political, spatial, and intimate context.

In the last article of this special issue, Lia Duran Mogollon discusses continuity in activism as a dynamic process shaped by different factors at the micro- meso- and macro- levels. She proposes two ideal-typical trajectories, the experimental and the linear, which she grounds in patterns of growth, expansion, and change, as narrated by the respondents. Empirically this article is based on nine biographical interviews with young activists (between 18 and 35 years old) conducted in Cologne between 2018 and 2020.

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Convention, Protest, or Violence? Estimating the Influence of Repertoires of Contention over Tactical Choice

Takeshi Wada, Yoojin Koo, Yoshiyuki Aoki

Abstract. Why do people opt for different forms of collective action, like lobbying, marching, or rioting, to voice contentious claims? The patterns of these collective action forms, or "tactics" exhibit variations among groups, regions, and nations, evolving over time. Current explanations for such tactical patterns are unsatisfactory due to limited theoretical and empirical exploration of the concept of repertoires of contention. This paper presents a comprehensive theoretical model drawing on social practice and learning theories, centered around the notion of tactical familiarity. The central idea posits that people in diverse societies have learned distinct ways of doing politics, gaining varying familiarity and proficiency with different tactics, developed through three mechanisms: feedback, diffusion, and memory. These mechanisms contribute to the formation of notably distinct repertoires of contention. Based on this theoretical model, this study develops an empirical measure of tactical familiarity. The novel measure allows comparing the impact of tactical familiarity with other factors, like political regime characteristics. Previous research has not conducted such comparisons, as it often focuses on particular tactics, like protests or violence, without delving into the full array of potential tactical choices, including conventional-institutional ones. Using quantitative event analysis and a dataset of 10 Million International Dyadic Events, the paper examines 17,575 global political events from 2000 to 2004. Multilevel multinomial logistic regression highlights repertoires of contention's significant influence on tactical choices, potentially outweighing political regime characteristics.

Keywords: repertoires of contention, protest, violence, contentious politics, event analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

To address grievances, seek material benefits, or demand rights, contentious social actors often follow institutionalized routines of conventional claim-making such as voting, lobbying, or taking judicial actions. On some occasions, however, they decide to go into the streets to protest collectively and disrupt ordinary flows of traffic or everyday operations of businesses or governments. In still other instances, they turn to more violent means, sometimes incurring damages to private or public property or to human lives. A quick inspection of cross-national and cross-sector patterns (cfr. *infra* Figure

1) reveals a great deal of variation. The pie charts show the proportions of convention (institutionalized and undisruptive political actions without public mobilizations), protest (non-violent street mobilizations that are often disruptive to the economy, society, and politics), and violence (entailing the use of force) used by social actors between 2000 and 2004. In certain societies, conventional forms of action are predominantly employed (e.g., Switzerland, USA, Japan), whereas in others, there is a higher inclination towards protest forms (e.g., Italy, Venezuela, Bangladesh). Meanwhile, in some societies (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Uganda), actors exhibit a pronounced inclination towards violent forms at very high rates. The three pie charts on the right show that, even within the same country (Italy), the forms of action chosen by actors vary widely.

Why are the forms of collective action, or "tactics[1]", chosen so drastically different? Existing studies have identified a range of factors influencing tactical choice: political opportunity structures (Kitschelt 1986), patterns of social cleavages (Olzak 2006), levels of economic development (rich and poor societies) (Muller and Seligson 1987), the strength of the state (Johnston 2012), or the practices of media reporting (Barranco and Wisler 1999). We argue that these answers remain unsatisfactory because the concept of repertoires of contention has been under-theorized and under-explored empirically. Theoretically, the concept of tactical familiarity – an essential component of the repertoire concept originally defined by Charles Tilly – has not been fully utilized in analyses. The idea suggests that contentious actors in different historical contexts have learned different ways of doing politics, acquired different degrees of familiarity with different tactics, and thus developed strikingly different repertoires of contention, as Figure 1 above showcases. We take such cultural dimensions of learning and familiarity seriously and empirically investigate whether tactical familiarity genuinely contributes to people's decisions to employ familiar tactics and, if so, to what degree. To assess the significance of tactical familiarity, we will conduct a comparative analysis with the impact of political regime characteristics (democracy and state capacity), recognized as two major explanatory factors in the literature. In other words, our inquiry will seek to answer the question: which serves as a more influential predictor of tactical choice, repertoires of contention or institutional regime characteristics?

Our findings arguably indicate that the repertoires of contention, operationalized as tactical familiarity, are stronger predictors than regime characteristics. While it might sound self-evident that repertoires of contention explain contentious tactical choices, the argument is far from trivial. Only a small number of empirical studies have fully adopted the definition of repertoires of contention as tactical familiarity and designed research plans accordingly to examine the links between repertoires and tactical choices (Ring-Ramirez, Reynolds-Stenson and Earl 2014). The unpopularity of such an approach to repertoires is especially evident in quantitative empirical studies, including those using protest event analysis in which strategic and rational accounts of tactical selection have gained salience (Maher and Peterson 2008).

This study attempts to contribute to the literature on two fronts, theoretical and empirical. First, building upon theories of repertoires of contention, social learning theories, and social practice theory, this study proposes a theoretical model of repertoires of contention built around the idea of tactical familiarity. Simply put, for those who own a toolkit (i.e., a repertoire), not all tools (i.e., tactics) are the same. If you are good at using specific tools, you frequently choose these; if you struggle with the others, you may be reluctant to use those. This is a matter of course, but nonetheless few studies have incorporated the idea into their actual research design (Wada 2016). We consider that, for each of the tools (tactics) in a toolkit, contentious social actors possess different degrees of familiarity, mastery, or – borrowing a concept from the social practice theory – "competence" (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). We will use "tactical familiarity" as a central theoretical and empirical tool across this paper.

We then make a clear conceptual distinction between actual tactics chosen by social actors at a moment of contention and repertoires of tactics as accumulated knowledge, a distinction that has not always been made clearly in the literature, as assured in the literature section. The distinction enables us to demonstrate the effects of repertoires of contention on actors' tactical selection empirically, something rarely done in quantitative studies of protests and violence. This distinction between tactics and repertoires permits us to introduce three major mechanisms of repertoire familiarity – feedback, diffusion, and memory – to complete our theoretical model.

The second and empirical contribution of this study is to employ a quantitative approach and compare repertoires' impact on tactical choice with that of other potential factors, including political regime characteristics. To accomplish this, we first create an empirical measure of repertoires of contention building upon the idea of tactical familiarity. Most studies adopting a cultural definition of repertoires of contention have

[1] In this article, we use "forms of action" and "tactics" interchangeably.

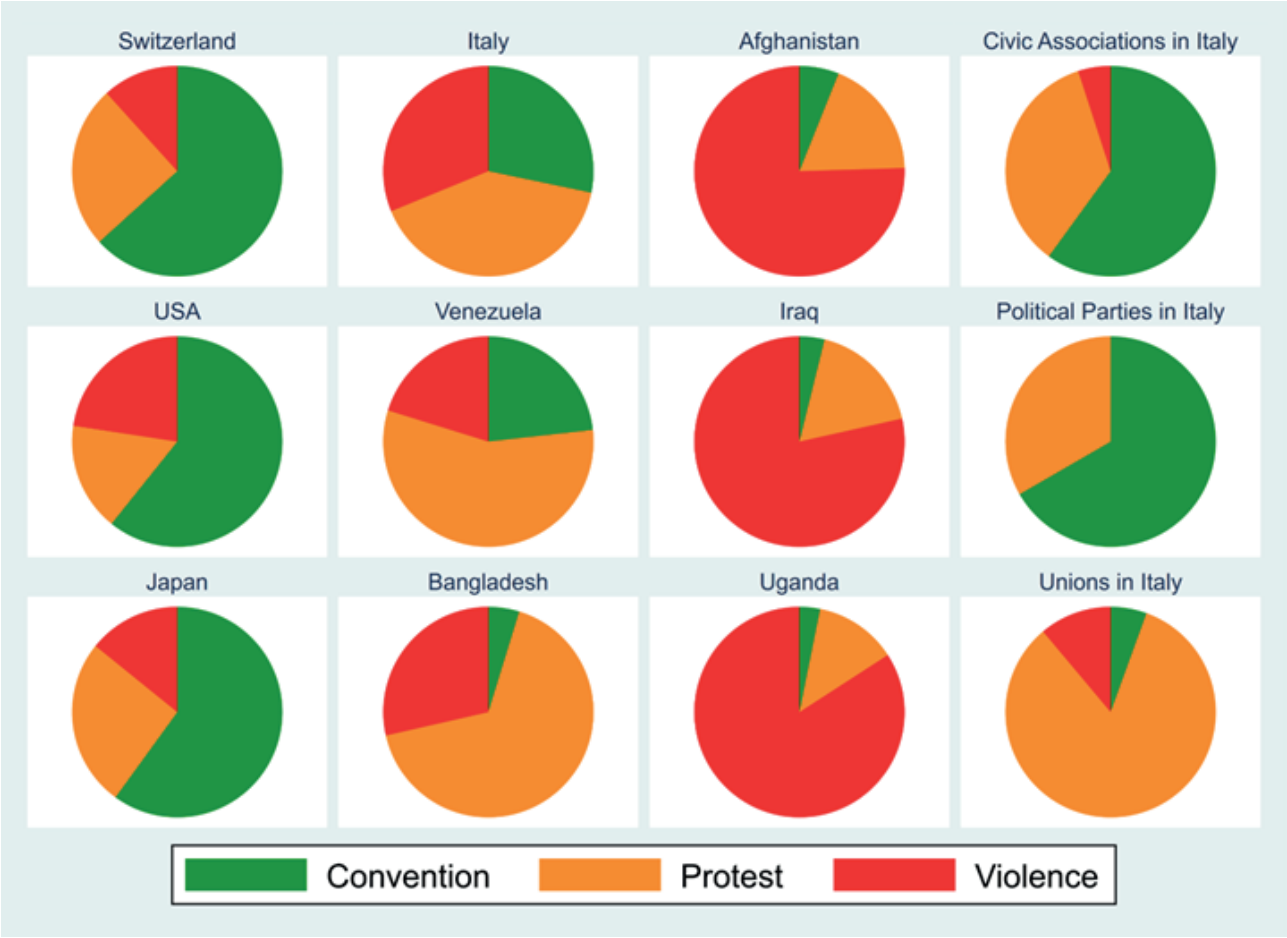

Figure 1. Convention, protest, and violence by country and by actor type, 2000-2004. *Source*: 10 Million International Dyadic Events (King and Lowe 2008).

employed qualitative methods empirically, such as in-depth interviews (Baumgarten 2017; Coe and Sandberg 2019), historical methods (Edelman and León 2013), and participant observation (Gade 2019). Admittedly, these qualitative approaches offer subtle and enriched descriptions of cultural process of learning and meaning construction in tactical selection, but we also claim that the difficulty of measuring repertoires should not justify the exclusion of the theoretically relevant factor from quantitative analyses of convention, protest, and violence. This study presents a method of scaling the "familiarity" aspect of repertoires of contention[2].

For this, we use an event analysis method, which in contrast to previous work that has usually focused on either protest or violence and rarely included convention, includes all three categories in its data collection design. Rather than treat non-disruptive conventional and institutional politics on the one hand and disruptive protests and violence on the other as distinct activities with separate literatures examining each, recent studies have been increasingly aware of the need to integrate these tactics into a unified analytic framework (Quaranta 2018; Katsanidou and Eder 2018). Our political event database – "10 Million International Dyadic Events" – provides information about the broadest range of tactics from convention to violence, which permits us to compare the probabilities of choosing protest and violence with those of choosing convention. We estimate repertoires' impact on tactical choice relative to that of other potential factors, including political regime characteristics and in so doing discover two intriguing relations between repertoires and tactical choices.

[2] As we discuss in detail in the method section, our method of scaling 'familiarity' is still exploratory, given data restrictions. A more sophisticated repertoire measure should be developed when high-quality event data becomes available.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. We will review the literature on contentious tactics and repertoires in the next section, introduce our research methodology including data, variables, and statistical estimation in the section following, and present our results in the findings section. The implications of our findings and prospects for future improvements will be discussed in the final section.

2. LITERATURE

This section reviews the existing literature and introduces our ideas about how to conceptualize and model repertoires of contention and tactical familiarity. We then discuss institutional regime characteristics, an alternative and predominant independent variable against which the impact of repertoires of contention is measured.

2.1. Tactical familiarity as culturally defined repertoires of contention

Repertoires of contention is the principal factor of interest in our study. Despite growing attention to repertoires of contention in the literature (Alimi 2014; Della Porta 2013; Taylor and van Dyke 2004; Bosi and Zamponi 2020), there is much room for theoretical and empirical improvements. Figure 2 visualizes our ideas.

First, we highlight tactical familiarity as one of the three cultural dimensions of repertoires of contention along with tactical value and tactical norm (see box A, Figure 2), something which – as lamented by Tilly – has not been done fully so far (especially in quantitative research designs) (Tilly 2008: xiv). Tilly defines a repertoire of contention as a «limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice» and emphasizes that repertoires are «learned cultural creations» which «emerge from struggle» (Tilly 1995b: 42). Della Porta and Diani (2006: 182) also use a similar definition saying that repertoires of contention «are handed down, reproduced over time, because they are what people know how to do». If we adopt such a definition and conceive repertoires of contention as a «cultural toolkit» (Swidler 1986) to be learned by doing, the definition will open the possibility of thinking about the facilitating and constraining effects of repertoires. That is, repertoires facilitate contentious social actors to employ certain tactics that they are familiar with but constrain them from using unfamiliar ones[3].

We argue that this theoretical idea – i.e., the degree of familiarity, mastery, and competence (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) actors have with specific tools has facilitating and constraining effects – is critical in the discussion of repertoires of contention because it implies that the familiarity affects rational tactical decisions, either consciously or not. People cannot use a tactic if they do not know how to do or are not aware of it, no matter how desirable it would have been in purely strategic terms (Polletta 2012: 55). And, as is the case with any learning experience, people cannot be familiar with everything. As Tilly (1995a: 42) writes, "[A]t any particular point in history, […] they learn only a rather small number of alternative ways to act collectively." Our study explicitly incorporates this facilitating and constraining aspects of repertoires of contention into the analysis.

It should be noted that tactical familiarity does not exhaust the cultural dimensions of repertoires of contention. The existing literature has since made a substantial theoretical progress by incorporating two other dimensions – which we call "tactical value" and "tactical norm." The tactical value dimension distinguishes highly valued tactics (ones which actors use repeatedly) from less valued ones (Jasper 1997; Galli 2016: 272-273). The tactical norm dimension separates tactics that are considered morally and socially acceptable (so actors use them often) from ones that are considered morally objectionable (Crossley 2002; Moore and Shepard 2013). As Jasper (1997: 237-238) expresses succinctly, tactics «represent important routines, emotionally and morally salient in these people's lives» and just «as their ideologies do, their activities express protestors' political identities and moral visions.» Chenoweth and Stepan (2011: 37) state that any tactic needs to rely on the "moral barriers" of the citizens that implicitly support it.

Next, our study attempts to contribute to the literature by making a clear conceptual distinction between tactical choices in a moment of contention (see box B, Figure 2) and repertoires of contention from which tactics are chosen (see box A, Figure 2). With some important exceptions (Bandura 1977; Coe and Sandberg 2019), most research has overlooked this separation mainly due, we suspect, to a very subtle and nuanced demarcation between repertoires and tactics selected. This analytic distinction between "learning" and "performing" (Bandura 1973: 65) is not easy to maintain in actual analyses because once a tactic is chosen and used, the experience of using the tactic becomes a learning process for the participants in contention and, as a result, the tactic becomes part of their repertoire for the next round of contention (see Mechanism #1 "Feedback Mechanism", Figure 2). This conceptual separation of

[3] King and Cornwall (2005) called these effects of repertoire familiarity as "structural inertia".

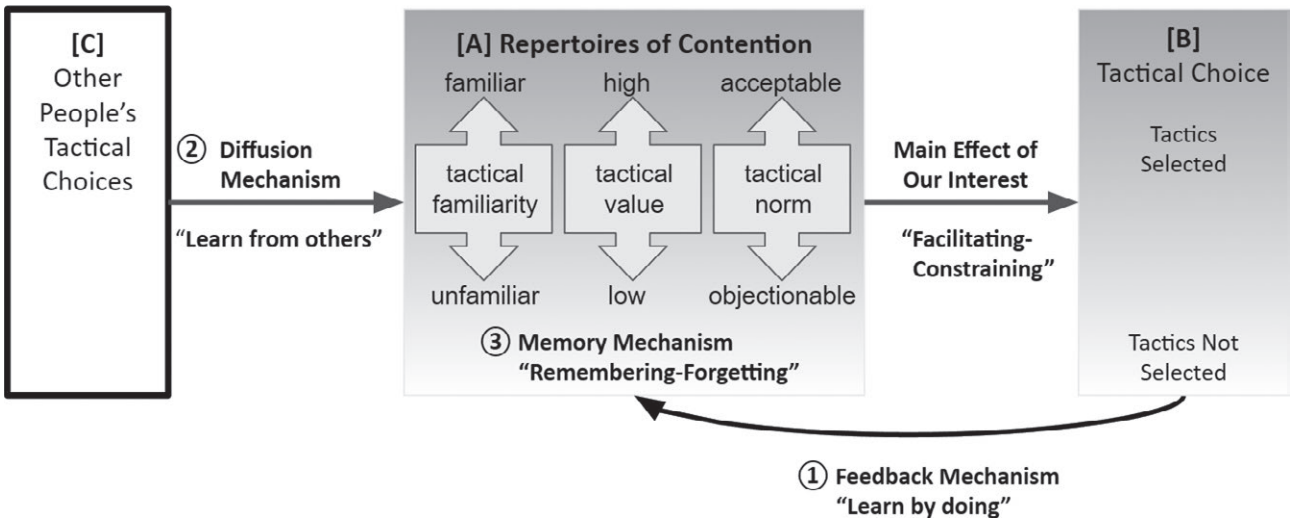

Figure 2. Causal mechanisms of repertoires and tactical choice. *Source*: Author's elaboration.

repertoires of contention from tactical choice is critical because it allows us to explore causal and empirical relations between the two (see Main Effect of Our Interest "Facilitating-Constraining", Figure 2).

Where do repertoires come from then? How do contentious social actors acquire a specific repertoire of contention? We identify three mechanisms drawing from the existing literature. The first mechanism is the "feedback" loop of "learn by doing" – «learn through practice» (Bandura 1973: 90) and «learn through adaptation» (King and Cornwall 2005: 7) according to the social learning theory – which we have already pointed out in the previous paragraph (see Mechanism #1, Figure 2). Actors in contention become familiarized with a tactic by doing it themselves.

The second mechanism is "diffusion" (see Mechanism #2, Figure 2). This is a mechanism of «learning from others or learning through modeling (observational learning)» (Bandura 1977: 22). Contentious social actors do not need to learn all available tactics by experimenting with or experiencing them themselves. They can also learn by observing others. Social movement diffusion research has addressed this mechanism. It untangled two types of diffusion mechanism – relational and nonrelational – through which tactics transfer from one group to another (Givan, Roberts and Soule 2010: 7; Wang and Soule 2012). In the relational diffusion mechanism, actors learn about a new tactic through direct interpersonal networks such as acquaintance with individual activists or intermediary organizations (brokerage) (Chabot 2010; Soule 1997; Jansen, Sluiter and Akkerman 2016). In the nonrelational diffusion, actors can become familiar with a new way of acting without direct person-to-person contact (McAdam and Rucht 1993; Soule 1997) through mass media (Andrews and Biggs 2006), electronic communication (Oliver and Myers 2003; Rolfe 2005), printed documents, or historical narratives (Zamponi 2018). Moreover, previous research indicates specific diffusion pathways, such as «attribution of similarity» (Tilly and Tarrow 2015), «cultural linkage» (Strang and Meyer 1993), or «structural equivalence» (Burt 1987; Soule 1997). Simply put, social actors are likely to learn more from others who are similar – culturally or structurally – to themselves. For instance, in analyzing how a protest tactic called "shantytown" diffused between 1985 and 1990 within U.S. campuses, Soule (Soule 1997: 870) points out that «student activists at liberal arts colleges look to student activists at other liberal arts colleges for cues on protest tactics».

The third mechanism involved in shaping repertoires of contention is related to "memory". It is a mechanism of «remembering and forgetting» (see Mechanism #3, Figure 2) or «retention» according to the social learning theories (Bandura 1977: 25; King and Cornwall 2005: 7). Even when people have learned a tactic by doing it or from observing what others do, the know-how they have acquired will not last forever. People can remember and retain certain tactics well as they simultaneously forget others. As such, the memory mechanism affects the degree of tactical familiarity and hence the probability of the tactic chosen. An attempt to incorporate this mechanism into large-N quantitative research can be considering "time". Time is well-used proxy indicator for this mechanism in that actors remember recently learned tactics better than ones they did a long time ago. Frequent tactical repetition

will refresh users' memory, improve their mastery, and increase their degree of tactical familiarity. In contrast, if a tactic has not been used repeatedly after its first adoption, it is likely that people will lose the know-how and competence necessary for employing this tactic and become increasingly unfamiliar with it (Lee *et al.* 2010).

Time, however, is obviously not the only function of the memory mechanism. Tactics used in symbolic historical events, as exemplified by revolution or state repression, are more likely than other tactics to remain in actors' memories for a longer period (Bandura 1977). Ceremonies and commemorations of these events will refresh their collective memory (Armstrong and Crage 2006; Cheng and Yuen 2019; Zamponi 2018), thus serving to maintain the level of tactical familiarity. In short, the memories associated with special events become a catalyst to heighten and preserve levels of tactical familiarity (Baumgarten 2017; Della Porta 2018; Edelman and León 2013).

In sum, taking repertoires of contention in the light of tactical familiarity and looking into the conceptual separation of repertoires from tactics enables us to establish the possible causal paths leading from repertoires to tactical choices and to investigate these paths empirically. Grounded on the existing literature, we also laid out three mechanisms (of feedback, diffusion, and memory) indicating how repertoires are generated and reproduced. As we will elaborate in the method section, this study aims to construct an empirical measure of the tactical familiarity concept, considering the three mechanisms, and assess its statistical association with the employed tactics. However, due to data limitations, the study does not test the "full model" encompassing the other dimensions of repertoires of contention (i.e., tactical value and tactical norm). Elucidating tactical familiarity, we believe, still helps contribute to a better understanding of the cultural dimensions of repertoires of contention.

2.2. Institutional Regime Characteristics

Rather than solely testing a hypothesis regarding the impact of repertoires of contention on employed tactics, this study contrasts that effect with the influence of institutional regime characteristics. This approach is taken because effects that may be statistically significant may lack practical significance in real-world scenarios. To assess whether a statistically significant effect truly indicates a practically meaningful effect, it is essential to compare it against established benchmarks. The rationale for utilizing institutional regime characteristics as a benchmark stems from the extensive investigation by social movement scholars into the proven relationship between the institutional characteristics of political regimes and contentious tactics (Tarrow 2011; Meyer and Minkoff 2004).

Two dimensions of political regime – democracy and state capacity – have received attention on the selection of action forms (Tilly 2006: 21). The degree of democracy of a country has been one of the essential factors explaining the rise and fall of claim-making activities (Gamson and Meyer 1996; Skrede Gleditsch and Ruggeri 2010). In non-democratic autocratic regimes under which political opportunity structure (POS) is largely closed, challengers generally refrain from engaging in protest or violence due to stringent government regulations and the high risk of violent state repression (Kriesi 1995; Olzak 2006). In democratic regimes, in contrast, where POS is more open, challengers are more likely to use protest tactics owing to possible elite divisions competing for power and to the subdued risk of state repression (Tarrow 2011).

The inverted U-curve theory – a variant of POS theories – also depicts the relationship between degree of democracy and tactics used but in a different way (Della Porta 2018: 465; Eisinger 1973). The theory predicts that protest and violent mobilizations are comparatively rare under autocratic regimes because of a high risk of state repression and a low benefit of protest and violent tactics (Sánchez-Cuenca and La Calle 2009: 40). Protests and violence are also infrequent under democratic regimes because challengers will have open and multiple access points to state institutions through conventional tactics with minimum risk of state repression. Its distinctiveness is the observation regarding semi-autocratic or semi-democratic regimes, characterized as partly open yet somewhat repressive. In these regimes, there is a combination of weak state repressiveness to deter civil violence and insufficient political openness to convince citizens to use non-violent means exclusively. Repressive measures, if applied, will likely lead to social grievances inducing challengers to fight back, while political openness will let them organize and resort to protest and violent tactics against the regime. In this way, challengers will have more leeway to employ a broader range of actions under semi-authoritarianism and semi-democracy (Muller and Weede 1990; Sánchez-Cuenca and La Calle 2009: 40).

State capacity, another dimension of political regime, is theorized to affect challengers' selection of tactics (Tilly 2006; Skrede Gleditsch and Ruggeri 2010). Strong states, insofar as their military-repressive capacity, bureaucratic-administrative capacity, autonomy within the international state system, or coherence of politi-

cal institutional capacities (Hendrix 2010), are more able than weak ones to prescribe challengers' political actions and tactics (Kriesi 1995; Tilly 2008). Facing strong and capable states, social actors' tactical options are greatly limited to undisruptive conventions.

Weak states, in contrast, often fail to monopolize the use of armed forces within their territory. Such weakness and incapability could lead to a burst of contentious uprisings, ranging from protests, riots, guerrilla activities, and revolutions to civil wars (Skocpol 1979). Waves of violence could also occur under conditions of governmental impotence or unresponsiveness, as happens, for example, in failed states (Cingolani 2018)[4].

3. METHOD

3.1. Event Data

Information pertinent to our main variables, tactical choice and repertoires of contention, comes from the database identified as "10 Million International Dyadic Events" (hereafter, the 10 MIDE database), available from Harvard Dataverse (King and Lowe 2008). Using computer-automated coding technologies, nearly 10 million events from 1990 to 2004 are compiled in the 10 MIDE database using Reuters news reports as a data source. Each event is saved in a dyadic form of «Subject Actor does something (event type) to Target Actor», with Subject and Target Actors coded from about 450 actor categories including countries and within-country groups and does something (event type) to coded in an ontology of 249 event types (King and Lowe 2008: 620) based on the Integrated Data for Events Analysis (IDEA) event codes (Bond *et al.* 2003). The 10 MIDE database is chosen because it does record the information about actual tactics used in the events (recorded as "event type") and it enables us to compare the use of conventional tactics with that of protest and violent tactics, unlike many event databases that focus on protests and/or violence exclusively. From the 10 MIDE database, we extracted 17,575 political events in which conventional, protest, or violent tactics were employed[5].

3.2. Main Variables of the Study

Our dependent variable, tactical choice, has three broadly defined categories: convention, protest, and violence. Our classification decision of the actual tactics ("event type" in the 10 MIDE database) largely rely on the Goldstein scale (Goldstein 1992), which assigns a numeric score to a political action according to its intensity, ranging from being cooperative (highest score of +10) to conflictive (lowest score of –10). According to our classification, between 2000 and 2004 the world saw 5,557 events with conventional tactics (31.6%), 4,431 events with protest tactics (25.2%), and 7,587 events with violent tactics (43.2%)[6].

Our primary independent variable, tactical familiarity as repertoires of contention, is about social actors' collective learning of and ongoing familiarity with claim-making tactics from past struggles. Available information about such subjective processes is limited, especially for quantitative research setups like ours, but some inventive efforts can be undertaken. To construct an approximate quantitative measure, we made four decisions. First, given the three tactical options (convention, protest, and violence), we decided to measure actors' familiarity with conventional, protest, and violent tactics separately.

Second, to reflect the idea of learning from past struggles (Mechanisms #1 and #2), we presupposed that actors learned by doing or from others over a period of 10 years prior to a given event. In other words, to predict tactical choices in the year 2000, for example, values of the tactical familiarity variables were calculated using information about tactical choices over the preceding 10 years, i.e., 1990-1999. We confess that the use of the 10-year time span is arbitrary. It is plausible that contentious actors may have learned from remote past, well before 1990. It is our compromise to use the 10-year

[4] While institutional regime characteristics (democracy and state capacity) are primarily structural, certain dynamic political processes and events – such as radicalization, polarization, autocratization, coup d'états, or protest cycles – could also influence people's tactical choices. Due to data constraints, this study was unable to incorporate these potentially relevant factors into the analysis. The authors are grateful to the anonymous reviewer for highlighting this possibility, which could enhance the richness of our analysis.

[5] For the introduction of the 10 MIDE and the concrete procedure of filtering political events from the database, see Online Appendix A.

[6] A table showing how we classified 37 event codes into the three categories is available in Online Appendix B. Two issues need to be highlighted concerning the dependent variable. First, the 10 MIDE database lacks information regarding the reasons, rationale, or logic behind actors' tactical decisions, hindering a more comprehensive understanding of the PROCESSES involved in tactical choice. Nevertheless, the database remains highly valuable because its "event type" allows us to identify the OUTCOMES of such processes of choosing tactics. Second, in a real-world political event, a series of interactions typically occur among relevant actors and institutions. However, the 10 MIDE database records only one tactic per event, chosen as "representative" or "newsworthy" by Reuters, indicating potential media selection bias (Hocke 1998). While this study endeavors to mitigate the impact of such bias by incorporating "media attention" as a control variable in the regression models, as detailed in Online Appendix C, it is important to note that many tactics employed in sequential contentious interactions may go unrecorded. We appreciate the anonymous reviewer for pointing out these issues.

span: the longer the span was (which is desirable), the more cases (and the degrees of freedom) we would lose in our regression models (which is not desirable). All the cases before the year 2000 were excluded from the final analysis because a full ten years of data were not available to compute the tactical familiarity scores for these cases. Thus, the time span under this study is 2000-2004.

Third, we attempted to integrate the idea of structural equivalence – a diffusion mechanism (Mechanism #2 in Figure 2) (Soule 1997) – by computing the familiarity of convention, protest, and violence by country and subject actor category combination[7] (e.g., USA-Unions, Mexico-Students). We assumed that the subject actor categories in the data would best reflect the theoretical idea of structural equivalence that the actors are more likely to learn from others like themselves.

Fourth, to incorporate the idea of the memory mechanism of remembering and forgetting (Mechanism #3 in Figure 2), we assumed that actors would remember recent experiences better than past ones. We introduced a simple memory function of gradually forgetting past happenings by using weights. To calculate the violence familiarity score to predict tactics in 2004, for instance, the frequency of violent events by the same country-actor category in the previous year was given a full weight of 1 as the most recent memory. Similarly, the frequency in the year 2002 was multiplied by a weight of .9, the one in the year 2001 by a weight of .8, and the frequency in the year 1994 (the first year of the 10-year time span) by a weight of .1[8].

Here we should admit that the feedback mechanism (Mechanism #1 in Figure 2) was difficult to operationalize meticulously using our event data because we had no way of knowing if two events by same country-actor category (e.g., USA-Migrants) were in fact carried out by the same or similar set of concrete individuals, which would have enabled us to claim that these individuals learned the tactic by themselves during the first of the two events and used it in the second. Nevertheless, the explanatory power of our analysis still stands, recalling that the social learning theory points out that the diffusion mechanism is more common and important than the feedback mechanism (Bandura 1977). The theory suggests that most human behavior is learned observationally and the capacity to learn by observation enables people to acquire large, integrated patterns of behavior (diffusion) without having to form them gradually by tedious trial and error (feedback) (*Ibidem*: 22).

In short, three repertoire variables – convention familiarity, protest familiarity, and violence familiarity – were created by computing weighted sums of the frequencies of convention, protest, and violence, respectively, by country-actor category in the past 10 years and by converting the weighted sums into percentages so that the three familiarity scores add up to 100%. Descriptive statistics of all variables including repertoires are shown in Table 1.

As a measure of democracy, we have used the electoral democracy index (*v2x_polyarchy*) from Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) Dataset Version 10[9]. The index is designed to answer the question, «To what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved?», elaborated as «In the V-Dem conceptual scheme, electoral democracy is understood as an essential element of any other conception of representative democracy – liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, or some other» (Coppedge *et al.* 2020: 42). The squared term of this variable is also included to test the inverted-U curve theory which hypothesizes a curvilinear relationship between the degree of democracy and tactical choice.

To construct a measure of state capacity, two variables – domestic autonomy and international autonomy – from the V-DEM Dataset are used. "Domestic autonomy" (*v2svdomaut*) is a response to the question, "Is the state autonomous from the control of other states with respect to the conduct of domestic policy?" while "international autonomy" (*v2svinlaut*) is to «Is the state autonomous from the control of other states with respect to the conduct of its foreign policy?» (Coppedge *et al.* 2020: 175–176). Both are measures of the ability of a state to formulate and carry out its policies independent of the influence of other states. We conducted a principal component analysis of the two variables to produce a composite scale.

Lastly, we controlled for the effects of the other theoretically relevant variables. For reasons of space, we moved the description of these control variables to Online Appendix C.

[7] We used two actor codes (country, sector) in the database to classify the subject actor of each event. Civil society actors are classified together under the sector code "CIVS" (civil society agents). This broad category contains 22 subcategories as follows: Armed civilian groups, Artists, Athletes, Businesses, Candidates, Civic group agents, Criminals, Detainees, Educators, Ethnic agents, Farmers, Mass media, Health care agents, Migrants, Nominal agents, Occupations, Political opposition, Political parties, Philanthropic agents, Religious agents, Students, and Unions.

[8] In a similar attempt to operationalize the time-dependent aspect of contentious repertoires, King and Cornwall (2005: 13) used the contentious strategies in the past year and created lagged variables.

[9] "The V-Dem Dataset", V-Dem Institute, accessed July 5 2020, doi:10.23696/vdemds20 (currently accessible at: https://www.v-dem.net/en/data/archive/previous-data/v-dem-dataset/).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the quantitative variables.

Variables	*N*	*mean*	*sd*	*min*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*max*	*NA*
Repertoires of contention									
protest familiarity (cay)	8242	.40	.33	.00	.06	.39	.64	1.00	0
violence familiarity (cay)	8242	.19	.27	.00	.00	.07	.27	1.00	0
Institutional regime characteristics									
democracy (cy)	816	.52	.28	.02	.27	.54	.79	.92	58
state capacity (cy)	816	.16	.81	-3.87	-.10	.45	.70	1.22	58
Social cleavages									
religious (cy)	826	.38	.22	.00	.18	.37	.58	.75	48
ethnic (cy)	834	.44	.25	.00	.22	.45	.65	.94	40
class (cy)	816	.60	.28	.04	.36	.63	.90	.98	58
Material resources: GDP per capita (cy)	874	59,517	706,568	81	473	1,754	7,082	9,875,255	0
Globalization: KOF Globalization Index (cy)	850	55.30	15.86	24.50	43.19	53.20	65.27	88.45	24
Associational strength: civil society index (cy)	874	49.22	10.21	23.22	41.08	51.41	58.60	66.45	0
Macroeconomic conditions: economic growth rate % (cy)	874	2.51	4.21	-31.65	.52	2.44	4.36	37.13	0
Media attention: sum of non-political events (cy)	874	2,639	11,435	0	62	247	1,613	181,463	0
Population (thousands) (cy)	874	35,284	128,448	1	2,961	8,163	23,687	1,300,274	0

NA: the number of missing cases
cy: variables measured at the country-year unit
cay: variables measured at the country-actor category-year unit

NA: the number of missing cases.
cy: variables measured at the country-year unit.
cay: variables measured at the country-actor category-year unit.
Source: Authors' elaboration. We report familiarity variables measured in the original unit ("cay" or countryactor category-year unit: N=8,242) not in the event mut (N=17,575). The descriptive statistics are different between the two units because the distributions in the event mut reflect the familiarity levels of the frequent actor categories (appearing in the data many times) more than the less frequent ones.

3.3. Statistical estimation

We use multilevel multinomial logistic regression models because our dependent variable – tactical choice – has three categories (convention, protest, and violence) and because there are two hierarchical levels as political events are nested within countries. Multilevel modeling is the most viable for this study that includes the independent variables at two theoretical levels in one model: institutional regime characteristics at the level of country and repertoires at the level of political event[10]. It thus enables us to compare their effects on tactical choice by gaining the amount of changes in predicted probabilities, as we explain in the findings section. We used two approaches to our missing data problem, listwise deletion (to remove cases that are missing data on any of the variables in our model) and multiple imputation.

4. FINDINGS

The results of our multilevel multinomial logistic regression analysis are shown in Table 2. Our decision to use multilevel modeling turns out to be appropriate because the random effect (i.e., the country level effect) is both practically and statistically significant. The

[10] For each political event in the model (i.e., each first-level unit), we identify the actor of the event and obtain the familiarity scores of the actor's country-actor category.

Table 2. Multilevel multinomial logistic regression of tactical selection.

Variables	*Model A (No Imputation)*				*Model B (Multiple Imputation)*			
	protest		*violence*		*protest*		*violence*	
	b	*robust se*	*b*	*robust se*	*b*	*robust se*	*b*	*robust se*
Repertoire of contention								
protest familiarity	.276	.069***	-.154	.084	.267	.067***	-.167	.082*
violence familiarity	.495	.094***	1.255	.142***	.477	.093***	1.231	.141***
Regime characteristics								
democracy squared	-5.076	2.090*	-6.646	2.783*	-3.466	1.710*	-4.902	2.311*
democracy	4.313	2.000*	6.037	2.778*	2.553	1.664	4.234	2.338
state capacity	-.308	.087***	-.431	.140*	-.230	.082**	-.325	.129*
Target of contention								
domestic society	-.376	.085***	-.427	.083***	-.387	.084***	-.415	.083***
foreign government	.220	.157	-.441	.220***	.208	.157	-.403	.212
foreign society	-.982	.237***	-1.536	.345***	-1.029	.238***	-1.552	.335***
Social cleavages								
religious	-1.034	.351**	-1.573	.471***	-.966	.336**	-1.444	.450***
ethnic	.128	.335	.276	.432	.264	.311	.480	.417
resources	.681	.444	.982	.656	.457	.442	.619	.617
Other variables								
GDP per capita	.037	.120	.030	.169	.009	.107	.040	.145
globalization index	.001	.012	.006	.015	.001	.012	.004	.014
civil society index	.005	.011	.003	.013	.007	.010	.007	.012
economic growth rate	-.024	.014	-.022	.015	-.014	.014	-.018	.013
media attention	-.308	.068***	-.398	.098***	-.275	.068***	-.386	.095***
population	.116	.091	.146	.114	.074	.086	.129	.103
constant	2.220	1.344	2.793	1.455	2.816	1.252*	2.983	1.348*
variance	.296	.114	.789	.324	.281	.100	.698	.267
covariance	.284 (se=.170)				.252 (se=.141)			
number of clusters	156 countries				169 countries			
no. of observations	17,287 events				17,575 events			

***p=<.001, **p=<.01, *p=<.05.

Source: Authors' elaboration. The protest familiarity and violence familiarity measures are included in the model, using the excluded convention familiarity measure as the baseline. The natural log of the original scales is taken to address the skewed distributions. A small value of .01 is added to the original familiarity scores ranging from 0 to 1 because the logarithm of zero is not defined. Therefore, the modified repertoire familiarity scores range from -4.61 (cases with zero familiarity) to .01 (cases with a familiarity of 100 percent).

estimated variance of the random effect on the tactical choice of protest relative to the tactical choice of convention (the base category) is .296 in the listwise deletion model (Model A). This gives a standard deviation of .544 which implies that a 1-standard deviation change in the random effect (country level effect) will amount to a 1.72 change (a 72% increase) in the relative risk ratio (the exponential of the standard deviation). Likewise, the relative risk ratio of the country level effect on the tactical choice of violence changes by 2.43 (a 143% increase). Thus, the country level effect appears to be greater on the tactical choice of violence than that of protest, but the difference estimated covariance of .284 is not statistically significant at .05 level (p=.095) which implies that a model constraining the same random effect for protest and violence might suffice. The multiple imputation model (Model B) practically gives the same result on the analysis of variance and covariance of the random effect.

In the regression output, the robust standard errors – robust to the heteroskedasticity of the errors – are reported in order to adjust for 156 country clusters in Model A and for 169 country clusters in Model B[11]. Giv-

[11] We conducted multicollinearity diagnostics, including VIF, tolerance, condition index, and variance proportions, using the collinearity diagnostics option in SPSS. The VIF exceeded 10 for four variables: democracy squared (11.5), democracy (14.3), GDP per capita (26.4), and religious cleavages (52.7). This prompted further investigation. Subsequently, we examined the condition index and its variance proportions table. While the condition index of three out of the fifteen dimensions exceeded 30, we did not identify a multicollinearity problem because none of these dimensions had more than one variable with variance propor-

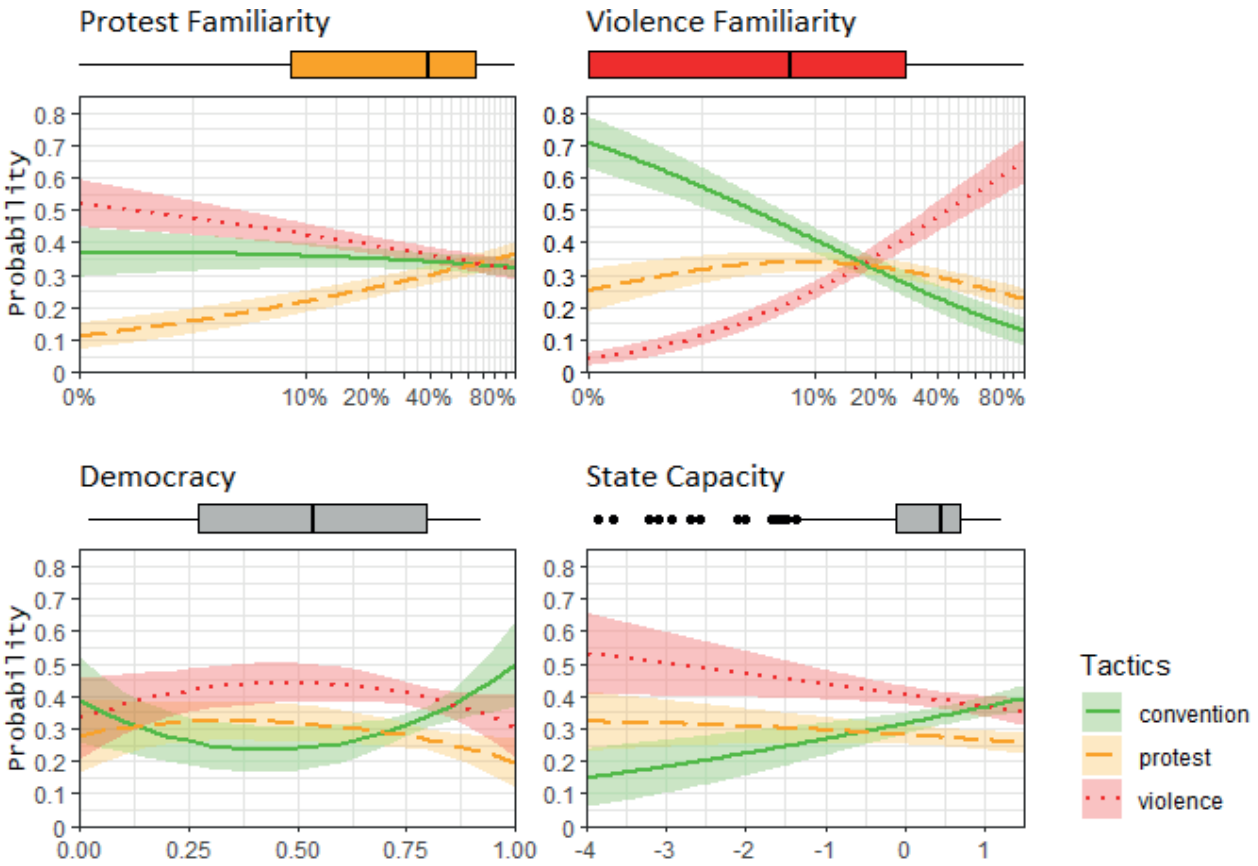

Figure 3. Adjusted probabilities of tactical choice based on Model A (multilevel multinomial logistic regression with robust standard errors). *Source*: Authors' elaboration. These graphs display the average predicted probabilities and the confidence intervals of tactical choices by selected independent variables based on Model A. Stata's *margins* command is used. We report the adjusted prediction plots of Model A instead of Model B because Stata's margins command is not valid after using multiple imputation methods (*mi* command). A boxplot on top of each AAP plot shows the distribution of the independent variable on the X-axis. The distributions displayed in these boxplots are based on the unit at which these variables are generated as reported in Table 1. In Figure 2, the boxplots of Democracy and State Capacity are measured using country-year as the unit. The repertoire familiarity scores are calculated by the country-actor category-year unit.

en the difficulty of understanding the substantive findings from the output table of multilevel multinomial logistic regression models as seen in Table 2, a series of Average Adjusted Prediction (AAP) plots, shown in Figure 3, help interpret the results more intuitively.

The effects of repertoires of contention on tactical choice are displayed in the two upper graphs in Figure 3. The X-axis corresponds to actors' degree of protest and violence familiarity[12]. Our main finding here supports the theory of repertoires of contention. For those actors who are unfamiliar with protest tactics, the probability of choosing the tactic of protest is very low (about .10 when the familiarity is near 0% in the graph on the upper left). As actors' protest familiarity increases, however, the probability of protest selection increases. When the actors' repertoire consists mostly of protests (e.g., a familiarity score exceeding 80%), the probability of choosing protest tactics reaches over .30. The more familiar actors are with protest tactics, the more likely they will select these tactics.

The same result applies to violence familiarity. As actors become more specialized in violent tactics, they are more prone to adopting these tactics. Notably, there are interesting findings vis a vis protest familiarity. First, as Figure 3 indicates, the facilitating effect is likely to be greater for violence familiarity than for protest famili-

tions above .90 (or even .70). The two variables with the highest condition index scores are as follows: civil society index (.50) and democracy (.21) for the first of the three dimensions; democracy squared (.80) and democracy (.66) for the second dimension, as expected given the related nature of these variables; population (.90) and media attention (.64) for the third dimension.

[12] The X-axis labels are switched from the logarithmic scale used in the regression models to the original percentages to facilitate interpretation.

arity. One way to investigate the practical effects of different variables in the model is to compare the probabilities between the 25th percentile and 75th percentile of the boxplot where most data – 50% of the entire distribution – concentrate, and we can compare the actual or realistic impacts of the variables on tactical choice. When protest familiarity increases from 9% (the 25th percentile of the data) to 64% (the 75th percentile), the probability of choosing the tactic of protest increases by .14 (from .19 to .33). When violence familiarity increases from 0% (the 25th percentile) to 27% (the 75th), the probability of selecting the tactic of violence increases by .36, or, remarkably, from about .05 to .41).

It is also intriguing to examine the tactic that is abandoned. When there is an increase in protest familiarity, the probability of actors choosing convention remains nearly constant while the prospect of their engaging in violence declines sharply. This indicates that protest tactics are substitutes for violent tactics. In contrast, when there is an increase in violence familiarity, conventional tactics decrease. Thus, violence increases at the expense of convention. These insights, obtained by inspecting the AAP plots, are new and original to our study. We will discuss more about these findings concerning the abandoned tactic in the Discussion section.

The next two AAP plots in Figure 3, Democracy and State Capacity, show the relations between regime characteristics and tactical choice. There are four critical findings to point out. First, the relation between contentious tactics and these structural and institutional factors are empirically demonstrated in the quantitative analysis of cross-national data. This is no minor accomplishment as concepts such as political opportunity structure have been one of the centerpieces in the literature of social movements and contentious politics.

Second, inverted-U curves are observed clearly in the Democracy graph. Along with the significant negative coefficients of the squared democracy variable in Table 3, this AAP plot graph proves that the peaks of the curves fall into the area between .3 and .6 of the democracy scores, indicating semi-democracies (or semi-authoritarian regimes) such as Russia (.37), Venezuela (.53), and the Philippines (.55). This finding supports the inverted-U curve theory which states that, as a political system opens and brings about favorable opportunities with a reduced risk of repression, protest and violent actions first rise and then fall again with the arrival of democracy.

Third, the State Capacity graph espouses our hypothesis regarding the relationship between state strength and tactical choice. As a state's capacity to formulate and implement policies increases, the probability of actors selecting protest and violent tactics under such a state decreases. Strong states turn to be more capable of containing intense social mobilizations than weak states.

Fourth, the practical significance of these regime factors is lower compared to that of repertoire of contention. To gauge the practical effects, we can compare the highest and lowest adjusted probabilities corresponding to the range between the 25th and 75th percentiles in the Democracy graph in Figure 3. The probability of actors choosing violent tactics changes by .04 (from .44 at the peak of the curve where the democracy score is about .48 to .40 at the 75th percentile point where the democracy score is .79). The probability of protest selection changes by .07 (from .33 at the peak and .27 at the 75th percentile point). The probability of using convention changes by .10 (from .24 at the bottom of the U-shaped curve to .34 at the 75th percentile point). Similarly, in the case of the State Capacity variable in Figure 3, the adjusted probability of violence as the tactical choice changes by .03 (from .41 at the 25th percentile to .38 at the 75th percentile), while protest and convention selection change by .01 (from .28 to .27) and .04 (from .31 to .35), respectively. These changes in probabilities are much smaller than the changes we found for the repertoire familiarity variables (.14 increase for protest familiarity and .36 increase for violence familiarity). We argue that this finding gives substantial evidence that the effects of repertoires of contention on tactical choice weighs more than the effects of political regime characteristics.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Implications of the findings

This study makes a critical conceptual distinction between the actual tactics chosen by actors at the moment of contention and the repertoires of tactics as knowledge. This conceptual distinction helps empirically examine whether repertoires influence tactical selection and, if they do, to what extent. We have theorized repertoires of contention as a cultural toolkit of tactics which people learn through multiple mechanisms such as feedback, diffusion, and memory. We have then operationalized the repertoire concept and proposed a measure of tactical familiarity. To find answers to our main research question – what is the most important predictor of tactical choice, institutional regime characteristics or repertoires of contention? – we took advantage of the 10 MIDE database which covers the broadest range of tac-

tics including conventions, unlike most event databases collecting protests and/or violence only.

Our main discovery has been that repertoires of contention do matter in explaining tactical choice. We argue that repertoires facilitate actors' decisions to employ tactics that are familiar to them and, at the same time, constrain their attempts to implement unfamiliar ones. The degrees of protest and violence familiarity account for a substantial part of the variation in tactical patterns.

Our second discovery is that the effects of repertoires of contention are greater than those of regime characteristics on tactical selection at the moments of struggle based on the comparison of practical impacts of these variables, that is, by looking at changes in the adjusted probabilities of tactical choice between the 25th and 75th percentiles of the variables. The adjusted probability of choosing protest tactics increased by .14 for the protest familiarity variable while the probability of choosing violent tactics increased by .36 for the violence familiarity variable. On the other hand, the probabilities changed only moderately between .01-.07 with changes in democracy or state capacity. Yet it should be noted that we did find significant associations between regime characteristics and tactical choice, which is not a trivial accomplishment.

Third, we discovered two intriguing relationships between repertoires of contention and tactical choice. The first is that, when actors' protest familiarity increases, protests are more likely to be chosen *at the expense of violence* but not of convention[13]. People often think that violence is an extreme radical extension of protest strategies, but this is probably not true for many actors. Those who use protest tactics frequently are less inclined to resort to violence. This result implies that many of these actors have a strong commitment to nonviolent protest tactics and refuse to fall into violent options. This might link with the issue of tactical value, another cultural dimension of repertoires of contention discussed in the literature section.

The second relationship is that, when violence familiarity increases, violent tactics are more likely to be chosen *at the expense of convention* rather than of protest. Those who routinely employ violence are much less likely than others to use convention. This suggests that, while violent actors use protest tactics as often as nonviolent actors do, they tend to turn away from conventional tactics. For violent actors, institutional political rules and procedures are not something to be appreciated, respected, or regarded as practically attractive. These two relationships between repertoires of contention and tactical choice are additional insights obtained from our regression analysis.

5.2. Future improvements

There are several issues for the improvements and for the future study. First, the analysis can be nuanced by using more detailed and concrete tactical categories than the three broad categories (convention, protest, and violence) we used. We still believe that this three-category classification is of value because people are much less likely to learn tactics across different categories; but it might not be fully satisfactory taking into account that many studies of repertoires of contention often examine more concrete tactics such as demonstrations (Somma and Medel 2019), shantytowns (Soule 1997), factory recuperations (Itzigsohn and Rebón 2015), candlelight vigils (Hwang and Willis 2020), or picketings (Rossi 2017). In fact, the 10 MIDE database keeps records of tactics at more concrete levels. Technically speaking, to implement the same regression analysis using more specific categories is possible. Roadblocks ahead would be the need for much greater computing power and increased complexity in presenting the results.

Second, readers might wonder if our evidence may simply suggest that the recently employed tactics are used again. How do we know that using the same tactic now as in the past is explicable by familiarity than by rational decision? On this issue of potential endogeneity problem, we admit that our empirical operationalization of the concept of repertoire familiarity is still exploratory and will need further refinement. Most importantly, the concepts of tactical value and tactical norm need to be incorporated into future analyses since tactical familiarity is not the only cultural dimension of repertoires of contention. Although it would be difficult to gather information about tactical value (i.e., actors find more value in certain tactics than others) and tactical norm (i.e., actors believe certain tactics are more socially appropriate than others) directly from event data, it might be possible to construct measures of these dimensions through other methods such as opinion surveys and to combine them with event data. Furthermore, as we discussed, familiarity and rationality are not mutually exclusive. Tactical familiarity is the basis of rational calculation, consciously or unconsciously, by making certain tactics easier to employ and others more costly or even unimaginable.

Third, the model could be refined further by incorporating additional learning mechanisms. Due to the data limitation, it was not viable for us to embed all the ideas

[13] This finding is actually consistent with some earlier research (Myers 2010: 312).

about three main mechanisms into our study[14]. As for the diffusion mechanism, there are different ways of learning other than the structural equivalence we embodied in our model as studies of tactical diffusion have identified a variety of relational mechanisms (e.g., brokerage) and non-relational mechanisms (e.g., media) (Givan, Roberts and Soule 2010). How to integrate such mechanisms into analysis will be a challenge for future projects. When it comes to the feedback mechanism, researchers could utilize an event database with more detailed information about actors (i.e., proper names of the groups and organizations in action), as done by King and Cornwall's longitudinal study of the women suffrage movement in the United States (King and Cornwall 2005). Lastly, the memory mechanism has a variety of pathways to remember things, such as remembering more shocking events better than mundane ones (Baumgarten 2017; Della Porta 2018: 464). Memories of tactics employed in impactful events, even ones that happened a long time ago, are likely to stay more vividly in actors' minds than other tactics (i.e., legacy effects). The strength of qualitative methods is pronounced to uncover mechanisms of this type, and yet there is much leeway for quantitative event analysis as well. We could use, for example, "geographical proximity" to model cross-national learning processes and "linguistic adjacency" to specify cultural learning processes where learning takes place via the same language.

The fourth issue concerns the levels at which we analyze repertoires of contention, both conceptually and methodologically. Some studies delve into repertoires at specific and concrete levels, such as individual activists (Schneider Marques 2017), while others examine them at broad and abstract levels, encompassing societies or countries (Echegaray 2015). Many studies operate somewhere in between, focusing on collectivities of different kinds, such as young people (Barbosa *et al*. 2014), workers (Itzigsohn and Rebón 2015), labor unions (Kerrissey and Schofer 2018:427), movements (Edelman and León 2013), organizations (Rossi 2015), as well as our country-actor categories. There is no clear consensus on the appropriate level, and it is probabaly undesirable to impose a single level on all studies. Nonetheless, we should be mindful of the potential implications of our choice regarding the level of analysis. For instance, Franklin (2013) explores whether Tilly's original idea of repertoires of contention, framed as a limited variety of tactical forms (the strong repertoire hypothesis), is more valid at a narrow and concrete level (e.g., campaign participants) or at a broad and abstract level (e.g., country). His findings indicate that the more concrete the level at which scholars measure repertoires of contention, the stronger the effect of repertoires on tactical choices.

Finally, it would be beneficial to validate our findings by using different event datasets (e.g., GDELT, the World Handbook of Political Indicators IV, or the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project). While it may not be possible to include conventional tactics in an analysis based on such datasets – because most event datasets do not contain such information – we could still conduct interesting validation tests using these datasets of protest and violent events, especially if we adopt finer tactical categories as we have previously discussed.

[14] Once scholars successfully develop three distinct indicators, one for each mechanism, it would be worthwhile to evaluate the significance of the three mechanisms that generate repertoires of contention. To complicate the matter, however, the three main mechanisms of feedback, diffusion, and memory are often interdependent, as King and Cornwall discuss (King and Cornwall 2005: 27).

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APPENDICES

A) How to Filter Contentious Events from the 10 MIDE Database

As outlined in our manuscript, the "10 Million International Dyadic Events", abbreviated as the 10 MIDE database, available from Harvard Dataverse (King and Lowe 2008), employs a comprehensive ontology comprising 249 event types,[15] which are derived from the Integrated Data for Events Analysis (IDEA) event codes[16]. This database thereby presents extensive opportunities for the investigation of contentious political events. In this appendix, we first explain the construction of the 10 MIDE database, followed by an explication of methods to filter contentious political events for analysis. Subsequently, we delve into its advantages for our analysis in comparison to other databases.

As an example of how the 10 MIDE database was built from texts, a sample lead is shown below (King and Lowe 2003: 620).

Russian artillery^{S} south of the Chechen capital Grozny *blasted*^{223} *Chechen positions*^{T} overnight before falling silent at dawn, witnesses said on Tuesday.

The word *blasted* is given the event code 223, which denotes military engagement, and the word sequences, *Russian artillery* and *Chechen positions*, are tagged S and T, respectively, meaning the subject actor and the target actor.

From the 10 MIDE database, we extracted the events of contentious politics we wanted to focus on for purposes of our analysis in five steps. First, we excluded 58 of the 249 event types in the database that are unrelated to political activities, such as natural disasters, market transactions, sports contests, and cultural events. Second, we further narrowed down our scope by selecting only events in which tactics or forms of action are explicit. Some event codes such as "complain", "demand", and others do not tell us explicitly *how* these tactics or actions were carried out. Our conservative approach excluded these events from our analysis as our main concern was to investigate specific and concrete forms of contention.

Third, we also excluded events in which state agents or military actors could be assumed to be the subject actor, shown in such codes as "armed force occupation", and "nuclear attack", among others. Fourth, we then selected events by the particular nature of the subject and target actors. We retained events in which the subject actors are civil society groups of the country in which the events occur[17]. We further selected events in which the target actors are either state agents, civil society groups, foreign state agents, or foreign civil society groups[18]. Lastly, only events in the database between 2000 and 2004 were selected. As explained in "3.2. Main Variables of the Study" in the article, the first ten years of data in the 10 MIDE database, from 1990 to 1999, were used for the purpose of generating tactical familiarity variables. Thus, the final and total number of events included in our analysis is 17,575.

There are two important advantages of using the 10 MIDE database. First, it enables us to examine country-level factors such as regime characteristics because it includes all countries around the world in its data. Second, it gives us a unique opportunity to compare the use of conventional tactics with that of protest and violent tactics. Unlike many event databases that focus on protests and/or violence exclusively, the 10 MIDE database contains information about all forms of action, including conventional and institutional forms of claim-making.

One might have doubts about computer-automated coding systems. However, King and Lowe (2003) found that for the small number of texts that humans (trained Harvard undergraduates) were able to code by hand, a computer performed as well as humans in terms of coding accuracy. For much larger numbers of events (with which no expert human coder would be able to keep up), a computer with its stable and replicable performance would therefore prove much more successful (King and Lowe 2003: 636-37).

Still, technological improvements are required insofar as computers have a higher propensity "to find events" when none exist in news reports. Nonetheless, as King and Lowe (2003: 636) point out, this shortcoming "is strongly counterbalanced by both the fact that these

[15] "10 Million International Dyadic Events", Harvard Dataverse website (https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/BTMQA0).

[16] Refer to the Virtual Research Associate website for further information about the IDEA event codes (http://vranet.com/idea/; accessed on June 12, 2020).

[17] Civil society groups are classified under the sector code "CIVS" in the 10 MIDE database.

[18] In the 10 MIDE database, there are also "non-agent" actor categories. These categories include beliefs (e.g., "human attitudes", "ideology", "protest altruism"), accidents and natural disasters (e.g., "infectious disease", "drought", "earthquakes", "mine explosions", "tornados"), human activities (e.g., "communication", "assassinations", "legislation", "bombing action", "military actions", "protest actions", "rapes"), and other types (i.e., "animals", "historical figures", "polls & surveys", "foods", "interest rates"). These categories are not the ordinary subject and target agents we usually expect. The computer-automated information extraction system sometimes assigns these categories as Subject or Target. It is possible that there are real human agents – individuals, groups, or organizations – in these events. Certain human activities such as military actions and rapes can be legitimate targets of contention. We decided to exclude these "non-agent" categories from our analysis to make sure that the data we analyzed was about contentious interactions between human agents.

false events are not correlated with the degree of conflict of the event category, and by the overwhelming strength of the machine: the ability to code a huge number of events extremely quickly and inexpensively."

Other database options might have been selected for our study such as The World Handbook of Political Indicators IV (WHIV), the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS), or the Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT), an event database with over a quarter-billion records from 1979 to the time of writing (i.e., 2021). There are reasons why we did not go with any of these, however. Although the WHIV is a cleaner contentious politics subset of the 10 MIDE database (Jenkins *et al.* 2012), we did not use it because it does not include events in which civil society actors employed conventional tactics. As for the ICEWS and GDELT, while they are attractive given their data coverage of recent years and their use of a multiplicity of news sources, we were unable to solve the problem raised by both of multiple identification of single events due to reprints and corrections to earlier stories, and to reports of the same events by different sources (Jenkins and Maher 2016; Lorenzini *et al.* 2022). In a future study, it would be fascinating to use the WHIV, ICEWS, GDELT, and possibly other databases to triangulate our research and arrive at more robust findings.

B) Classification of Tactics

Category	*Event codes*			*N* 17,575
	Code	*Name*	*Description*	
Violence	AERI	Missile attack	Launching of intermediate to long-range conventional ballistic missiles and aerial dropping of conventional explosive devices or bombs.	149
	ASSA	Assassination	Murder that is explicitly characterized as political killing and assassination.	135
	BEAT	Beatings	Beatings (physical assaults without the use of weapons).	146
	CBIO	Chem-bio attack	Use of chemical or biological weapons.	5
	CBRU	Unconventional weapons attack	All uses of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons use, not otherwise specified.	0
	CLAS	Armed battle	Initiation of armed hostilities or engagement between two or more armed forces, including truce violations (used as default for war and battles).	1081
	CONC	Crowd control	Mobilization or use of compliance force by police, military and others for crowd control.	9
	CORP	Bodily punishment	Infliction of bodily injury, death or pain for the explicit purpose of punishment.	132
	COUP	Coups and mutinies	Coups, mutinies and other rebellions by armed forces.	52
	GRPG	Artillery attack	Use of short to intermediate range tank-mounted, ship-based or field guns and cannons, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.	346
	MAIM	Torture	Maiming and all other reports explicitly characterized as torture.	48
	MINE	Mine explosion	Land and underwater mine explosions.	13
	PASS	Physical assault	All uses of non-armed physical force in assaults against people not otherwise specified.	1031
	PEXE	Small arms attack	Shooting of small arms, light weapons and small explosives, including the use of all handguns, light machine guns, rifles and hand grenades.	2775
	RAID	Armed actions	Ambiguous initiation of the use of armed forces to fire upon another armed force, population or territory.	1017
	RIOT	Riot	Civil or political unrest explicitly characterized as riots.	316
	SBOM	Suicide bombing	A bombing in which the bomber perishes during detonation of the explosive.	257
	SEXA	Sexual assault	Rape and other sexual assaults.	2
	VBOM	Vehicle bombing	Bombing explicitly characterized as a vehicle bombing (car bombing, etc.), except for suicide bombings, which are coded separately.	73
Protest	ABDU	Abduction	Abducting, hijacking and capturing of people.	25
	DEFY	Defy norms	Open defiance of laws and norms, civil disobedience. Also includes the establishment of alternative institutions.	201
	HTAK	Hostage taking and kidnapping	Hostage taking or kidnapping of people.	805
	JACK	Hijacking	All commandeerings of vehicles.	1

Category	Event codes			N 17,575
	Code	Name	Description	
Protest	PALT	Protest altruism	Protest demonstrations that place the source (protestor) at risk for the sake of unity with the target of contention.	10
	PDEM	Protest demonstrations	All protest demonstrations not otherwise specified.	864
	PMAR	Protest procession	Picketing and other parading protests.	357
	POAR	Political arrests	Arrests and detentions explicitly characterized as political.	94
	POBS	Protest obstruction	Sit-ins and other non-military occupation protests.	132
	PPRO	Protest defacement	Damage, sabotage and the use of graffiti to desecrate property and symbols.	128
	REDR	Reduce routine activity	Reduction of routine and planned activities, including cancellations, recalls and postponements typically presented as a protest against the routine.	1127
	SRAL	Rally support	Gatherings to express or demonstrate support, celebrations and all other public displays of confidence; protest vigils and commemorations.	153
	STRI	Strikes and boycotts	Labor and professional sanctions reported as strikes, general strikes, walkouts, withholding of goods or services and lockouts.	512
	TDIS	Armed force troops display	Public demonstrations, maneuvers, exercises or testing land-based armed forces not involving combat operations.	22
Convention	FCOM	Formal complaints	Written and institutionalized protests and appeals, and all petition drives and recalls.	454
	LITI	Judicial actions	Judicial actions.	2573
	SOLS	Solicit support	Requests for political support or solicitations of political influence, including electoral campaigning and lobbying.	2194
	VOTE	Elect representative	Voting and electing representatives.	336

Some codes such as armed battle (CLAS), crowd control (CONC), political arrests (POAR), and armed force troops display (TDIS) appear similar to the tactics usually employed by state agents. We decided to keep them in our analysis if the subject actors in these events are social agents.

C) Control Variables

In this appendix, we expound upon control variables in our analysis. By drawing insights from extant research, we illuminate their associations with tactical choices. Following this, we elucidate the operationalization of each individual variable, along with data source.

Target and field of contention. Existing studies suggest the possibility that claimants prefer to use different tactics depending on whom they target (Adams and Shriver 2016) and on the "field" of struggle they are in (e.g., educational field, medical field, corporate field) (Armstrong and Burnstein 2008; Taylor 1996). Walker, Martin, and McCarthy (2008) argue that movement actors employ different tactics depending on their targets' strength and vulnerabilities. Movement actors tend to utilize more routinized and less disruptive forms of action against the state, while they employ more radical and disruptive forms of action against non-state targets once they consider these targets' repressive, facilitating, channeling, and routinizing capacities for response (*Ibidem*: 43). Likewise, Medel Sierralta and Somma González (2016: 186) find in their study of protest events in Chile that «when the target is the State the use of restrained tactics is prioritized, while when the target is a private company (national or international) or an educational institution, transgressive tactics are prioritized».

In the 10 MIDE database, one target is assigned to each event. We classify these targets into four types: domestic state targets (n=9168, 52% of all targets selected), domestic civil society (non-state) targets (6989, 40%), foreign state targets (923, 5%), and foreign civil society targets (495, 3%).

Social cleavages. When a society is divided along class, religious, or ethnic lines, that society has a higher risk of disruptive and violent conflicts once these divisions are politically activated (Kriesi *et al.* 1995). Class cleavage still matters in street demonstration participation (Eggert and Giugni 2015), multiethnicity triggers domestic conflicts (Ellingsen 2000), and religious factors fuel violence (Basedau, Pfeiffer, and Vüllers 2016).

As measures of religious and ethnic cleavages, our study uses religious fractionalization (*SOC09*) and ethnic fractionalization (*SOC10*) from a dataset *Cross-National Research on USAID's Democracy and Governance Programs Phase II* (hereafter USAID) (Finkel *et al.* n.d.). These measures are the averages of the Annett (2001) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) indices of religious and ethnolinguistic fractionalization respectively (Finkel *et al.* n.d.: 66). A value of 0 denotes perfect homogeneity

while a value of 1 indicates extreme fractionalization. As a measure of class cleavage, we used the equal distribution of resources index (*v2xeg_eqdr*) from the V-DEM dataset. This index measures the extent to which different kinds of resources – goods and services such as food, water, housing, education, healthcare, welfare programs, both tangible and intangible – are distributed in society[19]. This index ranges from unequal (0) to equal (1).

Material resources. Resource mobilization theorists such as McCarthy and Zald (1977) have claimed that the availability of material resources is instrumental in the dynamics of protest mobilization. In this logic, high income societies are more capable than resource-poor societies of providing political activists with material resources for mobilization (Tarrow 2011: 24).

We have used gross domestic product per capita *(GDP per capita)*, constructed by dividing GDP (*DEV02I*) by population (*SOC01*), as a measure of a country's material resources and economic development. The information about these variables comes from the USAID dataset. The natural log is taken to address the skewed distributions. In Table 1 in the article, descriptive statistics of the original variable before the log transformation are reported.

Globalization. Two contradictory effects of globalization on tactical choice have been observed. On the one hand, studies on neoliberal austerity reforms and "IMF riots" (Walton and Seddon 1994) show that integration into the global economy triggered anti-austerity violence especially in the developing world. The privatization of industries and public utilities as well as free trade agreement policies stimulated anti-market protest mobilizations (Almeida and Pérez Martín 2020). On the other hand, a higher degree of dependence on the global economy has been associated negatively with occurrences of protests and violence because market policies and neoliberal economic reforms likely disarticulate, weaken, and demobilize popular groups (Castells 2010; Roberts 2008).

To measure a country's degree of globalization or its degree of integration into world economy, we have used the KOF Globalisation Index (Gygli *et al.* 2019)[20]. This is a composite index measuring globalization along economic, social, and political dimensions for every country in the world from 1970 on.

Associational strength of civil society. The theory of mobilizing structure emphasizes that the durable structure of social solidarity will help protest activities endure beyond politically favorable moments (Staggenborg 1988). Minkoff (2016) verifies that voluntary organizational membership is conducive to unconventional political actions (protests) in advanced democracies.

As per USAID, we have used the Index of Conditions for Civil Society (CS08) as a measure of civil society's associational strength. Scores approaching 100 indicate a highly autonomous and vibrant civil society; scores approaching 0 indicate low civil society autonomy; and a score of 50 represents an average autonomy level (Finkel *et al.* n.d., 50).

Macroeconomic conditions. Economic downturns and recessions are likely to stimulate protests. Using multilevel multinomial regression analysis of tactics based on the European Social Survey datasets, Quaranta (2018) finds that, under poor macroeconomic conditions (i.e., high unemployment, poor growth, large deficit, and high inflation), the probability of a specific tactical choice of "engaging in protests but not engaging conventions (i.e., voting)" increases.

Macroeconomic conditions are captured in our study by stating a country's annual economic growth rate of GDP per capita as a percentage (*PRF01* in USAID). Missing values were imputed using the imputation model (Finkel *et al.* n.d.).

Media attention. The effect of media attention needs to be controlled. In cross-national comparative studies, it is particularly important to consider this issue because the global newswire's attention varies greatly by country (Lorenzini *et al*. 2022). Reasons for the variation in the media attention a country receives can include population size, the country's geopolitical importance in the international system, the location of media correspondents, and so on. We hypothesize that, when media interest in a country is low, it is likely that the media will tend to focus on "newsworthy" events (Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986). Eye-catching protest performances and eruptions of violence will have more news value than everyday conventional political events (Barranco and

[19] This index is estimated by a Bayesian factor analysis model of the four indicators (the variable name in the dataset and the question to build the variables in parenthesis): (1) particularistic or public goods (*v2dlencmps*: Considering the profile of social and infrastructural spending in the national budget, how "particularistic" or "public goods" are most expenditures?); (2) means tested vs. universalistic welfare policies (*v2dlunivl*: How many welfare programs are means-tested and how many benefit all (or virtually all) members of the polity?); (3) educational equality (*v2peedueq*: To what extent is high quality basic education guaranteed to all, sufficient to enable them to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens?); and (4) health equality (*v2pehealth*: To what extent is high quality basic healthcare guaranteed to all, sufficient to enable them to exercise their basic political rights as adult citizens?) (Coppedge *et al.* 2020: 54-55).

[20] The KOF Globalisation Index is available from the KOF Swiss Economic Institute's website (https://kof.ethz.ch/en/forecasts-and-indicators/indicators/kof-globalisation-index.html). The dataset was accessed on July 5 2020.

Wisler 1999). On the other hand, we believe that when the media interest in a country increases, not only will "newsworthy" protest mobilizations and violent confrontations grab attention; conventional political interactions will also likely receive an elevated chance of being reported. Our study uses the total number of non-political events in a country as a proxy for media attention in multivariate analysis. The information we used for constructing this variable comes from the 10 MIDE database. As we mentioned in the Online Appendix A, 58 of the 249 original IDEA event types are non-political events, including natural disasters, market transactions, sports contests, cultural events, and so on. We have interpreted the sum of these non-political events to reflect the degree of the media's general attention to a country, independently of the ups and downs of political activities in the country. The natural log was taken to address the skewedness.

Population size. It is important to control for the population size of a country since a greater number of political activities will happen in large countries such as China, India, or the United States than in small countries such as Brunei or San Marino. As a measure of population size, the variable *SOC01* (population in thousands) from USAID is used. We took a natural log of the variable to address the skewness of the data. Table 1 in the article presents the basic statistics in the original scale.

D) Statistical Estimation

We use multilevel multinomial logistic regression models because our dependent variable – tactical choice – has three categories (convention, protest, and violence) and because there are two hierarchical levels as political events are nested within countries. Consider a simple model that permits different intercepts across countries:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta X_{ij} + \mu_i + \nu_{ij}$$

where Y refers to the dependent variable, X the independent and control variables, μ_i is country-specific intercepts, and ν_{ij} represents idiosyncratic errors. The intercepts are either estimated as a series of fixed intercept parameters ("fixed effects") or, in multilevel models like ours, treated as a normally distributed random variable ("random effects") under the assumption that μ is uncorrelated with X[21]. Multilevel modeling is the most viable for this study that includes the independent variables at two theoretical levels in one model: institutional regime characteristics at the level of country and repertoires at the level of political event[22]. It thus enables us to compare their effects on tactical choice by calculating the amount of changes in predicted probabilities, as we explain in the findings section of the article.

Three modeling issues arise and are noteworthy: sample size, unbalanced data, and missing values. First, our sample size of 169 at the second level (country) exceeds the size of 50-100 – the threshold suggested by Maas and Hox (2004) – to avoid the standard errors of the second-level variances being estimated too small[23]. Second, we decided to leave our data unbalanced as they are, keeping the level 2 groups (countries) with a small number of the level 1 units (events), like Brunei, in the analysis, along with the larger ones, like the United States, with a greater number of the events. We did this because simulation results show that "despite extreme unbalance, there was no discernible effect of unbalance on the multilevel estimates or their standard errors" (Maas and Hox 2005: 88). It is also suggested that we should not set a threshold to eliminate level 2 groups with few observations (Martin *et al.* 2011). This is because, in multilevel analysis, including countries (level 2) with fewer events (level 1) – even only one event – is still better than omitting them, as it improves the estimation of the residual variance and fixed effects. Third, we use two approaches to missing data problem, listwise deletion (to remove cases that are missing data on any of the variables in our model) and multiple imputation[24].

In the regression output, the robust standard errors – robust to the heteroskedasticity of the errors – are reported to adjust for 156 country clusters in Model A and for 169 country clusters in Model B[25].

[21] Babones (2014) suggests avoiding the use of multilevel models when this assumption is not met.

[22] For each political event in the model (i.e., each first-level unit), we identify the actor of the event and obtain the familiarity scores of the actor's country-actor category.

[23] Maas and Hox (2005: 90) find that the standard errors of the second-level variances are estimated too small when the number of groups is substantially lower than 100: "With 30 groups, the standard errors are estimated about 15% too small, resulting in a noncoverage rate of almost 8.9%, instead of 5%. With 50 groups, the noncoverage drops to about 7.3%".

[24] The number of imputation or fill-ins was set at 10. In the imputation model, we included all the variables in the multilevel multinomial logistic regression model without using auxiliary variables. The variables in the imputation model were assumed to have a joint multivariate normal distribution (MVN), and Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) procedures were used. Stata's *mi* commands were used.

[25] Stata (version MP 16.1)'s *vce(robust)* option in *gsem* estimation is used to compute the robust standard errors. This option gives estimates identical to the ones with the *vce(cluster)* option.

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The Privatization of Protest: Demobilization and the Emergence of Political Violence in the Aftermath of Local Protest Campaigns

Mans Lundstedt

Abstract. The processual approach to political violence suggests a close link between nonviolent and violent tactical repertoires. Yet in doing so it excludes cases where violence appears to appear in the absence of public protest activity. This article traces how political violence emerges in the aftermath of local protest campaigns against migrant accommodation. Developing the concept of the privatization of protest, the article shows how the demobilization of protest contributes to a process where grievances are reframed into private frustrations rather than objects of political contention. Transformed as such, persistent patterns of intermittent political violence can sometimes grow out of private interactions, even in the absence of any consistent public protest. Applying the conceptual apparatus of frames, emotions, opportunities and to a paired process tracing of episodes of protest against Swedish migrant accommodation in 2007-2008 and 2012-2017, the article maps the causal mechanisms that create facilitative conditions for violence, sometimes long after the decline of nonviolent protest. Extending its discussion beyond the case of Sweden, it links the processual approach to adjacent discussions on the link between micro- and meso-level causes of political violence.

Keywords: political violence, protest, Sweden, migrant.

1. INTRODUCTION

Processual approaches to political violence have greatly improved researchers' understanding of how individuals and collective actors overcome the strategic, normative, and emotional limitations on using violence as a means to block or promote political change (Bosi 2021). In their current usage, however, these approaches have been most closely linked to a single temporal model: the gradual escalation of large-scale social movement campaigns. As valuable as insights into this basic model of escalation have been, its predominance has meant that theoretical development has been limited to a relatively narrow set of empirical circumstances. These approaches have thereby side-lined alternative temporal patterns that are clearly present in empirical cases of political violence. The continued dominance of the gradual escalation model thereby limits the full potential of a demonstrably valuable analytical approach.

Following a discussion of the relationship between processual approaches and temporality, this article develops its argument through the detailed presentation of one pathway through which violence emerges in the absence of an unbroken escalation process: the *privatization of protest*. In the privatization pathway, violence does not emerge immediately from within the dynamic of highly mobilized movement environments, but from the rhythm of interactions within the private, personal networks of friends, family members, neighbours and acquaintances. However, when violence happens, its facilitative frames, emotions, networks and considerations of political opportunity remain traceable to the initial phase of protest. In the empirical section, the article demonstrates how the notion of a privatization pathway helps explain why attacks against migrant accommodation centres in Sweden, despite occurring seemingly arbitrarily, often happened in communities and against targets that had already been singled out in prior protest campaigns. As the article concludes in the final section the pathway can also be applied analogously to a range of other contexts. The article thereby makes an empirically grounded contribution to the critical discussion on temporality in processual approaches to political violence.

2. TEMPORALITY IN THE STUDY OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

2.1. From structure to process

Common reviews of the study of the relationship between nonviolent collective action and political violence read as stories of enlightenment (Bosi 2021; Bosi, Della Porta and Malthaner 2019; Bosi and Malthaner 2015; Della Porta 2008; Tilly 2003). In the first half of the 20th century, the established narrative explains, researchers treated non-state violence as a pathological reflection of social disequilibrium (Smelser 1962), or as a consequence of manipulation and collective arousal (Le Bon 2001). Starting in the 1960s, a new generation of scholars broke with their predecessors by reframing violence as "politics by other means", meaning that it should be understood as a rational, goal-oriented activity on par with other methods of political participation, claims-making and coercion (Oberschall 1973; Snyder and Tilly 1972). In this transition, the macro-level explanations that had once framed violence as an irrational response to structural forces were gradually replaced by meso-level concepts such as political opportunity structures, cognitive frames, and resource mobilization (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Haines 1984; Tilly 1978). Beginning in the mid- to late 1980s, researchers gradually adopted a more dynamic and relational understanding of the forces that drive the emergence of violence, locating events within longer series of immediate and proximate interactions between protesters, authorities and third parties (Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi 2015; Beissinger 2002; Bosi, Demetriou and Malthaner 2016; Della Porta 1995, 2013).

The historiography that has developed around the study of political violence is in part a story of how time comes to replace the static space of structure as the core of the explanatory framework (see also Melucci 1980). Against the structuralism of the pre-1960s era, the new generation of social movement scholars made way for temporal arguments through the introduction of more dynamic, fast-paced structural variables, and the linkage of structure to the model of goal-rational, strategic actors (Oberschall 1973; Tilly 1978). The trajectory accelerated in the 1990s, as a second generation of process–oriented authors criticized their predecessors for failing to part with what many perceived to be a lingering structural bias, particularly in relation to the concept of political opportunities (Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Suh 1999). As a response, a vast set of publications in the early 00s and 2010s emphasized the "dynamics" of political contention, and the "emergence" of violent as well as nonviolent repertoires out of gradually developing interactions between different actors involved in the exercise of political protest (for overviews, see Bosi 2021; McAdam and Tarrow 2011).

2.2. The paradigmatic status of the escalation model

Despite the proliferation of processual approaches, their theories and assumptions rely heavily on a single model of contention: the continuously escalating large-scale, long-term social movement campaign. The primary reference points come from a number of hugely influential studies focusing on West European labour and student protest in the 1960s and 1970s and the trajectory of the US Civil rights movement in the late 1960s (Della Porta 2008). Largely based on these studies, and subsequent studies of similar empirical cases, many existing processual approaches have converged around a theoretical model consisting in competitive escalation (between movements and security forces), the closure of political opportunities for nonviolent protest, and the dual process of radicalization and institutionalization within the original movement. While later works have added important insights on the role of emotional and cognitive mechanisms (Johnston 2014; Johnston and Alimi 2012; Snow and Byrd 2007; Viterna 2013), or further specified analytical meta concepts (Lichbach 2008; Tilly 2001), the gradual escalation model arguably remains

paradigmatic within the field (Bosi *et al.* 2019; Della Porta 2008). On the rare occasion that other temporal models are mentioned, it is done without analytical or theoretical distinction.

The problem with the escalation model is not that it is incorrect, but that it's paradigmatic status greatly reduces the scope of temporal patterns that have long existed on the margins of mainstream social movement approaches to violence. Going back through the literature, there are many discussions of the situational causes and consequences of riots (see McPhail 1991), of the intermittent sabotage, obstructionism and small-scale violence that occurs in workplaces and in local communities (Piven and Cloward 1991), the processes that drive the institutionalization of protest in the aftermath of violent outbursts (Park 1967). Although it is true that these early studies often lacked theoretical sophistication and empirical rigour, the ascent of social movement studies did not add to, as much as replace, our understanding of the temporal models that previously had dominated research on political violence.

It is clearly possible to imagine other temporal patterns in the relationship between nonviolent collective action and the emergence of political violence. Violence can and does emerge before, after, and simultaneously with nonviolent collective action (Lundstedt 2023). It can occur entirely in the absence of nonviolent collective action, in which case there is no relationship at all. Even among cases where there is a causal link from nonviolent collective action to the emergence of political violence, it is analytically meaningful to distinguish between those where causality runs through an unbroken, continuous sequence of interaction (as in the escalation model), and those in which violence happens only after a break, or discontinuity, in the initial sequence of nonviolent collective action.

To explore one alternative to the escalation model, this article focuses on situations where violence emerges long after the end of any visible signs of collective action. In the existing empirical literature, it is primarily visible in accounts from post-conflict settings and in research on collective memory and the generational transmission of violent repertoires (Bosi and Della Porta 2012). In these cases, and in those recounted below, violence does not emerge out of immediate confrontations between protesters and their opponents, but from the effects and transformations of collectively transferred outcomes of past protest within the dynamics of private interactions among friends, family members, neighbours and others. Hence, although the contentious interactions that occur during non-violent collective action and the dynamics of small groups are necessary for creating the general conditions for violence, neither is individually sufficient to explain its emergence (Collins 2008; Nassauer 2016). To date, however, no study has attempted to capture these disparate observations within a framework that is comparable to the escalation model. This article does that by developing what it calls the privatization pathway to violence. The next section will use the framework of frames, opportunities, emotions and relations to develop the concept and to highlight its differences and similarities to the escalation model. The second half of the article then applies the privatization pathway to explaining cases of anti-migrant violence in Sweden between 2012 and 2017.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Building from the paradigmatic model of gradual escalation, this section develops an analytical framework for constructing processual accounts of political violence more broadly. It thereby employs a mechanism-centred understanding of causality, in which violence is understood as the emergent outcome of mainly nonviolent interactions that cause changes in collective frames, emotions, opportunities, and relations. Going beyond the paradigmatic model, the argument stresses the equifinality of these processes, or how different combinations of mechanisms result in multiple pathways to the same outcome. In the section's second half, and in the presentation of the empirical results, the framework is employed to develop the privatization pathway to violence, or the way in which emotions, frames, opportunities and relations that have developed in times of mobilization facilitate the emergence of violence long after protesters have demobilized.

3.1. Analytical logic

The approach developed here traces the emergence of violence through the identification of causal mechanisms, or comparable ways in which in which events "change relations among specified sets of elements in similar ways across contexts" (McAdam Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 25). When a specific sequence of mechanisms, with similar effects, occurs in similar ways across contexts, it forms into a causal process that may then be labelled as a pathway to a given outcome (e.g., radicalization, escalation, etc.) (Lundstedt 2023). Actors and their interactions are therefore at the centre of the analysis. In contrast to micro-level analyses, however, it does not focus on the immediate circumstances that generate violence in specific situations (see Collins 2008). Instead,

the aim is to develop generalizable hypotheses about how interactive processes create conditions that make violence particularly likely to occur.

To construct generalizable models, the framework builds on the logic of causal analogy. In this view, causal mechanisms and their convergences in processes and pathways are not identifiable through their substantial content but through their effects on subsequent conditions (see discussion in Alimi *et al.* 2015). Because an event's effects are contingent on the wider context in which it happens, and because this context is shaped by prior mechanisms, the status of a given mechanism is affected by the timing with which it occurs (Bidart, Longo and Mendez 2013). Even when two events look outwardly similar, they are only analogous as mechanisms insofar as they occur in ways and in contexts where they can have the same causal outcomes.

Most processual approaches are open to the possibility of equifinality, or the assumption that the same outcome can follow from multiple sources. As developed above, however, this possibility is rarely employed in practice. This is particularly problematic when the goal is to explain highly contingent outcomes such as political violence, which occur across a wide range of temporal and spatial contexts, happen on different scales and with different intensities, and involve very different sets of participants, victims, and relevant third parties (Lundstedt 2023). It should therefore be emphasized that the presentation of the privatization pathway rests on the assumption that this is only one among many potential combinations of mechanisms. As will be developed in the following sections, much of the analytical work that has gone into the construction of the privatization pathway rests on identifying points of contrast vis-à-vis other pathways.

3.2. The privatization pathway

The privatization pathway describes the series of mechanisms through which the frames, emotions, opportunities and relations that have developed during moments of mobilization are maintained in such a way that they facilitate the use of violence even long after demobilization. It thereby differs prominently from the gradual escalation model, in which conditions for violence develop in step with the mobilization process itself. It also differs from other potential pathways to violence, such as the emotionally driven, uncoordinated violence that emerges from shocking events, the small-group dynamics of subcultural violence, and the strategic use of violence in autonomous cells and other specialist groups (Lundstedt 2023).

The concepts of frames, opportunities, emotions and relations grows out of social movement theory, where they capture the ways that participants think about a given grievance, what opportunities they attribute to different tactical means (e.g., nonviolent or violent), what collective emotions circulate among the protesters, and how the protesters are related to one another and to their opponents (see also Alimi *et al.* 2015; Della Porta 2013; McAdam *et al.* 2001). Depending on their specific combinations and on their timing relative to each other, these basic concepts allow for the formulation of multiple and equifinal pathways. The escalation pathway, as briefly outlined above, begins with the closure of opportunities for nonviolent protest and the fragmentation of the initial movement. These processes trigger growing competition between moderates and radicals, involving the emergence and growing salience of more radical frames, the elicitation of collective emotions that support risk-taking, and the creation of groups increasingly specialized in violent methods (cf. Della Porta and Tarrow 1986). Some of these mechanisms are also visible in the privatization pathway. However, whereas the escalation pathway develops through changes in an on–going process, the mechanisms that are involved in the privatization pathway need to account both for the decline of the initial sequence of nonviolent collective action, and for its subsequent outbursts of violence from within the context of private settings. In contrast to the smooth curve of escalation, it must account for three distinct phases in the episode's development: the initial mobilization phase, the transition into demobilization, and its aftermath.

The initial mobilization phase begins with the collective framing of a common grievance, the activation of coordinated networks and the identification of opportunities for nonviolent collective action. As in the gradual escalation pathway, the absence of emotions of shock and outrage, the optimistic understanding of political opportunities, and the possibility for leading actors to coordinate the development of common strategies, greatly lower the likelihood that some participants will take to violence already at this stage (Lundstedt 2023).

The transition from the initial phase within the privatization pathway begins with the closure of political opportunities, the proliferation of collective disillusionment, and the fragmentation of the protesting networks. At this stage, at the end of the initial phase, there is nothing that distinguishes the privatization pathway from cases of escalation or simple demobilization. However, instead of resulting in competing patterns of institutionalization and radicalization, or the end of collective action altogether, the frames that developed in the

initial phase of contention are transferred into the intimate relational settings of private personal networks (e.g., friends, family members, neighbours). Separated from public claims-making, collective action frames are transformed in ways that present grievances less as matters of policy, and increasingly as breaches with personal security and everyday experience (Snow, Cress, Downey and Jones 1998). The emotional tone of the participants' interactions shifts from outrage to a combination of demobilizing emotions such as disillusionment and fear (Johnston 2014). In the absence of perceived political opportunities, with frames that embed grievances in the context of everyday life, and through the elicitation of demobilizing but powerful emotions, the resurgence of nonviolent collective action becomes very unlikely. However, because grievances are kept salient within these smaller settings, they can still result in momentary outbursts of violence, e.g., through chance encounters, shocking events, or from escalated interactions among the participants (see Bjørgo 1997; Piven and Cloward 1991). The result is an uneven pattern of seemingly arbitrary violence in the aftermath of demobilization, which nevertheless draws its foundations from the preceding phases. Because the maintenance of grievances is separated from the policy process and from the development of the specific issue, and because they are embedded in collective memory, violent outcomes can flare up intermittently over very long periods of time.

4. DATA AND METHODS

The following analyses are based on two datasets on nonviolent and violent protest campaigns targeting the creation and maintenance of refugee accommodation services in Sweden between 2012 and 2017. The article's argument is based on the comparison of 14 cases in which the emergence of violence happened after a significant break in publicly visible protest events or other attempts at claims-making (e.g., letters to the editor, petitions, correspondences with policymakers). These are taken from a larger dataset of 86 episodes where violent events happened before, during, or after any occurrence of nonviolent collective action, without significant discontinuities in the targets or scale of protest, or among the participating actors (cf. Kriesi, Hutter and Bojar 2019). For the sake of brevity, the results section illustrates the argument through the detailed presentation of two cases that, in combination, demonstrate the breadth of applications of the privatization pathway.

Each case was reconstructed using extensive triangulation of mainstream media, social media, and far right movement sources. The cases were initially identified through a keyword search in the Swedish Retriever media database, covering roughly 2500 print and broadcast media outlets at the local, regional and national level. Further data (and a small number of cases) were added by way of a manual reading of the full websites and social media of the leading far right organizations at the time (the Sweden Democrats, the Party of the Swedes, Nordic Youth, and the Nordic Resistance movement). The final part of the data collection consisted in the tracing and reading of sources that were only relevant to specific cases, such as police and court records, local blogs, and locally specific (open) social media groups. Because the latter differed on a case-by-case basis, it is not possible to efficiently summarize the sources in full.

Upon collection, the data were organized into two parallel datasets. The first is a protest event dataset containing public, non–routine attempts to obstruct, change, or revoke the decision to place migrants into the host community. This dataset is used to supply quantitative measurements of the intensity, extent, and order of protest events, as well as the methods, actors, and targets that are involved in them. The second dataset consists of more fine-grained qualitative event chronologies that organize potentially relevant events by date and (if necessary) by hour. These chronologies include data on potentially relevant policy decisions (e.g. the decision to open a specific facility), reactions in local media and among residents, protest events, responses from policymakers, anti-racist actions, and so on and so forth (see also Bjørgo 1997). While the level of detail differs from case to case (depending on the type of events involved, and the level of local media coverage), making it improper to conduct traditional process tracing, the large number of cases greatly benefits the identification of causal analogies.

The construction of the privatization pathway is part of a comparative project that also includes an additional 80 violent protest campaigns where violence against migrant accommodation emerged through other combinations of mechanisms. Hence, the analysis is deeply informed by the contrasts that emerge between the privatization pathway and five others: the moral outrage pathway, the nationalist opportunism pathway, the gradual escalation pathway (as mentioned extensively above), the subcultural pathway, and the autonomous cell pathway. Whereas the moral outrage and nationalist opportunism pathways describe the brief but rapid emergence of violence in response to shocking events – with or without the opportunistic involvement of far-right activists – the subcultural and autonomous cell pathways show how violence develops in the absence of

wider protest campaigns, either from ritualistic small-group dynamics among friends or from the strategic activities of violent specialists (Lundstedt 2023). Briefly touched upon in the previous section and in the narratives below, using the other pathways as contrast points makes it possible to construct a more robust explanation of why the emergence of violence happens so late in the privatization pathway, as compared to the others.

The article takes several measures to ensure a balance between transparency and the treatment of sensitive information, particularly when referring to private social media accounts. First, while the locations are sometimes mentioned by name, there are no hyperlinks to specific conversations or comment threads. All observations of social media activity not attributable to organizations and public figures (e.g., policymakers) occurred in groups that were either open or semi-open (in the sense that they were searchable, had large numbers of members, and that anyone could become a member without qualification). Second, when translating quotes, care has been taken to alter or shorten full statements in ways that hinder identification through translation back into Swedish. If discussions were held in a format that made identification possible (e.g., in comment sections on websites where the users were already fully pseudonymized), the article uses full (translated) quotes. Overall, because of the specific ethical challenges that come with studying sensitive subjects that mainly involve private individuals (rather than collective actors), direct quotes have been kept to a minimum. The sacrifice of transparency and narrative detail, to the benefit of anonymity, should also be understood in relation to the article's intended contribution, which is primarily theoretical and analytical.

The decision to focus the empirical section on anti-migrant violence in Sweden has methodological and analytical consequences. Regarding the former, the informal character of much anti-migrant protest, and the blurring of the lines between political claims and apolitical expressions of local conflict that often characterizes anti-migrant violence, makes it difficult to properly identify cases, events, and their interrelations (Blee 2009, 2017; Klandermans and Mayer 2005). Without extensive use of triangulation, including accounts from many different types of actors, it would likely have been very difficult to develop a full image of the cases under study. On the other hand, the informal and local quality of much anti-migrant protest in the studied period (cf. Andretta and Pavan 2018; Lundstedt 2023) means that there is a larger number of sequences to observe and to analyse than would be possible on issues where people tend to mobilize at the regional and national level.

Regarding analytical consequences, it is important to note the relatively high level of conflict that characterizes migration issues. Although the likelihood that an individual sequence will result in violence is probably higher when concerning migration than many other issues, the core mechanisms should not differ. Anti-migrant protest might be more likely to lead to violence precisely because it more often involves the mechanisms detailed here. For instance, the high level of politicization, and the topic's high level of salience in national-level media and on social media might support the maintenance of frames in the aftermath of local demobilization. It is also possible that the presence of racist and xenophobic frames increases the risk that the core mechanisms will in fact lead to violent outcomes.

5. THE PRIVATIZATION PATHWAY IN PROTEST AGAINST SWEDISH MIGRANT ACCOMMODATION

The privatization pathway traces how violence emerges from the context of private interactions in the aftermath of nonviolent collective action campaigns. It thereby develops through two phases: a first phase consisting of nonviolent, publicly oriented protest activity, and a secondary phase in which the same protests have turned inward, transitioning into the everyday context of conversation among friends, family members, neighbours and other private personal networks. As developed in section 3, the transition from one phase to the next is mediated by changes in political opportunities, frames, emotions, and relations.

Table 1 illustrates some of the main characteristics of the privatization pathway, based on the protest event dataset. The data show how the combination of mechanisms in the privatization pathway make for sequences that are often very extensive, and where the temporal distance from nonviolent collective action to violence can be very long. When combining the moral outrage, nationalist opportunism, escalation, subcultural, and autonomous cell pathways, the average duration from the first occurrence of nonviolent collective action and the final occurrence of violence against the same target is only 136 days. In the privatization pathway, the corresponding average is 403 days. In fact, the longest single case of the privatization pathway continues through intermittent acts of violence over the course of roughly three years (1099 days). Likewise, the average duration from a nonviolent collective action event to subsequent violence is only 23 days in the other pathways, but more than five months (168 days) in the privatization pathway.

Table 1. Differences between privatization and other pathways.

Pathway	*Avg. duration*	*Avg. duration between nonviolent and violent events*	*No. of events with far-right organizers*	*No. of events with informal actors as organizers*	*No. of events using conventional methods*	*Total no. of events*
Privatization	403 days	168 days	35	83	111	167
Others	136 days	23 days	151	202	169	438

Source: Author's elaboration.

The data also reveal differences in organizational makeup and repertoires of action. Cases of privatization have limited involvement of far-right organizations, but a relatively large involvement of informal groups and individual participants who do not announce their involvement in any existing organizations (54% as opposed to 46%). Before demobilization, and before the emergence of violence, cases of privatization mostly involve small-scale, conventional, partially institutionalized methods (appeals, letters to the media, meetings and correspondence with politicians). Hence, the structure of nonviolent collective action, with its informal and largely local relational structure, and its small scale of collective action, partially reflects the structure that emerges after demobilization.

The following sections illustrate the mechanisms in the privatization pathway through two in-depth case studies that cover sequences of nonviolent collective action and violent protest in Tollarp and Ljungskile between 2015 and the summer of 2016. These are cases that illustrate the range of situations where the privatization pathway is visible. Although both campaigns ended in intermittent acts of violence, the extent and intensity of violence was higher in Tollarp than in Ljungskile. They are also cases where the quality of media reporting, the use of open social media, and the maintenance of relevant sources make it possible to develop in greater detail the day-to-day development of each sequence. Finally, they represent different combinations of contextual factors, with very different levels of support for anti-migrant parties in the 2014 national and local elections, different socioeconomic situations, and different histories of far-right organization. Tollarp is characterized by its very strong support for the Sweden Democrats, moderate median and average income, and a long history of far-right organizations operating in and out of the local community. In Ljungskile, the Sweden Democrats performed like the national average, and the community does not have a prominent history of local far right organization. On the other hand, Ljungskile has the highest average and median income in its surrounding municipality. Both localities are of roughly the same size (≈4000 inhabitants), and they are both located on the margins of municipalities with larger administrative centres (Kristianstad and Uddevalla).

5.1. The first phase

The first phase begins with the identification and framing of grievances, the attribution of opportunities for nonviolent protest, and the activation of relatively coordinated networks of protesters. The framing of grievances is necessary if the protesters are to make any claims at all, and if they are to successfully mobilize bystanders. The attribution of opportunities and the activation of coordinated networks of protesters are necessary for protest to remain nonviolent throughout the initial phase. Because the participants believe that nonviolent means are sufficient to achieve political change, and because the actors making this interpretation have some degree of control over the direction of the campaign, it is considerably less likely for violent strategies to emerge on the margins. If the latter does happen, however, the campaign transitions into a different pathway altogether, falling outside of the scope of this article.

In Tollarp, the first phase began in the fall of 2015. In a context of rapidly growing refugee migration into Sweden, the national-level Migration agency was pushing the municipal government was to increase its capacity for accommodating unaccompanied migrant youths. Because of a recent wave of arson attacks and other attacks against migrant accommodation facilities throughout Sweden and internationally, the municipal government decided not to announce its commission of an empty lot for the construction of a mid-sized residential care unit on the margins of central Tollarp.

In the beginning of December, rumours about what was happening at the lot were circulating intensively in local social media and among neighbours (see Tollarp's Facebook page). Responding to these rumours, a neighbour to the facility walked onto the premises and into the foreman's office, taking with him a copy of the building instructions. Immediately afterward, a small group of neighbours went to the local newspaper,

entered discussions on social media, and wrote an open letter to the municipality in which they denounced the plans for the care unit, and the way that the planned facility had been kept secret from those living in the area. In the letter and in the ensuing discussions, the participants opted for a meeting with local political representatives and for an attempt to challenge the plans through a formal appeal (Maunula 2015).

The framing and interpretation of opportunities that emerged after the Tollarp plans had been exposed remained throughout the initial phase of the campaign. Focusing primarily on the municipality's failure to anchor the plans within the neighbourhood and drawing on themes of centre-periphery relations and the defence of property values, the participants remained optimistic about their chances to block or alter construction through formal channels. Either the plans could be stopped through conversation with local politicians, or through the exercise of the neighbours' right to appeal. Expressing emotions of outrage and disappointment, the participants in the social media discussions agreed that the municipal leadership in central Kristianstad failed to take the interests of peripheral areas seriously in the policy process (see Tollarp's Facebook page). Hence, the initial phase saw the development of a framing that centred on centre-periphery relations, highlighting the relationship between the proposed facility and the wider policy process. This coincided with the perception that political opportunities were open, and the elicitation of collective emotions conducive for collective action. Only to a limited extent did these initial interactions draw on xenophobic depictions of the youths that were meant to live in the coming facility, and it was rare to find expressions of fear in the various written materials that emerged during this period.

In Ljungskile, the object of grievance was the repurposing of a disused hotel into a home for unaccompanied minors that had originally been allocated to the municipality of Gothenburg. While most participants on local social media, as well as many writing in the local newspaper, nostalgically lamented the loss of the hotel, a small group of parents feared that the opening of a home for unaccompanied minors would threaten the safety of the children at a nearby preschool. Fearing the presence of what they referred to as "traumatized, psychotic migrants" as well as the risk of spillover from far-right violence, the parents doubted the legality of the project, acting through repeated correspondences with local policymakers and inquiries to responsible inspection authorities. Like in Tollarp, they also demanded the organization of a municipal information meeting where the neighbours could express their claims directly to policymakers, and they promoted a petition for other locals to sign (see Ljungskile's Facebook page).

The beginning of the first phase in Ljungskile saw a similar development of a policy framing, an optimistic interpretation of political opportunities, and the elicitation of mobilizing emotions within a limited network of protesters. The participants placed blame on the responsible authorities, they identified formal means through which they could potentially stop the project, and they felt disappointed and angry that their specific neighbourhood had been singled out for the project. Framing the opening of homes for unaccompanied minors either as an expression of unequal centre-periphery relations, or as a threat against children's' safety, the actors that tried to mobilize support for their cause presented the two facilities as concrete expressions of more general issues, although located in the middle of local, everyday experience. Publicly announcing the possibility to challenge the projects on legal grounds, and through direct deliberation with policymakers, both campaigns placed considerable stock in nonviolent and even institutionalized means, rather than more disruptive or nonconventional forms of protest. By mobilizing primarily within very limited and highly coordinated groups (the immediate neighbours and parents with stakes in a specific preschool), both campaigns contained very limited internal variation. These elements made possible the transition to the privatization of protest in the second phase.

5.2. Demobilization and the transition from the first phase

The transition to the second phase begins with the reversal of the attribution of political opportunities, the elicitation of collective disillusionment, and the subsequent fragmentation of the protesters' networks. The reversal of political opportunities and the elicitation of demobilizing emotions are tightly bound to each other, as leading participants experience and narrate disappointing encounters with decision-makers, as they note the scant effects of nonviolent collective action, or as they realize that they have overestimated their formal opportunities.

In both Tollarp and Ljungskile, the participants were soon disappointed with the lack of outcomes for their respective strategies. In Tollarp, this was visible in three ways. First, discussions on the local Facebook group soon concluded that no one among the participants had the legal right to appeal the plans (see Tollarp's Facebook page). Second, the requested information meeting turned into a disappointment, as the municipality decided to send professional civil servants rather than elected political leaders. As one person in

attendance put it, it felt like "being run over for a second time". During and after the meeting, the local village association came out in defence of the plans, revealing the loss of a potential ally (Haraldsson 2015). In its aftermath, the information meeting came to be used as more broadly a symbol of the municipal government's disregard for the peripheral areas, even among people who wanted to advance migrants' right to stay in the municipality (Johansson 2016). Third, a petition that the participants had launched earlier in the fall largely turned out to be a failure, adding up to no more than a few hundred signatures, many of whom did not reside in the locality or even in its surrounding municipality (Skrivunder.com 2016). In Ljungskile, the municipal government did not agree to organize an information meeting (Hvittfelt 2016), and the initial petition only drew 200 signatures (see Ljungskile's Facebook page). In the social media groups, in letters to the editor, and in local media quotes, these events combined to reverse the participants' previously positive perception of political opportunities, making way for the collective expression of disillusionment.

The negative attribution of opportunities that happened in this period had remarkably similar effects on relational structures and outward activities in the two localities. Reports of publicly oriented activities ceased. Except for one petition that opposed the Tollarp plans as part of a wider range of construction projects for migrant accommodation in the Kristianstad countryside, there were no more examples of nonviolent protest in either town. Meanwhile, the number of individuals who participated in the discussions diminished rapidly, and participants in both locations gradually moved into closed Facebook groups. Examining those who remained in the public groups, it is possible to see a concentration to tight groups of family members and friends, something that is also reflected in the participants' references to real-life discussions (see Tollarp's Facebook page). Mirroring the fragmentation that went on in this period, public discussions also occasionally came to focus on what the participants saw as "yet other" closed groups, none of which appeared to result in concrete action (see Tollarp's Facebook page). Changes in the attribution of opportunity and in the elicitation of emotions thereby coincided with a turn toward smaller and even more informal relational settings.

5.3. The second phase

The fragmentation of protest networks and the demobilization of public protest campaigns do not necessarily make the salience of the grievances go away. However, with the decline of public protest and the transformation of the participating networks, the way that grievances are framed changes shape. As most of the relevant interactions transition into the informal settings of friend groups, families, workplaces, and as the purpose of these interactions change from strategizing to informal exchange, they become increasingly tied to experiences of everyday life. Hence, the framing of grievances increasingly closes in on their effects on the participants' everyday existence. Rather than being framed as a threat against collective interests and values, the identified grievance comes to be seen as a threat to, or breach of, individual safety and everyday experience.

With the demobilization of protest in Tollarp and Ljungskile, visible interactions shifted in terms of framing as well as in their emotional content. Especially visible in Tollarp, comments on the second petition and in the public Facebook group suggested that the grievance, while ostensibly the same, had now been reframed as a threat to everyday routines and individual safety, and that this altered framing elicited a sense of fear among the participating locals. This transformation of the overall framing also involved the growing involvement of explicit xenophobic and Islamophobic themes, much as had been the case in the initial phase of protest in Ljungskile. As a commenter on the petition put it,

> *I DON'T want my 12-year-old DAUGHTER to go to school with 18-22 year-old MEN who claim to be 16-17 years old. Because these MEN have been raised since they were breast-fed that women have no value and that their ONLY purpose is to birth MEN and make sure that the MAN has everything he needs. They also believe that the day a girl gets her PERIOD is the same day they become WOMEN and it's the prophet Allah's way of saying that this woman is READY for MARRIAGE and giving birth to CHILDREN. I had my period in fifth grade, 11 YEARS OLD!!!!! (Skrivunder.com, 2016, capitalization in the original).*

Even among less explicit commenters, the sense of fear proliferated. Unlike what had been the case in December, there were no attempts to prescribe potential ways of blocking the facility. Instead, a lengthy exchange between two locals, both of whom had long been involved in opposing the plans, ended with a suggestion to move out of the neighbourhood for fear of personal security, and hopes that the winter would be long enough to stall construction beyond the planned opening date (see Tollarp's Facebook page).

The negative interpretation of political opportunities, the fragmentation and submersion of networks, the elicitation of demobilizing emotions, and the reframing of grievances as a threat to individual and everyday

security, combines to form conditions where violent outcomes are especially likely to be seen as viable, accessible, and potentially desirable. As small and fragmented groups see no opportunities for nonviolent collective action, as they take part in the elicitation of demobilizing collective emotions, and as their frames move further away from the policy process, it is unlikely that they will make another attempt at conventional or institutionalized methods. On the other hand, the continued salience of grievances and the elicitation of fear maintain the desire for something to be done. These mechanisms can then be channelled into chance encounters with migrants and policymakers, in escalating interactions among peers, and in other settings where fear and disillusionment can provisionally be transformed into mobilizing feelings of anger and elation.

The months that followed the demobilization of protest included a range of intermittent acts of violence. In Ljungskile, these were limited to repeated acts of property damage and vandalism, including extensive use of racist graffiti (NyheterSTO 2016). Among the perpetrators were a group of teenagers without known ties to the far right (Norlin Persson 2016). In Tollarp, the attacks involved the use of a Molotov cocktail a few days before the facility's opening date, as well as a series of attacks against the other facilities that had been mentioned in the petition a few months earlier (Sörenson 2016). Although it is not possible, based on available data, to draw direct links between discussions on social media and the attacks, it is significant that these attacks occurred in a context where the framing of migrant accommodation and the negative attribution of opportunity had moved the former outside of the capacity of political claims-making and into a concrete threat to individual and everyday experience.

6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

While differing considerably from the paradigmatic model of escalation, the privatization pathway similarly provides conditions necessary for the emergence of violence. The closure of opportunities presents nonviolent tactics as ineffective, while the subsequent fragmentation of networks cuts off the practical conditions necessary for collective mobilization. The reframing of the grievance as an urgent threat to individual safety and livelihood, and the integration of these frames into everyday interactions, allow some participants to expect otherwise drastic options to be considered socially legitimate. As demobilizing emotions of fear and disillusionment are provisionally transformed into anger and elation, some will be moved to act on what those in their surroundings only speak of.

Throughout its two phases and their transitions, the development of the privatization pathway is dependent on the absence of contingent as well as structural factors in the surrounding context. First, it is necessary that the initial phase of protest does not become an object of the type of gradually mounting repression that authors observe in the escalation process. Instead, the negative attribution of opportunities should be a reaction to events and experiences that are mundane enough to warrant disappointment and disillusionment rather than highly mobilizing feelings of outrage and shock. Second, to persist throughout the demobilized phase, it appears necessary that the grievance can plausibly be experienced in the participants' everyday life. The privatization process is unlikely to be seen in the aftermath of campaigns purely concerning abstract policies (e.g., industrial policy, general environmental policy), if the participants do not manage to frame the issue in ways that link it to everyday experience.

Above and beyond the present examples, the privatization pathway is useful in a wide variety of analogous settings, i.e., where the occurrence of violence happens despite an extensive break in the preceding sequence of nonviolent collective action. Its mechanisms can also be seen in more complex cases, where frames and relations that were once developed in the context of prior sequences of collective action are reignited as collective violence in response to new grievances. Such cases include urban riots, extensive series of intermittent ethnic violence, and the long tails of violence that sometimes come to characterize post-conflict settings. In these and other settings, the privatization pathway helps provide a framework for capturing the political substance of violence that often appears apolitical and random in a short-term perspective.

On a broader scale, the critical discussion of temporality in relation to processual approaches to political violence should inform better and more imaginative theoretical and empirical work. Once we note the arbitrary paradigmatic quality of the escalation pathway, it is possible to extend the framework without abandoning the enormously useful insights that past works have provided. The difference, however, is that these insights should be understood in relation to a single temporal model rather than to the emergence of political violence as a general phenomenon. Future research should therefore continue to explore the temporal variance that exists within the empirical field, and how these differences relate to the mechanisms and processes that lead people to use violence for political ends.

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Rejecting the Radical New Left: Transformations in Japanese Social Movements

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Abstract. After a disastrous period of New Left political violence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, followed by two decades of abeyance, Japan has experienced a renewed era of social movement activity since the 1990s. These new movements explicitly seek to avoid contamination by the earlier period, even when their participants know little about it except for fear perpetuated by media portrayals of senseless violence. We analyze ethnographic accounts of contemporary groups engaged in collective action, ranging from small informal groups in Japan's invisible civil society; groups trying to mobilize laborers who fall outside Japan's traditional enterprise unions; and groups reviving and revitalizing older movement networks to deal with new threats; to new right-wing challengers and their counter-movements; and those making innovative use of cultural resources. They all seek alternatives to earlier social movements that engaged in political violence, by creating very different organizational structures and relations to ideology, relying on social media for communication, and developing new forms of collective action. They foreground cultural and expressive repertoires, and seek to establish the movement as a place of personal and social belonging. As was true of the New Left social movements in the mid-20th century, these new groups are closely attuned to movement developments around the world, even as they craft their responses to specific historical conditions in Japan.

Keywords: Japan, mobilizing non-regular woekers, right-wing challengers and counter-movements, cultural movements.

1. INTRODUCTION

After a period of New Left political violence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, followed by two decades of abeyance, Japan has experienced a renewed era of social movement activity since the 1990s. These new movements explicitly seek to avoid what they see as contamination by the earlier period, even when their participants know nothing about it except for fear perpetuated by media portrayals of senseless violence. They range from small informal groups in Japan's invisible civil society; groups trying to mobilize laborers who fall outside Japan's traditional enterprise unions; and groups reviving and revitalizing older movement networks to deal with new threats; to new right-wing challengers and their counter-movements; and those making innovative use of cultural resources. These quite different groups

all actively seek alternatives to earlier movements in Japan that engaged in political violence. As was true of the New Left social movements in the mid-20th century, these new groups are closely attuned to movement developments around the world, even as they craft their responses to specific historical conditions in Japan.

This article analyzes a dozen ethnographic accounts of contemporary social movement groups engaged in collective action, based on our own research and that of younger scholars we have worked with (Slater and Steinhoff 2024). We examine the cases through the lens of current research on social movements and memory. Building on Halbwachs' seminal work on collective memory (1992 [1925; 1950]) social movement scholars have been examining the intersection between socially constructed memories of social movements and their impact on later social movements. Work by Olick and Levy (1997) and Olick and Robbins (1998) has examined how collective memories of cultural trauma impact the future, while Fine (2001) and Zamponi (2018) have emphasized how negative collective memories constrain the options available to contemporary movements. We ask two questions: why does this stigmatized period of activism half a century ago remain such a powerful negative reference for contemporary young activists in Japan? How do contemporary activists steer around the stigmatized past to find new ways to legitimize their protest activities?

2. HISTORICAL LEGACY OF VIOLENT PROTEST IN POSTWAR JAPAN

The historical frame of reference of violent Japanese student protests in the 1960s and 1970s survives as image and feeling for most activists and the general public in Japan. For both groups, this period is characterized by sectarian violence, despite the fact that only a small portion were ever actually violent. In a pattern of selective history that is not unique to Japan, the issues and larger historical context are often lost, while negative and frightening images are read today as anti-social, selfish and gratuitously violent. In an attempt to unpack this important history, we outline the two protest cycles between 1958 and 1972 that have left such deep scars on Japanese society.

2.1. The 1960 Anti-Security Treaty Protests: Crisis of Democracy

The 1960 Anti-Security treaty protests were the biggest test of Japan's fragile postwar democracy under the new postwar Constitution, which had been written under the postwar Allied Occupation of Japan and passed by the Japanese parliament (the Diet) in 1947. In addition to giving Japan the full range of civil liberties and protecting individual rights, labor rights, and political parties, Article 9 of the new constitution renounced Japan's right to «war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes» (Beer 1998). As a consequence, the United States undertook to provide for Japan's defense under the US-Japan Joint Security Treaty, (known as "Anpo", the contraction of its name in Japanese). The treaty came up for mandatory renewal in 1960, eight years after the end of the Occupation, and was deeply contentious precisely because it tied Japan to the United States and American foreign policy.

The Japanese government, led by Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) strongly supported the security treaty, while a broad coalition of leftist political parties plus labor unions, student organizations, and civil society groups organized a national People's Council for Preventing Revision of the Security Treaty with 134 member organizations. Protected by the new postwar constitution, the Council led massive nationwide protests against revision of the security treaty from 1959 to June 1960, including a series of successful general strikes in spring 1960 and many large protest marches around the parliament building, called the Diet.

The fight culminated the night of May 19, 1960, when the Prime Minister called an emergency meeting to extend the Diet session while the Socialist Party Diet members held a sit-in to block the entrance to the lower house chamber. As people watched live on television and several thousand protesters gathered outside, riot police dragged out the Socialist Diet members one by one. Then after midnight, with only LDP members present, the speaker called the meeting into session, passed the extension, and quickly called for a vote on the security treaty. TV cameras «captured the LDP Diet members raising their hands to vote their approval, and then swung dramatically to the right to show that all the seats in the other half of the chamber, where the opposition parties normally sat, were empty» (Kapur 2018: 23). That led to a final month of huge protest marches organized by the People's Council. Their ranks were swelled by new groups of ordinary citizens who feared that Japan's fragile democracy would fail. In wild protests on June 15, a female University of Tokyo student was trampled to death. The next day Kishi cancelled U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's planned visit and promised to resign within a month. The new treaty automatically

went into effect after 30 days; the protests quietly ended and Kishi resigned.

Student governments at universities around Japan had been nurtured in the early postwar period by the newly legal Japan Communist Party (JCP), which built its hierarchical structure from local campus elected student government organizations through city and regional federations up to the All-Japan National Student Federation (Zengakuren). However, in 1958 a large block of those national Zengakuren leaders split with the JCP and formed an independent New Left organization called the Communist League, informally known as Bund, with affiliated student organizations. As national leaders of Zengakuren, Bund still held sway over the majority of student organizations, sat on the People's Council, and led the mainstream student component of the 1960 Anpo protests with other New Left groups, while student government organizations that remained loyal to the JCP formed a separate anti-mainstream faction that also participated. (Steinhoff 2012: 63-66). In the final phase of the 1960 Anpo protests, small citizens' groups also joined the protests, a harbinger of later civil society groups that proliferated from the mid-1960s through the 1970s and 1980s (Sasaki-Uemura 2001). After the 1960 Anpo protests ended, Bund dissolved into competing factions that could not agree on why the massive protests had failed and went into abeyance for a few years. Realizing that the Joint Security Treaty would come up for renewal again in 1970, the national student leadership soon began to mobilize a new generation of students to prepare for another period of protest that would become far more complex and violent than the 1960 Anpo protests.

2.2. The New Left Protest Cycle 1968-1972: An Unprocessed Cultural Trauma

The late 1960s–early 1970s protest cycle also involved opposition political parties, their affiliated labor unions, and an array of civil society organizations such as the anti-Vietnam war organization Beheiren (Havens 1987; Shiratori 2018; Oguma 2009). They were joined by a revitalized student movement that included both New Left and Old Left organizations. Although there was no longer one unified national student organization called Zengakuren, some of the independent New Left organizations created their own national student alliances, which they also called Zengakuren. The central aim was to mobilize for the 1970 security treaty revision, but they also participated in public demonstrations on an array of other national and local issues. These included environmental issues arising from Japan's era of high economic growth, plus specific issues connected to the US-Japan Joint Security treaty that enabled Japan's supporting role in the Vietnam War (despite its renunciation of war in Article 9 of the Constitution).

On their campuses, students also organized non-hierarchical all-student joint struggle committees (Zenkyōtō), which issued demands at mass student meetings, occupied campus buildings, and carried out protracted student strikes that closed 162 university campuses for days or months. Thus, although the major protests of the era were organized by hierarchical national organizations, the Zenkyōtō movement and other citizens movements of the late 1960s also pioneered some of the flat organizational structures that characterize contemporary social movements. By 1969, students' street demonstrations had escalated into semi-violent confrontations between students and riot police, which led mainstream organizations to withdraw from demonstrating with the students and caused major student organizations to split over tactics. Thousands of students were arrested and tried for serious protest-related crimes, and the most radicalized students went underground or overseas in order to continue the fight with bombings, airplane hijackings, and other violent attacks (Steinhoff 2012).

Steinhoff (2013) analyzed the contention between public collective memory and students' memories of three key escalatory events in this protest cycle:

a) an early battle between police and students near Haneda Airport on October 8, 1967 in which a student was accidentally killed protesting the Prime Minister's departure to visit South Vietnam;

b) the climactic two-day battle between Zenkyōtō students and riot police on the University of Tokyo campus January 17–18, 1969 after several months of a student strike, which marked the turning point from state tolerance to strong repression of student protest; and

c) the Asama Sansō siege of early 1972, in which five wanted students from an underground group with a hostage held off 3,000 riot police for ten days at a mountain resort lodge.

The first event was front page news in major newspapers and featured on evening television news with little detail, but was covered in greater detail in the newspapers produced by the various New Left student organizations involved. The student's death appears in most student activists' narratives as the moment that led them to join the fight. The two events from the middle and end of the protest cycle featured many hours of live television coverage of riot police forcibly ending building occupation standoffs and arresting everyone inside. Hence the general public and the activists were both deeply exposed

to the same media presentations, although students also had additional sources of information from their own print media and viewed the events differently.

If the second event at the University of Tokyo was the climax of the protests, the third seemed to mark the nadir of the protest cycle. It also involved a curious time inversion. Twenty-nine members of two different underground organizations, including several wanted by the police, had come together to create a merged organization (the United Red Army or Rengō Sekigun). Hiding out in the mountains, they lived communally in cabins for several months. Police hot on their trail had already arrested a number of other members of the group as they came down from an overnight trek over the Japanese Alps into the mountain resort town of Karuizawa. The final five had escaped into a nearly impregnable lodge that spilled five stories down the mountainside and was accessible only from the road entrance on the top floor. Activist students all over Japan initially celebrated the nine day siege, because five students with rifles were holding off 3,000 heavily armed riot police, who wanted to avoid harming the hostage. On the tenth day, the police used a wrecking ball to demolish the front of the building. As 90 percent of the national television audience watched the live broadcast for 10 hours and 40 minutes, police swarmed inside and finally brought out the students and their hostage, unharmed, and arrested the students.

By this time, police had already been interrogating other members of the group. As a few began to tell strange stories that at first were not believed, the police began digging up bodies across three prefectures. Over the winter, the merged group had slid into a collective purge in which fourteen members were targeted, tortured, and brutally murdered; it was a distorted attempt to toughen up the weakest ones in preparation for an imagined battle with the police (Steinhoff 1991; 1992; 2003). As the evidence of the United Red Army purge dribbled out in the weeks after the Asama Sansō siege, both the general public that had been watching the siege on television, and the student activists who also watched on television cheering for their five warriors, were stunned to learn what had happened. This is the unprocessed cultural trauma from which neither the New Left student movement nor the Japanese public has been able to recover.

Notably, from 1969 on, both public collective memories and those of movement participants began retroactively to view earlier events negatively. Public collective memories also blurred unrelated events together. As small remnants of the Japanese New Left continued the fight from a safe haven in the Middle East, using international hostage-taking incidents and airplane hijackings to try to get their associates out of Japanese jails, their overseas activities were added to the list of shocking events in Japanese public collective memory. Particularly since the 1980s Reagan era in the United States, when Japan was encouraged to participate in the American "war on terror", public media presentations on Japanese television have routinely presented unrelated violent incidents involving different people and groups, in Japan and internationally, into a pastiche of unexplained violent images. The dark and incomplete representation of this period of political movements has resulted in a general stigmatization of activism (Steinhoff 2012). Consequently, since the 1970's, activists in Japan have wrestled with their own historical legacy.

While that is not unfamiliar in other national contexts, it has been more debilitating in Japan. The Japanese New Left period has been systematically compared with parallel protest cycles in the United States, Germany, and Italy (Zwerman, Steinhoff and Della Porta 2000). All four countries experienced a similar period of violence that emerged out of the broader New Left protests of the late 1960s, with varying long-term impacts. Recent work by Zamponi (2018) on student movements and memory in Italy and Spain reveals some continuing relevant comparisons between the Italian and Japanese cases that are rooted in their common experience of radical New Left protest in the 1970s. In other recent work, Della Porta and her colleagues (2018) have studied the Italian case in comparison with other southern European countries, linking the legacies and memories of the Italian protests of the 1960s and 1970s to contemporary social movements.

How a movement's history is fashioned, remembered, and represented has a significant effect on the ability of a contemporary movement to frame its goals as legitimate, to have its identity recognized as viable, and thus to secure support from society as a whole (Hammock 2010; Zamponi 2018). One question that any movement faces is whether the past will become a resource mobilized to inform and legitimize contemporary efforts or if it will be a handicap that hinders the development of contemporary politics. At its extreme, association with an undesirable past can be used to silence social movements, damning them by association, and sometimes leading to a disavowal of the past by the activists themselves. This is the negative representation of student protest that contemporary Japanese society and most activists carry.

The demise of the movement in the 1970s not only signaled the loss of a particular set of protest strategies, but also cast doubt on the set of grievances for which that generation fought. Cassegård understands this not

only as a «collective trauma» suffered by the Left, but as a moment that discredited «an entire discourse – a way of speaking, acting and identifying oneself associated with the New Left – and thereby for a long time dampened activism in Japan» (Cassegard 2014: 34). While distance from the ideological foundation of its own history is understandable as a survival strategy, this historical legacy casts doubt on the motives for any contemporary activism, delegitimizing public expression through open and direct demonstrations.

The negative aftereffects go beyond compromising clearly leftist movements. Despite some scholarly attempts to recognize or at least not disavow the New Left protest period such as Oguma (2009), this history is unavailable to almost all activists and media today. Wiemann (2019) has examined the relationship between memories of 1960s-1970s protest and protest activity following the March, 3, 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear power plant accident (known as 3/11 in Japan) as a form of collective memory, noting that the earlier period is represented in such a negative light that activists seek primarily to distance themselves from it.

In part, this is the result of Japanese education and mass media. Unlike other countries where their own recent history and civil rights struggles are taught in most schools, Japanese postwar activism is not well known, not taught in schools, and only present schematically in media representations of the era. In response to the student strikes on Japanese campuses, many private colleges abolished their student government organizations to prevent future mobilization and student protest became a taboo subject. In effect, this painful period has been erased from the narrative of postwar Japanese history. Only environmental and labor movements have been able to sustain activism more or less continuously from the 1970s to the present.

Yet even though younger people today may be unaware of the actual history, activists as well as ordinary citizens retain the popular visual image of masked and helmeted young people, causing havoc armed with fighting poles and extreme ideologies (Steinhoff 1999). Most Japanese children grow up knowing nothing about the period except to recoil from it with fear and trepidation. Each new movement in Japan is forced to find some alternative way to explain its goals and activities, as it wrestles with the negative perception of past activism.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The array of groups we analyze spans the three decades from the 1990s through 2021 and all appear as chapters in Slater and Steinhoff (2024). The studies are all based on extensive ethnographic research by the co-editors and their younger colleagues. We use this body of empirical research both to examine the contours of contemporary social movements and to reflect on the powerful rejection of the earlier period of activism in Japan.

The ethnographic studies range from the many single issue groups in Japan's invisible civil society examined by Steinhoff (*Ibidem*); through the labor activism of community unions and their networks studied by Shinji Kojima (2024) and Robin O'Day (2024); Carl Cassegård's (2024) exploration of artists joining homeless activists in the early 1990s; the revitalized networks of antinuclear activists that initiated the community power movements Makoto Nishikido studied (2024); Yoko Iida's (2024) study of the rapid re-emergence after 3/11 of a large national network in defense of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution; and Rika Morioka's (2024) observations of how an older generation of anti-nuclear activist women in northern Japan guided young mothers to "gentle" protest activity after 3/11. Other studies include Yuki Asahina's (2024) examination of the new right-wing group Zaitokukai's aggressive anti-foreign protests; Vivian Shaw's (2024) comparison of the different tactics of four anti-hate speech counter-movements that responded to Zaitokukai; plus Vinicius Furuie's (2024) contrast of two generations of Chukaku-ha activists; Alexander Brown's (2024) analysis of musicians' protests in the immediate aftermath of 3/11; and Slater's (2024) examination of the rapid rise and self-imposed dissolution of SEALDs (Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy). In addition to their rich ethnographic accounts, each author includes a postscript summarizing what has happened to their groups and movements since the fieldwork was completed, which provides a longer-term perspective on the impact of the groups.

While ethnography is the premier method of conducting deep field research on local social movement groups, most of our younger research colleagues, as well as the groups they were studying, shared a generational absence of knowledge about the earlier movements that their subjects were trying so hard to avoid. As a result, most of their accounts describe negative sentiments and avoidance behavior, often with little detail. The few exceptions deal with movements that trace their own history to pre-1970s Japan. Furuie's study documents incidents of exclusion young 21st century activists experienced while unsuccessfully trying to modernize the 1960s New Left group Chūkaku-ha from within (2024). Similarly, Iida's study of the Article 9 Association (whose national leaders had previously led the anti-Vietnam war

group Beheiren half a century earlier) acknowledges the difficulty the group had in recruiting younger members outside of the continuing transmission channels connected to JCP affiliated organizations (2024).

Either implicitly or explicitly, all of these groups struggle to overcome the negative legacy of the earlier period of intense social movement activity in Japan.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY JAPAN ALTERNATIVE POLITICS

It is not uncommon for political activists everywhere to label themselves as "regular" citizens. In the case of most of the activism we have examined, this move is not only a claim of authenticity but also of distancing themselves from the extremism of the stigmatized past. In everyday usage, regular or normal is captured in Japanese by the term *futsū,* which has two distinct but related connotations: one is descriptive, pointing to actions that fall within some socially accepted norm or range of behavior; the other is more prescriptive, suggesting an evaluative standard of proper judgment or action. Activists use this term rhetorically in order to differentiate themselves from the radical extremes, and to re-situate themselves in the legitimate center of contemporary society. The Beheiren movement used this term to stake out a position against the Vietnam War in the 1960s, in distinction to the venal and self-interested party politics of the state, as well as the more fractious activists of their day.

Another way to find discursive space outside of an infected politics is to posit a sphere of the "everyday" with the transformation of the person as the primary target of political engagement, presuming that larger political shifts will follow (Ando 2014: 12). The rise of the term *shimin* (citizen) during the 1980's functions in similar ways – as an attempt to carve out some non-extreme and yet engaged position within the concept of civil society, even if this attempt proved to be more easily coopted (Avenell 2011). The problem faced by Japanese activists today is once again how to secure a position from which to speak out in opposition to the *status quo*, in a way that does not jeopardize one's membership or inclusion in that very society. Today, that means without compromising your position by too close an association with a discredited past. Thus, two things are going on at once: first, a questioning of existing politics and society, and second, an attempt to establish a legitimate position from which this critique can be made (Slater, Morioka and Danzuka 2014).

4.1. Creating New Codes and Updating Identities

When groups distance themselves from familiar positions and identities, the creation of coherent and persuasive identities becomes more difficult. The development of alternative politics during this period in Japan reveals how narrow a discursive space is available. The movements we have examined reveal activists who avoid the label of "activist" and shun any association with the "political" more generally. To similar effect, we also find many single-issue groups avoiding any claim to a wider political position (Slater *et al*. 2015). Thus, ironically, political activists distance themselves from politics. We are led to an unsettling observation: one must disavow "politics" as a precondition to be engaged in alternative politics! Logistically, such discursive distancing not only problematizes a movement's links to its own past, but also potentially jeopardizes the possibility of establishing horizontal ties among the many different contemporary single-issue movements that might otherwise be able to claim a political lineage.

Although we are discussing people and groups that are clearly social movement activists, our ethnographic research has revealed that most of them disavow this label completely. They reject the most common Japanese term for someone engaged in a political movement (*undōka*), the milder term for political activity (*katsudōka*), or even the foreign term "activist" that removes the label from the Japanese political context. The most neutral and thus least objectionable to many is the term "supporter", which implies that the individual supports a set of ideas outside of any movement structure, mobilization, or even identity.

The disavowal of politics also creates generational rifts among contemporary activists, with younger or less overtly engaged people distancing themselves from usually somewhat older, more overtly and unabashedly political players still lingering on the outskirts of today's scene. This interpersonal distancing has two results. First, the knowledge and experience of these older activists – always an important resource in any movement – is often lost or compromised. It also leads to distancing from the few higher profile personalities among the left, the sort of people who, due to their wider recognition, could potentially unify a range of efforts into some common cause. Instead, such recognizable figures are sometimes dismissed with the oxymoron 'professional civic activist' (*purō-shimin)*, a term used to chide someone who is professionalizing something that should only be pursued at the civic or amateur level. We did find some instances of inter-generational continuity: Nishikido's (2024) study of community power movements traces

the movement's roots to earlier anti-nuclear activism; Morioka (2024) acknowledges the important mentoring role of older antinuclear activists in post-3/11 mothers' gentle protests; and Steinhoff describes three institutions developed during the 1969-1970s period that are still utilized widely by activists today. Nonetheless, among young contemporary activists the search for political alternatives that are considered "legitimate" narrows the path forward.

4.2. De-Institutionalization of Activist Politics

The discursive ambivalence about "political" engagement is both reflected and compounded in the institutional shifts of movement structures that we see in contemporary social movements. In early postwar Japan, most significant activism occurred within the context of institutionally bounded groups with formal membership status and stable internal hierarchies of roles and positions. These groups were often linked into larger national or even transnational federations around identifiable ideologies. The 1960 anti-Anpo protests and the student movements of the late 1960's and 1970's, as well as the labor movements that continued into the 1970's and 1980's, were usually organized through local cells or chapters linked to larger communist, socialist, or New Left movements. Activists at both universities and companies could benefit from durable institutional identity that facilitated recruitment of members, resources for internal leadership, financial support through membership dues, and institutional memory across years of uneven activity and changing personnel. On the other hand, these institutional contexts imposed certain limitations upon membership, by demanding a large investment of time and energy from members and limiting the issues and strategies used by each group. This vertical membership structure resulted in a lack of cooperation among otherwise quite similar groups and fostered factional conflict that could become violent. Nevertheless, the two different contexts of schools and companies provided ideological focus, institutional structure, and logistical support.

In most of the new social movements that have emerged in Japan over the past thirty years, institutionalization is more difficult to identify and less often considered desirable as either strategy or outcome. When young people are politically engaged today, they are rarely organized around university affiliation. This shift is not just among students; the retirement of an older leftist generation of scholars, once very active in teaching and supporting student activism, has left many universities politically unengaged. In fact, following the end of the late 1960s protest cycle, most private universities disbanded their student government organizations, eliminating the main vehicle for mobilizing students into protest activity, which also provided a reliable stream of income from student fees.

In companies there has been a similar denuding of political activism, albeit for different reasons. The Japanese system of enterprise unions that encompass both regular blue collar and lower level white collar workers in large companies but exclude non-regular workers, the formal restructuring of labor unions in the late 1980s (Carlile 2005). and the neoliberal decline of labor unions in general have led to decimated membership and a dramatic reduction in political influence. Moreover, the tenuous and often fractured relationship that non-regular workers have to a particular company or workplace has led to a deinstitutionalization of work and consequently, of workplace-based activism. Recent efforts to organize precarious workers into community unions (Kojima 2020; 2024; O'Day 2015; 2024) depend on a peculiarity of Japanese labor law, and provide even more evidence of this trend, since these unions organize outside of specific workplaces. The development of some alternative to these once-dominant enterprise union structures can be seen both in the relative deterioration of political ideologies, and in new organizational structures founded on less rigid hierarchies.

4.3. Unraveling of Political Ideologies

As the primary institutions that once supported political activism no longer play as prominent a role, there have been a number of shifts in social movements. First, today's activist groups make fewer demands of members and fewer efforts to create a single ideological position. This can lead to a greater ideological diversity within a single group, or sometimes even a lack of ideological engagement altogether. We see this dynamic at different levels of political activity. At the most macro-level, the geo-political re-positioning of Japan as a global economic power since the late 1970s has led to the almost unquestioned acceptance of the treaty outlining Japan's dependency on US security forces, which remains in effect today and was the ideological basis for the 1960 protests. Once seen as a threat to Japanese national sovereignty, and thus a possible unifying ideology across different movements, the issue is rarely a prominent platform in the contemporary movements we examined. With the fading of this issue, the emphasis on ideology as the focus of a group has also faded.

This diminution of ideology is particularly dramatic in the case of labor. The fragmentation of labor not only

breaks apart labor unions as institutional bases but renders the materialist underpinnings of class struggle that once supported these unions less rhetorically convincing. Ideas of socialist revolution are so remote for most as to render the underlying ideological positions anachronistic. If the revolutionary imperative of "workers unite" was always a hard sell to different segments of the Japanese labor market, with the dramatic rise in irregular labor and the blurring of lines between work and non-work, many today do not even identify as "workers" to begin with. After an initial embrace of a deregulated economy, workers are increasingly seeking stability rather than flexibility, having seen the debilitating effects of dispersed and predatory neoliberal capitalism (O'Day 2015). The irony here in Japan as elsewhere, is that just at the time when workers are losing stability and labor activism most urgently needs political representation, the ideological tools that have defined this effort in the past are no longer accessible or meaningful. The labor movements that have appeared recently do not exhibit any systematic effort to resuscitate the idea of social class.

Second, it is not just revolutionary ideology that is missing today. More generally, there is a lack of effort to promote any singular ideological position at all. Instead, we see a greater tolerance of ideological diversity within political groups. While periodic allusions to past ideologies show up in printed materials and on websites, they are rarely the primary focus of any group, and there are far fewer lectures or study sessions aimed at the articulation or development of a coherent, encompassing position. Sometimes, relinquishing a more complete ideological vision is accepted as the necessary cost of gaining sufficient participants to support a particular issue. As a result, contemporary groups demonstrate a thinned-out engagement with the ideologies that were once considered the foundation of Japanese social movements.

On the other hand, lack of ideological unity is sometimes represented as a positive feature, pointing to a group's acceptance of diversity as an inherent act of respect for the individuality of its members, in what Day (2006) has identified in the anti-globalization movement as embrace of an «anarchist logic of affinity». The acceptance of diversity is often offered as illustration, even proof, of the spontaneous emergence of the movement, reflecting the natural diversity of individual opinion. This reflects what Meyer and Tarrow (1998) call «an ideology of spontaneity», a pattern that has only increased over time. While in an earlier generation in Japan, legitimacy was often linked to solidarity built around a clear set of goals that many movements worked to achieve, today solidarity appears more as regimentation, a prioritization of collective will or even coercion over individual or personal motives. In that construction it appears manufactured and false, casting doubt on the authenticity of the movement. In an age when social movements are often validated as the autonomous outpouring of individual sentiment, ideological unity has become a problematic concept and no longer a worthy goal. Spontaneity has predictable effects on both movement structure and repertoire in shaping the range of alternatives that have emerged.

4.4. New Ontologies: Open Networks and Flat Hierarchies

Deinstitutionalization and the loosening of ideological adherence have consequences, including new relationships between groups and individuals, and more fundamentally, the status of groups as political actors (Slater *et al*. 2015). Much of contemporary social movement theory has moved away from focusing on organizations to examining looser networks that come together occasionally. Within social movement theories in general, many scholars have shifted from organization-based models toward network models to analyze how social movements utilize the social ties that develop among individuals or small groups through their co-participation in events (Diani 2007; Diani and McAdam 2003). For the past thirty years in Japan and other places, instead of organized groups with members, we often now see events such as demonstrations and petition drives populated with participants who might join for that event but have little loyalty or identification to a group, even if they are strongly committed to the cause.

This shift does not necessarily suggest a lack of activity, nor does it suggest a failure to solidify activity, commitment, or sentiment. Rather, today the mobilization of people into groups, once symbolized in Japan by the creation of mailing lists, embodied in drinking parties, and financed by membership fees, often does not seem necessary or feasible for participation in activist politics. Rather than defining and attempting to institutionalize the outer boundary that defines membership, more often today we see the creation of a small core of devoted leaders and then radiating from this center, an open-ended and often personal network. This core is often less than a dozen people, maybe with a larger number who help with different events. The larger numbers reported in the media who come to demonstrations could be called participants but not "members", in the older sense of the term.

The unbounded perimeters of groups also affect the nature or quality of the relationships among activists. Lack of clear boundaries and more fluid membership make the social order within those boundaries more dif-

ficult to establish and maintain. Again, contemporary young activists in Japan do not understand such internal order as necessary or even desirable. In contrast to a bounded hierarchy, where new members can work their way up through a clearly defined set of positions and responsibilities, today's less clearly defined groups lack internal hierarchical divisions, stable status positions, or clearly defined lines of authority. Instead, there is some variant of deliberative democracy (Cohen 1989) or participatory democracy (Polletta 2002), characterized by more horizontal communication and direct decision-making. One term that is often mentioned in Japanese movements is "flat hierarchies", which not only points to a lack of vertical structure or responsibility, but also indicates an ideological commitment to create an activist group that embodies in its own structure and practices the principles it seeks to create in society at large. These features are not specific to Japan but are found throughout the developed world; however, Japan's shift is also strongly linked to rejection of past movements, and thus contrasts so sharply with the form of clearly bounded, hierarchical groups that was once so prevalent in activist and other organizations in Japan.

These new movement structures are rhetorically and self-consciously differentiated from the earlier periods of strong social movement activity. Many of these movements imagine themselves not only as a means to achieve social justice, but also as a performative space where the principles of equality and individuality are embodied in the practices of being part of the movement itself. These structures and practices find some rhetorical expression in what is often called "prefigurative" politics (Ando 2013; Raekstad and Gradin 2020) or some adherence to anarchist ideals. Overall, while there is a usually a desire to address and change some part of their world, many of these groups explicitly recognize that the aim of the group is mutual self-help, or the affective rewards of group participation.

4.5. Social Media

Today, the patterns of political mobilization of any form of political engagement revolve around social media (Kindstrand, Nishimura and Slater 2016). As in social movements and grassroots activism all over the world today, social media technology has transformed virtually every aspect of activity, from distribution of information to the framing of issues, from resource mobilization to the recruitment of new participants, from mediating the relationships individuals have to the movement and each other, to patterns of effective and legitimate leadership. Probably more than any other single factor, social media in Japan allow dispersed and deinstitutionalized movements and less formal patterns of alternative engagement to emerge as relevant, even as they reject earlier patterns of solidarity and commitment. Japan's intensive involvement with social media means that the primary tools of most social movements are already intimately integrated into people's newsfeeds, friend groups, and the lists that they follow; in effect, the line that once separated the political from other parts of their lives is already erased. This means the formation of groups, and one's status as a member, is often rendered moot. Social media allows participation, access to information, and some sort of relationship with others without forcing a declaration of one's status as a member.

Social media have allowed activists to identify and exploit political opportunities more quickly and to reach new audiences with their message. The instrumental nature of social messaging allows many to participate in events without any commitment to or definition of members and groups. Social media provide the technological platform for the sort of unboundedness and flat hierarchies that are part of the philosophical commitment of many non-institutionalized activist movements. They allow information flow to occur in multiple directions, which renders a study group meeting to learn about an issue unnecessary, even cumbersome and outdated. In an age where "following" someone does not entail ideological commitment, it allows, even promotes, a plurality of beliefs and hybridity of positions. Flat hierarchy is often the assumed shape of a digital network. While not discounting the potential limitations of social media use, in politics and beyond, we also note that users rarely find their social media participation constricting. Digital experience that is simultaneously random, spontaneous, and anarchic feels familiar and even natural to many users. We do not attempt to disentangle social media from social movements today, even while acknowledging the distinct pre-social media origins of many of these tendencies.

4.6 Cultural Politics and Demo Enactment

Different movements create distinct cultures, and these cultures are themselves reasons to participate in or reject a certain movement, over and above the more structural or explicitly political issues that were once thought to define the goals of political engagement. In these days of dispersed sociality, social media have been important tools in the creation of movement identity and central platforms for the formation of movement cultures, but the contents of these identities come from a set of cultural resources that augment and even sup-

plant more recognizable political resources. Nearly all of the groups we have examined place strong emphasis on cultural resources. These take different forms, from the instrumental use of culture, as in the recognition by activists of the significance and efficacy of deployment of music and design for explicitly political ends (Brown 2024), to a focus on more cultural issues to define movement identity and the focus of political engagement (Cassegård 2024). This latter can include identity politics, where the goal of the movement is to challenge cultural norms or "cultural codes" as an end in itself (Melucci 1988; 1995), rather than as a means to enact other social change.

A culturalist approach is common in these groups, with little focus on overt political goals as criteria or metrics of movement evaluation. Instead, scholars often examine the nature of movement activity by focusing on how political activists fashion interpretations (Slater 2024) or hold and develop beliefs and values (Furuie 2024), as ways of acting upon the world. This cultural focus does not negate the demands for policy or legal changes, political representation, or institutional changes; it simply points to the importance of the alternative cultural terrains on which these struggles are fought, and the possibility of shaping this terrain by purposive individual or collective action. This approach recognizes the creativity and sophistication of digitally mediated cultural resources. Indeed, in the current movement environment, there is an expectation that successful movements must achieve a certain level of creative cultural production. Drawing on art, design, and popular culture, most movements today are prolific, clever "prosumers" (Ritzer, Dean and Jurgenson 2012; Nakajima 2012) of cultural resources as a way to attract interest, link their efforts to other movements, and craft or stylize their own movement messages. Given the saturation of digital technology, it should not be a surprise that activists are also adept at creative digital media to craft tactical and innovative alternatives even within the increasingly crowded media-scapes of Japan.

The cultural approach calls attention to the patterns of demonstrations, direct action, and other forms of enactment and performance of political movements in public space. With the deinstitutionalization of social movements and the demise of ideological purity, the deployment of cultural forms into public ritual takes on increased importance in many aspects of a movement. Demonstrations and public protests have always been an important part of activist politics in Japan as elsewhere, but with fewer small face-to-face meetings, public demonstrations carry more political weight as key scenarios that mobilize members and articulate political positions. Long gone are the days of the Anpo era's snake dance or labor unions' fist pumping response chants in unison – both now would be dismissed by many as overly confrontational and unimaginative. Nevertheless, snake-dances and chants are the functional predecessors of forms that might be called cultural production in today's argot.

Especially among younger activists, the practices and spaces selected for performance repertoires have shifted in ways that make demonstrations not just an expression of a group's position, but a ritualized, collaborative social event, carefully staged for subsequent reposting on social media. Any demonstration messaging conveys some meaning about the issues and the different groups participating, but rather than propositional content ("Protect Article 9"), what we see today is more provocative and creative ("I can't believe we are still protesting this shit"). The syncopated pop rhythms unify participants and create some transient collective experience. Most people come to events, rallies, and demonstrations as individuals, rather than participating in groups defined by other institutional connections such as school, work, or labor union groups. This extra-institutional nature of activism may be exactly what is appealing to participants; many do not want their political activity to be part of their "regular" life, known to their family and associates. They are not members in any sustained way, do not contribute resources, including money or labor, and they do not represent an identity. People come, dance, and chant (and maybe drop a few coins into a passed hat): politics as a street party. The emphasis on attractive and appealing styling is particularly important in Japan, as it further pushes contemporary social movements away from the dark associations of the past as well as providing transnational stylistic connection to similar movements in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

4.7. Possibilities and Risks of Dispersed Social Action

In sum, contemporary Japanese social movements and social activism have attempted to move away from their discredited past. They are less ideological, less extreme, less institutionalized, less bounded, and have a flatter internal structure. They are more flexible, adaptive, and attractive. They have created alternative ways of connecting their audiences to political causes and to each other. They have moved from groups with members to networked participants staging events. They share information and sentiment through digital means, rather than organizing through meetings and study groups in communities, schools, or worksites. These new patterns of social movements have provided new spaces and

new ways of becoming involved. Contemporary young people concerned with what is going on in their own government and society have found that participating in demonstrations may offer their only chances to talk about it at all. This has been a hugely liberating fact for many individuals who feel excluded, constrained, limited, or silenced by pressure within standard institutional contexts not to express such views. For a long time, social movements have been providing a space to voice individual concerns in a supportive, collective context, and thus are an important way for individuals to learn how to speak up for themselves. In contemporary Japan, we see this function fulfilled in a combination of digital platforms and face-to-face demonstrations.

These ethnographic studies have documented some previously unexplored and even unimaginable connections among social movements, trade unions, civil society, and lifestyle activism. Community unions have had some success in assisting and recruiting nonregular workers, and also in connecting such workers to broader social movement networks that offer support and, in some cases, turn them into activists. Kojima (2024) in particular, notes that these groups have acted as social brokers to connect unions from different lineages into cooperative partnerships. Nishikido (2024) documents the surprising success that anti-nuclear activists in northern Japan have had in constructing and maintaining community windmills as an alternative power source, which has brought them into new relationships with their investors, power corporations that purchase power from them, and the communities that benefit from the income they generate to support local improvements.

Cassegård (2024) describes an alliance between homeless people and artists who joined their squatter communities as a lifestyle. Both Nishikido (2024) and Morioka (2024) point to the existence of older generations of lifestyle or everyday activists in their communities as innovators and leaders that facilitated newer movements, but we see less of this orientation in the millennial generation. Brown (2024) explores the different options and constraints faced by musicians who write and play topical protest songs, depending on whether they are under contract to large music corporations or independent. Iida (2024) and Slater (2024) offer quite different examples of how rapidly post-3/11 protest movements against specific government policies were able to expand to meet their moment effectively. The latter case of SEALDs also documents the group's unusual decision in advance to disband once that moment was over, the very opposite of lifestyle activism, even though they were able to convert their activist prosumer skills into real-world occupational credentials.

Finally, the trajectories of Asahina's (2024) aggressive New Right group Zaitokukai, the differential appeal of Shaw's (2024) antiracist countermovements, and Furuie's (2024) Nazen offshoot of the 1960s New Left group Chūkaku-ha demonstrate clearly how any association with the violence of 1970s activism remains doomed to failure. Zaitokukai was broken by lawsuits that crippled them economically and the most physically aggressive of Shaw's countermovement groups also did not fare well, even though many of the racist ideas of Zaitokukai have been incorporated into the more mainstream Japanese right. Nazen only survived by separating itself from Chūkaku-ha and continuing its more contemporary and non-violent style as a small independent group. Morioka's (2024) emphasis on «gentle protest» and other studies of women's activism in the post-3/11 period (Kimura 2016) also reinforce the continuing efforts of contemporary activists to avoid contamination with the discredited past. At the same time, these new studies offer ways for contemporary Japanese activists to escape the taint and protect their new movements.

These shifts also carry some limitations and risks. A loosely organized, digitally enabled space for the circulation of political and cultural information, networking, and engagement that is easy to join with relatively little personal or financial cost, provides an important alternative to the often-stifling institutional structure of earlier movements, but it is unclear how sustainable these new patterns will be over time. Participating in a one-off event is not the same as joining a group as a member. How does this translate into incremental social change or a raising of consciousness more broadly, let alone policy changes either locally or nationally? Cultural politics carries with it similar risks. On the one hand, the expression of political platforms through cultural resources is attractive to many, but the appeal may be primarily because the politics are obscured (or simply obscure). When cultural politics is more a matter of challenging codes at a micro-level or a personal politics of identity, it is not always evident where the "politics" might be. For example, today, the increasing fact of irregular work has been "naturalized" for many younger people. While this shift might restore some dignity to work that is both necessary and often the only work available, it has not translated into stable or regular support of a living wage, or insurance protections for irregular workers.

Sadly, much of the old stigma against social movement participation remains. People of all ages and geographic locations report that they have lost friends or job opportunities when it became known that they participated in demonstrations. The slogan "making protest

normal", might be fine on YouTube, but not so acceptable where one has to live, study, and work. While going to demonstrations and being politically engaged in general may have become more widely available, most people in Japan remain hesitant to share such political interest with others outside the context of a specific event of political engagement and its immediate participants.

5. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

In the first half of this article we have answered our question about why avoidance of the New Left protest period of the 1970s remains so potent half a century later. It really was a cultural trauma that remains unprocessed and therefore still fearsome and potent today. The second half of the article has shown both the promise and the limitations of contemporary activists' attempts to find new approaches to activism, which also correspond to similar trends in other countries.

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Between Cooptation and Surveillance: Varieties of Civic Monitoring in Spain

Alessandra Lo Piccolo

Abstract. Civic monitoring is a democratic practice that allows citizens to hold accountable powerholders and enhance the accountability of democratic systems. To date, democratic theorists and collective action scholars have stressed the relevance of monitoring by NGOs, social movement organizations, and alternative media to increase civil society's watchdog potential, filter publicly relevant information, and ensure the inclusion of new voices and the representation of new instances in democratic arenas. However, little is known about how such diverse collective actors leverage monitoring practices, particularly in interaction with monitored actors and their constituencies. Focusing on the Spanish case (2011-2021), often considered a prominent example of monitory democracy, the study employs Situational Analysis and builds on semi-structured interviews and document analysis to discuss differences within the Spanish monitoring field. The results contribute to ongoing discussions on the hybridization of civic efforts and classifications of civic monitoring initiatives.

Keywords: civic monitoring, civil society organizations, hybridization, Spain, crisis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the long-debated crisis of liberal democratic models (Canovan 1999; Crouch 2018; Runciman 2018; Schmitter 2015), theorists have put much of their hopes in the emergence and spread of a new form of political participation based on the continuous scrutiny of public powers, developing concepts such as monitory democracy (Keane 2009, 2018) or counter-democracy (Rosanvallon 2008), characterized by the proliferation of multiple sites of control and oversight that aim at constraining the use and abuse of power from below (Trägårdh et al. 2013). Moving from different premises, research on mobilization in times of crisis, such as in the aftermath of the 2008 Great Recession or during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bosi and Zamponi 2015; Flesher Fominaya 2020; Zajak 2022), has demonstrated that Civil society organizations[1] (CSOs) constitute primary sources of innovation under conditions of uncertainty and rapid change (Della Porta 2012, 2017, 2020b). These strands of literature find their common ground in the study of civic moni-

[1] CSOs here refers to multiple grassroots actors such as NGOs, SMOs, civic groups, alternative media.

toring practices, intended as the ensemble of grassroots efforts to scrutinize power from below, enhancing transparency and accountability, for example, by trying to unveil corrupt deals (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014; Fox 2015; Olken 2007).

Among other cases, Spain is a critical case for investigating the characteristics and evolution of monitoring practices, often described as a textbook case of monitory democracy (Feenstra and Keane 2014). In particular, scholars underline how the outbreak of the 15-M movement in 2011 and its calls for «Real Democracy Now!» accelerated ongoing dynamics, exploiting opportunities for public scrutiny offered by digital technologies and media to strengthen civic controls over the country's political, financial, and cultural elites (Casero-Ripollés and Feenstra 2012) and hold them accountable to «their own laws» (Flesher Fominaya 2015: 154). Since then, monitoring practices have remained a constant in the anti-corruption and pro-accountability toolkit of CSOs. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic opened new opportunities to monitor powerholders' decisions and actions, with CSOs asking for open data on the pandemic evolution and on the allocation and use of public funds to face its consequences (Pleyers 2020; Villoria and Gómez 2021; Zajak 2022).

However, the internal differentiation of monitoring practices in Spain remains a matter of empirical debate. As Flesher Fominaya and Feenstra (2023) maintain, monitoring «continues to maintain a clear separation between those governing from those governed, raising the question of whether monitory mechanisms necessarily bring us closer to the "real democracy" ideal and its demand for greater citizen participation in decision-making and deliberation» (*Ibidem*: 286).

Moving from this background, the article explores variations within the Spanish civic monitoring field (2011-2021), looking specifically at how CSOs have exploited monitoring practices to bridge the gap between powerholders and monitoring citizens. The study builds on Situational Analysis (SA) and relies on interviews, documents, and existing literature to i) map the elements characterizing monitoring practices in Spain from 2011 onwards, ii) elucidate the words and arenas involved in monitoring practices, and iii) understand the how civic monitors positioned themselves vis-à-vis monitored actors and their constituencies through these practices. The analysis suggests that these dynamics point to ongoing hybridization processes within the civic field, providing a more nuanced perspective on monitoring practices, ranging from cooptation to surveillance.

2. CIVIC MONITORING IN SPAIN: EVOLUTION AND CONSEQUENCES

Since the end of the 1970s, the evolution of Spain's political landscape, transitioning from a fully-fledged authoritarian regime to a 'democracy in the making', has been strictly intertwined with the history of corruption scandals and opaque relationships between political and economic powers (Heywood 2007; Johnston 2005). However, the influence of the so-called transition syndrome[2] left corruption scandals at the margins of political debates for a long time (Jiménez 2004). Things started to change in the late 1990s when the revelation of several scandals involving members of Gonzales' socialist government[3] (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) eased the electoral victory of the Partido Popular (PP) and the politicization of debates around corruption (Heywood 2007). However, scandals related to Aznar's government[4] (PP 1996-2004) indicated that public corruption was widespread across the entire political spectrum. Whereas accusations of corruption remained a constant in the Spanish political debates, growing civic demands and international pressure resulted in timid attempts by Zapatero's government to increase the system's transparency (PSOE 2004-2011). However, little was achieved until the 2010s, when the emergence of scandals related to Rajoy's governments[5] (PP 2011-2018), coupled with the economic hardship of the Great Recession (Jiménez and Villoria 2018). While in 2013, the PP government tried to relegitimize its position by passing a new law on transparency and citizens' right to access public information[6], the consequences of the economic crisis and the rampant distrust in traditional political parties contributed to the profound restructuring of the party system after 2015, favoring the electoral success of political forces that extensively campaigned around public corruption, such as Podemos and Ciudadanos (Gomez Fortes and Urquizu 2015).

Vis-à-vis these long-term political and institutional change processes, significant transformations also interested the civic sphere and citizens' forms of political participation. The traditional role of political parties as primary accountability actors had indeed begun to decline (Przeworski 2006), strengthening the role

[2] The solid electoral support for the Socialist Party (PSOE), the weakness and internal fragmentation of the Partido Popular (PP), and the unwillingness of the media to publicize potentially destabilizing news removed corruption from public debates (Jiménez 2004).
[3] E.g., Guerra's case, cfr. Jiménez (2004).
[4] E.g., Piqué's case, cfr. Heywood (2007).
[5] E.g., Gürtel and Bàrcenas cases.
[6] Ley 19/2013, *Ley de transparencia, acceso a la información pública y buen gobierno*.

of CSOs as social watchdogs (Rosanvallon 2008). In Spain, the grassroots mobilizations started on the 15th of May 2011, known as the 15-M movement, articulated new quests for transparency and accountability, bridging them with pro-democratic and anti-austerity claims (Blakeley 2019; Faber and Seguín 2019; Romanos, Sola and Rendueles 2022). Amid a situation of political, financial, and social unrest, CSOs have thus sought to rebuild political trust from below (Feenstra *et al.* 2017), triggering democratic innovations among which civic monitoring practices have occupied a prominent role (Della Porta 2020b; Feenstra *et al.* 2017; Flesher Fominaya 2020, 2022; Romanos 2017).

Civic monitoring[7] is a democratic practice that exposes power abuses and enhances transparency and accountability in democratic systems (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014). The concept has its roots[8] in Schudson's work on monitorial citizenship (1998), Keane's notion of monitory democracy (2009, 2018), and Rosanvallon's concept of counter-democracy (2008). With due differences, each of these theories emphasizes the emergence of new participatory practices in liberal democratic systems, based not on the representation or direct expression of interests but on the proliferation of power-scrutinizing sites.

In Spain, as elsewhere, grassroots actors have increasingly resorted to monitoring practices to engage in democratic processes beyond the mere electoral ritual, alongside traditional forms of political participation, such as mobilization, protests, or advocacy (Feenstra *et al.* 2017). This has resulted in the proliferation of diffuse and everyday forms of control, evaluation, and public scrutiny of powerholders from below to discover, unveil, and denounce abuse of power, institutional wrongdoing, corruption, and lack of transparency (Casero-Ripollés 2015). However, the characteristics and consequences of these practices remain to be discussed.

Indeed, existing studies have seldom addressed internal differences within the civic monitoring field, leaving the question of how social movement organizations, NGOs, or alternative media exploit monitoring practices and whether internal differences exist almost unexplored. Indeed, monitoring practices represent a perfect terrain to investigate hybridization processes within the civic sphere (Della Porta 2020a), given the great variety of grassroots actors exploiting them. Movement scholars have pointed to broad NGOization processes characterized by a moderation of repertoires, an increasing formalization of organizational structures, and a depoliticization of frames (Choudry and Kapoor 2013; Della Porta 2020a). Pro-accountability and anti-corruption movements, for example, have gone through similar processes, weakening their social watchdog role (Sampson 2015). Similarly, part of the scholarship has underlined how, nowadays, rankings of international NGOs, such as Transparency International's corruption index, have reached an influence comparable to one of the international organizations' ratings for countries' economic development (Rosanvallon 2008). Yet, this increased influence has come with a progressive decline in the representativeness of these social watchdogs, increasingly responding to particularistic and corporatist interests (Przeworski 2006).

Investigating the Spanish case, Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés found that grassroots monitoring practices have strengthened some of the functions traditionally associated with the mobilization of social movements and civil society groups, expanding the range of voices represented in public arenas and extending the representation of groups and interests beyond the parliamentary arena (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014). At the same time, they found that the reliance on monitoring practices has allowed collective actors to expand their watchdog and information filtering functions, traditionally associated with the media, individual whistleblowers, or hacker collectives (*Ibidem*).

However, few works have investigated internal differentiations within the civic monitoring field, particularly concerning the interactions between monitoring actors, monitored elites, and their constituencies. This appears particularly relevant to understanding the pro-accountability consequences of civic monitoring. The relatively scant literature on the theme has indeed demonstrated that monitoring practices seem less impactful when relying on open confrontations with elite circles, while cooperation between monitoring actors and monitored institutions is more likely to result in accountability gains (Buttiglione and Reggi 2015; Fox 2015; Olken 2007). On the other hand, the risk is that monitoring practices will result in mere top-down concessions (Fox 2016; Sampson 2015), which answer the needs of institutional actors rather than serving the interests of the constituencies that civic monitors should serve (Peruzzotti 2011). Investigating the relationship between civic monitors, monitored elites, and their constituencies seems thus critical to assess whether and how these practices pursue their accountability goals, that is, to what extent they work as effective centers to scrutinize powerholders and include citizens in these oversight practices.

[7] So far, studies have differentiated monitoring practices based on the nature of the monitoring actors, distinguishing between institutional, shared, and civic monitoring (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014).

[8] Concepts such as the politics of disclosure (Olesen 2021), transparency movements (Nolin 2018), or the transparency era (Schudson 2015).

If the 15-M movement's legacy and effects are still debated[9], this is even more true when looking at the monitoring practices that emerged over those years. Analyses have indeed rarely assessed their evolution. For this reason, the rest of the article analyses the characteristics of monitoring practices in Spain in the aftermath of the 2011 mobilization until the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis maps the elements characterizing the Spanish monitoring field, the arenas involved, and the positions of monitoring actors vis-à-vis monitored elites and their constituencies.

3. DATA AND METHODS

The article investigates civic monitoring practices focusing on the case of Spain (2011-2021), relying on Situational Analysis. Developed by Adele Clarke and colleagues (Clarke 2003, 2021; Clarke *et al.* 2016), SA integrates Glaser's and Strauss' classic version of Grounded Theory and its constructivist declinations (Charmaz 2006), having situations as its fundamental units of analysis.

Recent research on data-enabled anti-corruption activism, which comprises civic monitoring initiatives, has openly advocated for using SA, given its focus on ecologies of relations between collective, individual, institutional, and extra-institutional actors (Mattoni 2020). SA appears indeed particularly promising when applied to the study of civic monitoring initiatives. First, it foresees using different materials, such as interviews, documents, or digital platforms, in a coherent research design. Second, it explicitly considers the role of non-human actors as defining elements in any situation, for example, considering ICTs' role in the case of monitoring practices. Third, it uses different analytical maps to help researchers generate new questions along the research process, producing grounded and situated knowledge for theory-building purposes.

SA uses four analytical maps as its main analytical tools (Clarke 2021; Mattoni 2020). First, situational maps allow researchers to single out all the relevant elements characterizing the situation under investigation, for example, the civil society organizations carrying out monitoring activities and the monitored institutional actors. Second, relational maps help visualize the relationships between all the elements characterizing the situation, such as the interactions between monitoring organizations and institutions via monitoring technologies. Third, social worlds/arenas maps serve to understand the ongoing negotiations among all the elements in a situation and their arenas of commitment, for example, singling out the arenas in which institutional and non-institutional actors negotiate the goals of monitoring initiatives. These three maps are generally drawn and used at earlier stages of research projects, informing data collection, coding, and interpretation (Clarke 2021). Lastly, positional maps allow researchers to understand actors' positions along specific axes of interest (Clarke 2003; Hayati *et al.* 2014). The article builds on situational, social worlds/arena, and positional maps to describe the Spanish civic monitoring field and the positions taken by different civic monitors vis-à-vis institutional monitored actors and their constituencies.

The data was collected in the framework of a previous project on anti-corruption in Spain, including six semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 CSO members and spokespersons, organizational and institutional documents, and secondary literature. Interviews were collected online and in person between May and September 2021 and lasted 60 to 110 minutes. The sample selection aims to represent a wide array of Spanish monitoring actors at different times. It includes two NGOs that have been campaigning on transparency and accountability since before the beginning of the 15-M and participated in monitoring coalitions and campaigns: Access Info and Transparency International Spain; one social movement organization that was among the 15-M movement organizers in Barcelona and the leading subject of the monitoring campaign 15MpaRato, X-Net; three alternative media, and organizations committed to data-driven journalism and fact-checking created after the beginning of the 15-M mobilization, Civio, Maldita, and Political Watch[10]. The data are triangulated with documents produced by these organizations and the analysis of their website and monitoring campaigns such as OpenGenerationEU.

The analytical procedure has proceeded as follows. At first, interviews, documents, and secondary literature were scrutinized to draw a situational map containing all the relevant elements characterizing the Spanish civic monitoring arena (cfr. *infra* Table 1). Secondly, the analysis focused on the human collective actors characterizing the monitoring situation in Spain to draw a social worlds/arena map (Fig. 1). Lastly, the whole dataset was coded to produce the positional map (Fig. 2). The following section presents the ordered situational map (cfr. *infra* Table 1) to illustrate the Spanish monitoring field before moving to the discussion of the social worlds/arena map and discuss ongoing hybridization processes.

[9] For an overview, see Fominaya and Feenstra (2024) and Wilhelmi (2023).

[10] Political Watch was previously known as CIECODE.

4. SITUATING CIVIC MONITORING IN SPAIN

In Spain, the emergence of the 15-M movement in 2011 and its call for «real democracy» went hand in hand with the multiplication of grassroots monitoring practices in the form of dedicated social movement campaigns (e.g., 15MpaRato), alternative media (e.g., Civio), NGO lobbying (e.g., Access Info), and advocacy coalitions (e.g., ProAcceso coalition), which enhanced society's watchdog functions, used filtrations to unveil powerholders' wrongdoings, included new voices in the political arena, and expanded representation (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014; Feenstra and Keane 2014).

At first, whistleblowers were fundamental to translating the anti-corruption and pro-accountability grievances expressed by the 15-M into coherent monitoring initiatives. Leaks from informants accrued to central actors in the movement, such as X-Net[11], and became the basis for grassroots campaigns such as 15MpaRato, which collected leaks from whistleblowers to build a popular lawsuit against Rodrigo Rato, former director of the IMF, Minister of the Economy, vice president of the Spanish government, and president of Caja Madrid – then Bankia. The campaign was supported by a sizeable civic network, which reflected the heterogeneous composition of the 15-M and succeeded in bringing Rato to court and recovering the assets of 44 small investors (Flesher Fominaya 2020; Monterde *et al.* 2015). Monitoring through whistleblowers' filtrations was thus regarded as a counter-democratic tool to curb public corruption and hold power accountable (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014).

Contextually, the requests moved by the 15-M and the corruption scandals hitting the governing party (PP) gave a new impulse to old struggles. The pro-transparency campaign led by the ProAcceso coalition and the NGO Access Info found a fertile terrain to influence the passage of the transparency law in 2013. While CSOs variously attempted to pass a transparency law during Zapateros' governments, it was only with the eruption of the 15-M protests that transparency issues gained salience in the public debate. Law 19/2013 introduced new standards of proactive publications for institutional actors and the right for citizens to access public information, granting CSOs new monitoring opportunities and resources (e.g., open data for alternative media) and triggering the creation of monitoring actors on the institutional side (e.g., Transparency and Good Governance Council).

Most notably, monitoring practices have spread thanks to the development of ad-hoc information and communication technologies (ITCs). Alternative media have elaborated civic platforms such as Quien Manda[12] to analyze the connections between political and financial elites or Qué hacen los diputados[13] to keep track of MPs' work, and social movement organizations have developed collaborative platforms to monitor political parties' funding, such as Cuentas Claras.

Concurrently, global monitoring initiatives found resonance in the Spanish context. A notable example is the incorporation of Transparency International Integrity Pacts, a fundamental anti-corruption tool wherein CSOs serve as monitoring authorities in public tendering, into the Spanish context. Over time, Transparency Spain has signed multiple pacts with public authorities, aiming to increase the transparency and integrity of public contracting.

All these practices have come at hand during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, with CSOs exploiting their platforms, coalitions, and tools to oversee the elites' actions and decisions regarding the health, social, and economic crisis. Alternative media and data-driven initiatives such as Maldita have used their years-long experience to open and publish data on contagion rates and decision-making; NGOs such as FIBGAR have set up ad-hoc whistleblowing channels to collect COVID-related filtrations, and long-lasting networks as the ProAcceso coalition has mobilized against institutional opacity. At the same time, new actors have explicitly emerged to monitor pandemic-related issues, such as OpenGenerationEU, a civic coalition born to scrutinize the allocation and use of the Next Generation EU funds.

In line with previous works (Casero-Ripollés and López-Meri 2015; Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014; Feenstra and Keane 2014), the situational map helps single out how, over time, the reliance on monitoring practices has crosscut the Spanish civic field, being deployed by alternative media (e.g., Civio, Political Watch), coalitions (e.g., ProAcceso, Open Generation EU), NGOs (e.g., Transparency Spain, Access Info), and social movement organizations (e.g., X-Net). However, whereas at first, monitoring appeared to be strictly intertwined with the anti-corruption and pro-transparency claims expressed by the 15-M movement, over time, these practices have progressively lost their representative functions to answer more technical needs.

CSOs have thus recurred to monitoring practices for several purposes, from intervening in law enforcement (courts) to protesting (denouncing elites, calling

[11] X-Net opened an ad-hoc platform for safe and anonymous whistleblowing, Buzon X.

[12] Powered by Civio

[13] An iniative by Political Watch

Table 1. Table version of the ordered situational map.

Elements	*Type of actors/actants*	*Examples*
Human Collective Actors	Social movement campaigns	e.g., 15-MpaRato, X-Net
	Coalitions	e.g., ProAcceso, Abre
	NGOs	e.g., Access Info, Transparency Spain
	Alternative Media	e.g., Civio, Maldita, Political Watch
	Mainstream Media	e.g., ElDiario.es, El Mundo, InfoLibre
	Institutional Actors	e.g., government forces: national (PP), regional, and local governments; opposition forces: e.g., Podemos, Vox, Ciudadanos; administrative and enforcement institutions, e.g., Transparency and Good Governance Council, Antifraud Agency Valencia; international actors, e.g., EU
Human Individual Actors	Whistleblowers	
	Elites' members	e.g., Rodrigo Rato
	Political leaders	
	Head of administrative institutions, Heads of local institutions	e.g., President of the Transparency and Good Governance Council
	Spokespersons of CSOs	e.g., Transparency and Good Governance Office, Barcelona
		e.g., X-Net, Access Info, TI-ES's President
	CSO members and activists	
Non-human Elements	Leaking Platforms	BuzonX, Globaleaks
	Popular lawsuits	
	Monitoring Platforms	Que hacen los diputados, Quien manda
Temporal Elements	2008	Financial Crisis
	2011	Austerity measures and anti-austerity protests
	2020	Covid-related restrictions
Socio-Political Elements	Financial Crisis	Great Recession, Austerity Measures,
	Mass Protests	15 M/Indignados
	Laws	Transparency Law, European Directive on Whistleblowing,
	Covid-19	Lockdown measures, 2020 Royal Decree 463/2020 suspended access to information, Next Generation EU

Source: Author's own elaboration.

for e-mobilizations), informing, exposing, and raising awareness (through alternative and mainstream media), or participating in policy-making (at the locale, national, and international level).

The 15Mparato campaign, for example, was launched in 2012 by a group of activists that animated the 15Mparato land Rodrigo Rato in prison (Flesher Fominaya 2020). A group of SMOs led by X-Net asked citizens to leak information to build the case, filing the lawsuit in weeks. The campaign used whistleblower leaks, bringing Rato to court, recovering small investors' assets, and attracting the Spanish media's attention. Its success led to several similar investigations based on whistleblowers' leaks[14]. Hence, 15MpaRato and X-Net monitoring worked mainly in the enforcement (courts), media (alternative and mainstream), and protest worlds. However, when the attention around whistleblowing started to grow, nationally and internationally, other CSOs and incumbent parties such as Ciudadanos and Vox started to work on the legislative regulation of whistleblowers' protection. Following some relevant losses in court[15], X-Net partly moderated its contentious repertoires to enter the policy arena, for example, joining the ABRE coalition, which grouped Spanish CSOs advocating for a national law protecting whistleblowers.

On the contrary, NGOs such as Access Info – which forged the Pro Acceso coalition – started mobilizing on transparency and the right to know through traditional advocacy repertoires. However, over time, the organization exploited the 15-M discourses and requests to strengthen its position vis-à-vis political elites and obtain the passage of the transparency law in 2013. Over the years, Access Info kept overseeing the law's enforcement, recurring to confrontational repertoires as strategic litigations or e-mobilizations, like tweet bombing,

[14] E.g., the Tarjetas Negras and Castor's cases.

[15] Rato was absolved in 2020 for Bankia's case but entered prison in 2018 for the Tarjetas Negras' one.

Figure 1. Social worlds/arena map. *Source*: Author's own work, based on template by Clarke, Friese and Washburn (2015: 201).

when necessary. Other NGOs have instead preferred less confrontational forms of monitoring. Transparency International Spain – for example – has always sought to maintain quite cooperative stances towards institutional actors, reclaiming its super partes identity. Transparency's monitoring work, particularly through the Integrity Pacts initiatives, has remained mainly anchored to the legislative and enforcement worlds, avoiding mediatization and protest.

The reliance of some CSOs on protest repertoires (e.g., tweet bombing and e-mobilizations) and formal confrontation (e.g., strategic litigation) created tensions with more moderate coalition members. Coalitions such as Pro Acceso or Abre sometimes struggled to conduct monitoring functions jointly, preferring to act independently.

Other telling insights come from monitoring by alternative media, data journalism, and open data initiatives, which have grown significantly in Spain over the last decade (Casero-Ripollés and López-Meri 2015). Actors such as Civio, Maldita, or Political Watch tried to carry out some of the 15 M pro-transparency and pro-accountability claims by retrieving, opening, and circulating public information to put decision-makers' choices and actions under the public spotlight. While operating mainly within the media world, these actors have often resorted to confrontational repertoires to have their rights recognized (e.g., using lawsuits to access information) and joined forces with other CSOs to intervene in the legislative process (e.g., being part of the ProAcceso coalition) and scrutinize the use of public resources (e.g., OpenGenerationEU).

Visualizing the dynamics of the Spanish monitoring arena through the social worlds/arenas map offers (Fig. 1) some clues on ongoing hybridization processes, with diverse actors relying on the same practice with or without resorting to confrontational repertoires (Clarke A.E, Friese C. and Washburn R.S 2017). However, to elucidate differences within the Spanish monitoring field, the following section investigates how civic monitors have positioned themselves vis-à-vis monitored actors and the constituencies they intend to serve.

5. POSITIONING CIVIC MONITORING

Besides differences in repertoires and arenas, the Spanish monitoring actors seem to differ according to their positions vis-à-vis the elites and constituencies.

On one extreme, one can find Transparency Spain's Integrity Pacts, where monitoring results in cooptation within the elites' circles and the citizens' inclusion in public scrutiny is minimal. The Integrity Pacts, for example, aim to increase transparency and efficacy in public contracting via agreements between the contracting authority and service providers under the scrutiny of a third civic party. Transparency has signed several pacts with Spanish local authorities, e.g., Madrid City Council. Here, the focus is ameliorating administrative procedures, which resembles more a logic of service delivery rather than bottom-up surveillance. Conflictual stances are hardly part of these monitoring practices that, as reminded by Transparency Spain:

> *Wholly depended on political will [...] it's extra-legal because it is not in the law; it is a political will, a good practice. (INT 4)*

In this case, monitoring takes the form of a top-down concession built around the needs and interests of monitored authorities. When present, citizens' inclusion is minimal and dependent on resource availability:

> *We signed those pacts, some workshops were held for all citizens, and for monitors [...] What happens is that when that project ended, we could only give it a minimal follow-up without resources and people to continue signing more pacts, doing events, or raising awareness. (INT 4)*

On the opposite extreme, one can find instances of civic monitoring that reject integration and dialogue with elites and aim to make the citizenry the leading

actor of public scrutiny. 15MPaRato constitutes a perfect example of this type of civic monitoring based on citizens' surveillance of public powers. The leaks-based campaign drew on whistleblowers' information and grassroots lawsuits because:

> *As citizens, we do not perceive the parties and the judicial system as allies against corruption and abuses but as part of the problem. It is evident to any observer that a large part of the victories in the fight against systemic corruption come from the citizens or thanks to citizen support. (DOC 1)*

The campaign framed the post-2008 situation as a systemic crisis that could only be solved from below. However, over the years, some of its leading members partly revised their approach and engaged in the legislative and enforcement worlds (Fig.1). For example, X-Net cooperated with Barcelona's city council to set up an institutional whistleblowing platform. Such a decision was framed as coherent with X-Net's monitoring goals. The group thus reclaimed its role as an external watchdog and its suspicious attitudes toward the institutional world, affirming that:

> *We must once again be external elements to fulfill the role of watchdogs. The institutions must do most of the work because that is where the resources are. The citizen devices must replace the institutions only when they neglect their functions. The recommended methodology advises the leaker to send the information only to the administration's mailbox with the resources to act. But, after the time indicated by the administration, the citizen who considers the action ineffective can denounce this oversight through citizen self-organization, such as the Xnet Mailbox. (DOC 1)*

Between these two poles, one can find more blurred instances of civic monitoring, which struggle to balance integration within elites' circles and citizens' inclusion. The tension is evident when considering monitoring coalitions that, by definition, put together groups with different goals and monitoring styles. The ProAcceso coalition, for example, has existed for more than a decade and managed to achieve important goals, such as the approval of the transparency law in 2013. However, monitoring the elites' work has sometimes been the source of tensions between its members. As recalled by Access Info's President, who founded the coalition, some CSs refused to participate in monitoring activities, which were thus carried out independently:

> *The first time I proposed to the coalition Pro Acceso to jointly analyze the political party programs and manifestos to see what they were saying about transparency, everyone said there was "Absolutely not" because they never followed those programs anyway. And so, at Access Info, we did it on our own. (INT 2)*

The tension between confrontational and cooperative stances characterized coalitional monitoring even during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the Pro-Aceso coalition confronted the Spanish government for suspending the citizens' right to access public information during the first lockdown. On the other hand, it seized the opportunity to propose reforming the transparency law. The need to combine conflict and cooperation in monitoring is well-explained by Access Info's president when stating that:

> *If we, the civil society, are sort of outsiders to the administration, if we're not sympathetic to how they work, if we don't try to understand the challenges they have, we can't have the same impact because that becomes confrontational, you know, and I think that again, in a more kind of mature civil society context, you would have civil society organizations who are critical who will challenge, who will litigate, but who understand as well and you are ready to kind of brainstorm solutions with the people in the public administration who are trying to do the right thing. (INT 2)*

However, monitoring coalitions have struggled to include citizens in scrutinizing processes so far. Their occasional reliance on confrontational repertoires has not come with ad hoc strategies to foster citizens' par-

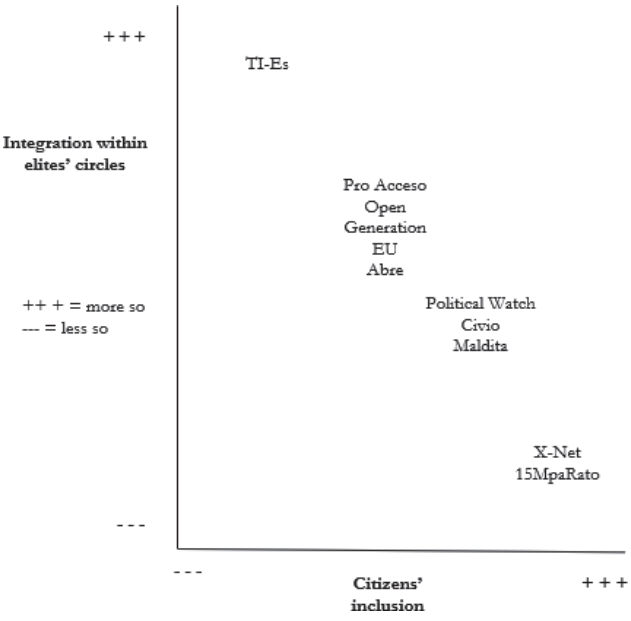

Figure 2. Positional map. Civic monitoring, elites' integration, and citizens' inclusion. *Source*: Author's own work, based on template by Clarke, Friese and Washburn (2015: 231).

ticipation in monitoring practices. Even the more citizens-oriented initiative, Open Generation EU, seems to lack instruments to directly realize people's inclusion in monitoring the use of the Next Generation EU funds, presenting itself as a group of: «civil society actors, experts, and journalists to demand transparent and accessible management of Next Generation EU funds and the Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan, embodied in the 'España Puede' plan[16]».

Monitoring by alternative media seems characterized by similar tensions. Citizens' inclusion in monitoring practices is rooted in the idea that public information belongs to the people and that opening and distributing it is a service to the community. As recalled by an interviewee from Maldita:

> *What we do is ask for databases, we ask the government, the administration, or whoever, […] and from there we tell a story. What we also always try to do is open those databases, which is like, "We have achieved this, we have requested it, and we believe that it is data that has to be public. They must be public; they are government data; therefore, they are public data, and they belong to all of us and beyond our use and telling what is interesting, here is the database and whoever wants to use it, redistribute it or whatever. (INT 6)*

However, including citizens in monitoring processes is often a challenging task. Whereas monitoring, transparency, and accountability have become salient in the Spanish public debate, civic monitors such as Civio recognize that data-enabled monitoring is still something ordinary citizens can hardly carry out autonomously. According to Civio's spokesperson, whereas citizens are increasingly interested in monitoring practices, they still need to outsource this work to trustable CSOs:

> *People want to monitor institutions. In other words, people still trust social organizations that do this work more than doing it themself. (INT 6)*

Data-driven initiatives have tried to address this need, favoring the use and re-use of information by specialized CSOs. As reported by Political Watch:

> *Typically, our tools are more oriented to people who carry out political surveillance for their work, for example, the advocacy department of a civic organization, which needs to know what happens in the details of politics, for example. (INT 8)*

However, besides supplying other actors with information, alternative media can directly use their bulk of data in more confrontational ways, for example, restoring to naming and shaming strategies to exert pressure on the institutional realm. As maintained by Civio:

> *We often go to court, sometimes with the administration, when they deny us the information […] we believe citizens should have a right to. Ultimately, we investigate and press to generate the necessary jurisprudence so that if we win a particular trial, information that is not available right now, we can make it possible for any citizen to request it now. (INT 3)*

However, alternative media see the need to dialogue with the institutional world while avoiding cooptation. As reported by Civio, it is necessary to fulfill one of the main goals of scrutinizing powerholders, which is ultimately to unveil problems and find solutions:

> *We investigate areas where we believe there is insufficient information on transparency. And what we do afterward is, with what we have learned, what we bring to light, especially if they are bad practices, abuses or errors, or bad faith on the part of the administrations, we try to provide solutions […] If, as an institution, you are not being transparent enough by bringing your problem to light, we are trying to get you to correct that, let's say, that immoral practice. (INT 6)*

This succinct overview proves that civic monitoring initiatives differ according to their positions vis-à-vis monitored actors and the general public. Monitoring from below can indeed take the form of cooptation when prioritizing the integration within elite circles over citizens' inclusion, as in the case of Transparency's Integrity Pacts, or resemble surveillance when struggling to enhance the people's scrutinizing power and rejecting cooperation with political elites, as it in the case of 15MpaRato. In between, NGOs, coalitions, and alternative media often struggle to find a balance between these two poles, trying to enhance citizens' participation and improve institutions' work through monitoring practices.

6. CONCLUSION

The article has investigated the crosscutting reliance on civic monitoring practices by Spanish CSOs over the last decade. Analyzing interviews and documents through SA has helped single out hybridization processes within the civic arena. The situational map has elucidated the main elements characterizing monitoring from below. The social worlds/arena map has

[16] Description accessible at https://opengenerationeu.net/quienes-somos/

shown how different actors such as NGOs, social movement organizations, coalitions, and alternative media have equally resorted to monitoring practices to intervene in the legislative, enforcement, media, or protest words. Exceptions regarded some NGOs such as Transparency Spain or campaigns such as 15MPaRato, which alternatively avoid engaging in protest or legislative work in their monitoring functions. Finally, the positional map has elucidated different integration logics between civic monitors, monitored elites, and the public. SMOs and movement campaigns such as X-Net and 15MpaRato have mainly sought to include citizens (e.g., whistleblowers) in monitoring practices while surveilling institutions' work. Conversely, NGOs such as Transparency Spain have used their monitoring role to enhance their integration with monitored institutions, sometimes resulting in cooptation within the elites' circles. In between, monitoring coalitions have tried to increase their leverage towards legislative and enforcement actors, balancing confrontation and dialogue. Similarly, alternative media have moved between conflict and cooperation, trying to sustain institutional work while creating monitoring ecosystems and mediating the relationship between monitored elites and the public.

The evidence aligns with ongoing discussions on hybridization processes in the civic field and well-documented tendencies in the Spanish case (Della Porta 2020a; Feenstra 2018). Furthermore, the study sheds new light on differences within the civic monitoring field beyond distinctions based on the functions of monitoring practices (Feenstra and Casero-Ripollés 2014; Feenstra and Keane 2014). The study shows how monitoring practices deployed by different CSOs represent new forms of political participation, which become particularly relevant in multiple crises, such as in the aftermath of the Great Recession or during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Significant limitations relate to the data collected and the method applied. Whereas the data collection stopped in 2021, new evidence on post-pandemic times would be necessary to understand the current relevance of monitoring practices further. Moreover, SA's potentialities have not been exploited fully here. Whereas the study has focused mainly on human collective actors and three types of maps, new investigations could benefit from moving the attention to the roles of other defining elements. For example, new evidence could come from a fine-grained analysis of the role of non-human actants, given the crucial role of ICTs in monitoring practices (Keane 2009; Mattoni 2020). Understanding whether and how different monitoring technologies shape or are shaped by different CSOs could enhance our understanding of varieties of civic monitoring.

Lastly, replicating the study beyond the Spanish context would corroborate the presented evidence. Whereas Spain has been considered a critical case for democratic innovation, monitory democracy, and hybridization processes, monitoring, NGOiziation, and SMOization seem to be on the rise worldwide (Choudry and Kapoor 2013; Della Porta 2020a). New comparative studies will reduce the risk of ending up in a «Spanish exceptionalism» type of argument and will enrich our understanding of the tension between monitory democracy and counter-democracy, which to date remains largely undebated.

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APPENDIX

Interviewees

1. X-Net, online, May 2021
2. Access Info, offline, May 2021
3. Civio, online, June 2021
4. Transparency International Spain, online, July 2021
5. Political Watch, online, June 2021
6. Maldita, online, July 2021

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Unveiling Extra-Institutional Agency in Nationalist Contention: Transformative Events and Grassroots Mobilizations in Scotland and Catalonia (1980s-2000s)

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Abstract. The literature on nationalist movements in Western democracies has almost exclusively focused on ethno-nationalist parties by attributing to them the key-role of "ethnic entrepreneurs". Yet, non-institutional actors such as social movement organizations and grassroots groups can significantly impact the history of territorial contention and reshape movements. Their role is thus explored in the Scottish and Catalan struggles for selfdetermination between the 1980s and the 2000s. Firstly, the historical analysis of transformative events shows how the latter were set in motion by non-institutional actors. While Scottish organizations and groups operated to foster cross-party cooperation, the Catalan counterparts operated to mobilize society and popular support. Secondly, a thematic analysis of primary sources shows that the mobilizations fuelled by these events produced organizational and cultural changes in both nationalist movements. These changes left their legacy suggesting that former grassroots mobilizations made an important difference to resources mobilized in the current secessionist movements.

Keywords: movements, Scottish, Catalan, mobilizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

When studying nationalist mobilizations in Western democracies, scholarship has almost exclusively focused on ethno-nationalist parties by attributing to them the key-role of "ethnic entrepreneurs" – i.e., agents of nationalist mobilization (Winter and Türsan 1998). Yet, non-institutional actors such as social movement organizations (SMOs) and grassroots groups[1] significantly contribute to the evolution of territorial contention. This article focuses on these non-institutional actors in nationalist movements.

The recent developments in Scotland and Catalonia – where the referendum campaigns rapidly grew into mass social movements – have effectively

[1] A social movement organization is defined as a complex or formal organization that shares the goals of a social movement and acts accordingly. I instead use the concept of "grassroots groups" to indicate informal organizations with loose internal structures and few established procedures.

drawn academic attention to non-institutional actors (Crameri 2015; Della Porta *et al*. 2017; Keating 2015; Lynch 2015). By defining these referendums as being "from below", Della Porta and colleagues (2017) have brilliantly shown that civil society actors and social movement organizations (and not just the traditional political or judicial institutions) have initiated, appropriated or subverted the referendum campaigns. However, before these mass movements so manifestly burst upon the scene in the 2010s, social movement organizations and grassroots groups had already been mobilizing to support self-determination over the past decades.

The role of these non-institutional actors is hence investigated in the campaigns for self-determination that occurred between the 1980s and the 2000s. The concept of transformative events, turning points in collective action, is chosen to shed light on the agency of non-institutional actors (Bosi and Davis 2017), intended as their capacity to effect structural change[2]. While attention is usually drawn to the creative manifestations of agency *during* transformative events, this article emphasizes the role of agency in the production of the events themselves. Non-institutional actors were indeed able to bring about some transformative events and the mobilization around these events catalysed change in the movements' organizational structures and cultural resources. The analysis also hints at the fact that these changes prepared the ground for the renewed territorial mobilizations in recent times as they persisted beyond the events themselves, making important differences to resources mobilized in contemporary episodes of contention.

The historical analysis of transformative events, based on scholarly work and events' accounts, shows that the initiatives of non-institutional actors produced momentous turning points in the history of nationalist movements. Their initiatives generated different reactions from their institutional interlocutors thus triggering new forms of interactions between SMOs and parties. The thematic analysis of original materials produced by SMOs and grassroots groups, instead, explores the transformative capacity of their mobilization, looking at the movements' organizational structures and cultural resources.

By adopting the concept of transformative events, this study develops a major theoretical argument that challenges overly structural models and emphasizes the processual nature of collective action. Processes of collective action are mutually constituted by continuities and transformations in which agency plays an important role. Actors can indeed "produce" transformative events that affect social movements and their trajectories. While events constitute sudden ruptures in a temporal process, at the same time they act on existing structures thus exhibiting both continuity and change. Events bring about new practices, discourses and relations but they are always transformations or rearticulations of preexisting ones.

The following section briefly reviews the literature and illustrates how an eventful approach to nationalist mobilization can help fill the identified gap. The methodological framework is then followed by the historical analysis of the selected transformative events taking place in Scotland and Catalonia. Finally, the article presents the analysis of the mobilizations' effects and discusses the findings in a comparative manner.

2. A SOCIAL MOVEMENT APPROACH TO NATIONALIST MOBILIZATIONS: AGENCY AND THE TEMPORALITY OF EVENTS

Minority nationalism is but one of the different types of nationalism and includes those nations within existing states that pursue territorial claims and/or civil and political rights (Johnston 2018). It however shares the core ideology of nationalism which is the principle of self-determination whose pursuit can take different forms such as mobilizing for greater autonomy or independence.

Nationalism has been defined in terms of different families of concepts, such as ideology, identity, discourse but also movement. It has only been relatively recently that nationalism has progressively been included in the study of social movements (Dufour and Traisnel 2009) as the analysis of nationalism has shifted the focus from its cultural and structural origins and development to its "political-contextual" dynamics (Goodman 2010). Since the study of nationalism has involved contributions from several disciplines, theoretical approaches are numerous but can be distinguished between those prioritizing either structuralist or agential perspectives. Traditionally, structuralist approaches are macro-analytic and tend to consider the rise of nationalist movements taking a long-term historical perspective. In this light, nationalist movements are either the result of deeply entrained historical identities (Delanty 2003) or a by-product of broader social forces, like industrialization (Beissinger 2002). Following the structuralist tradition in social movement studies, some scholars have adopted the Political Process model (McAdam 1982) arguing that political opportunity structures are important determinants in explaining the development of some nationalist movements (ex. Maiz 2003; Romano 2006; Pinard 2020).

[2] For a full development of Sewell's concept of structure, see Sewell (1992).

More agential approaches, instead, have identified other types of determinants. Special attention has been traditionally paid to «the role of elites, political entrepreneurs, intellectuals and charismatic leaders in shaping and influencing nationalist discourses, objectives and political choices» (Sabanadze 2010: 48). In these accounts, the masses are viewed as passive actors reacting to the mobilizing strategies of the elites. Rational choice proponents (Hardin 1996; Laitin 2007) have tried to counterbalance this tendency explaining why people participate in nationalist movements focusing on the cost-benefit calculations of ordinary citizens. How the "masses" mobilize and the outcomes of their mobilization are dimensions that are not explored in rational choice works. However, these and other aspects have become central in other studies. Indeed, bottom-up processes[3] and popular protests are brought to the fore in research focusing on nationalist movements in authoritarian regimes (ex. Beissinger 2002) or in colonized countries (ex. Schmidt 2005) but also nationalist movements resorting to armed conflict (ex. Bosi and De Fazio 2017). Instead, in Western democratic contexts where nationalist interests are predominantly aggregated by political parties (De Winter and Türsan 1998), forms of mobilization "from below" have usually been overlooked. Studies presenting a perspective on nationalism centred around actor agency tend to adopt national parties as units of analysis (ex. Lluch 2010). Even when it is acknowledged that nationalist movements are composed of party and non-party organizations (NGOs, pressure groups, citizen associations, etc.), the focus remains on "party nationalism" (Johnston 2018). The way I propose to address this gap in literature is by looking at transformative events[4] (McAdam and Sewell 2001; Sewell 1996) set in motion by those actors that have usually been neglected in nationalism studies.

Instead of treating all events as largely equivalent, McAdam and Sewell (2001) have argued that some of them are more important than others because they can produce radical tipping points in the trajectory of social movements. Transformative events are sequences of action that, even if brief and spatially concentrated, contribute to produce enduring effects on the evolution of a movement. This is because they are symbolically resonant as they are recognized as notable by contemporaries who assign importance to them. And they produce a cascade of consequences able to transform structures and practices (Sewell 1996). In social movement literature, transformative events are said to dramatically increase the level of mobilization. Protests and campaigns fuelled by such events can have impacts on the very movements that carry them out. Through these mobilizations, networks develop, frames are bridged and tactics experimented. Some new practices and structures are transitory, while others "sediment" within the movements, persisting beyond the context in which they were created (Della Porta 2018). Mobilizations, particularly eventful ones, generate legacies in a movement thus shaping the organizational and cultural structure of its successors (Della Porta *et al*. 2018). On the organizational level, SMOs decide how to structure their networks, through internal and external processes, such as the development of membership criteria, the creation of functional and/or territorial subunits as well as their relation with the organizational environment (Kriesi 1996). They also need to opt for an action repertoire, that is the set of tactics and performances at the disposition of collective actors engaged in contentious dynamics (Tilly 1986). On the cultural level, social movements engage in the strategic efforts to create a shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action (Snow *et al*. 2013). These efforts are also known as framing processes[5]. Literature has categorized different types of frames and of framing strategies, although some are definitely more recurrent than others. The core component of collective action frames is the injustice frame and consists in evaluating a situation as unfair and morally unacceptable and placing the blame for it (Gamson 1992). Frame bridging, instead, is probably the most prevalent framing strategy used by social movements and it occurs when «two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem» are linked (Snow *et al*. 2013: 400).

3. METHODOLOGY AND CASE SELECTION

This study adopts a comparative research design that favours "thick description" over generalization and aims at discovering similarities, differences and patterns across the two selected cases. The comparison of Scotland and Catalonia is anything but new (Moreno

[3] A similar concern can be found in recent cultural approaches to nationalism where attention is refocused «on the agency of ordinary people and masses – as opposed to elites – as the co-constituents and consumers of national symbols, rituals and identities» (Knott 2015: 1).

[4] Brubaker (1994) has also borrowed an eventful perspective from William Sewell but he has encouraged to adopt it to study nationhood or "nationness" as an event, that is as something that suddenly crystallizes rather than gradually develops.

[5] Framing is one of the activities that social movement leaders and participants do on a regular basis. Grievances are the result of this signifying work, and not naturally occurring sentiments or complaints arising automatically from material conditions (Snow *et al*. 2013).

1988; Cetrà and Harvey 2017; Dalle Mulle and Serrano 2019) as they constitute two relatively coherent cases characterized by a strong sense of national identity as well as advanced levels of regional autonomy (Bremberg and Gillespie 2022). Historic nations within democratic EU states, Scotland and Catalonia present moderate forms of nationalism but despite these basic common traits, they vary in several aspects. One concerns their status of nation that has been recognized for a long time in the UK (Guibernau 2006) but not in Spain where a mono-national nation-state interpretation prevails (Dowling 2017). Moreover, the Catalan nation was threatened with extinction by Franco's dictatorship which persecuted Catalonia's culture and language and abolished the 1932 Catalan Parliament. Scotland, instead, has never gone through an analogous experience and obtained its regional government only in 1998 (Greer 2007). Despite its recognition as a nation, Scottish nationalism contains a relatively weak cultural/linguistic dimension which is instead strong in Catalan nationalism as language and culture are deeply rooted in society (Keating 1996).

The chosen timespan is germane to the scope of the article. The analysis takes into account the mobilizations that occurred until the early 2000s which precede the emergence of the contemporary secessionist movements. The 1980s, instead, were chosen as the starting point of the analysis because they were characterized by a powerful resurgence of nationalism (Elliot 2018) following the 1979 watershed. In both regions, referendums on autonomy/devolution were held that very same year and did not lay the nationalist movements to rest. In this timespan, a total of six transformative events (three per region) have been selected for being salient cases of grassroots-led processes.

The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part is based on historical sociology methodology and hence employs narrative as mode to analyse events. Drawn upon academic scholarly work, journalistic and activist accounts, this analysis aims at contextualizing and exploring how non-institutional actors brought about the events and their impact on the development of the movements. The second part analyses the mobilizations surrounding the events, their effects and legacies and draws upon original campaigning material produced by SMOs and grassroots groups in the framework of those mobilizations. A total number of 103 documents (32 webpages, 32 leaflets, 35 advertisements in newspapers and 4 posters) has been collected.

For the Scottish case, I could use the online Scottish Political Archive (SPA) set up by the University of Stirling to cover the decades 1980s-1990s. I have focused on written documents[6] such as leaflets and campaign posters, and selected information-rich material. For the Catalan case, I could not find a similar online archive of political material so I have relied on the online archive[7] of one of the major Catalan-medium dailies, *Avui*, where SMOs published public statements, posters, manifestos, declarations and activity programmes. I went through the material published all along the unfolding of the campaigns (1981-1993) and I have selected information-rich items. In both cases, for the analysis of the mobilizations of the early 2000s, I have used the online archive Wayback Machine to retrieve the SMOs' websites created between 2005 and 2010 and I have selected the web pages providing information about their principles, aims and activities.

To analyse the collected original material, I have resorted to the qualitative technique of thematic analysis which focuses on identifying and describing prominent patterns in the data and makes it possible to compare them across different cases. Running the data through the software MaxQDA, it was possible to recognize emerging themes that became the categories for analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). The coding was done inductively, marking similar sentences with a code to categorize them and at a later stage, combining the codes into clusters forming a theme. This process resulted in the elaboration of four themes that structure my analysis. In their final refinement, I was guided by social movement theories and in particular, those concepts regarding organizational development (SMOs' structuration and action repertoires) and cultural resources (injustice frame and frame bridging).

4. TRANSFORMATIVE EVENTS IN SCOTLAND AND CATALONIA

In this section, I will briefly outline the transformative events that I have selected, highlighting that they were all grassroots-led and showing their relevance and the ways they worked as catalysts for mobilization.

4.1. Scotland

For the Scottish case, I have analysed the following events: the publication of the report "A Claim of Right" in 1988; the "Scotland Demands Democracy" March in

[6] The Scottish Political Archive has much of its material online, accessed via Flickr (https://www.flickr.com/) by typing the catalogue number in the search bar (ex. spa.2558).

[7] Available on the website operated by the Municipal Archive of Girona: https://pandora.girona.cat/index.vm?lang=es&view=hemeroteca

1992; the launch of the Scottish Independence Convention in 2005.

In the 1980s, the cross-party, non-partisan Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (CSA) took up the devolution project after the failed 1979 referendum. Its main aim was to unite "parties and people" who were opposed to the status quo and wished for constitutional change (SPA: spa.758.3.2). With this in mind, in 1984, it produced a plan to establish a Constitutional Convention but it was only after another Tory victory in the 1987 election that the project began to take shape. A tipping point was reached in 1988 when the Constitutional Steering Committee formed precisely by the CSA issued the report "A Claim of Right for Scotland" that recommended the establishment of a constitutional convention to draw up a scheme for a Scottish Assembly. Steeped in historical significance, as will be shown, the report made the status quo untenable (The Herald 1998) and triggered a succession of events that eventually led to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. Indeed, the recommendation in the Claim materialized in 1989 with the establishment of the Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC), the broadest based devolution gathering of politicians and civic Scotland (Kellas 1992). Within this body, not only did the Labour Party officially commit to devolution but their devolution proposals merged with those of the Liberals thus paving the way to the blueprint of a Scottish Parliament in 1995 and the united coalition that won the 1997 referendum.

The Convention was momentarily eclipsed in 1992-93 by new political organizations committed to engaging the public and building grassroots support for constitutional renovation (Lynch 1996). Thatcher's reforms throughout the 1980s triggered widespread protests and this gave further impetus to change. In the wake of the fourth Conservative victory in the 1992 election, new campaigning groups emerged to express their discontent with Scotland's democratic deficit. Despite the Scottish electorate voting for the opposition parties in general elections, their influence in the UK arena could not match the level of support they had in Scotland (Ichijo 2004). Civic groups like Scotland United, Common Cause and Democracy for Scotland were formed precisely to campaign for democratic solutions to this problem and were able to organize the "Scotland Demands Democracy" March. Held concurrently with the 1992 EU summit in Edinburgh, this event was the largest ever pro-home rule demonstration that even to this day, is regarded as a «major staging point on the way to the creation of a Scottish Parliament» (Barnes & Peterkin, 2012). The demonstration attracted wide support and over 25.000 people turned up, generating political momentum and ensuring a remarkable media coverage also internationally. The Democracy Declaration, read at the rally and endorsed by civic organizations and the pro-devolution parties, represented a show of unity among the opposition parties (Cusick 1992). This unity would prove to be a crucial strength of the 1997 referendum campaign and marked the difference with the 1979 campaign (Dardanelli 2005). Once the Scottish Parliament was finally established, the constitutional debate was put to rest.

Discussions about independence emerged relatively soon though, as the perception about the effectiveness of the Scottish Parliament was rapidly deteriorating already in its earliest days. Dissatisfied with the lack of a debate about independence in the Scottish Parliament, a group of activists gathered with the feeling «they needed a voice» (Orr 2006: 22) and worked to prepare the way for a formal platform campaigning for independence. So, on St. Andrew's night in 2005, the Scottish Independence Convention (SIC) was launched in Edinburgh's Dynamic Earth in a spirit of great enthusiasm as people who were not natural allies showed mutual support (Orr 2006). Leaders of the Scottish National Party (SNP), the Scottish Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) shared the platform, together with academics and artists. Participants regarded the meeting as a sign that Scotland was «a nation on the verge of growing up» (Truman 2005) and spoke of a «phantom revolution» (Orr 2006: 23) because of poor media coverage, yet still a revolution. From that moment onwards, although public opinion did not shift towards support for independence, the pro-independence arguments made all the political running (Bradbury 2021).

4.2. Catalonia

For the Catalan case, I have analysed the following events: the establishment of *La Crida a la Solidaritat* in 1981; the protest at the inauguration of the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona in 1989; the first mass demonstration of the *Plataforma pel Dret a Decidir* in 2006.

In the late 1970s, the democratic transition after Franco's dictatorship entailed the reacquisition of Catalan autonomy and regional competences, engendering great resistances to it. The manifesto denouncing the discrimination of the Castilian language in Catalonia (known as "Manifesto of the 2.300") makes a good example. As a formal response to the Manifesto, a group of Catalan intellectuals and activists published a letter titled *Crida a la Solidaritat en Defensa de la Llengua, la Cultura I la Naciò Catalanes* [Call to Solidarity in Defense of the Catalan Language, Culture and Nation]

inviting Catalans to gather at the University of Barcelona the day after. That meeting is remembered as a chaotic moment, the University's Paranymph was packed and no one expected such a high attendance (Safont 2021). It marked the birth of a movement, shortly named *La Crida*, that soon counted in its ranks around 1300 organizations and successfully mobilized thousands of people in defence of the consolidation of self-government and linguistic normalization. *La Crida* also tried to revitalize the left-wing party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* [ERC – Republic Left of Catalonia] and eventually succeeded but at its own expense as the movement lost two of its leading figures who joined the party and made it fully pro-independence (Lluch 2010). This consequently favoured the party's co-optation of pro-independence activists from different political organizations, often leading to their dissolution.

Before its collapse, however, *La Crida* was one of the main initiators of the mobilization that took place in 1989 on the occasion of the inauguration of the Stadium in Barcelona which had been chosen to host the upcoming Olympic Games. The stadium was filled with Catalan flags and leaflets with a slogan – "Freedom for Catalonia" – that ended up identifying the whole nationalist campaign during the Games. Highly symbolic, this protest is remembered as a clear "show of force" that proved that Catalans could think and act big (Bassas 2017). The campaign that followed this protest was successful in its aim, namely "Catalanizing" the Games but also in helping Catalans define, for themselves and others, «the role and place of Catalonia in the contexts of the Spanish state, the European Community and an emerging post-Cold War international system» (Pi-Sunyer 1995: 36). The protest at the inauguration of the stadium was the moment that marked the difference as not only did it prove a certain unity in the movement (Tomas 2017) but it was perceived as the beginning of a project that belonged to the people, and was not shared by the administration nor by political authorities (Masreal 2022).

During the rest of the 1990s, the consolidation of ERC as a party belonging to the Catalan parliamentary system went hand in hand with the marginalization of militant independentism (Gabriel 2002). However, a new phase began with the new Catalan Tripartite government which opened a dialogue with the Spanish Government about the reform of the Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia in 2003. Concerned with the way the debate on the Statute was carried out in Madrid (Cuadras-Morató 2016), representatives of civic, cultural and political organizations gathered in the *Plataforma Pel Dret a Decidir* [PDD – Platform for the Right to Decide] at the end of 2005 to give voice to Catalan national aspirations. The first large-scale demonstration organized by the *Plataforma* on 18 February 2006 saw over 200,000 people participating and it constituted a milestone in the history of Catalan nationalist mobilization (Álvarez 2006). Participants and observers agree that it was a moment of "great togetherness" and strong collective emotion, with a feeling that the demonstration was able to open up new future perspectives (Miró 2006), affecting the development of the debate on the Statute but more generally, Catalanism. And indeed, that demonstration was the seed from which other initiatives would soon blossom (Segura 2013), such as the 2009-2011 popular consultations about Catalan independence and finally, the establishment of the *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* [ANC – Catalan National Assembly] in 2012.

5. MOBILIZATIONS' EFFECTS AND LEGACIES IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

As the main features of the transformative events have been outlined, I will now focus on the effects that eventful mobilizations had on the very same actors that set in motion the events. Effects are analysed in four areas characterizing SMOs: their structuration and action repertoires on one hand, the elaboration of injustice frames and the carrying out of frame bridging on the other. For each of these areas, I will also highlight the continuities and trends developed throughout different waves of mobilization, showing how some practices and frames became part of the nationalist movements' culture.

5.1. SMOs' structuration

One of the biggest transformations that the mobilizations surrounding transformative events brought about is the development of new networks of activists and organizations. This aspect has to do with the external structuration of SMOs, namely the way they interact with their organizational environment. In Scotland, it is possible to observe the creation of two umbrella organizations, the Conventions, which were both the result of bottom-up initiatives and both addressing the lack of inter-party cooperation (SPA: spa.758.3.1; Scottish Independence Convention 2007c). The Constitutional Convention was born from the efforts of the CSA, a grassroots organization launched by politicians, academics, trade unionists and activists (SPA: spa.769.9.1). All political parties took part in the Convention (except the Conservatives and the Nationalists) and so did churches, unions, women's forums, business and local councils

(Hearn 2019). Compared to previous conventions, this was the first with such a wide membership and such an extended series of meetings (Kellas 1992). The SNP actively participated in the CSA's preparatory meetings but in the end, withdrew from the Convention while the Labour, originally reluctant, joined it thus welcoming the CSA's proposals and moving to a position on Scottish self-government closer to that of the SNP than its traditional one. The Independence Convention too was originally conceived by a group of Scots with different profiles, some being members of political parties, some not, some from the Central Belt, some from the Borders (Orr 2006). Openly inspired by the previous Convention, the SIC was the first cross-party non-partisan platform for Scottish independence that united all pro-independence parties (SNP, Scottish Greens and SSP)[8]. The networks established by the two Conventions seem to be more oriented towards the participation of politicians and political parties and ended up initiating elite-led processes[9]. Unlike the two Conventions, the 1993 Coalition for Scottish Democracy was an umbrella platform that did not include institutional actors and was instead made up of trade unions, the Campaign for a Scottish Parliament (previously, CSA) and the newly born Common Cause and Democracy for Scotland (SPA: spa.769.14.2).

The mobilizations around the events triggered the emergence or consolidation of new collective actors in Catalonia. The latter were characterized by a communitarian dimension that was reflected in wide and transversal networks able to mobilize massive popular support. *La Crida*, for instance, worked as an umbrella organization including hundreds of other organizations such as cultural and linguistic associations, neighbours associations, university faculties, youth groups, sport/ludic clubs and leftist organizations (La Crida 1981: 10). La *Crida* was welcomed and supported by both regionalist parties CiU and ERC although CiU soon distanced itself from *La Crida*'s actions due to the movement's radical discourse. After the 1989 protest at the Olympic Stadium, *Òmnium Cultural* decided to launch the unified platform *Acció Olímpica* [Olympic Action] that attracted an impressive number of sport clubs, municipalities, civil society associations (including *La Crida*) and individuals (Òmnium Cultural 1992; Acció Olímpica 1992a). Similarly, a glance at the lists of participants and supporters of the PDD makes it clear that this platform as well had a very high aggregating capacity (Plataforma pel Dret a Decidir 2006a). ERC got very involved in the Plataforma, being one of its members from the very beginning, while CiU participated in the preparatory meetings and joined only some of the PDD's activities.

Although most of these umbrella organizations and platforms do not exist anymore in Scotland and Catalonia, the networks of activists and organizations that they held together were activated and have participated in recent secessionist mobilizations. Examples of core activists and politicians in today's movements who were also leading figures in the campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s are countless[10].

Each event brought about the emergence of new networks connecting both individual and collective actors. However, some trends can be observed and specifically in the internal structuration of the Scottish and Catalan SMOs. One concerns membership criteria. While individual-based membership tends to be the preferred option among Scottish SMOs (as in the case of the 1992 civic groups), in the Catalan context what stands out is the presence of long lists of all kinds of different organizations and associations that joined the umbrella platforms. Scottish SMOs were mainly constituted by individuals rather than collective actors even when membership was open to organizations and individuals, as in the CSA[11] and the SIC. In Catalonia, instead, *La Crida*, *Acció Olímpica* and the PDD were characterized by a dense and complex web of cultural and civic associations that constitutes, now as in the past, the hard core of Catalan campaigns for self-determination.

The other trend concerns the SMOs' territorial and/or functional differentiation. Scottish grassroots organizations tend to be organized in local branches based in the major cities, as was the case of the CSA and Democracy for Scotland (SPA: spa.moe.57.1). Organizations like Women for Independence and Radical Independence Campaign in the 2014 referendum campaign adopted exactly the same structure. This territorial differentiation is present also in the Catalan movement (for example, in the PDD) but some SMOs also encouraged sectorial activism by creating internal committees that carried out different campaigns. *La Crida*, for example, established internal sub-units fighting against war or environmental pollution but also mobilizing in solidarity with

[8] The SIC represents an antecedent for the creation of Yes Scotland, the cross-party campaign platform which led the official Yes campaign in the 2014 referendum.

[9] Similarly, the 2014 Scottish referendum started as a top-down elite endeavour and the Yes campaign initially appeared as an off-shoot of the SNP (Della Porta *et al.* 2017).

[10] Just to mention a couple, Isobel Lindsay was a founding member of the CSA and became a prominent voice in the Yes movement in 2014 while Jordi Sanchez was *La Crida*'s spokesman and then the leader of the ANC.

[11] Some trade union councils, political party branches and few other political groups participated in the CSA (spa.769.17.1; spa.769.9.1).

African post-colonial struggles (Safont 2021). Similarly, in 2012 the ANC created both territorial sub-units to ensure a strong presence at the municipal level and sectorial assemblies – this time based on sociodemographic variables – to reach and consolidate a social hegemony translatable in support for independence (Assemblea Nacional Catalana 2012).

5.2. Action repertoires

The mobilizations in the wake of the transformative events also fuelled some changes in the tactics adopted by SMOs, either setting the prevalence of some tactics or introducing new ones. In Scotland, the CSA organized some rallies and held conferences during the 1980s (SPA: spa.758.3.1) but what it managed to do was quite modest. However, with the creation of the Constitutional Convention in mind, the Campaign successfully lobbied a large number of delegates and politicians who were invited to the CSA's inter-party meetings. By doing so, the CSA re-adopted a pressure group approach to home rule that was abandoned some decades before (Finlay 2022). The SIC followed this very same path although it is worth mentioning that a member of the Convention, a grassroots association called Independence First, tried to encourage protest-oriented actions (specifically, demonstrations) thus complementing the elite-led initiatives of the Convention (Independence First 2006a). However, the real innovators in the Scottish context were the 1992 civic groups – Democracy for Scotland and Common Cause – which adopted a non-confrontational "social movement approach", as it is the case with the massive Democracy March in 1992. Sometimes they carried out symbolic actions such the 1993 mini-referendum in Falkirk and the famous Vigil for a Scottish Parliament, set up in Edinburgh with a pledge to keep it continuously occupied until a Scottish Parliament was achieved (SPA: spa.moe.46.1). What was also really innovative about their tactics was the adoption of a prefigurative strategy based on the principle of directly implementing the changes one seeks (Della Porta 2018). Their open fora and public meetings, characterized by inclusivity and horizontality, became spaces reflecting the kind of Parliament – and ultimately, the kind of society – they wished to create (SPA: spa.2994.).

The tendency for Scottish SMOs is therefore the adoption of micro-level, community-based initiatives similar to the modus operandi of political parties (leafleting, street stalls, conferences, etc.) while big demonstrations like the 1992 March are the exception rather than the rule. It is a tendency that is reflected also in the 2014 referendum campaign during which only two big demonstrations (March and Rally for Scottish Independence in 2012 and 2013) occurred and local campaigns did not depart significantly from those carried out by the CSA or Democracy for Scotland[12]. In both pro-devolution and pro-independence campaigns, parties gave their support and participated in these massive demonstrations so they became important moments of collaboration and mutual support between institutional and non-institutional actors.

If Scottish SMOs opted for non-confrontational tactics, the Catalan repertoire tended to be protest-oriented and disruptive but without being violent. Until this date, *La Crida*, for example, is remembered for its "spectacular" direct actions and civil disobedience that aimed at strengthening the level of national consciousness in the Catalan society (Lluch 2010). For instance, to demand the use of Catalan in public services, some activists sprayed paint on the departure boards in Sants station or threw paper planes with "En catalá!" [In Catalan!] written on them in Barcelona airport (La Crida 1986).

La Crida was also involved in the "Freedom for Catalonia" campaign during the Olympic Games in Barcelona. The initiatives of this campaign were also high-impact actions but this time, mostly internationally-oriented to spread the issue of Catalonia's quest for recognition. So, the "Freedom for Catalonia" banners were deliberately showed in many sporting events and key-moments of the Olympics like the arrival of the Olympic flame (Acció Olímpica 1992b) and Catalan flags covered buildings and balconies in Barcelona (Acció Olímpica 1992c). ERC, led at that time by Angel Colom (former leader of *La Crida*), resorted to similar protest actions and for that, coordinated with *La Crida* and other non-institutional actors.

In its repertoire, the PDD combined conventional actions (such as demonstrations) and more innovative ones such as the campaign "Decideixo Decidir" [I decide to decide], to demand the right to call referendums without Madrid's permission (Plataforma pel Dret a Decidir 2007). Also, despite not being an exclusive initiative of the PDD, the popular referendums about Catalan independence occurring between 2009 and 2011 could take place mainly thanks to the Plataforma.

Trends in the use of certain tactics are not only easily recognizable but, in some cases, the adoption of the same repertoire is even explicitly intended in today's movements, as in the case of the ANC that opted for peaceful and passive resistance in line with *La Crida*'s ones (Assemblea Nacional Catalana 2013). In the foot-

[12] Prefigurative practices can be found also in the 2014 referendum campaign that generally focused on horizontality, democratic decision making and inclusivity (Della Porta *et al.* 2017).

steps of *La Crida* and the PDD, the ANC has been also organizing mass-based initiatives and highly visible protest events deliberately staged for media dissemination[13].

5.3. Injustice frames and frame bridging

I now turn to another fundamental component of collective action, that is framing processes. Activists in any social movement resort to injustice frames to reach a shared understanding of some problematic condition that requires a collective effort in order to change it. SMOs also engage in bridging arguments to convince people with similar values and maybe involved in similar causes to join them.

In Scotland, the CSA (and later the SCC) put forward the argument that the needs, ambitions and hopes of the people of Scotland were unheeded and socio-economic policies were thus unfairly imposed because Scottish representatives did not have control of Scottish affairs (SPA: spa.758.3.2). Thatcher's victory marked the beginning of the "democratic deficit" as Tories had no electoral and moral mandate in Scotland (SPA: spa.moe.57.1) and this represented a "cynical denial of the interests of a whole nation." (SPA: spa.769.4.2) To this idea, the 1992 civic groups added more complexity as they put emphasis on the unheard voices of Scottish citizens rather than Scottish representatives, rejecting the possibility of creating a replica of Westminster where power was not devolved down to the lowest practical level (SPA: spa.moe.50.1). The SIC framed Scotland's situation as one characterized by a general feeling of helplessness to improve the Scottish economic and social records and consequently, the living condition of the Scottish people (SPA: spa.265.1). The main problem was belonging to an "unequal union" which had always been at Scotland's disadvantage and had not allowed Scotland to take the most important decisions about its future (Independence First 2006a).

At the core of all these frames lies the condition of a nation that is not heard, not fairly represented in state institutions and that has been held back by the Union. It is a matter of limited powers. The debates on independence during the 2014 referendum are shaped by most of these arguments.

In Catalonia, instead, injustice has to do with the fact that national identity and all its expressions are contested and sovereignty repeatedly threatened by the central state. In this case, it is a matter of feeling mistreated. In *La Crida*'s framing, Catalonia could not advance in the process of national restoration that had just begun with the democratic transition because of the centralizing attempts of the Spanish state (La Crida 1981). It is in this context and at the hands of *La Crida* that the slogan "Som una nació" [We are a nation] was used for the first time[14]. The 1992 campaigners found it unfair that Catalonia was not allowed to be represented as a nation in the Olympic Games and this was seen as a sign of disrespect, particularly given that Catalonia was the host country of the Games (La Crida 1991). So, *La Crida* wanted to push for national recognition while the Olympic campaign added the international side of recognition. An even bigger sense of injustice was perceived when Catalans voted for a new version of its Statute of Autonomy and felt that their legitimate political aspirations were immediately hindered by the central state. It was not acceptable that what they had decided as a nation was heavily questioned (Plataforma pel Dret a Decidir 2006b) and feelings of humiliation fed the protests of those years.

Either in terms of more autonomy or independence, self-determination represents the ultimate solution to address these unjust conditions and unfair treatments. Over time, the campaigns for self-determination have been linked to frames that resonate with the broader cultural structure in order to reach a larger pool of supporters. This is what the process of frame bridging is about.

In Scotland, SMOs connected the demands for self-determination to the principles of popular sovereignty and popular participation. The 1988 Claim of Right represents a cornerstone in the history of modern Scottish nationalism specifically because it was in this document that the notion of popular sovereignty first emerged as a serious claim (Tierney 2005). Power rests with Scottish people Scotland who constitute the ultimate authority (SPA: spa.769.15). The 1992 civic groups interpreted this principle in a narrow sense, linking the demand for a Scottish Parliament with the demand for "real" or participatory democracy (SPA: spa.800.2). "Power to the citizen" (SPA: spa.770.1.1) both meant an active participation in the debate about the proposals for a Scottish Parliament and in political life through the Scottish Parliament. Their campaigns for a referendum called for a democratic renewal because "a cross periodically on a ballot paper is no substitute for genuine democracy" (SPA: spa.moe.50.1).

[13] Transformed in a pro-independence political demonstration, the celebration of the *Diada* (National Day of Catalonia) makes a good example of such initiatives (Humlebæk and Hau 2020) as well as the vast human chain of some 400 km of 2013 or the "V-shaped rally" of 2014.

[14] And it was readopted later by the PDD in 2006 and also by *Òmnium Cultural* in 2010.

Independence Convention referred both to the principle of popular sovereignty and the argument of democratic enhancement but this time, combined with demands for an independence referendum. So, independence was needed because only the people of Scotland could be sovereign in determining their own future (Scottish Independence Convention 2007b) and independence would bring democracy closer to them. They framed their demand to hold a referendum not as a nationalist aspiration but rather as a democratic demand that could be supported by anyone who cherished the principle of democracy (Independence First 2006a). This bridging between independence and democratic values persisted also in the 2014 campaign in which terms like deliberative democracy, empowerment and inclusiveness played a central role (Della Porta *et al.* 2017).

This last point applies also to the Catalan case in which over time, different SMOs made many references to democratic principles and values to support their demands for self-determination. Probably the best example in this respect is the PDD's innovative frame shifting the focus from the right to self-determination to the right to decide thus linking national aspirations to the capacity to democratically take part in a decision.[15] For this broad democratic dimension, the "right to decide" frame was soon incorporated into the discourse by both ERC and CiU. However, what emerges from the analysis of the Catalan material is the use of anti-totalitarian/anti-colonial frames connected to demands for self-determination. Catalan nationalist campaigns engaged in resisting repressive aggressions and continuing abuse through the negation of rights.

La Crida, for example, presented their campaigns as part of the struggle of "subject people" carrying out a project of "national liberation" from an intransigent and belligerent state (La Crida 1985). The perceived attempts of "Spanishization" of the Olympic Games intensified the narrative of a totalitarian state[16] and this is clearly reflected in the slogans of the 1992 campaign "Catalonia is an oppressed nation" and "Freedom for Catalonia". *Acció Olímpica* explained that the adoption of the latter was justified by the fact that many Catalans, and not just pro-independence activists, believed that Catalonia needed more freedom (Acció Olímpica 1992d).

This bridging between liberation and independence can be found also in the contemporary secessionist movement that even readopted the same slogans by adapting them to the new context. It is the case with the "Freedom for Catalonia" slogan which was used by *Òmnium Cultural* in the 2013 Concert for Freedom and finally reappropriated by Catalan political prisoners following the 2017 referendum.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research on nationalism has been interested in understanding the role of nationalist actors in mobilizing territorial differences. However, the focus has been predominantly on political parties thus overshadowing activity in the extra-institutional sphere and its potentially enduring impact on nationalist contention. This article set out to address the need to broaden the scope of analysis to reflect the broader range of actors engaged in territorial contention. Therefore, its focus has been on non-institutional actors and in particular, social movements organizations and grassroots groups. The comparison of the Scottish and Catalan campaigns for self-determination from the 1980s to the 2000s wanted to explore how these actors impacted the history of territorial contention and reshaped movements. To do so, the article has adopted the concepts of transformative events and eventful protests. In particular, these concepts have helped highlight the role of agency not only in the unfolding of key-events but also in the production of the events themselves. The historical analysis of transformative events has shown that the initiatives of non-institutional actors led up to these events, turning points in their self-determination struggles. What distinguishes the initiatives of the Scottish actors from those of the Catalan counterparts is that while the former were generally more turned to support parties and foster their cooperation, the latter were more directed at mobilizing the Catalan society and popular support. Indeed, Scottish SMOs and grassroots groups took action whenever political parties "failed" or their room of manoeuvre was perceived as limited. This is the case of the CSA that emerged once the Scottish government could not deliver devolution in the 1979 referendum. In the unfolding of the "democratic deficit" phase at the turn of the 1990s, civic groups engaged in collective action out of frustration with the powerlessness of Scottish parties in the UK system. And once the Scottish Parliament was created, the SIC emerged in response to the lack of debate in the institutional arena about further constitutional change. Catalan civil society, instead, reacted *en masse* when Catalan culture and/or political autonomy were perceived under threat. *La Crida*, indeed, took action in the context of the 1981 failed coup and more specifi-

[15] On the relevance and success of the concept of the right to decide, see Subirats Vilaregut (2012).

[16] The *Operácion Garzon*, a preventive manhunt that got many Catalan independentists arrested a few weeks before the Games, also largely contributed to this narrative as activists campaigned against torture.

cally, after the publication of the Manifesto of the 2.300. On the occasion of the 1992 Olympic Games, activists perceived the risk of "Spanishization" of the Games and immediately prepared to "strike back" to make sure Catalonia had its place in the international community. Finally, the PDD was formed precisely to counteract the hostile debate against the new Statute of Autonomy.

Despite its focus on non-institutional actors, the analysis has also observed how these moments of mobilization also affected the interaction between SMOs and parties. The initiative of the former behind each event incited different parties' reactions, ranging from formal support or active involvement in SMOs' actions (particularly, by parties outside government with a more radical nationalist stance – the SNP and ERC) to the incorporation of SMOs' demands and discursive innovations. The parties' decision to incorporate SMOs' demands played a key role in the electoral arena. The Claim of Right and the subsequent participation of the Labour party in the SCC, for example, were crucial steps in the party's "tartanisation" which moved Labour onto the SNP's territory (De Winter and Tursan 1998). Similarly, ERC's adoption of a pro-independence strategy under the influence of *La Crida* (with the incorporation of *La Crida*'s key-figures in the party leadership) allowed the party to successfully take the independence stance from the extra-parliamentary sphere to the institutional arena.

Transformative events like these are said to precede the "take-off" of mobilization. The thematic analysis of original materials produced by SMOs and grassroots groups has focused on the transformative capacity of non-institutional mobilization, looking at organizational and cultural impacts that the mobilization had on the movements themselves (Della Porta 2018). At the organizational level, SMOs built new networks by providing structures that could bridge between different parties or generally, between moderate and radical nationalists. The difference that stands out by observing these networks is that Catalan platforms tended to include a massive amount of cultural and civic associations. This reflects the strength of the cultural dimension in the Catalan nationalism and refers to the Catalanist socialization that was "forced" to take place in sport clubs, hobby congregations and neighbourhood associations during Franco's dictatorship (Conversi 1997).

SMOs also expanded the action repertoires. In Scotland, they did so by combining different modes of action, in particular combining traditional campaigning practices (leafleting, street stalls, etc.) with other actions like lobbying, non-confrontational protests (vigils) or prefigurative practices. In Catalonia, they did so by experimenting with new tactics such as spectacular acts of civil disobedience or popular referendums. In both cases, large international events led non-institutional actors to adapt their tactics to internationalize their struggles – the Scots with a massive demonstration (an exception in the Scottish repertoire), the Catalans with disrupting acts and English slogans. The difference with the tactics adopted by Scottish SMOs is striking as most of the actions carried out by Catalan organizations are acts of national affirmation. Massive acts like those coordinated by the PDD are able to engender endogenous solidarity and a collective self-perception of strength (Della Porta *et al.* 2017). This is probably connected both to the lack of national recognition and the presence of historical resistance movements. These aspects do not characterize the Scottish movement as the existence of the Scottish nation has never been challenged or threatened (Duclos 2015) so there has been no need of particular consciousness raising efforts.

At the cultural level, SMOs also expanded the cultural repertoire as they reworked and bridged collective action frames. Both movements framed the relation with the central states as unjust: in the Scottish case, this relation is characterized by an imbalance of power between the UK and Scotland while in Catalonia, it generates a feeling of mistreatment among Catalans. To these injustice frames, each mobilization added further elements. In Scotland, for example, the Westminster system provided too limited powers not just to Scottish MPs but also to Scottish citizens. On the other hand, the Spanish state mistreated Catalonia not just by denying its status of nation but even by denying Catalans' fundamental rights and freedoms, like the right to decide. In both cases, injustice frames were bridged with democratic frames, suggesting that the central states were not, or not enough, democratic – with clear references to the past authoritarian experience only in the Catalan case.

Finally, the analysis hints at the fact that past mobilizations made important differences to the resources mobilized in contemporary episodes of contention thus raising a note of caution against the myopia of the present (Melucci 1994). Protests and campaigns, especially eventful ones, produce resources that continue and develop beyond their original contexts (Della Porta *et al.* 2018). This implies that, as "new" or unprecedented some movements can appear, they are shaped by past mobilizations. Considering the Scottish and Catalan independence referendums, some continuities have been observed both at the organizational and cultural levels. For example, the Scottish campaign pivoted around micro-level, community-based initiatives while the Catalan *Procés* was characterized by protest-oriented, disruptive but peaceful actions. Similarly, frame bridging consisted of

bridging requests for secession with democratic-emancipatory and social justice frames (Della Porta *et al.* 2017). Adopting a processual approach to collective action pays particular attention to singling out key events that mark the emergence of new phases characterized by the transformation of preexisting structures. In this way, scholars may observe the coexistence of change and continuity in collective action processes as they see how events affect the evolution of contention and how much of those events persist over time in different rearticulations.

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From Tactical Differentiation to Tactical Convergence. Trajectories of Healthcare Direct Social Actions and Their Impact in the Greek Healthcare Arena: 1983-2015

Stella Christou

Abstract. This paper traces the emergence, politicisation and spread of healthcare provision tactics by (contentious) collective actors in Greece between 1990 and 2015. Drawing on participant observation, in-depth interviews with relevant field actors (N=40), and documentary analysis, the paper develops a diachronic typology that analyses and compares; (1) the appearance of those tactics in the Greek context in the 1990s, (2) their appropriation by contentious actors after the December 2008 riots, and (3) their diffusion, and eventual modularisation over the course of the 2010 crisis and the cycle of anti-austerity contention. In so doing, the paper helps disentangle the dynamics of repertoire innovation through an understudied set of tactics. This is achieved through the reconstruction of the genealogy of healthcare Direct Social Actions (DSAs) – pace Bosi and Zamponi (2015) – in Greece, their transmutation from "consenting" to contentious tactics after 2008, and their wide diffusion among contentious milieus after 2010. In addition, the paper discusses the interplay between the contextual and strategic dimensions of those tactical preferences across actors and across time. To be sure, early utilisation of those tactics on the side of marginal players can be understood as attempts to tactically differentiate themselves vis-à-vis those traditional and hegemonic players in the arena who relied on indirect, protest tactics. The crisis, however, disturbed the seeming equilibrium of the healthcare arena thus prompting tactical convergence around healthcare DSAs among contentious actors, on the one hand, while reinforcing strategic convergence among some actors and strategic divergence among others.

Keywords: politicisation, healthcare, actors, tactics.

1. INTRODUCTION

On June 2015, the European Parliament (EP) honoured 47 people across the European Union with the European Citizen's award. Among them were two people from Greece, Dr. Giorgos Vichas from the "Metropolitan Community Clinic of Hellenikon" and Kostas Polichronopoulos from the soup kitchen "The other human", both selected for their exemplary social contribution in the country.

During the award ceremony, the EP vice-president and Citizens' Prize jury president Sylvie Guillaume highlighted that

> *The European Citizen's Prize 2015 jury has honoured the efforts of citizens to provide healthcare for the poorest, food aid, rescue, solidarity, education, the fight against radicalisation and the protection of LGBTI rights [...] European citizens whose daily work is essential to the social cohesion of our countries and I am glad that the Parliament could honour them (European Parliament 2015).*

However, neither of the two accepted the prize. Instead, they used the occasion to exert criticism towards Europe and its institutions. In the words of Dr. Vichas;

> *the austerity policies implemented and imposed in Greece are the result of pressure and blackmails by the IMF, the ECB and the EU. These policies have led more than 3 million impoverished and jobless citizens outside the health care system. […] This Europe, which wants to reward us, does not seem to be bothered by all these data, neither by the thousands of deaths of unsecured fellow citizens. […] It would be hypocritical for us to receive a Prize when Europe closes its eyes to malnourished infants and dead cancer patients, to mothers telling they have to live their families without electricity and water and minimal amount of food (Keep Talking Greece 2015).*

Dr. Vichas' refusal was a collective decision, taken on the side of the broader Social Clinics-Pharmacies movement that emerged in Greece over the course of the most recent cycle of anti-austerity contention in 2010. The movement was a massive instance of self-organisation and a remarkable social action that provided (primary) healthcare services and/ or pharmaceuticals for free to anyone in need.

In the context of the crisis, over 90 such clinics-pharmacies sprang up across the country (Adam and Teloni 2015; Cabot 2016; Evlampidou and Kogevinas 2019). The majority of them formed the Social Clinics-Pharmacies movement, and shared common tactics, goals and principles. More specifically, the clinics-pharmacies combined direct tactics of healthcare and/or pharmaceutical provision with indirect protest tactics against the austerity regime. The movement demanded that the clinics-pharmacies become obsolete through progressive healthcare reform and public investment in the National Healthcare System (NHS).

In this paper I provide a genealogy of those tactics of healthcare and/or pharmaceutical provision in Greece, to unearth their origins, continuities, discontinuities and strategic appropriation by different actors over time. I argue that although initially conceived by marginal actors and used as a strategy for differentiation and distancing from the hegemonic and predominant actors in the Greek healthcare arena, these tactics became diffused and modular over the course of the anti-austerity contentious cycle. I investigate these shifts as an instance of repertoire innovation which can be explained on the basis of 1) the increased demand for healthcare services during the crisis years, 2) the politicisation of the healthcare arena, and 3) the introduction of new and emergent actors therein.

Building on social movement scholarship, this paper opts to bring insights onto this largely overlooked set of tactics by providing a longitudinal perspective to their employment. In addition, it opts to complement existing accounts of these tactics through a specific and clear focus on those tactics of healthcare (and pharmaceutical) provision by contentious actors. As I hope to show, the healthcare arena exhibits some idiosyncrasies and is markedly distinct to the one of welfare. Studying contentious action therein, thus, can shed some light as to the particular dynamics of the arena as an arena of political contestation.

2. TACTICS, STRATEGY AND DIRECT SOCIAL ACTIONS IN HEALTHCARE

Tilly's (1986) elaboration of the repertoire of contention has been foundational to the study of social movements. Capturing the relationship between what people *do*, what they *know* to do and what society *expects* them to do, the repertoire is a relatively hard convention made up of tools at the disposal of contesters to make claims. These tools, their appropriateness and effectiveness are structured and *strictured* historically, and movement actors are called upon to choose among those most likely to advance their goals and cause. The repertoire is, thus, a "set of performances available to any given actor within a regime" (Tilly 2003: 45) configured through the interaction between the contours of said regime and its tactical employment on the ground.

Scholars of social movements (Melucci 1993; Tilly 1986, 1993) have used the repertoire to unearth broad patterns of power and conflict, with tactics reflecting particular socio-economic arrangements. Tactics have been studied for their ability to be innovated (Tarrow 1994) and for their capacity to travel through time and space, both geographically and metaphorically (Bosi e Zamponi 2015; Della Porta and Mattoni 2014; McCammon 2003; Wang and Soule 2016). What is more, tactics are considered important in maintaining movements

through their organisational networks and collective identities, over periods of relative acquiescence and are understood as central to the establishment of social bonds and of ways of being in the world (Futrell and Simi 2004; Glass 2010; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Polletta 1999; Rupp and Taylor, 1990; Staggenborg 1998; Taylor 1989; Yates 2015).

Most studies on tactics, however, have focused either on indirect, protest tactics or tactics of identity formation and, concomitantly, the creation of alternative communities. Very few studies, to date, have looked at the separate category of tactical forms that «focus upon directly transforming some specific aspects of society by means of the *very action itself*, instead of claiming something from the state or other power holder» (Bosi and Zamponi 2015: 367, emphasis added). Fuelled by the most recent cycle of anti-austerity contention following the 2008 global financial crisis, the visibility of these tactics increased and so did scholarly attention around them.

Scholars of anti-austerity movements have looked at those characteristics that differentiate them from previous instances of collective action and/or contention. To summarise, anti-austerity contention brought forward issues of socio-economic justice and prompted scholars and students of social movements to reintegrate structural accounts into their analytical approaches (Benski *et al.* 2013; della Porta 2015; Peterson *et al.* 2015). What is more, in most settings, anti-austerity mobilisations combined issues of economic inequality with issues of democratic accountability, democratic responsiveness and the separation of democratic politics from the financial sector (Benski *et al.* 2013; Della Porta 2015; Della Porta *et al.* 2017; Grasso and Giugni 2016).

This intersection of the economic and democratic crises was used to explain the spread and modularisation of tactics of direct intervention among social movement actors, but also among alternative communities, solidarity collectives, resilience groups and NGOs. Relevant literature has stressed the relevance of democratic unaccountability, pauperisation and the fading of the welfare state in this conjuncture as central to informing contentious and/or collective action.

So moving from indirect to direct tactics, scholars have looked at Sustainable Community Movement Organisations, which opt to re-socialise the economic system and re-politicise people towards more direct forms of participation (Forno and Graziano 2014). Others have looked at the spread of Alternative Forms of Resilience (AFR) over the crisis years, understood as the wide repertoire of «nonmainstream/ capitalist economic and non-economic practices through which citizens build community resilience when confronted with hard economic times through austerity policies, decreasing social welfare policies and threatened economic and social rights» (Kousis and Paschou 2017: 148). However, the case studies analysed under the AFR umbrella focus entirely on economic tactics, and do not delineate those from their welfare or healthcare counterparts.

This pitfall was partly bridged by Bosi and Zamponi's (2015) systematic comparison of welfare provision tactics during the 1970s and 2010s crisis-settings in Italy. The authors coin the term Direct Social Actions (DSAs) for this inclusive category of tactics which invites a plethora of actors to their enactment. These include (i) NGOs and voluntary associations, (ii) solidarity economy organisations and informal grassroots groups and (iii) protest activities and social movement milieus who choose to use them «either as a supplement to their claim-making activity or as their primary form of action» (*Ibidem*).

Having these distinct categories in mind, they point to the different trajectories toward the same tactical forms and compare the different spheres each set of actors participates in. They conclude that although social movement actors represent a minority in the overall sample of DSAs in Italy, they make up a third of those providing welfare from below. Their study, thus, highlights that these tactics 1) travel through time, that 2) they become more visible as demand for them rises and that 3) they are strategically, albeit not unproblematically, used by contentious actors to (re)policise their constituencies. As such, DSAs can be understood as a tactical preference among Italian contentious actors that wish to mediate the socio-economic effects of the crisis while affecting political opportunities for themselves.

Similarly, Sotiropoulos and Bourikos (2014) investigate the seemingly unexpected upsurge of DSAs in Greece over the course of the 2010 crisis, to conclude that the official volunteer force active in the country did not grow in size, but rather that those voluntary groups involved in social protection against the consequences of the austerity policies expanded their interventions. More specifically, they suggest that «[w]ithout covering the large social protection gap, left over after the welfare state had receded, both formal and informal groups contributed to the rise of social solidarity in Greece» (*Ibidem*). This proliferation of social solidarity from below is explained on the basis of (1) the expansion of deprivation to wider social strata, (2) the curbing of state funding for NGOs, and (3) the political projects attached to those informal and grassroots initiatives engaged in solidarity from below. Namely,

> *informal organisations do not want to act in a fashion complementing state-driven social protection. They reject*

the state and charity activities of the business sector, they want to treat the beneficiaries of their activities as participants in the collective production and distribution of social assistance, and view social solidarity in the context of the economic crisis as part of a wider political movement to construct alternative forms of social and economic life (Ibidem).

We understand, thus, that DSAs, at least on the side of contentious actors, have been studied either as economic tactics that wish to create alternative communities socialised in alternative markets or as welfare tactics that wish to mediate as well as politicise the crisis and its effects. As such, Sotiropoulos and Bourikos (*Ibidem*), Zamponi (2019) and Bosi and Zamponi (2015) unearth the contextual as well as strategic dimensions of these tactics and root them in the repertoire of anti-austerity contention. In particular, they all note that social movement milieus experienced a relative failure to extend their constituencies in a period that should have, otherwise, constituted an opportunity for them. For this reason, they shift their strategic orientation, witnessed in their change of tactics towards more direct forms of intervention to affect immediate change. Seen in this light, DSAs are part of political strategies that aim to mediate the "politicisation of the need" and the "social" where neither is implied.

In the remaining of this paper, I shall try to complement the aforementioned accounts by focusing on the healthcare arena, its players and their tactics (Jasper and Duyvendak 2015) from the establishment of the Greek NHS in 1983 and all the way to the closure of the anti-austerity cycle of contention in 2015. As I hope to show, the case study provides us with important insights as to the strategic utilisation of DSA tactics in the healthcare arena, itself markedly different from that of welfare (Carpenter 2012; Christou 2022; Moran 2000). Most importantly for this paper, the healthcare arena is distinguished by the role of the medical professional group, which exhibits a high degree of specialisation and autonomy and has been central in the configuration of health systems and policies (Freidson 1988; Immergut 1991). This makes the arena harder to penetrate and seals it off from broader participation and/or contention (Brown and Zavestoski 2004; Christou 2022). In this paper, I hope to show that healthcare DSAs were proven successful in introducing new and emergent actors in the healthcare arena – whether medical professionals or lay activists. These actors (re)politicised claims and aims in the arena and shifted the agenda in the direction of long-resisted healthcare reform.

3. METHODS

This paper draws from my participant observation of the grassroots clinics(-pharmacies) (2013-2014) and in-depth interviews (n° 40 see appendix) with actors involved in the healthcare arena over two periods of fieldwork (2013-2015 and 2018-2021). The interviews lasted a median of 1h15m. Relevant interlocutors were chosen on the basis of purposive sampling, drawing on my experience of the case, and snowball sampling to enhance my data collection and substantiate my findings (Bryman 2012). Due to the temporal scope covered by the paper, I had to use methods frequented in historical inquiries (Bosi and Reiter 2014) and complement those experiential accounts with primary and secondary sources. More specifically, I have relied on my personal collection of social movement material covering the period 2010-ongoing, together with documentaries, radio shows, posters, leaflets, books, news articles, Facebook posts and blogpost entries, as well as debates concerning healthcare in the public sphere, especially concentrated in periods of reform. In addition, I have used secondary sources such as policy and historical analyses of healthcare reform in the country.

4. 1983-2008: HEALTHCARE REFORMS AND THEIR DISCONTENTS

Law 1397/1983 radically transformed the Greek healthcare arena through the establishment of the Greek National Health System (henceforth NHS) which would operate on the basis of free, universal and equal access to high-quality health services on the part of the Greek population, as provided by the public healthcare system. Similar to other Southern European counties, Greece at the time was exiting from a period of long and protracted political repression as the military junta of 1967-1974 was replaced by the liberal conservative party of New Democracy. In 1981, however, New Democracy was overturned by the mass victory of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) which, upon its election, took on the role of reforming the political system and modernising the country on the basis of redistribution and equality.

By the time of PASOK's victory, the healthcare system had become a topic of intense debate as it was already facing significant pressures. After the military junta, relevant reports had identified regional inequalities in healthcare provision and financing, as well as the existence of illegal, direct payments for healthcare services. The proposals drafted based on these reports centred around the merging of the various sickness funds

and the introduction of family doctors to decentralise care and harmonise service provision in rural settings, as well as facilitate referrals to hospital units.

4.1. Medical syndicalism: Indirect tactics to resist reform

Medical doctors would prove decisive in affecting the Law and its completion. To be sure, established hospital and university doctors were against the reform for the NHS. According to their representatives, the NHS constituted a threat to their status and compensations, as well as to the quality of care delivered. In a contemporary interview President of the Auxiliary Teaching Staff of the Athens Medical School Kaklamanis warned against the principle of universalism, as this would «result not in the advancement but in the degradation of healthcare» (Petritsi 1983).

However, PASOK had the support of junior doctors which, in the period preceding the socialist government, had doubled in numbers and had radicalised over the course of their medical studies, joining the movement against the junta and the uprooting of its allies in universities, the army, and the public sector. These radical junior doctors objected the powerful strata of established hospital and university doctors and resented their privileges. What is more, and by virtue of their mass participation in medical associations, junior doctors shifted the orientation of their trade unions, including the powerful Union of Hospital Doctors in Athens and Piraeus, in a socialist direction for the first time during the 1980s (Davaki and Mossialos 2005).

These professional and political antipathies, therefore, provided the window of opportunity necessary for PASOK to introduce its radical reform onto the national healthcare system. Albeit subscribing to the Beveridge model of healthcare, however, the Greek NHS was not to be funded via general taxation, but through social contributions made to the numerous existing sickness funds, which the Law opted to merge. In a nutshell, then, the newly found NHS was to (1) equalise and universalise access to healthcare, to (2) ensure its quality across the country and across the funds and to (3) develop a system of Primary Care. However, these core items of the Law would remain incomplete since the founding of the NHS, as the medical professional group would soon join forces to defend and expand its interests.

Senior doctors persisted in resisting the individual reform clauses that undermined their status and reduced their compensations, while junior doctors soon found themselves against PASOK, which they perceived as taking advantage of the professional rivalry to undermine the group in its totality. Efforts to complete the reform on the side of the government would thus become the subject of contention across generational and ideological divides, leading to the announcement of a mass strike in 1984, heralded by the, by then, socialist Union of Hospital Doctors in Athens and Piraeus (EINAP). Minister of Health Paraskevas Avgerinos condemned the strike and deemed it illegal as it would affect "the delay, if not the undermining of the implementation of the NHS" (I Kathimerini 1984).

EINAP was swift in responding to the Minister, affirming that

> *it is the hospital doctors that can implement the NHS. For this reason, it is the Minister's action that serves to undermine the NHS. With awareness of our responsibility, we call our members to militant participation in tomorrow's strike and in the general assembly (Ibidem).*

The strong corporatist traditions in the country would foster alliances for this privileged professional group, and the various sickness funds together with their constituencies also found themselves against the completion of the reform. In this climate, Avgerinos' hostile attitude towards doctors and his attempts at litigation led to his isolation, his resignation and replacement by Giorgos Gennimatas, who halted the 1983 reform effort and extended doctors' professional privileges.

This victory marked the beginning of a long history of contention against the NHS reform. Another such occasion was marked by the mobilisations against the second greatest reform effort in 2000-2002, heralded by PASOK's Minister of Health Alekos Papadopoulos. Papadopoulos' plan for the NHS involved its decentralisation in regional authorities, the formation of a Primary Care level and the curbing of informal payments made to hospital doctors in the public healthcare system. Physicians working for the biggest insurance fund in the country (IKA) – which also functioned as a Primary Care provider – commenced a continuous strike for tenure in 2001. A year later, they were joined by hospital and university doctors who interrupted their medical practice and teaching activities. As a commentator for Kathimerini observes

> *University doctors have proved to be extremely obstinate in their clash with the Health Ministry. They may not have hoisted red flags or taken to the streets to protest, but in essence, they make the most uncompromising unionists look like amateurs (I Kathimerini 2002).*

The powerful role of doctors in halting healthcare reform is not confined to Greece, however. Scholars have stressed how medical professionals are central in health

policy and more generally, according to sociologists of professions, among the most powerful professional groups writ large. Building on Freidson (1988), scholars agree that doctors have historically established their "dominance" over other healthcare professions and have acquired "clinical autonomy" from other health workers, their constituencies and the state. This autonomy has clinical, economic and political implications, that include the acquired right of medical professionals to regulate and oversee medical practice, to decide on their compensations and to affect healthcare policy as experts (Elston 1991).

Greek doctors, however, relied on a wider basis of fragmented interests that converged in their favor. Resistance against the 2000-2002 reform effort was also expressed by bureaucrats for its decentralisation clauses, as well as the national Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) which saw threats to the status of university doctors as extendable to all employees of the public sector. All the above made for a powerful movement resisting the reform, culminating, yet again, in the resignation of Papadopoulos and the halting of healthcare reform (for more see Nikolentzos 2008; Nikolentzos and Mays 2016).

Over time, the solidification of the NHS would reinforce and amplify its internal weaknesses, translating into systemic blindspots for the healthcare system (Davaki and Mossialos 2005; Mossialos and Allin 2005). The underdeveloped Primary Care level in the country would further contribute to the centralisation of care in and around hospitals, which run without a system of referrals. This not only came at the cost of the public healthcare budget, but it also undermined prevention and equality in distant and rural parts of the country.

In addition, geopolitical transformations over the turbulent 1990s, turned Greece from a migration to a destination country, would challenge the principle of "universality" as enacted in the NHS. More specifically, as outlined above, the NHS was offering access on the basis of legal residence in the country and registered, formal employment. Undocumented migrants were denied access unless in the case of an emergency, and asylum seekers were only allowed to use emergency services until their status was recognised by the Greek authorities. As such, these constituencies were covered by the National Centre of Disease Control and the third sector, which thrived on the weaknesses of the NHS and its promotion and funding by mainstream politics (Sotiropoulos 2013; Huliaras 2015).

4.2. Volunteering doctors: DSAs to cover for healthcare needs

These blind spots were also noticed by grassroots civil society actors as early as the 1990s, giving birth to the first instance of self-organisation and grassroots healthcare provision for those people falling outside the purview of the NHS. More specifically, in Chania in the island of Crete, prominent left-wing militant and trade unionist Kostis Nikiforakis established a volunteer clinic to cater for those seasonal migrants living and working on the island. After a series of negotiations with the local authorities, he took over the soup kitchen "Saint Nikolaos Splantzias" from the Church and transformed it into a secular soup kitchen under the name of "Social Intervention- Soup Kitchen Splantzias". It was not long before the initiative added primary and dental care to its activities. Medical students at the University of Crete joined Nikiforakis and offered their services to "Splantzias" which soon began attending not only seasonal migrant workers but also the local poor and the homeless.

The clinic of "Splantzias" was, thus, the first informal civil society actor to engage with healthcare DSAs in the country since the establishment of the NHS. However, and despite their innovative nature, one can approach these DSAs as "consenting" tactics to mediate healthcare needs in the absence of universal care. The clinic closed down after two years but some of its members would mobilise anew and on a new basis in the period analysed below.

5. 2008-2010: POLITICISING HEALTHCARE DSAS

5.1. Volunteering doctors: DSAs to propose alternatives

In 2008 another clinic opened in Crete, this time in Rethymno, under the name "Volunteer Clinic of Social Solidarity in Rethymno" (EIKAR). Similarly to the clinic of "Splantzias", EIKAR was granted a space by the municipality and offered primary care services to migrants without papers.

Starting with only two specialisations -internal medicine and paediatrics- the clinic would soon move to the city centre and expand its services. The stated goals of the clinic were the mediation of healthcare needs for those most vulnerable residents of the island, but also the identification of healthcare needs for the articulation of concrete demands for reform, alongside the promotion of alternative approaches to health – holistic medicine, prevention over treatment etc. – and the facilitation of social change writ large (Tzanakis *et al.* 2018).

This already marks the first attempts to politicise healthcare DSAs. Before long, EIKAR was increasingly visited by uninsured Greek nationals, thus suggesting the first symptoms of austerity onto health and care. EIKAR would provide the seeds for the mushrooming of

the Social Clinics-Pharmacies over the course of the crisis and the anti-austerity cycle of contention discussed in the following section.

5.2. Anarchist-autonomia[1] doctors: DSAs in the Spirit of December

While doctors and grassroots civil society actors in Crete were strategizing around their use of healthcare DSAs, urban centers in the mainland, and Athens in particular, were shook by the assassination of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos by policeman Epaminondas Korkoneas on the night of December 6th, 2008. In just a few hours after the assassination, people took to the streets, initiating a short yet intense protest cycle of mass protests and riots (Seferiades and Johnson 2012).

The events following the "December uprising" were spearheaded by the anarchist, *autonomia* and anti-authoritarian movements which are relatively marginal due to the country's strong communist traditions. Momentous mobilisations and clashes with the police were gradually replaced by university occupations and assemblies (Kanellopoulos *et al*. 2012) which covered a range of topics. These included health and care, as a special "Assembly for Health" was established in the occupied Athens University of Economics and Business to then move to the historical occupation of Villa Amalia, over the months of February and March 2009 before it dissolved. In a collective document, participants of the Assembly for Health affirmed that;

> *The December riots freed the territory of the city, [they] freed spaces in which we, people who were trying to approach the issue of health individually and spasmodically, managed to meet and talk outside and away from the institutional framework that, until then, was offered to us as the only option (Health Assembly 2020).*

The events of December, thus, stirred the healthcare arena, introducing a new collective actor therein, which would articulate new stakes and utilise new tactics of intervention. More specifically, the Health Assembly gave birth to two sets of innovative tactics of contention in the national healthcare arena, each brought forward by actors that explicitly stated their intention to "break" from the hegemonic strategies of the trade union movement and its repertoire. The first was the padlocking of the hospital cashier. "Padlocking" was an alternative to the traditional hospital strike that intended to obstruct the collection of money without blocking hospital operations, thus targeting the state and not care delivery. The second was a re-appropriation of healthcare DSAs through the creation of the Social Space for Health. These two innovations were linked to different strategic agendas and visions for change, ultimately causing the Health Assembly to split.

5.3. The Social Space for Health: DSAs for self-organisation

The Social Space for Health (SSH) was established in April 2009 in the occupied building of the abandoned Health Centre in the Athenian neighbourhood of Petralona. Supported by the Neighborhood Assembly of Petralona, Koukaki and Thissio in Athens, the SSH was to provide free primary healthcare services to locals as well as politicise the issues of health, care and wellbeing. The founding members of the SSH clarify their intervention

> *People from the Assembly for Health (a collective of health practitioners and others formed in December 2008) also participated in local neighbourhood assemblies. Thus a parallel processing of issues such as health-as-a-right, free access to medical services, and working conditions in the medical field was initiated. Aside from intervening in medical issues and creating an accessible health space for everyone (which would not only service the poor), the main aim of the Assembly for Health was to develop a theory and practice for another kind of healthcare – one that deviates away from commercialisation, oppressive, unbalanced power relations, and medicalisation – and moves towards our aim to diffuse knowledge and maximise the ability of individuals to participate in decisions for their own health (Health Assembly 2020).*

To be sure, the strategy of the SSH can be understood as deriving from the combination of anarchist critiques to the state and Foucauldian critiques to biomedicine and biopolitics. It did not engage with health policy and it outright rejected the NHS as corrupt by virtue of its dependence on the state. In this context, healthcare DSAs were understood as key in prefiguring health autonomy and social emancipation. The politicisation of DSAs by the SSH, then, is radically different from that of EIKAR. As such, we see how new and emergent actors utilised healthcare DSAs as tools to break into the historically sealed arena. With them, they brought new claims and stakes and strategically differentiated themselves from those organised interests in the arena. The effects of these transformations, however, would not be visible until the following period.

[1] Autonomia here refers to the political movement inspired by the Italian *Autonomia Operaia* of the 1970s.

6. 2010-2015: HEALTH CRISIS, HEALTH MOVEMENT, HEALTH REFORM

These transformations in contentious action only foreshadowed the cumulative and combined effects of austerity onto health and care. In 2010the government of PASOK inaugurated a long period of bailouts by signing the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) issued by the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (the so-called Troika). The MoUs prescribed the combination of fiscal consolidation measures, labour market reforms and structural changes(Armingeon and Baccaro 2012; Frangakis 2015) that wrecked the social fabric, leading to the dramatic pauperisation of large social strata and bringing the NHS to its knees. Unemployment levels skyrocketed (Matsaganis and Leventi 2013) while unemployment benefits shrunk both in size and scope (Vaiou and Kalandides 2016). By 2010, a third of the Greek population was officially impoverished (Ifanti *et al.* 2013).

What is more, the MoUs involved direct prescriptions for the NHS, including the reorganization of its funding through the merge of the various sickness funds into one (EOPPY) in 2011. The merge implied the shrinking of the benefits basket for all, further squeezing funding for the NHS and provisions for beneficiaries.

Cuts in personnel, reductions in their compensations and the closure and/or privatisation of hospital units, clinics and beds in the name of cost-containment all formed part of a greater plan to reduce public expenditure onto healthcare. Over the austerity period, the Troika acquired its first-ever control over a national healthcare system by setting a 6% ceiling on public contributions towards health (Karanikolos *et al.* 2013). While health policy experts deemed it arbitrary and extremely low, Health Ministers in the country went beyond Troika's desires and reduced public health expenditure to 4.6% in 2014 (Kentikelenis *et al.* 2014; Kondilis *et al.* 2012; Stuckler and Basu 2013).

The rapid impoverishment of the population led to a sharp increase in the demand for public healthcare options. As "hospital budgets were reduced by 40%, the admissions and utilization of public health services were increased by 30% [between 2011 and 2013] highlighting the shift from the private health sector to the public one" (Ifanti *et al.* 2013). In addition, and as already mentioned in the beginning of this paper, a third of the population was left without health insurance (Amnesty International 2020).

Cutbacks in prevention and intervention programmes contributed to the (re)appearance of infectious diseases, including malaria (Stuckler and Basu, 2013) and HIV which increased 16fold between 2010-2011 (ECDC 2012; Hatzakis *et al.* 2015). Major depression, suicidal ideation, as well as suicides rose to epidemiological levels as mental health budgets were being dramatically slashed (Economou *et al.* 2013: 20; Kentikelenis *et al.* 2011; Vaiou and Kalandides 2016). The economic crisis was turning into a health crisis.

The economic, social and health outcomes of austerity paved the way for a long and protracted cycle of anti-austerity contention in the country between 2010-2015. Scholars of contention in Greece have all divided the broader cycle of contention into three consecutive waves, each with their own constituencies, tactics and demands. For the purposes of this paper, I follow the periodisation of Kotronaki and Christou (2019) which sees the first wave as beginning with the voting of the first MoU in 2010 and culminating with the Greek Indignados in 2011. This wave was characterised by mass sectoral protests that introduced and established the anti-memorandum and anti-austerity frames characteristic of the whole cycle (Kousis and Kanellopoulos 2014; Serntedakis and Koufidi 2018). The following wave saw the decline of indignation and the upsurge of collective practices of solidarity and self-organisation, through the diffusion and modularisation of DSAs. Finally, the third wave (2014-2015) was distinguished by the domestication of protest forms and solidarity practices, as the emergent party of SYRIZA was preparing for power (Karyotis and Rüdig 2018; Kotronaki 2018).

6.1. Protest wave

The same dynamics were also reflected in the healthcare arena. The first wave was a protest wave proper, involving the mobilisation of healthcare professionals in defence of the NHS, their positions and compensations against the austerity regime. Those mass mobilisations were largely sectoral, called by trade unions and political parties. Protest events were frequent, and they culminated around periods of reform and parliamentary vote on specific bills. The first wave mobilised the arena's hegemonic actors which utilised their usual protest tactics to push for their sectoral demands. Albeit tactical innovation was not yet apparent, new frames and claims entered the scene, addressing austerity and the memoranda.

In May 2011, thousands of people took to the streets following an online call for "Direct Democracy Now!". Following the steps of the Spanish Indignados movement, participants set up tents in major squares across the country and engaged in continuous protest. The encampments saw the formation of citizen assemblies

discussing the causes of the crisis, its effects as well as potential solutions. In addition, and as noted by Marilena Simiti (2014), assemblies were also divided on different themes similar to those following the 2008 riots. Issues of health and care were discussed in the squares, preparing the arena for the next wave of contention.

6.2. Solidarity wave

The first wave spilled into the second one, with the gradual dissolution of the encampments in late 2011 and the decentralisation of contention from squares to neighbourhoods (Malamidis 2020). This decentralisation favoured the diffusion of occupation tactics as well as DSAs around affected domains (housing, food, healthcare, education etc). Meanwhile, the medical trade union movement continued its contentious activities, and strikes and protests witnessed a peak between 2011-2012 before subsiding in 2013 (for more see Tombazos and Serntedakis 2018).

It is during this hybrid wave that we saw the mushrooming of grassroots healthcare initiatives, themselves combining healthcare DSAs with indirect tactics of protest and claims-making. Indicatively, the first clinic-pharmacy established during this period was KIA, the Social Clinic of Solidarity in Thessaloniki. KIA was the by-product of a successful migrants' hunger strike in 2011, where doctors attending to the protesters decided to continue their operations due to the increased demand they perceived for such interventions. According to a participant

> *We were delighted to be the positive outcome of […] the strike. […] And we all had in mind those with no social security whose number was ever increasing, so while we were talking about it over a glass of distilled spirit [raki] that Irene had brought back from Crete, we said let's do something about those with no social security. That's how we embarked on this idea, on the spot, on the 7th floor of the Trades' Union Centre, we came to the decision that something ought to be done (Thodoris Zdoukos in Karagkiozidou* et al. *2016).*

Similarly to EIKAR, KIA expanded its constituencies from migrants to impoverished and uninsured nationals, responding to the needs of the time. In so doing, it developed more contentious characteristics than EIKAR, including protest tactics in solidarity with the migrants, against austerity and for healthcare reform. The next clinic-pharmacy established was the Metropolitan Community Clinic in Hellenikon (MKIE) in the Athens metropolitan arena by Dr. Vichas, cited in the prologue to this paper. MKIE traces its establishment to an appeal made by Mikis Theodorakis, a composer and historical figure of anti-fascism in the country, during an event against the privatisation of the abandoned airport in the municipality of Argyroupoli-Hellenikon. As Dr. Vichas recalls

> *In a small group of friends, just before the beginning of his concert at the old airport of Hellenikon, he told us "No Greek should starve, no Greek should be left without a doctor (Zarakovitou 2019).*

This small group of friends were medical professionals and lay, local activists also involved in the Greek Indignados movement. Together they decided to set up a clinic-pharmacy, utilising one of the abandoned buildings in the old airport. As such, MKIE was not only addressing healthcare needs through DSAs; it was also servicing the struggle for the protection of the old airport, proposing an alternative and setting an example of its public repurposing. The more the paradigm of the clinics(-pharmacies) would diffuse, the less tactical options austerity contesters would have. Soon enough, political parties on the (radical) left would set up their own initiatives as part of their greater involvement in the anti-austerity movement. The neo-Nazi party of the Golden Dawn also tried to get involved in healthcare DSAs, namely by launching its own blood donation campaign "only for Greeks". The campaign was as short-lived as it was unsuccessful.

a) Strategic convergence

-The Social Clinics-Pharmacies Movement:

This tactical convergence among anti-austerity actors soon led to strategic convergence and the formulation of an anti-austerity health movement, namely the Social Clinics-Pharmacies Movement, following KIA's call for a national meeting of grassroots clinics in 2013. The movement's code of conduct stressed the clinics-pharmacies' "autonomous, independent, self-organised and self-managed" operations and defined their tactics as oriented to the provision of "services of primary healthcare to all uninsured people, the unemployed and the poor, on a completely volunteer basis".

The clinics-pharmacies were juxtaposing themselves to existing structures and initiatives, mainly NGOs and the Church. Unlike the charitable orientation of formal civil society and the Greek Church, the clinics-pharmacies were to operate under the principle of solidarity, and their DSA tactics formed part of a larger contentious agenda of the "collective struggle for our right to public healthcare" and for "free access to medical and pharmaceutical care for all" (see Kotronaki and Christou 2019).

What is more, the founding document of the movement prescribed the combination of healthcare DSAs with indirect, protest tactics against austerity and for progressive healthcare reform, namely in universal access and primary care. The movement saw itself as part of the greater anti-austerity and anti-fascist movements. Finally, it did not wish to replace the NHS; the clinics-pharmacies would mobilise in its defence, so that they become obsolete.

- Solidarity4All:

Parallel to these cooperative efforts, the emergent party of SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left) also began strengthening its bonds with the numerous grassroots solidarity initiatives, in general, and the clinics-pharmacies, in particular. This leaning of SYRIZA towards civil society has been explained as a strategy to mitigate its failure to penetrate the trade union movement (Karaliotas 2021; Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2014). In 2012, SYRIZA's leader Alexis Tsipras extended an appeal to his party members prompting them to engage in grassroots solidarity efforts. Tsipras also called for the creation of a strategic document regarding these initiatives, understood as pools for supporters as well as ideas for the most pressing issues stemming from the austerity regime and ways to address them.

The strategic document outlined the main areas of intervention for party members as those (a) health, (b) food, (c) education, (d) culture, (e) solidarity economy and (f) legal support. In less than a year, the party had established its own Social Movement Organisation (SMO) "Solidarity4All", meant to map, promote and facilitate grassroots solidarity initiatives.

b) Strategic divergence

This strategic convergence among emergent actors in the healthcare arena did not remain unnoticed, triggering further differentiation on the part of the anarchist-*autonomia* initiatives which also flourished over this period. In the aftermath of the movement's founding meeting, to which they were invited, the SSH distinguished its position and warned against the movement's tactics and their strategic alignment.

To be sure, the SSH defended itself as the original practitioner of healthcare DSAs and, as such, criticised the movement for supporting the inherently corrupt NHS and the state. The SSH argued that healthcare DSAs can only operate in the name of autonomy and self-organisation, starting from health and spilling over to all domains of social and political life. If DSAs were not to serve the struggle for emancipation, then they were lending themselves to be instrumentalised and coopted by the state.

Thus, the diffusion of healthcare DSAs diversified their strategic utilisation by contentious actors and fuelled competition for their ownership in the arena. The SSH went on to denounce the movement and began organising its own network of cooperation with a number of clinics adhering to its principles. For this network of anarchist-*autonomia* clinics, austerity formed part of a greater biopolitical strategy to exterminate the poorest strata of society. Combined with their commitment to prefiguring self-organisation through health and care, the network only saw the crisis as an opportunity to politicise and expand its constituencies. This clearly sets this network apart from the austerity contesters' camp and their repertoire.

6.3. Domestication wave

The final phase of the cycle of anti-austerity contention was characterised by the plateauing of solidarity DSA initiatives. As mentioned above, this wave saw the gradual domestication of anti-austerity contention through the alignment of the movements' goals with those of the emergent movement-ally part of SYRIZA, facilitated by the party's SMO "Solidarity4All".

By the end of the cycle, segments of the anti-austerity movement transmuted their visions for social change to wishes for parliamentary change in an anti-austerity and anti-memorandum direction (Kotronaki 2018). The Social Clinics-Pharmacies movement was no exception, and their interactions with "Solidarity4All" and SYRIZA led to their involvement in drafting SYRIZA's pre-election plan for health and care. For the first time since the establishment of the Greek NHS the issues of universality and Primary Care were addressed.

The victory of SYRIZA in 2015 marked the end of the cycle of anti-austerity contention. Once in power, however, it continued to consult members of the Social Clinics-Pharmacies' movement and in 2016 and 2017 it announced two interrelated reform clauses for the NHS. First, access was extended to all those with a social security number -that is to everyone but undocumented migrants. Second, a first-ever network of Local Health Units (ToMY) was announced with the intention of promoting prevention and equality and facilitating referrals to other levels of care. This was an instance of paradigmatic healthcare reform, albeit in paper, as core elements of the reforms were not fully realised. Upon the announcement of the reforms the movement of the Social Clinics-Pharmacies was dissolved while most of the component clinics (-pharmacies) retained their oper-

ations and revisited their strategic orientation in the new conjuncture.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the co-development of the Greek healthcare arena, its actors and their tactics. Departing from the establishment of the Greek NHS in 1983, the paper has followed the medical professional group and its indirect, protest tactics to resist healthcare reform, defend its interests and advance its autonomy. These organised efforts have led to a policy stalemate in the country and have shifted the agenda for the NHS away from universalism in coverage and comprehensiveness in care.

At the same time, the paper traces the entrance of new and/or emergent actors in the arena by virtue of their healthcare Direct Social tactics. More specifically, the 1990s saw the first experiments with healthcare DSAs guided by medical humanitarianism to mediate the blind spots of the NHS. These tactics were soon discontinued, to be picked up again in 2008, this time as part of larger strategies to contest healthcare practices, in general, and the NHS, in particular. A year later, the same healthcare DSAs were (re)appropriated and (re)purposed by the anarchist and *autonomia* milieus, which employed them within their own prefigurative agenda for self-organisation and autonomy. To be sure, until the advent of the economic crisis in 2010, healthcare DSAs represented marginal tactics of marginal actors in the arena, "jockeying for advantage" against their powerful enemies, that is the medical professional group and its trade unions (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 54). Thus, DSAs were strategically used to open the healthcare arena to new actors and stir it in the direction of new stakes.

The economic crisis of 2010 had direct and cumulative effects onto the Greek NHS, population health as well as individual wellbeing. The political and social disintegration, coupled with the health crisis induced by the austerity regime, paved the way for a strong and impactful anti-austerity contentious cycle that shook the country between 2010-2015. In this environment, healthcare DSAs expanded the, otherwise, closed arena of healthcare as they offered new and/or emergent contentious actors alternative ways of participating therein. Most of them came together and formed the Social Clinics-Pharmacies movement, which combined direct tactics of healthcare and pharmaceutical provision with indirect claims-making tactics for progressive healthcare reform.

As such, I conclude that the same tactics that were initially conceived as indicative and formative of strategic divergence prior to the crisis, prompted strategic convergence upon their diffusion. In line with the relevant scholarship, I argue that healthcare DSAs diffused as demand for (primary) healthcare services and pharmaceuticals increased. This led to the politicisation of issues regarding health and care and the employment of DSAs by different contentious actors. The sum of these transformations affected the arena to such an extent that the emergent party of SYRIZA drafted its healthcare agenda based on the movement's demands and experiences and announced paradigmatic healthcare reform once in power in 2015.

This paper highlights some of the idiosyncrasies of the healthcare arena, and most importantly the centrality of the medical professional group therein. This is in line with the international health policy scholarship, that sees doctors as consequential to the configuration of healthcare systems (see for example Starr 1982; Immergut 1991; Chapin 2010). Contention on the part of less powerful groups, however, has received much less attention. The central role of the medical professional group in the arena has direct and indirect implications for mobilisation therein. To be sure, healthcare DSAs are costlier than their welfare and/or economic counterparts. That is because they rely of the expertise, state licensing and legitimacy of those employing them. Healthcare DSAs imply at least some participation of healthcare professionals. At the same time, and as showcased in the case examined here, healthcare DSAs offer medical professionals opportunities for mobilisation outside their sectoral as well as for collaboration with lay, non-expert activists. The co-operation of medical professionals and non-expert activists in the Greek healthcare arena, rejuvenated the grievances of the former and gave confidence to the claims of the latter, ultimately paving the way to paradigmatic healthcare reform.

The study of healthcare DSAs can be relevant for social movement studies and health policy. Future research should look at the continuities and discontinuities of healthcare DSAs among different (contentious and non-contentious) milieus as well as across different crisis settings (economic crisis and Covid-19 pandemic). This will allow us to better understand the opportunities offered but also the obstacles posed in the mobilisation of these tactics and their utilisation within larger contentious strategies.

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APPENDIX

List of interviews

1. Alex. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
2. Alexis Benos. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy, Advisor to the Ministry of Health, Professor of Primary Care, General Practice and Health Policies. Thessaloniki, 2015, 2019 and 2020.
3. Antonis. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
4. Chris Giovanopoulos. Ex-cadre of Solidarity4All, Researcher. Online, 2019.
5. Dora-Dimitra Teloni. Member of Social Clinic-Pharmacy, Professor of Social Work. Athens, 2019.
6. Eleni. Receptionist at Social Pharmacy. Athens, 2018.
7. Georgia. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2018.
8. Gianna. Member of Social Solidarity Centre. Athens, 2018.
9. Hara Matsouka. M.D. Ex-member of Social Clinic-Pharmacy, Advisor to the Ministry of Health, Ex-President of the National Centre for Blood Donation. Athens, 2019.
10. Hobo (nickname). M.D., Member of Saleu Bellum, Member of Autonomous Doctors' Union. Athens, 2018 and 2019.
11. Katerina. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
12. Katerina Matsa. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy, Founding Member Ψ-Initiative for Mental Health Reform. Athens, 2019.
13. Konstantinos. M.D. Syndicalist. Athens, 2019.
14. Kostas. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
15. Lena. Pharmacist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2018.
16. Manolis. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Online, 2020.
17. Maria. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2014.
18. Maria. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2019.
19. Marianna. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
20. Meri. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2018.
21. Nikos. Syndicalist. Online, 2019.
22. Orestis. M.D. Activist. Athens, 2019.
23. Panagiotis. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
24. Penelope. Member of Workers' Club. Athens, 2018.
25. Petros. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2020.
26. Rea. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2019.
27. Samy. Activist, Social movement expert. Online, 2021.
28. Tatiana. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2019.
29. Thanos. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2014.
30. Thanos. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2019.
31. Thodoris Megalooikonomou. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy, Founding Member of Ψ-Initiative for Mental Health Reform. Athens, 2019.
32. Thomas. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.

33. Vasiliki. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2019.
34. Vaso. M.D. at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2018.
35. Vicky. Ex-member of Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2019.
36. Voula. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
37. A. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
38. B. Receptionist at Social Clinic-Pharmacy. Athens, 2015.
39. C. Member of militant antifascist group. Piraeus, 2019.
40. D. Activist in anarchist/autonomia milieu. Athens, 2019.

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Working From the Backstage: A Longitudinal Analysis of the Save Sheikh Jarrah Campaign

Federica Stagni

Abstract. This article explores the evolution of protests in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, focusing on the shift in dynamics and the movement's composition. The research employs a longitudinal perspective, utilizing Protest Event Analysis (PEA) and Qualitative Social Network Analysis (SNA) to trace changes in protest networks from 2000 to 2021. The study introduces the concept of a *backstaging mechanism*, highlighting the movement's ability to strategically step aside to achieve its goals. This mechanism is examined through a triangulation of data, combining PEA and SNA results with insights from 20 interviews with activists from diverse ethnonational groups. The paper contributes to the literature on social movements by offering nuanced insights into the dynamics of protests involving varied groups and international organizations.

Keywords: Sheikh Jarrah, backstaging mechanism, social movements, qualitative social network analysis, protest event analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem gained widespread attention in all media outlets in May 2021 after the Israeli High Court's decision to remove eleven Palestinian families from their homes. Thousands of people gathered in demonstrations, making the *#savesheikhjarrah* hashtag viral. Nevertheless, protests are not something new in this neighborhood. The first evictions took place in 2008-2009, sparking a solidarity movement of Israeli activists supporting the Palestinian residents of the district, which has persisted to this day. However, significant changes have occurred since then. What was once described as a joint Israeli-Palestinian protest movement is now predominantly associated with the Palestinian struggle, considered the catalyst for the 2021 Unity Intifada (Tatour 2021; Alqaisiya 2023).

What has changed in the coalition, and how has the involvement of the Israeli left in these protests transformed? For what reasons have Israeli activists withdrawn from this struggle, and what have prompted others to stay and continue to be interested in the issue? This paper will try to answer these questions by presenting what I will call the backstaging mechanism i.e., the ability of a section of the movement to step aside when this may help achieve the movement's outcomes.

This contribution is based on a triangulation of data. Through a Protest Event Analysis (PEA), it was possible to reconstruct the protest networks over time. The timeline of the protests was split in two in order to build two different Figureic networks. The first network (T1) covers the period from 2000 to 2011, and the second covers the period from 2012 to 2021 (T2). In this way, it is possible to see how the composition of the protests has changed over twenty years and carry out a longitudinal Qualitative Social Network Analysis (SNA) that compares the campaign at two different moments in time and scrutinizes issues of stability and change within a movement that sees the collaboration of distinct ethnonational groups and international organizations. The SNA data were then corroborated by 20 interviews with activists from both ethnonational groups who participated in the Sheikh Jarrah protest cycle at different times. In addition, I took part in several demonstrations during different periods of fieldwork in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and East Jerusalem. The period from March to May 2022, when I did my last field exploration, was precisely one year after the demonstrations that brought Sheikh Jarrah back into the international news.

This article contributes to the literature on social movements by examining the evolution of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood protests in Jerusalem from a longitudinal perspective, offering insights into the dynamics of protest movements that involve diverse ethnonational groups and international organizations. It also confirms previous funding concerning the Israeli leftist trajectory in the movement. The research introduces the concept of the backstaging mechanism, contributing to Tilly's (2001) and Della Porta's (2014) research agenda. In particular, the paper is interested in contributing to the debate on relational mechanisms. As suggested by Tilly (2001: 24), «Relational mechanisms alter connections among people, groups, and interpersonal networks; words such as ally, attack, subordinate, and appease give a sense of relational mechanisms». Similarly, Della Porta, in her book Mobilizing for Democracy, writes: «mechanisms are categories of action that filter structural conditions and produce effects». Hence, considering the backstaging mechanism as a possible relational mechanism means recognizing the importance of movements' interactions within a cycle of protests and increasing our knowledge of these dynamics and their effects on certain political and social processes.

The paper also contributes to the literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by focusing on the emergence of a campaign that tackled a pivotal issue in this field – the dispossession and eviction of Palestinian families from their homes. The question of evictions and resistance to them is central to area studies on Palestine. It is expressed in all the literature that addresses the concept of *Sumud*, which also emerged in the analysis of this case. In this way, the article enhances the understanding of the multifaceted nature of activism in the Israeli-Palestinian context and its implications for broader conflict dynamics.

The article's structure unfolds as follows: it begins with an initial contextual section detailing the situation in Sheikh Jarrah and the broader Palestinian context. The subsequent section delves into the analysis of protests within the neighborhood, even though these have been studied by Palestinian and non-Palestinian scholars. Following this, the theoretical framework is introduced, employing a longitudinal analysis to demonstrate shifts in protest composition over time while maintaining a certain level of continuity. The article then proceeds to conduct a Qualitative Social Network Analysis (SNA) at two selected time points. In the final section, the study attempts to formalize a trend previously identified in other research further supported by field interviews: the demobilization of Israeli activists and the concurrent development of new strategies by those who continued to mobilize in this movement.

2. SHEIKH JARRAH: A STORY OF ATTEMPTS OF DISPLACEMENT AND RESISTANCE

2.1. Contextual Notes

International reports, notably Falk and Tilley (2017), highlight the division of Palestinians into four judicial "domains" since 1967. Palestinians in Israel (1.7 million) are governed by Israeli civil law, resulting in different types of discrimination that mainly manifest in access to resources, jobs, lower salaries, and racism (Abdo-Zubi 2011; Norwich 2017; Rouhana and Ghanem 1998; Zinngrebe 2019). The Basic Law reinforces Israel's Jewish nature, distinguishing citizenship from nationality (Falk and Tilley 2017). Yiftachel (1999) argues that despite formal democratic institutions, the ethnic element in the Basic Law prevents Israel from being a full democracy, defining it as an "ethnocracy." The military law domain applies to 4.6 million Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, living under military occupation since 1967. Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza need permits to enter Jerusalem; they are subject to severe restrictions on their right of movement through checkpoints and roadblocks and their right to security because of the frequent night raids inside Palestinian houses (Hilal 2015; Khawaja 1993). In addition, they are often victims of settlers' violence (Alimi and Demetriou 2018;

Ghantous and Joronen 2022). Oslo Accords delineate zones with minimal autonomy. Gaza, part of the OPTs, became an open-air prison post-2005, and the Israeli government controls essential resources, imposing severe constraints (Bhavnani, Choi and Miodownik 2011). The fourth domain denies Palestinians repatriation rights, contrasting with the "National Law", granting any Jewish person worldwide Israeli citizenship at the time (Amnesty International 2022). Finally, the 300,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are subjected to a special legal domain, which is the one of permanent residency (Huberman 2023). They experience discrimination in access to education, health care, employment, residency, and building rights. They also suffer from expulsions and home demolitions, which serve the Israeli policy of "demoFigureic balance" in favor of Jewish residents (Falk and Tilley 2017). The category of permanent residency is designed to prevent Palestinians' demoFigureic and, importantly, the electoral weight being added to that of Palestinian citizens in Israel. As permanent residents, they have no legal standing to challenge Israeli law; they lack the right to vote in national elections conducted by the Palestinian Authority or the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. The only voting privilege accorded to them is participation in the Jerusalem municipality elections. Such a legal framework represents a blatant infringement upon fundamental civil and political rights (Falk and Tilley 2017).

The neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, located near the Old City, has become a contentious site that saw several cycles of protest to prevent the eviction of Palestinian families residing there. The dispute centers on the Simeon the Just tomb, where a Jewish community was established in the late 19th century. However, they gradually abandoned the site during the Arab revolts of the 1920s and 1930s through the 1948 War of Independence. Under Jordanian rule from 1948 to 1967, the Jordanian government, utilizing the Enemy Property Law, assumed control of these plots. In 1956, 28 Palestinian families receiving refugee aid from UNRWA[1] were selected for a relief project in collaboration with the Jordanian Ministry of Development. According to the agreement, these families would relinquish refugee assistance and pay a nominal rent for three years, after which house ownership would be transferred to them. After three years, formal ownership was not transferred to the families, and this lack of evidence forms the basis for Nahalat Shimon International's case against the Palestinian residents. In 1972, 27 families were notified of rent owed to the Sephardic Community Committee and the Knesset Israel Committee[2]. Using 19th-century Ottoman-era documents, these committees initiated a process with the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) to register the lands in their names. In 1982, a legal case for rent delinquency was brought against 23 families. Rather than contesting ownership claims, the lawyer for the Palestinian families, Itzhak Toussia-Cohen, reached a court-sanctioned agreement, providing residents with "protected tenancy" status, subject to appeal only if proven based on false grounds[3]. Families argue that Toussia-Cohen lacked authorization for the agreement, a decision serving as a legal precedent for subsequent appeals. In resistance to authorizing Committees' ownership claims, most families refused to pay rent. In 1997, Suleiman Al-Hijazi challenged the Committees' ownership claims in a lawsuit, asserting his ownership of the disputed territory. The case was rejected in 2002, and subsequent appeals were also unsuccessful. Despite a 2006 court decision not corroborating the Committees' ownership, their official registration was never revoked, and subsequent rulings have upheld the 1982 precedent[4].

In 1999, settler activity commenced in the neighborhood and has persisted since. The initial group of settlers acquired tenancy rights from a family, subdividing the structure for more families. In 1999, due to charges of rent delinquency and unauthorized construction, a section added by the Al-Kurd family was forcefully evicted and sealed. Two years later, settlers illicitly entered the sealed section, establishing their residence.[5]

On March 28, 2004, Mohammed and Fawzia Al-Kurd were ordered to evict the settlers from the added section of the house, demolish it, and seal any remaining openings[6]. The sentence was reiterated on February 25, 2007[7]. Being unable to demolish the house with the settlers inside it, the Al-Kurds repeatedly sought police

[1] The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a UN agency dedicated to supporting Palestinian refugees' relief and human development. Established in 1949 by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), UNRWA was tasked with providing relief to all refugees resulting from the 1948 conflict.

[2] https://www.ir-amim.org.il/sites/default/files/SheikhJarrahEngnew.pdf

[3] Under this classification, tenants and their cohabiting kin are guaranteed the security of living in their units so long as they pay rent and abide by rigid restrictions regarding maintenance and renovation.

[4] In November 2006, following a Magistrate Court decision, the Israel Lands Registry (ILR) received an order from the Lands Settlement Officer of the Court to cancel the Committees' ownership. The ILR failed to execute the officer's order and referred the case back to the court.

[5] The Al-Kurd's unit is adjacent to a small bloc of settler residences, and settlers there marked the sixth group to move into the neighborhood. The event launched the Al-Kurds' story into the Palestinian media, which frames the story as symbolic of the Palestinian situation in Jerusalem. Here is the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNqozQ8uaV8

[6] Criminal Case 2353/03.

[7] Civil Court of Local Affairs 2353/03.

assistance and filed requests and complaints with the district police. In November 2008, following the loss of a protracted appeals process, Fawzia and Mohammed Al-Kurd were forcefully evicted from their home.

2.2. The Protest Cycles

The hashtag *#SaveSheikhJarrah* gained momentum in Western countries, with British singer Dua Lipa and Academy Award-winning actress Viola Davis among those who shared it[8]. In October 2020, the Israeli court ruled in favor of settlers who claim that Palestinian families live on land that used to belong to Jews. Palestinians appealed the decision at Israel's High Court. In Sheikh Jarrah, Palestinian residents were subjected to military violence by the army, and armed settlers, who attacked civilians, gathered at large outdoor tables to celebrate the breaking of the fast (*iftar*) together as a sign of solidarity with the threatened families (Sauvage 2021). On May 6, the Israeli army deployed in force to protect Knesset member Itamar Ben Gvir, a far-right politician who, in a provocative and highly offensive move, decided to move his office to a house under settler occupation. Now, he is the Minister of National Security (*Ibidem*). After this event, Israeli and Palestinian activists gathered in a joint protest, with quite a few people also coming from Tel Aviv. Five Knesset MPs also participated in the demonstrations: three Palestinians, Sami Abu Shehadeh, Ahmed Tibi, and Osama Saadi, and two Jews, Ofer Cassif and Mossi Raz (who were interviewed for this research). Cassif, a communist deputy, was beaten by police officers in Sheikh Jarrah some weeks before. His denunciation garnered scant empathy in a right-dominated Knesset that sympathized with the settlers' ambitions (Gharabli 2021).

However, the vast mobilizations against Sheikh Jarrah evictions were not as sudden as described. Bosi (2008) clearly demonstrated that even eventful protests usually result from long-term processes. Therefore, approaching the political process of social movements must necessarily incorporate a temporal dimension (McAdam and Sewell 2001: 91). Indeed, in 2008, when the Israeli High Court issued the first eviction orders for eight families, mass demonstrations started. Incorporating a temporal dimension in the analysis becomes crucial not only because it accounts for change and stability but also because it shows once again that all mass demonstrations result from long political and social processes influenced by the interaction of a myriad of actors.

The Protest Event Analysis (PEA) conducted for this study utilized the news aggregator Nexis Lexis, which collected news articles related to the Sheikh Jarrah campaign from the earliest identified articles in 1980 through the end of 2022. In Appendix B, it is possible to find the list of sources comprising the search string used in the research. The search yielded an exceptionally high number of articles, primarily attributed to the peak of protests in 2021, resulting in over 30,000 articles. After eliminating duplicates republished by various newspapers (a specific function of Nexis), the final count was slightly over 20.000. The coding process followed a conventional approach to protest event analysis, with the inclusion of event types. This was done considering events like demolitions and decisions from the Israeli court, which were deemed connected to the protests, following Tilly's *Event Catalogs* (2002) that understands protest events in interaction with other events not as single occurrences. In this way, the relational element of interactions is also kept into account by considering different events as not only part of the same cycle of protest but as reciprocally influencing each other (*Ibidem*). Additionally, a part of the coding process was specifically dedicated to creating matrices for the social network analysis.

As shown in Figure 1 (created from the PEA dataset), 2021 was exceptional; however, protests and mobilization in the neighborhood have been constant since the 80s, with another pick in 2008-2011 when the first eviction orders were issued. What has changed is, on the one hand, the composition of the movement and the political opportunities frame it was inserted in. The Israeli government is becoming increasingly right-wing, leav-

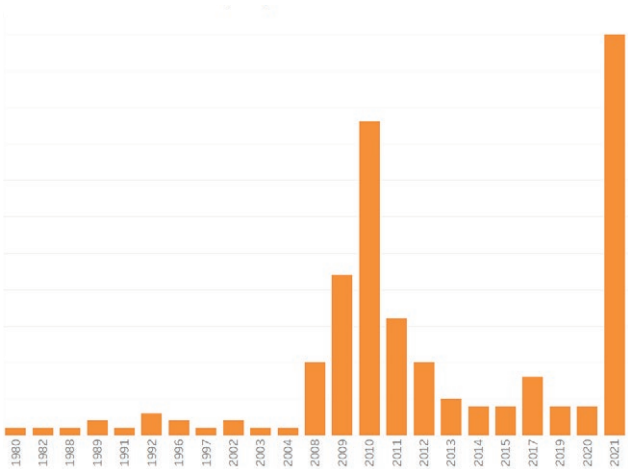

Figure 1. Protest in Sheikh Jarrah per year. *Source*: PEA from 1980 to 2021 from newspapers. Demonstrations in Sheikh Jarrah.

[8] https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/832457-dua-lipa-raises-voice-in-support-of-palestinians

ing marginal space to express dissent (Filc 2018: 130); in addition, some of its last decades' discriminatory policies towards Palestinians, such as the construction of the separation wall, declared illegal under international law (2004), are increasing the level of segregation and dispossession of the whole Palestinian population (Falk and Tilley 2017).

What has not emerged from the more recent newspaper articles and media sources, however, is that the gatherings and protests of Palestinian and Israeli groups cooperating for years to avoid the expulsion of residents continue to occur every Friday without exception. This is why I speak of a backstaging mechanism as different from disappearing completely or de-mobilizing. It implies that the presence of a section of the movement remains, but it steps outside the spotlight, and their support comes from a corner, not from the stage's center. It means remaining an active part of the movement and the coalition but from the shadows, continuing the job on equal footing without changing the relationships with their partners, but allowing a section of the movement – in this case, the historically oppressed group – to be at the stage as the main, and sometimes only, actor. As reported by an Israeli activist, part of a new group active in Jerusalem:

> *I don't know if it was okay for everyone, but maybe the fact that they took some distance from Israelis allowed them to be successful. I do not know, but if it was the case, okay, great. I am happy if they succeed; I do not care how. However, this was last year. Now, most of the youth that participated here are no longer there. Some of the leading figures of the protests are abroad while we are still there. I am not saying it is wrong. It is cool with me that they should live their normal lives, but it is important to say that there are people in Sheikh Jarrah with whom we still work closely, who are very willing and active and want to work with us, including the formal committees. Sheikh Jarrah committees are willing and happy to work with us. Maybe there was a change, and it was okay, but the relationships remain.* (IS31)

The backstaging mechanism also differs from the definition of an abeyance network, which involves a whole movement that remains silent and has the possibility of being re-activated in the moment of need (Hmed and Raillard 2012). Here, it appears that just a section of the movement is not visible and does not demobilize; it remains active but in the shadows. The backstaging mechanisms illustrate the possibility of segments of the movement providing continuity and even massive mobilizations by sidelining when necessary for the cause and reaching the outcome of the movement. It reveals the link between relations, time, and strategies. It is an explanatory tool that searches for the connection between change and continuation of the qualitative network analysis explored here.

3. CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION: TIME AND RELATIONS

This case is inserted into a broader research agenda, able to connect different analytical levels of interactions from the micro to macro level, passing through the meso-organizational dimension and crossing time and identities. In social movements, the process matters as much as the outcomes. Movement mechanisms and dynamics tell us much about actors' choices, strategies, and their ways of staying "in the movement". Entities are not interdependent; they act according to their interaction with social fields, networks, social worlds, and political contexts. Social actors' identities and actions result and evolve through exchanges. They cannot be understood as coming from a pre-relational moment (Dépelteau 2018: 17). As pointedly articulated in Emirbayer's *Manifesto for a Relational Sociology* (1997), relational theorists reject that some discrete, pre-given units, such as the individual or society, are the ultimate starting points of sociological analysis. As he states: «Individual persons, whether strategic or norm following, are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded […] [a relational perspective] depicts social reality in dynamic, continuous and processual terms, and sees relations between social terms and units as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substance» (Ivi: 287-289). Relations cannot escape a reflection on time, continuity, and change. In line with this, Alimi, Demetriou, and Bosi (2015) agree on the importance «to focus on changes in patterns of relational dynamics within and among the major parties and actors involved in episodes of contentious politics» (*Ibidem*: 38). In the study of this case, the relational element, exemplified through both the networks and the personal experiences of activists, is conjunct with the Protest Even Analysis and the temporal study of previous cycles of protest (Hutter 2014). They further underline that «actors, groups, or organizations within a social movement make claims that may influence the state and potentially other non-state parties; their activity triggers an interactive chain of moves and countermoves» (Ivi: 39).

In addition to the interactionalist school, scholars specializing in social movements have consistently emphasized the significance of relationships among events. Protests often manifest in cycles or waves, as noted by Andrews and Biggs (2006), Tarrow (1989), and

Wada (2004). While some of these cycles or waves result from diffusion processes or external conditions, many are intentionally orchestrated by movement activists (Della Porta and Andretta 2002: 59). This contribution aims at posing the spotlight on certain internal conditions and their changes across time as the combination of the PEA and qualitative SNA shows. Relational dynamics may change in this chain of moves and countermoves, and new modes of coordination and cooperation can emerge and develop (Della Porta and Diani 2015: 189). This paper tells this story: how diverse movement components interacted and changed their participation into a socio-political alliance that crossed an ethnonational divide. Indeed, analysis of movement strategies involves identifying interactions within the movement and exchanges between it, the state, and external actors as underscoring changes in mobilization. Substantiating a process-based account of how cooperation emerges and unfolds means capturing the heterogeneity of social movements. These relations are crucial in shaping mobilization patterns (Norwich 2017: 179). In fact, the identification of an understudied process, such as the one of coalition formation among different ethnonational groups, has allowed for the documentation of new mechanisms deemed crucial for the survival and maintenance of the movement itself.

In this regard, Tilly and Tarrow (2007) highlighted the importance of relational mechanisms. They draw on the brokerage concept as a relational mechanism that creates new connections between previously unconnected sites. "Diffusion" is understood as the spreading of forms of contention, an issue, or a way of framing it from one site to another. "Coordinated actions" occur when two or more actors engage in mutual signaling and parallel making of claims on the same object. Following these insights, this article will advance the theorization of a new mechanism that tries to understand why a salient component of the movement was sidelined in the description of the 2021 eventful protest in Jerusalem. This results from years-long interactions, disagreements, confrontations, and adjustments. Relational mechanisms are those that define the shape of the protest network (Della Porta 2008: 30-31). Hence, developing a conceptual tool, such as the backstaging mechanism, enters into a research agenda that aims at keeping into the due account interaction among actors who are different but co-participate in the construction of the mobilization and the cycle of protest. It creates an epistemological space in which relational mechanisms can be identified both through mapping instruments such as the PEA and the SNA and then explored and filled with meanings through interviews. The campaign analyzed here took place in two very different moments, and the different protest cycles were qualitatively and quantitatively very different. Consequently, paying attention to the relational and interactionist dimensions can illuminate the changes within the *#savesheikhjarrah* campaign. In addition, the backstaging mechanism is probably something retraceable in other movements, too, where asymmetries of power due to differences in race, gender, class, religion, and ethnicity are present. Indeed, it has a strategical dimension and a moral one insofar as the leadership role is played by the historically oppressed ethnonational group, not the opposite.

4. A NETWORK THAT CHANGES

This section will present the qualitative Social Network Analysis results interpreting cohesion and homophily measures in the two different time spans.

4.1. First cycle of protests

The qualitative social network analysis was based on the Protest Event Analysis data. The data collection spans from the late 1980s, marking the initial collaborative protest between Israelis and Palestinians in 1996. Subsequently, as depicted in Figure 2, there was another notable surge in protests around 2008-11, followed by a revival in 2021 due to the renewed threat of expulsion for the residents. In terms of timeline, T1 encompasses the period up until 2011, as shown in Figure 2, while T2 covers the span from 2012 to 2021, as illustrated in Figure 3. The year 2011 holds significance as a point acknowledged by all participants as a downturn in the momentum of the Sheikh Jarrah campaign. The rationale for selecting this time cut is twofold, encompassing both endogenous and exogenous considerations. The inclusion of both an internal and external variable is driven by the aspiration to enhance the legitimacy and scientific significance of constructing the two networks. While 2012 marked a year of notable Arab revolts with profound ramifications throughout the Middle East, including Israel and Palestine (Alimi 2012), the aftermath of the 2011 pick in the Sheikh Jarrah protests witnessed a decline in mobilizations. It is thus plausible to posit, in accordance with the protest cycle theory (Portos and Carvalho 2022), that as the movement progressed into its final phase, a discernible alteration in its composition occurred. Eventful protests (della Porta 2020) are notoriously considered critical junctures. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider them as a water-

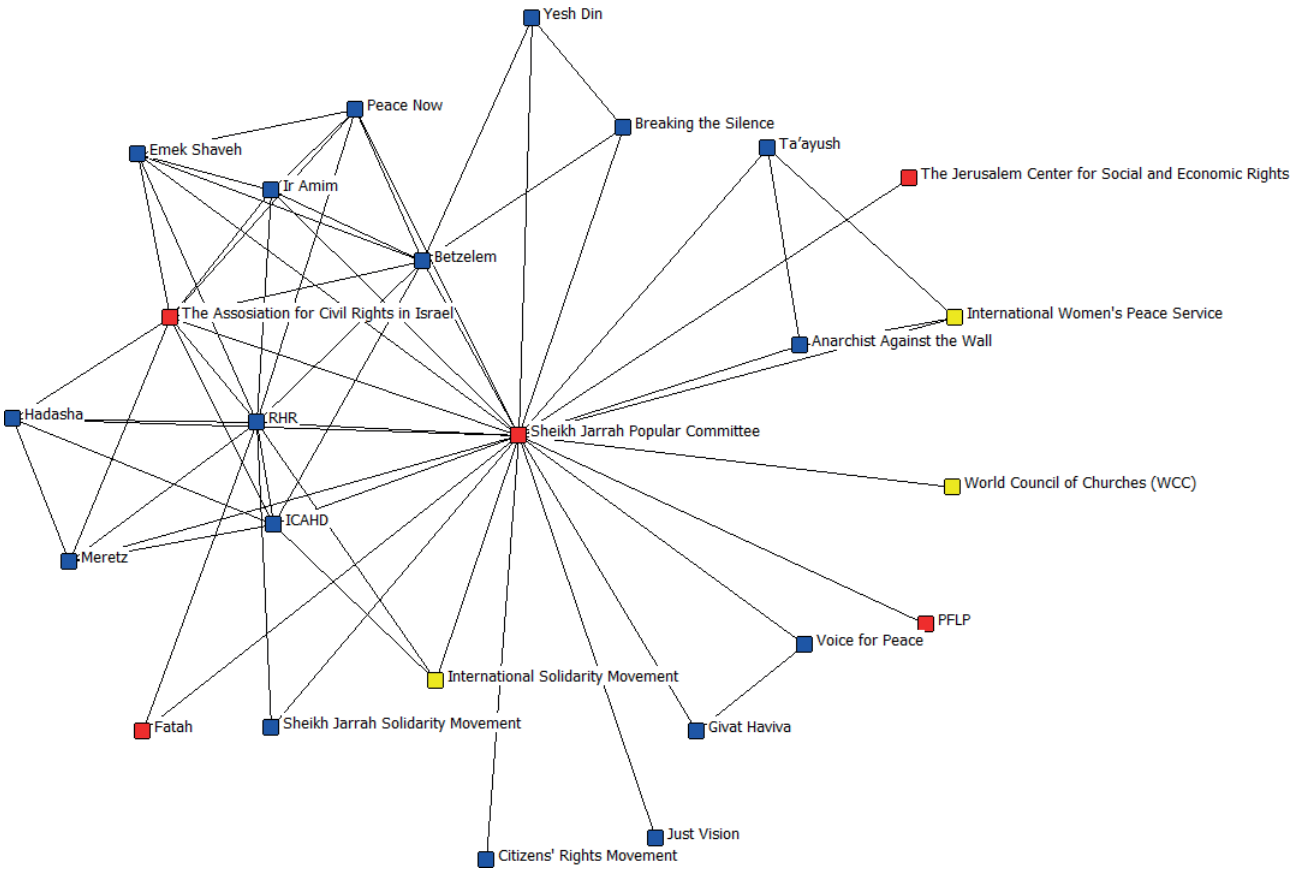

Figure 2. PEA Network 1996- 2011. *Source*: Author's own elaboration.

shed between two cycles of protests: this is when it is possible to retrace change and continuity.

A Palestinian resident's recollection highlighted this differentiation:

> *When it started in 2008, there used to be four or 500, and there used to be more people from Jerusalem. It went on for one year. But then, you know, people get tired, and they evicted those who were evicted. Things came down, so they could not keep the same momentum. But this small group of people (Israelis) continued to go every Friday, even if they were 30. Look, the thing which shows how they are determined is that they go if it is raining, if the weather is freezing, whatever the weather, they never said: "Oh, this Friday, we don't go. It's cold." So, every Friday, they are ready to come. You know, most of the people are very sensitive to doing things with Israelis because of this issue of normalization; most of the people, Palestinians in Jerusalem, don't come to this. Usually, the biggest number could be 20, 30, 40, or 50 Palestinians. There are always people from the neighborhood, but Palestinians of Jerusalem do not come.* (PA12)

Captured prior to the significant mass mobilization of 2021, this statement links the temporal aspect and the relational and political opportunity frame. While the scale of the protests has diminished over time, a cluster within the Israeli left still displays an unwavering commitment to mobilization, joining the residents in demonstrations every Friday at 3 pm in the winter and 4 pm in the summer. However, Jerusalem's broader populace and typical Palestinian residents exhibit limited involvement in the movement.

T1 (Figure 2) shows a broad participation of Israeli organizations and collectives in contrast to a minority of international organizations. The central Palestinian actor is certainly the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood Popular

Table 1. T1 Network's Indicators.

Number of Nodes	25
Number of Ties	120
Density	0.307

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Committee, which coordinates protest actions and tries to keep together the different souls and political positions of the two sides of the neighborhood (East and West). For this reason, the Committee is at the center of the network. Most organizations associated with the "Israeli Left" galaxy are present in the network: Peace Now, Emek Shaveh, Ir Amim, Ta'ayush, Breaking the Silence, and others. As mentioned already, both in the literature and the interviews, the residents of Sheikh Jarrah developed disagreements and felt like they were being instrumentalized by the Israeli left and their political agenda (Fleischmann 2019; Hallward 2011). Hence, some of these groups were demobilized in a second cycle of protest.

Looking closely at network measures, we see that the average density of the network is 0.307. Density refers to the proportion of actual connections (edges) among nodes (groups) compared to the total possible connections. An average density of 0.307 indicates that about 30.7% of the potential connections between groups in the protest events occurred. In other words, the network is moderately connected, with around a third of possible connections being explored. The standard deviation of the density values across the network is 0.868. This suggests significant variability in the density of connections among the different groups. Some actors have very few connections, while others might have more contacts. Given this context, an average density of 0.307 implies that the protest events network is moderately interconnected, with notable variability in connectivity among different groups.

Another analysis that is worth presenting the homophily test. Performing a homophily test in Social Network Analysis involves assessing whether there is a tendency for individuals in a network to form connections with others who are similar to them in some way. Homophily refers to the tendency of people to associate and connect with others who share similar attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity, interests, or other characteristics. Here, the test was performed based only on the ethnic attribute. Nodes were divided into Israel (Group 1), Palestinian (Group 2), and international (Group 3).

Israeli groups outnumber all the others. The tie strength between individuals in Group 1 and Group 2 is 53, while the strength between individuals in Group 1 and Group 3 is just 4. It indicates a high connection between Palestinian and Israeli organizations, leaving international organizations closer to Israeli ones. The E-I Index measures the proportion of ties within groups compared to the total number of ties in the network. In your case, the E-I Index is 0.348, which indicates some level of homophily, meaning individuals with similar characteristics are more likely to be connected than those who are different. Finally, the correlation coefficient measures the relationship between group membership and tie strength. In this case, the correlation is -0.095, close to zero. A value near zero suggests a weak relationship between group membership and tie strength, indicating that the network's homophily is weak. To conclude, individuals with similar characteristics are more likely to be connected; however, the relationship is not very pronounced, and there are several connections between Palestinians and Israeli organizations, as shown in Figure 2. As with any analysis, it is essential to consider the context and the specific research question when interpreting these results.

From a more qualitative point of view, we observe the presence of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary socialist party founded in 1967 by George Habash. The PFLP is today deemed a terror group by Israel. The PFLP does not recognize either the Fatah-led government in the West Bank or the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip as legitimate. Because of the terrorist classification, its activity in the Occupied Territories and Gaza was nearly impossible. It now has a small number of political operatives. The PFLP had gradually dwindled before the harsh crackdown that preceded the Second Intifada. However, it was a major political player in the OPTs before then. The fact that it participated in demonstrations in Sheikh Jarrah shows its considerable political involvement during the 1990s, as does Fatah, the other mainstream political group represented in the network. They will no longer play this role within the period considered in T2. After the construction of the separation Wall in 2006, it became nearly impossible for political representatives from the OPTs to visit Jerusalem and engage in its socio-political arena, as well as for ordinary Palestinians: permits are required and not always granted (Amnesty International 2022: 95).

By contrast, Meretz is the Israeli political party that was most present at the campaign's start and remains until nowadays. Meretz was formed in 1992 from the ashes of Mapam, a Marxist-inspired party (in which Israelis and Palestinians campaigned together). The new list won 12 Knesset seats in the 1992 elections and became part of the Labor government led by Yitzhak Rabin, which signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. This explains why it is present in the T1 network. During the fieldwork, I had the opportunity to meet two Meretz members who were also representatives of the Jerusalem municipality. Meretz representatives consider the evictions of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah a crime against humanity, and it has always been a constant and central point of their political program (Hasson 2023).

The reasons for this shift are several. Palestinians are now utterly disillusioned with their political parties' insignificance and corruption (AMAN 2020). They do not feel represented by the Israeli ones either since they cannot vote in Israeli national elections, only in Jerusalem's municipal elections. Nonetheless, the Meretz party maintained a presence in the neighborhood through its representatives, such as Mossi Raz, who attended the weekly demonstration almost every Friday. Unlike the PFLP, Mertz, as a political party within the Israeli political system, was allowed to continue participating in the demonstrations as one of the few institutional voices against evictions. None of their representatives was elected in the 2022 electoral competition.

To conclude, this first Figure shows a situation of several and recurrent cooperation between Palestinian residents, their committees, local Palestinian organizations, Israeli human rights NGOs, international NGOs, and political parties from Palestine and Israel. Although East Jerusalem is part of the rest of the Occupied Territories, Fatah and the PFLP are now outlawed from entering Jerusalem and cannot participate in local politics.

Table 2. T2 Network's Indicators.

Number of Nodes	16
Number of Ties	54
Density	0.242

Source: Author's own elaboration.

International NGOs were a minority, while the Israeli organizations were numerous and highly active. Some of them remained active, and some demobilized.

4.2. Second cycle of protests

The second Figure (Figure 3) presents a contrasting image. It is notably smaller regarding node count and connections (Tab. 2). It highlights how, post-2012, the interactions between the two ethnonational groups diminished, partly due to increased pressures against normalizing relations with Israelis. However, insights from this second network (Figure 3) also reveal the

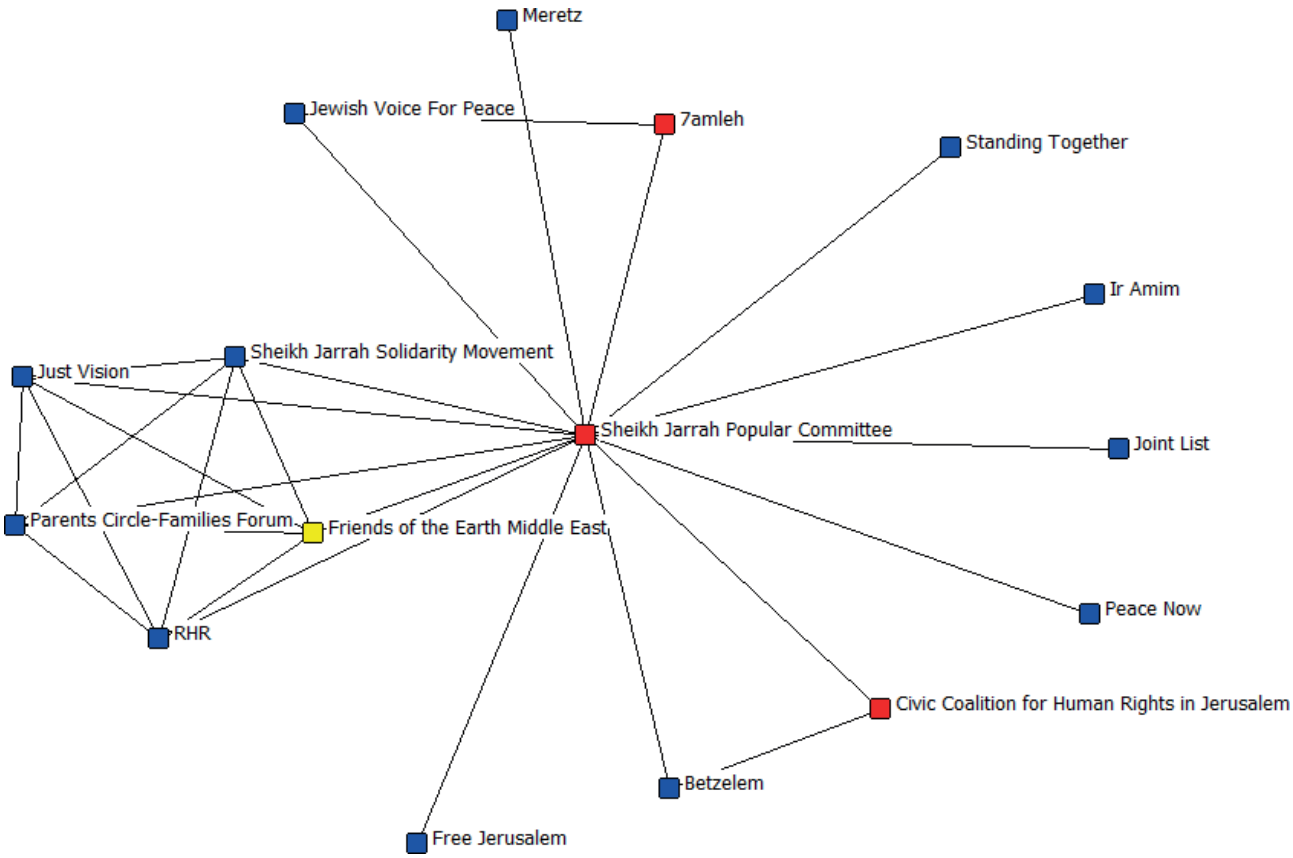

Figure 3. SNA 2012-2021. *Source*: Author's own elaboration.

continued involvement of certain Israeli groups in the Sheikh Jarrah mobilizations. Notably, Rabbis for Human Rights has remained consistent – an organization well-known within the Israeli left landscape. Another significant figure on the Israeli left is Ir Amim, an NGO focused on Jerusalem's urbanization and planning. While the Sheikh Jarrah Popular Committee undeniably remains central to these networks, there has been a shift in its degree of centralization. Unlike T1, more nodes are exclusively linked to the Sheikh Jarrah Popular Committee and lack connections. This could stem from challenges and disagreements faced by the movement. As elucidated by previous studies (Fleischmann 2019; Hallward 2011), a section of the Israeli left distanced itself from the coalition after disagreements over certain action repertoires and the future evolution of the movement. It is plausible that this disappointment prompted a more cautious approach to forming alliances, with a heightened focus on the residents at the core of each collaboration, considering both new and existing partnerships and centralizing the decision-making process.

Nonetheless, a more tightly knit subgroup is highlighted in red in Figure 4. Clusters or closely connected subgroups denote sets of participants within a network whose interactions are significant enough to categorize them as distinct entities. What unites them is their shared identity as Israeli organizations. Notably, this is also the only instance where an international organization could be identified, likely introduced by these Israeli entities. Homophily is here more prominent than in the previous network.

Density measurements further suggest a network with diminished cohesion. In this scenario, a node possesses a 24% likelihood of engaging in collaboration with other actors within the network. Given the network's scale, this statistic still highlights a degree of closeness and interaction among the different nodes. However, the decline in cohesion could also be attributed to the factor above: a period of tension that prompted certain participants to exit and pursue distinct paths in activism. This assertion was reaffirmed by one of the activists who played a role in both T1 and T2 mobilizations:

> *So, we knew all the time that there are different approaches within the neighborhood and the people—some like our presence less than others. Moreover, in the beginning, we said, okay, we are connecting with whoever we want. We want many people to hear of Sheikh Jarrah. This is surely what they want from us. However, it was a mistake. I think it was an important lesson of post-2011: everything we do, we do with the will of the people from the neighborhood, and now this is the bottom line.* (IS32)

The in-degree metric not only identifies nodes with greater centrality but, particularly in this relatively compact network, sheds light on those nodes that occupy more peripheral positions. Similar to the preceding case, Israeli organizations collaborating with the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood committee are also prominent here. A generational shift has occurred, even though certain older groups have maintained their involvement. Notably, Free Jerusalem, a collective established in 2015, has joined the network, primarily comprising young individuals and university students from the city. Some Palestinian residents have identified this group as proactive in organizing protests and gatherings, particularly during heightened tension. During a conversation with one of the founders, a comprehensive discussion took place about the collective's name. Notably, Free Jerusalem deliberately opted to exclude the term «peace», unlike most Israeli groups. The founder's response was as follows:

> *Of course, we desire peace, just like everyone else, but we believe that genuine peace cannot be achieved until a portion of Jerusalem's population (the Palestinian community) ceases to be confined to an underserved area of the city and treated as second-class citizens. Only when we all experience freedom and equal treatment can discussions of peace hold true meaning.* (IS31)

In this specific network, the Homophily Measures indicate an E-I Index of 0.448 and a correlation of -0.314. These values suggest some level of homophily in the network, as the E-I Index is greater than 0 (though not excessively high), and the correlation is negative (indicating weaker ties between individuals with similar characteristics). The correlation remains low in both networks, demonstrating that the two networks' ethnic homophily is not necessarily an indicator that fosters cooperation, and those Israeli and Palestinian organizations do not necessarily prefer to work with groups of the same nationality, and the networks are instead heterogeneous. However, it is true that, in particular, in the previous case, Israeli groups more frequently work with people of the same ethnonational identity even when working in the framework of the Palestinian cause.

In summary, the network displays two significant trends: firstly, the past participation of political parties from both sides within the confines of the conflict's geoFigurey – and secondly, a consolidation of the entire network around the central committee of the neighborhood. Although further examination of these data is warranted, given the article's scope, the network primarily serves as a visualization tool to elucidate the evolving pattern of campaign relationships over time. The follow-

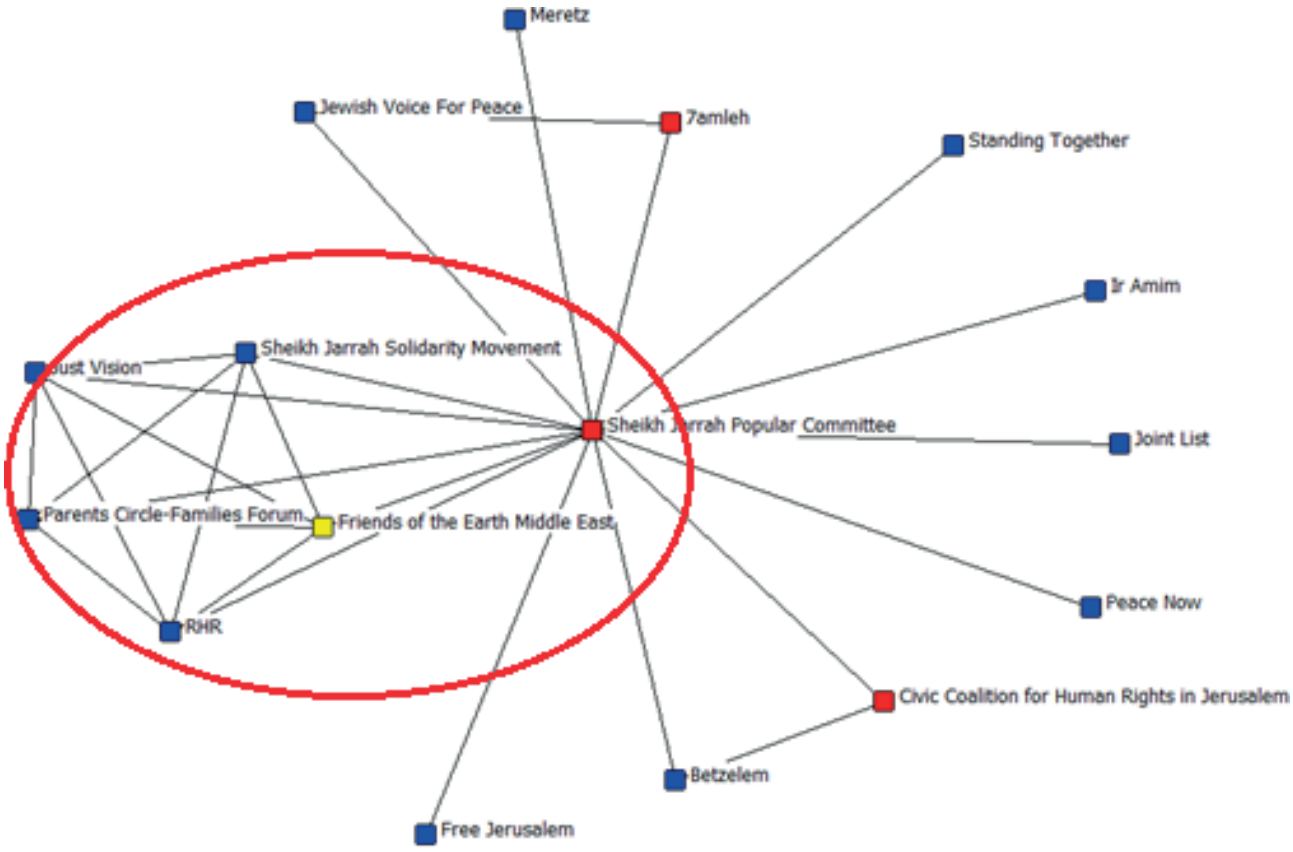

Figure 4. Cluster. *Source*: Author's own elaboration.

ing section will illustrate what has caused such a qualitative change in the networks.

5. A HISTORY OF MISTAKES AND AMENDS

This section gives more concrete examples of what the backstaging mechanism means and goes into more depth into certain episodes that took place during the 2021 campaign. Jabril, the resident of Sheikh Jarrah, recalls their first encounter with Israeli activists:

> *They came to my house in 2008; I remember it perfectly; they were a girl and a boy, young, wearing jeans, she was curly with blond hair, and they said to me: "We want to help you, what can we do?" At first, I was skeptical; rumors began circulating about the importance of non-normalization. However, was this normalization? They were just a boy and a girl. Moreover, I told them: Let us have some tea and see what we can do together.* (PA27)

Jabril reported that, since then, the movement and support from both Israeli and international activists have expanded and proved crucial. Unfortunately, the increased involvement of NGOs has led to resentment, especially against some Israeli peace organizations accused of "appropriating" Sheikh Jarrah's cause as a standard-bearer of left-wing Liberal Zionism. In 2008-2011, Sheikh Jarrah was identified as a bulwark of the Israeli left to safeguard democracy. Then, only ten years later, the same neighborhood became the emblem of the Palestinian national struggle. Much has been written on the involvement of the Israeli left in the first Sheikh Jarrah campaign; hence, what is reported here corroborates most of that analysis (Fleischmann 2019). Regarding the more recent surge of protests, the predominant emphasis in most contributions has been on the role played by social media and its impact on globalizing the protest (Miladi 2023; Huberman 2023).

Fleischmann (2021), for example, underlines that despite the potential advantages of Israeli involvement in campaigns against housing evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, it has not always been welcomed by Palestinians and, in fact, has been viewed as a hindrance. The dominant Israeli presence was identified as the primary factor leading to divisions inside the movement (*Ibidem*: 194).

As the movement expanded to include more Israelis, an exclusive Israeli organizing committee was established, distinct from the joint Palestinian – Israeli planning committee, indicating a growing divide (Ivi: 195). This situation aligns with concerns raised by Budour Yousef Hassan (2017), warning of the risk of external groups co-opting the grassroots Palestinian resistance movement under the guise of solidarity and coexistence. Strategic differences emerged between the Israeli-only committee, aiming for a broader anti-occupation campaign, and the joint Palestinian – Israeli committee, focused on addressing the Sheikh Jarrah evictions. This was confirmed by activists interviewed during my fieldwork as well. One of the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement funders, a collective of Israeli leftists involved in the first Sheikh Jarrah campaign, who later split in 2012, shared his experience. Some activists changed sites, some remained, and a minority demobilized utterly.

> *We were a group of Israelis who lived mainly in Jerusalem. Sheikh Jarrah's was an emblematic cause. At the time, we were close to the university, which is just over Sheikh Jarrah, and we did not mind being arrested. So often, during the 2009/2010 protests, we provoked the police precisely to get arrested, to make the media talk about us. In this way, however, the Palestinians stepped out of the spotlight. I do not know if it was the right strategy, but at one point, the residents asked us to stop. Some of us got angry, and after some discussions with the residents, the group disbanded.* (IS34)

Another Palestinian activist, active in 2009/10, said:

> *At that time, the Israeli Peace Organization or Solidarity Organization also took part, and they took the space, the public space, and kicked off all the other demonstrators and, activities, and organizations for the rest of the year. This meant that Sheikh Jarrah was no longer a place of Palestinian resistance.* (PA19)

Even within cooperation that persists over time – the Friday demonstrations continue every Friday and see the assiduous participation of both Israeli and Palestinian activists – coalitions do not necessarily remain unchanged, but like all relationships, have vicissitudes, evolve, take steps back, grow, and modify. Following a moment of crisis, in which criticalities of the coalition emerged and were discussed, people have taken different routes. Still, more importantly, those who have decided to stay had to change their relational strategies and coalitional dynamics to continue to be active in that struggle. New generations who desire deeper relations of cooperation need to adapt and make amends for the mistakes they have previously made. It is in this context that the backstaging mechanism crystallized.

All the activists interviewed stated how, in recent times and with the rekindling of the conflict in the spring of 2021, relations and collaborations with the inhabitants of Sheikh Jarrah have become more tense. This is certainly due to several factors. As mentioned, previous disagreements within the 2008-2011 *#savesheikhjarrah* coalition played an important role. On the other hand, there is also the question of anti-normalization, which is nowadays much more felt in Jerusalem due to a generational change. Many of the young people who participated in the protests in April 2021 were people who mobilized for the first time to support the neighborhood, and they did not accept the presence of the Israeli left there. They felt disappointed and advocated for non-normalization. As remembered by a Palestinian resident of Sheikh Jarrah:

> *What happened last year was different because, for once, all Palestinians united for Sheikh Jarrah. I guess for Jerusalem. So, there was Al-Aqsa, there was Gaza, and all these elements gave this momentum to the uprising. It gave momentum to Sheikh Jarrah and became very well known. Did you know that according to people who work with this social media, the hashtag #savesheikhjarrah was shared by 40 million globally? They knew about Sheikh Jarrah in one way or another because of all of that. And the young activists who use these social media manage to reach some well-known celebrities, each with 1 million 2 million followers. I think Sheikh Jarrah became more known than the Palestinian cause. Sheikh Jarrah put Palestine and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on top of the agenda again after it was very quiet for a long time.* (PA26)

Hence, in 2021, Sheikh Jarrah became global and although there was a large component of Israeli activists who had been active in this campaign before the neighborhood became famous all over the world, they suddenly disappeared from the stage and, therefore, also from the news. Once Sheikh Jarrah was headlined by the international newspaper as "the Palestinian cause", the Israeli activists found themselves in a different position, and they decided to step aside. The Israeli activists, in this case, have really demonstrated what it means to leave the leadership of the movement to the Palestinians, to the group that lives under occupation, and not to the one that enjoys greater resources and international support. Here, an Israeli activist described a moment of tension with some younger Palestinian activists in the neighborhood during the 2021 protests:

> *So, for example, I remember one evening at the beginning of Ramadan, Ibrahim was inviting some Israeli activists to*

have an Iftar dinner at his house. Then, some young activists of East Jerusalem started to come, and they were sitting on the street chanting and hanging out. At a certain point, someone told us, that they heard there were Israelis there, they did not like it very much, and Ibrahim was very upset. He looked at them and said, "Some of these people are part of the Palestinian struggle before you were born. They have been here with us for 12 years now, so, if you have any problem with them, you have to chick me off too. (IS32)

Ibrahim himself remembers this episode very well: «I really wanted the young activists there. They are very important, they are the future generation of the Palestinian struggle, but they cannot question my choices. They cannot question my partners» (PA19).

Although moments of crisis and hardship arose when the presence of the Israeli activists was questioned, they continued to participate in the weekly protests.

During a Friday demonstration, young people, mostly from East Jerusalem, but not only some came also from the north, joined. An only-Palestinians group was doing another demonstration at the same time and the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah did not know what to do. Therefore, they somewhat like came through; we were in the garden, our meeting point while they came from the neighborhood East side. They saw us, turned around, and went back to the neighborhood. Something like this. I was looking, and I told the other Israelis this is not up to us; this is for the people of the neighborhood to decide how they want to do it. So, I saw some people from the committee from the eastern side, and I saw them going to these young people, and I didn't understand what happened there. I saw the reaction, but I could not hear what they were saying. I asked afterward and I have been told that the residents told, "Listen, those are our partners, if you like, you can join, and we will be more than happy to have the demonstration together but if not feel free to go". This was very very very strong. I was like, whoa. I was impressed but on the other hand I also told myself: are you sure that's the right thing to do? (IS28)

As can be seen from all these testimonies, cooperation between the various groups is never easy or natural, especially in protests expansive moments where new groups and new personalities join with their, sometimes different, ideas on what the tactics of the movement should be. On the other hand, however, those alliances that are based on long-lasting interpersonal relationships are able to survive time and difficulties. In order to mediate these problems and keep the presence of the Palestinian youth in the protests, the backstaging mechanism was applied.

In summary, going back to the previous protest cycle gives us some tools to understand what happened in 2021. Previous moments of tension that saw the Israeli activists becoming the protagonists of the Sheikh Jarrah resistance made the residents more cautious about their alliance strategies. This is also evident in the centralization of the second network. However, this decision was also strategic in nature. Indeed, presenting Sheikh Jarrah as a Palestinian movement for national liberation permitted to obtain more extensive support from different parts of the Palestinian population from several locations, how also came to join the demonstrations. The result was deploying the backstaging mechanism. In the words of an Israeli activist:

I think the strategy is to keep in contact always. You do not just stick with people when you need something; there's continuous communication. This also means leaving some space. Sometimes, because of our involvement, they may have problems because our discourse is not the same as the Palestinian discourse. So, it is fair that they represent the Palestinian struggle. We are not neutral. We are the Occupier. And even if I am against Israeli policy and so on, I know I am the oppressor. (IS28)

In this testimony, not only emerges the need to stay and maintain a relationship even when there is no need for «action», but it also stresses the need to step aside when necessary. This distancing is not only related to a strategic dimension essential for achieving specific objectives but also as a way to deal with power asymmetry between the groups. The mechanism of backstaging implies that a component of a movement or coalition perceived as tricky or even adverse by a part of the public opinion decides not to claim its belonging to a campaign to increase the chances of success of the campaign itself. However, this does not involve a detachment or a distancing from the movement, but rather a stay in the campaign by moving away from the spotlight.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The focal point of this paper addresses a less-explored aspect within the realm of social movements: the trajectory of the movement components that fade from official news coverage. While existing literature predominantly delves into elucidating the dormancy of movements through abeyance networks, it rarely tackles the question of where the overlooked segments of these movements diverge. This article addresses this inquiry by introducing the concept of the backstaging mechanism.

To achieve this, the paper employs a Protest Event Analysis (PEA) of the news, acknowledging its inherent biases in representation – mitigated by the numerous

interviews and participant observations – along with a qualitative Social Network Analysis (SNA). This combined approach, although existing, remains uncommon in movement studies, providing a nuanced, long-term perspective. Despite the numerous studies scrutinizing the protest cycle of 2008-2011 and more recent analyses focusing on 2021, this paper uniquely bridges together the two mobilizations systematically. While offering a continuous study of the protest cycles, it narrates a story involving actors from movements of Palestinian origin mobilizing alongside Israeli activists. The network analysis reveals a shift from an initial phase where Israeli organizations were highlighted as key participants in the protests. In T2, there is not only a decrease in the presence of Israeli organizations in the campaign but also a centralization of the Sheikh Jarrah Neighbourhood Committee. This enriches the literature on non-violent mobilizations in Palestine and introduces an innovative approach to studying protest cycles.

While presenting a partial analysis of the two protest cycles, this article opens avenues for future studies on the same movement. It serves as a reference for analyzing movement outcomes and examining how the Israeli component influences the campaign's success/failure. Furthermore, it explores how neoliberal and gentrification dynamics intersect with colonialism and Palestinian expropriation, offering a macro-social lens for categorizing phenomena across different global regions. Examining the transformations within the campaign and its evolution over time, particularly in terms of composition and objectives, aligns with the focus of this special issue. This perspective enables us to contextualize movements not only within the political and social sphere but also within a historical and relational framework. The relationship, frequently overlooked by scholars of movements, is with time itself and how it influences the discourses, composition, objectives, repertoires, alliances, and ultimately, the mechanisms of these movements.

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APPENDIX

A: List of interviews

A3: Save Sheikh Jarrah Campaign (Total 20).

ID	Date	Location	Actor type	Gender	Language	Documentation
IS2	05/11/2019	Jerusalem	MP	M	Spanish	Transcribed
IS4	19/11/2019	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS7	25/11/2019	Jerusalem	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
PA12	05/11/2020	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS21	16/03/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA16	10/03/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed
PA18	18/03/2022	Ramallah	Resident	M	Arabic (with translator)	Transcribed
PA19	25/03/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed
PA21	07/04/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	F	English	Transcribed
IS27	13/04/2022	Jerusalem	MP	M	English	Notes
IS28	14/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA24	15/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA25	16/04/2022	Ramallah	Resident	F	English	Transcribed
IS31	17/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
IS32	18/04/2022	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS33	19/04/2022	Tel Aviv	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
Pa26	20/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS34	20/04/2022	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
PA27	22/04/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed
PA28	22/04/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed

PA: Palestinian Nationality
IS: Israeli Nationality
IN: International

B: PEA Sources on LexisNexis

1) Agence France Presse
2) Arutz Sheva
3) Associated Press International
4) BBC
5) BBC Summary of World Broadcasts
6) BBC Monitoring Middle East – Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring
7) CNN.com
8) FARS News Agency
9) Jordan News Agency
10) Jordan News Agency (Petra)
11) Ma'an News Agency
12) MENA English
13) Middle East Eye
14) Mondoweiss.net
15) National News Agency Lebanon (NNA)
16) Palestinian News Network (PNN) – English
17) Palestine News & Information Agency (WAFA)
18) Press TV
19) Qatar News Agency
20) The Associated Press
21) The Canadian Press (CP)
22) The Daily Star (Lebanon)
23) The Jerusalem Post
24) The Jordan Times
25) The National
26) The New Your Time
27) The Palestine Chronicle
28) The Times of Israel
29) Xinhua General News Service
30) Jpost.com

Query string: Sheikh Jarrah OR الشيخ جارح AND initiative OR petition OR signature OR campaign OR protest! OR demo! OR manifest! OR march! OR parade OR rall! OR riot! OR festival OR ceremony OR vigil OR boycott! OR block! OR sit-in OR squat! OR bomb! OR firebomb! OR molotov OR assault OR attack OR bomb OR curfew OR stone OR teargas OR strike OR boycott OR riot OR High Court OR activis* OR organiz* OR احتجاج OR طاشان OR مظاهرة OR سرام OR منظمة

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«I was in exile before leaving the country». Tunisia and the Feminist Continuities of Activism

Maria Nicola Stragapede

Abstract. What happened to the women who participated in the 2010-2011 Tunisian revolutions and subsequently left the country? While scholarly work has extensively delved into the engagement of the young generations who participated in these transformative times, there has been a limited attention to the experiences of women who subsequently underwent journeys of exile. This article seeks to empirically fill this gap by looking at the political trajectories of six women activists, spanning from their participations in the 2010-2011 Tunisian uprisings to their experiences in exile. Drawing on ethnographic research and life history interviews conducted between 2021 and 2023, this article shows the transformations in these activists' political trajectories before they left the country. Furthermore, it outlines how, even in exile, queer and feminist activism has provided these women a space of engagement through a "multiple identifications" of their political attitudes and interests. Adopting a social movement approach focused on the continuities of engagement, this article contributes to two fields of the literature that have been traditionally studied in isolation: the literature on gendered borders and the literature on gendered transformations throughout revolutionary times. Finally, the article emphasises the importance of studying the transformations of meanings of engagement while analysing political continuities.

Keywords: continuities, political trajectories, SWANA revolutions, gendered borders, feminist and queer engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scholarly work has extensively explored the engagement of the young generations who took part to the protests that swept through the SWANA region (Southwest Asian and North African region) between the end of 2010 and 2011. However, there has been a more limited discussion on the stories of the young women who participated in these eventful moments and subsequently experienced journeys of exile. With a focus on the Tunisian context, this article seeks to address this academic gap and centres its analysis on a biographical exploration of six women's political engagement from their participation to the 2010-2011 uprisings to their exile. Grounded in extensive ethnographic research and life history interviews conducted between 2021 and 2023, the article seeks to shed light on these women's continuation of

activism amidst political, spatial and intimate disruptions. In this way, by bridging the dimensions of politicisation, migration and interpretations of engagement, the analysis aims to contribute to the scholarly literature on gendered migration and revolutions in the SWANA region. Additionally, it seeks to enrich the social movement literature by offering insights into how activism is sustained at the biographical level.

To this purpose, this article proceeds as follows: section two provides a theoretical exploration of the intersections between women's participation in the 2010-2011 SWANA revolutions and the scholarly work on gendered borders studies; section three will introduce the fieldwork research that underpins this article, along with the processes of data reduction and analysis; section four delves into the core of the empirical analysis, revealing the processes of activists' reconversion or "orientation" and observing the sustained engagement of these women activists in queer and feminist movements; finally, the concluding section briefly summarizes the empirical findings and discusses their relevance and their contribution to the existing literature.

2. THE SWANA REVOLUTIONS AND THE "GENDERED ORDER"

The 2010-2011 uprisings that spread in most of the SWANA region were firstly narrated by many commentators through a look of surprise towards these events, picturing the people who rose to revolt as finally exiting from a long period of political quiescence, authoritarian rule and ideological void, as Pace and Cavatorta (2012) underline. A plethora of analysis has emerged since these revolutionary times, ranging their focus from structural explanations around the causes of the revolts to micro explorations on the impact of these events on the lives of revolutionaries (Volpi and Jasper 2018; Dakhli 2020). However, as Kréfa and Barrières (2019) notice, most of these studies have concentrated on the heterosexual man as the main subject of study, disregarding – until more recent years – a gendered analysis of such times. They emphasise, in particular, that a thorough consideration of gendered analysis goes beyond merely introducing a new exploratory variable. Instead, it involves examining how the entire "gendered order" is put into place during both ordinary and extra-ordinary time, shedding light on its possible ruptures, continuities and restructuration across these times.

On this purpose, the two authors put into question the relationship between the "gendered order" and moments of crisis, highlighting how such moments may create opportunities for overturning established gendered norms, and yet they also carry the potential to perpetuate, strengthen or establish a new "gendered order". The reproduction of the «division of militant work» that Lacombe (2019) underlines is one of these possible counter-effects, revealing how pre-existing systems can be re-constituted in the post-crisis order. As observed by Allam (2017) and Pratt (2020), gendered norms can equally be instrumentalized by the emerging political orders in the new political landscapes. Pratt (2020), for instance, points out how regimes, during counter-revolutionary phases, have often bolstered their legitimacy by emphasising women's protection and safety, while engaging in the repression of their rights and in violent actions against them. These insights can be extended across other temporal and spatial dimensions, illustrating the reproduction of the "gendered order" throughout different moments of crisis (Viterna 2013).

This existing research has primarily delved into the changes within the "gendered order" throughout the 2011 revolutions and their aftermaths across various contexts. The focus has been particularly directed towards the experiences of women actively involved in the revolutions, of those affiliated with political organisations or collectives and finally of those whose personal lives underwent profound intimate transformations, despite not directly participating in these momentous events (Hasso and Salime 2016). Rooted in a post-colonial feminist tradition, these studies expand the understanding of women's political agency and emphasise their intersectional characteristics and their multi-positionalities across spaces of action (Hasso and Salime 2016; Pratt 2020). However, the existing literature fails to address the intimate and political transformations experienced by women who participated to these revolutionary moments and subsequently migrated abroad. Although there are exceptions in those studies directly addressing the persecution and forced migration of women (Freedman *et al.* 2017), the primary emphasis remains on the transformative aspects of the migratory experience, rather than on the prior processes of politicization.

Expanding beyond the literature on the SWANA 2010-2011 revolutions and subsequent migration(s), significant insights on the topic can be found in the emerging studies on gendered borders studies (Freedman *et al.* 2023). These studies consistently direct attention, on the one hand, to the multiple sites where the "gendered order" is perpetuated or reversed in the lives of migrant women; on the other, to how women's lives have been transformed throughout the migratory experience. While these studies do recognise the importance of

political agency – by stressing the politicisation of women's subjectivities throughout their journey – they tend to overlook how women who were previously been politicised[1] could either maintain or transform their political activism after migrating[2].

Furthermore, as we have observed in the literature on migrations and the SWANA revolutions, these analyses privilege a focus on experiences of "forced migration", considered as the direct consequence of structural conditions (a situation of threat) and/or individual conditions (a situation of threat specifically directed to person or a group). This article aims instead to encompass various experiences in which the migratory journey unfolds. Following Nouss (2015), I will employ broader definitions of "exile", including in the analysis different experiences of expatriation, forced migration and political exile[3]. Regardless of the specific conditions prompting these women activists to leave their country, the empirical analysis indicates the pivotal role that a growing disaffection with the political landscape in the country and the perceived sense of revolutionary loss played in the decision to migrate. As emphasised by Miranda[4] (2023: 221), it is indeed crucial to move beyond a

> *Unilinear vision linking poles of emigration and immigration, governed by causes (demographic, economic, political and now also ecological), polarised around the ways in which national borders are crossed and the legal statuses (worker, refugee, asylum seeker, students, etc.) attributed to migrants at the moment of the border crossing.*

Furthermore, she stresses how it is crucial to consider the «meaning and significance they [the gendered subjects] give to their experience» (Ivi: 221-222), specifying how an approach to continuities should not be equated with unilinearity; on the contrary, it acknowledges how, in the continuum of experiences, meanings and interpretations are transformed across contexts. Following Miranda's suggestions, the article aims specifically to unravel this dichotomy through the social movement literature on the collective or individual forms of "sustainment" of activism. In particular, this article refers to Taylor's definition (1989) of «abeyance structures» to identify collective forms through which activism is sustained, and to Corrigal-Brown's definition (2011) of «individual abeyance» to refer to forms of continuation of engagement at the biographical level. This conceptual framework has found application in various studies, ranging from the analysis of activists' pause and later re-engagement in life to research on forms of reconversion or professionalization, as in Fillieule and Neveu's work (2019). These terms refer to activists' deploying their militant capital (including the knowledges, practices, and/or relationships cultivated in previous forms of engagement) into other forms of engagement or/and in the professional sphere.

Despite its widespread applications, this framework has been rarely employed in studies addressing the individual sustainment of activism across experiences of migration and throughout revolutionary processes, to which this article seeks to contribute. Following a social movement perspective on continuities, the analysis therefore contributes to the scholarly literature on gendered migrations and revolutions in the SWANA regions, by empirically examining their concrete intersection. Finally, as suggested by Miranda (2023), it points out to women's subjective interpretations of both their political activism and exilic experiences, outlining the transformations, negotiations and re-adaptations of meanings of engagement.

3. METHODS

As outlined in the introduction, the main aim of this article is to study the trajectories of six women activists and their journeys of activism, tracing their involvement from the 2010-2011 revolts to their subsequent exile. The biographies of these six women activists were gathered through a combination of ethnographic work and life history interviews. Embracing Abu-Lughod (1990) «polyvocal ethnography», I integrated numerous voices of analysis, including my own as a researcher, to construct a dialogical experience during an extended fieldwork.

I conducted the ethnographic work in Paris and in different locations of the Ile-de-France region between 2021-2022, where I participated in political events organised by the participants to my research, including art exhibitions, conferences, workshops, political meetings and informal gatherings. My own history of feminist engagement, my previous life experiences in Tunisia, my Southern-Italian background and my positionality as a young woman are all elements that have greatly contrib-

[1] With reference here to their direct participation and engagement in political organizations.

[2] Some exceptions in Bereni (2012) with her reflections on the «space of the women's cause» and the transferability of this frame of engagement; in Dyrness (2016) with her reflections on the «third space feminism»; in Adami (2023) on temporal approaches to migration.

[3] For example, consider McKeever (2020)'s conceptualization of political exile. He emphasizes the "forced" departure from a country due to one's political affiliations and/or political engagement.

[4] Specifically regarding the Tunisian case, Zederman (2018; 2023) has equally outlined the significance of studying the continuum of migrants' engagement across different temporalities and fields of action.

uted to establishing a connection with my interlocutors. Conversely, these women had faced direct or indirect forms of racism, experiences of visa regimes and revolutionary violence that I never lived myself and for which I ensured to foster a trusting fieldwork environment, with the ethnographic work proving particularly beneficial to this purpose.

The ethnographic phase has equally been crucial in mapping the networks of activism in France and in selecting the core biographies on which this paper is based. I have conducted the majority of these life history interviews in France between 2021 and 2023. Each life history interview lasted on average between two and six hours (see appendix B for a list of the life history interviews employed in this article). The selection of women with whom I have conducted these life history interviews has been guided by two main criteria. First, following Mannheim (1952), we could argue that these women activists belong to the same «political generation» that has been formed as such by sharing common political, cognitive and emotional experiences of political socialisation. They have all been involved or politically socialised in the left-wing space of dissent in Tunisia that had silently survived under Ben Ali (for a list of the organisation where they have been involved see appendix A). Furthermore, they have all participated to the 2010-2011 Tunisian revolutions and, at that time, their age ranged between 17 and 27 years old. Secondly, these women have all left Tunisia after 2011 and they have all taken part in feminist and queer activists' networks, as the empirical section will further explain. In this article, they have all been anonymized and their names have been changed to protect their identities.

The life history interviews have, more specifically, been aimed at directly reconstructing the activists' paths of engagement and their perception on such journey (Della Porta 2014). The life history interviews concentrated on the different stages of these actors' political and intimate paths, encompassing their familial, educational and geographical backgrounds, their experiences of political socialisation under Ben Ali (mostly through friends, family, political organisations, schools and cultural spaces), their memories of the revolution and their educational, working and political experiences in its aftermath, both in Tunisia and throughout their migratory journey. These narrations were also accompanied by questions on their views on the political context across time, their emotional and affective ties in the different stages of their lives and more specific questions on their experiences between leaving Tunisia and re-adjusting to the new country.

To the purpose of the data analysis, I transcribed the interviews verbatim, ensuring that the transcripts used the exact wording employed by the activists (Spradley 1979). I transcribed the interviews in the language they were conducted, which was usually French, and later translated some extracts into English. In the analysis of the transcribed interviews, I first outlined – with the support of a life history calendar – the different phases of activists' engagement, and I have connected them to their affective and emotional linkages to engagement at the time (Freedman *et al.* 1988). To the purpose of this study, in the appendix C, I have identified five main phases of these activists' paths of engagement dividing them in:

a) political socialisation under Ben Ali;
b) activism after 2011;
c) disengagement from (names of organizations for each);
d) activism after disengagement;
e) activism after exile. While having intersectional characteristics (coming from different geographical and class backgrounds), they have all maintained similar paths of activism[5].

Secondly, with the support of MAXQDA, I have employed a thematic analysis of the field notes and the six life history interviews (Ritchie and Spencer 1994), centring them around the following three index:

a) activists' emotions (hope, disillusion, fatigue, enthusiasm…);
b) activists' practices within the organizations (hierarchy, debate, sisterhood, self-reflection…);
c) meanings and interpretations of activists' engagement/reconversion/disengagement.

I have then analysed the data not separately, but within their narrative and the life-stage to which they had been associated (Andrews *et al.* 2008). In the following empirical section, I will therefore focus on the paths of these six women activists, brining attention to their different stages of activism in relation to their subjective interpretations on each phase, their emotive and mnemonic associations, and their practice-oriented experiences across time and space.

4. CONTINUITIES OF ACTIVISM: FROM DISENCHANTMENT TO EXILE

This empirical section shows the paths of engagement of six women activists in Tunisia (sections 4.1 and

[5] Considering that this information is not relevant to discuss the empirical analysis of this article, I will not specify the intersectional characteristics of each woman in order to further protect their anonymization.

4.2) and after their exile in Europe (section 4.3), showing their processes of continuation of activism and their meanings of engagement. These processes have not happened in a clear-cut separation, but are often overlapping, with a gradual disengagement from one form often leading to a growing political and emotional investment in another. In order to analyse the continuities of activism, it is indeed crucial to focus on how these transitions have unfolded. In particular, I will look at meanings of engagement and forms of "orientations", to show how individual interests, dispositions and political attitudes have intervened before the moment of joining a new party or organisation, as well as how they have often preceded reconversion. Accordingly, the following sections will show, on the one hand, the continuities that emerged throughout political change and exile; and, on the other, how feminist and queer spaces made such continuities possible offering a space for "multiple identifications".

4.1. Disenchantment and Exit

As extensively documented, the 2010-2011 uprisings have been a transformative event for the Tunisian population, impacting not only longstanding activists but also people who observed these events or took to the streets for their first time. This transformation occurred due to the intensity of these events, but also for the new hopes and utopias that they generated (Bayat 2013). A new young left-wing political generation became significantly involved in this process but soon began to perceive that the older political generations were taking control of the post-revolutionary process. In particular, they felt how these older generations struggled to adapt to the new practices and utopias that have been created through the revolutions (El Waer 2018; Hmed 2018). In the immediate passage from clandestine forms of activism to post-clandestine ones after 2011, these young activists felt indeed how the very meanings of "being engaged" – both as a political and personal experience – had been changed (*Ibidem*).

This resulted in a major phase of exit or disengagement of these activists from the organisations they had been once involved and took place among a variety of political organisations and structures (*Ibidem*). This has especially been registered after the years 2013/2014. On the one hand, the electoral loss of the Left in 2011 and 2014, the assassinations in 2013 of Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi (two prominent leaders of the Left), the enduring presence within the governing bodies of public figures closely associated to Ben Ali and the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions are all potential elements that brought these activists to feeling a detachment from politics (Abdelmoula 2018; El Waer 2018; Hmed 2018). On the other, as mentioned, the life within the organisations themselves was not able to canalise the experiences of these young activists who went through the 2011 revolution. This was especially evident in the strict hierarchical form and the lack of transparency that the historical organisations maintained – even if in different degrees and forms – and that could not meet the more horizontal politics that the revolution opened (*Ibidem*).

In line with these findings, the "exit" observed within the biographies of the six women activists upon which this article is centred was indeed connected to both their fatigue within the functioning of these organizations (as shown in appendix C)[6] and the broader events unfolding in the country. Alongside these aspects, there were, however, other factors pertaining more specifically to the life within the different organisations, as the six women activists mentioned. Among these, the experiences of sexism in traditional left-wing organizations and the impossibility of having roles of leadership as women are factors that played a crucial role[7]. Another issue raised by some was directed towards the traditional feminist organisations, perceiving them as lacking after 2011 more inclusive definitions of feminism (they equally stressed, however, how this has profoundly changed since then). This included, notably, LGBTQAI+ rights, sex workers' rights and, more broadly, the new practices and discourses inherited from the revolutions[8].

4.2. Towards Feminist Practices

As observed in the previous section, these six women activists disengaged, after 2013/2014, from the organisations in which they had previously been involved, with the exception of Aziza who left the PCOT soon after 2011. Their engagement was transformed through two main different processes, that saw a combination of previous forms of mobilisation with biographical changes as well as a resignification to engagement itself. On the one hand, after their exit from political organisations, these activists sporadically continued participating in manifestations or following more issue-based causes. This was linked to a form of disenchantment related to the post-2011 outcomes, a personal necessity towards self-reflection and pause from politics and less biographical

[6] Among these, it should be noted, however, that the experiences within the FTCA and FTCC were narrated as positive and joyful ones.
[7] For further reflection on this topic see Selmi (2019).
[8] For further reflection on this topic see Kréfa (2019; 2022).

availability, that in the case of Lina, Aziza, Haifa leaned towards journeys of professionalization (while for Laila it brought to a period of exit from engagement). On the other, those activists who had already been involved in feminist organisations under Ben Ali and its immediate aftermath (as Halima and Reem), found soon new spaces to re-organise in the new feminist and queer collectives and organisations – like Chouf, Chaml and Mawjowdin – that have been created after 2012, as well as in transnational queer and feminist networks.

Following their exit from previous political organisations, some activists started leaning towards more feminist-oriented practices and increased their interest in feminist and queer organisations – while, however, not joining them on a permanent basis (as in the case of Lina, Aziza, Haifa and Laila). In the words of Lina: «The thing that gave me hope again was the queer movement […] I did some workshops with them and they gave me hope again» (June 2022). She increasingly started detaching from a «patriarchal image of power» and started orienting herself towards civil society and associative spheres, combining them with the queer and feminist cause. However, if Lina (as well Laila and Aziza) found a new form of political hope, for others (as Haifa), this form of engagement kept remaining emotionally separated from the previous forms of activism.

In the cases of Lina, Aziza, Haifa and Halima, this orientation towards feminist practices and queer and feminist organisations was accompanied by paths of professionalization while still in Tunisia. Aziza reflected more specifically on the period in which she started taking distance from political action: «I've withdrawn a bit from political life and everything and I've concentrated on how to earn money and go away and, at the same time, by doing graphics and design, I've realised that my need for artistic practice is fundamental to my life» (June 2022). She equally narrates how it was in this same period that her artistic production started to change. In her words: «I started talking about resistance, struggle, metamorphosis, things like that […] But I talked about them as a woman, from a feminine position, it became more personal: it was always political but more personal and more feminist» (August 2021). While exiting the PCOT, she started to become more and more interested in feminism: she did not join any specific organisation in a permanent form, but she started following other experiences of feminist and queer activism, increasingly changing not only her artistic practices, but also her meanings of engagement. From believing in «camaraderie» – as in being «comrades» – she started believing in «sisterhood», she told me, and she increasingly started considering her artistic experience as her form of engagement.

While different experiences lead these activists to come closer, engage or re-engage in feminist or queer organisations and practices, feminism offered for everyone a space of identification. These forms were, however, frequently depicted as «already being there» during their childhood and teenage years through discursive references – such as discussions about «menstruations and women's sexuality». Additionally, they were shaped by the example of mothers, sisters or other women in their lives who consistently encouraged them or who they witnessed fighting their own battles on a daily basis. However, these memories became "feminist" for these women only when they came across the first political spaces where they felt recognised or when they encountered a feminist activist who shared similar perspective on (feminist) engagement. For instance, as Laila (June 2021) recalled:

> *I had this friend who would always tell me that we're not feminists, even if we believe in women's rights and stuff. And [she told] that feminism doesn't serve all women, and I would be like, yeah, I'm not a feminist, because that was you know, when they give you the wrong definitions of feminism.*

By briefly travelling abroad, however, she met a woman «who knew about feminists in every part of the world» and in her enthusiasm for transnational feminist solidarity, Laila found her own form of feminist identification. Moreover, what emerged as common in the experiences of all these women was the possibility of finding a space for «creativity» and invention, a space that could be «brave enough», that had «something to fight for», and that tried to function according to new logics and principles, as those that emerged in 2011. In these spaces, these activists could «experiment» with new forms of activism, merging artistic practices with political ones as well as nurture their personal and self-caring dimensions and intimate connections with others. Furthermore, they could focus on the «importance of practices», rather than on «purely ideological» or «authoritarian» forms of political engagement. This confirms what has been documented in many works that explain, on the meso-level, how the practice-oriented qualities of feminism have helped the sustainment of engagement, whether this was through professionalization (Hasso 2001) or through the continuation of engagement across generations (Whittier 1995).

On the other hand, Reem and Halima, who were already close to or engaged in feminist organisations under Ben Ali's clandestine rule, could instead soon reconvert their capital into other forms of engagement

while still in Tunisia. This passage was smoother thanks to their previous political relationships and to the emerging of numerous feminist and queer associations in 2011, which allowed these activists to find new political spaces while continuing engaging on similar causes[9]. There were also two major additional factors that facilitated this passage. First, as Halima put it, they offered the possibility to «work in the field or, in other words, to take action on a day-to-day basis, to change mentalities and behaviours» (July 2021), conducting workshops and other formative experiences in universities, creating festivals or engaging more directly in the various neighbourhoods of the city. Second, this became possible also thanks to the transnational networks that, already under Ben Ali's period, feminist and queer associations had started to silently build. This was the case of Reem who underlined how building these networks had been addressed to «being recognised as a community», «finding each other» and «recognising each other's needs» and it was especially important for the LGBTQAI+ community that, also through this support, could start creating their first associations (May 2023).

4.3. Exile and the Continuities of Activism

The time that followed these processes of individual abeyance, professionalization or reconversion was often combined with the search for new working or students' opportunities abroad – mostly in France, and only in one case in another European country. To the purposes of this analysis I will not enter into further details on these activists' processes of exile, but I would underline how they always happened through the request of study or work permits and never brought to asylum applications. Despite the possibility of political reconversion among the women activists who had previously been engaged in feminist organisation or, for others, their "orientations" towards feminist practices, leaving the country was often linked to a feeling of «having nothing to do anymore» or «something to give». It often included feelings of «marginality» or «rejection», the need for a «right of existence», the perception of «being illegal» and a state of «exile» or «alienation» experienced while being in the country. The sense of «revolutionary loss» was permeating many of these narratives (field notes 2021).

However, compared to the other activists of the same generation who left the country after 2011, as I could observe during my ethnography, these activists could find in the space of arrival forms of engagement that they saw as in continuity with their previous queer and feminist engagement or orientations (field notes 2021). I argue how this was possible through a "multiple identification" of their cause in the space of arrival, readapting it to the new forms and spaces of action encountered, to one's own biographical trajectory at the time of arrival and to the processes of reconversion that these activists had experienced before leaving the country. While experiences of engagement in exile have indeed been depicted in rupture with previous forms of mobilisation, I instead observed how, in all these cases, forms of political continuities had been deployed in two (possibly overlapping) paths: processes of re-engagement towards "homeland" politics and/or "local forms of engagement" in transnational networks. In continuity with former political utopias and activism experiences, a focus on spaces that could be both creative and horizontal was fundamental in the search for new spaces of engagement. Furthermore, paths of professionalization continued characterising the experiences of Lina, Aziza, Haifa and Halima and, in addition, the one of Reem who, some years after her exile, equally followed paths of professionalization in feminist and queer spaces.

a) "Homeland" Activism

With the exception of Reem, all the activists I encountered have re-engaged in "homeland" politics, referring to those forms of mobilisation towards the place where these activists have lived before their exile. This occurred with varying intensities, as some women activists became more actively involved in the network and continued mobilising until the movement ceased its activities. In contrast, others participated actively only in the initial phases and subsequently remained engaged by taking part in the manifestations organised by the network, maintaining close relationships with its members. This "homeland" engagement found renewed momentum, particularly through the emergence of Falgatna (We're fed up), a feminist anti-capitalist movement created in Tunisia in December 2019, on the wave of the LasTesis' performance «Un violador en tu camino» («A rapist in your way») and anticipated by the AnaZeda campaign («MeToo») that had sparked numerous protests against sexism, gender violence and feminicide in Tunisia (Bint Nadia 2020). At the same time, Falgatna was devoted to experimenting with horizontal and creative political practices and, in doing so, it helped creating a community of feminist engagement from abroad (*Ibidem*).

The collective quickly gained significant popularity but, within a few months, had to face the impact of the initial waves of Covid-19. Nevertheless, it played a pivotal role in establishing and solidifying a Tunisian feminist

[9] This phenomenon has been usually described by the social movement literature as "spill-over effect" (Corrigall-Brown 2011).

and queer network of activism from abroad. These women activists continued to advocate, manifest and organise against gender violence, linked to forms of police abuse or to cases of feminicide and harassment taking place in Tunisia. This moment was lived by many with a sense of "political reappropriation", reclaiming a space that had been taken from them. As Lina describes the moment when, while in France, she participated again in a protest: «It had been a long time that I hadn't done that. It had been years and, there, we were making banners with spray, we were drinking beers, we were choosing the slogans […] And I hadn't done that for years, it was extremely nostalgic, I felt so well» (June 2022).

As explained by Kréfa (2019; 2022), the emphasis on «human rights violations», rooted in the surviving spaces of mobilisation active under Ben Ali, has remained central in mobilising feminist and queer movements. In line with her work, I observed that this discursive frame continued mobilising queer and feminist activists abroad, providing them a space to continue their journey of reconversion in queer and feminist activism. Rather than "homeland" politics itself, it was these activists' interest in feminist and queer causes in Tunisia that led them to re-engage in Tunisian politics. This engagement was facilitated by the emerge of new networks and relationships, and by reactivating, as in the example of Lina, these activists' prior emotional attachment to the political sphere. For them, the meanings of "homeland" politics were mostly intertwined with the feminist and queer groups where they could rediscover a sense of home and belonging.

b) Local Activism

A second space for feminist and queer mobilisation emerged through local forms of engagement. This encompassed participating in or creating associations focused on migration and women's rights, within local networks of activism that privileged a transnational and global dimension and, in some cases, this engagement was integrated with the activists' professional spheres. These forms consistently took on an intersectional dimension, as these activists pointed out at the continuum of their struggles in Tunisia with the violence and racialization of their bodies in the new country of arrival. It has been a significant aspect for those who arrived in France, considering both its enduring colonial legacy with Tunisia and the prevalent racism and Islamophobia experienced by these women in the new environment. Finally, these activists could reinterpret their older political values and beliefs in the light of the feminist and queer practices that they had started to discover and identify with. As Aziza (June 2022) pointed out:

> *I liked the experience of Falgatna, I was interested in it. But I tried to be more in the international and intersectional [spheres] […] I want to be in contact with a lot of different nationalities, I don't want to focus on my relationship with Tunisia, the links with Tunisia, I'm not interested. I feel that while I was in Tunisia, I was an internationalist, and I still am.*

She explained, in particular, how passing from her communist views on «internationalism» to «intersectionality» was a more natural declination of her journey of engagement in France. Therefore, while still participating occasionally in forms of "homeland" activism, she prioritized intersectional activism on a local basis. On the other hand, other activists emphasised that, while being active on a local basis, they primarily identified their feminist activism on a global and transnational dimension. This was especially true in cases where feminist and queer activism converged (field notes 2022).

Finally, within these frameworks, paths of professionalization coexisted with the experiences of these activists within intersectional feminist and queer spaces on the local level. In these cases, the meanings of "being engaged" – inherited from their previous experiences in the country – often remained distinct from their engagement within the professional sphere. As Halima underlined: «I feel engaged through my work […] But I'm not an activist anymore, because for me there's a difference between being engaged in my work, for which I receive a salary, and being an activist» (July 2021). On the other hand, for others, especially in the cases of Aziza, Lina and Reem who mostly invested in a professional reconversion of their activism, the boundaries between professional and activist experiences remained mostly blurred and, within their personal histories, could mutually sustain each other.

5. CONCLUSION

In this article, I have delved into the political trajectories and meanings of engagement of six women activists throughout the 2010-2011 SWANA revolutions and their subsequent exile. The analysis has explored their connections to political organizations and movements following these eventful times, analysing their experiences within two geographical spaces: Tunisia and another space of exile, that has been France for the majority of the cases here analysed. By combining theoretical and empirical reflections, this article has converged two bodies of the literature that are traditionally studied in isolation: the literature working on women political engagement during revolutionary times

and the one on gendered borders studies. In particular, challenging the extant literature, this study underscores the importance of analysing the continuity of women's political engagement before and after their exile, with an emphasis on their subjective meanings of engagement.

Firstly, in examining the political transformations of these women preceding exile, I have observed how they disengaged from more historically rooted political organisations to lean towards feminist-oriented practices and feminist and queer organisations. This shift occurred through various means, involving, on the one hand, forms of orientations for those activists who had not previously been involved in feminist organization and who did not directly fully re-engage in political activism. And on the other, this transformation happened through a more direct reconversion in the case of those activists who, politically socialised in feminist organisations, preferred to engage in horizontal structures, aligning more closely with the newly inherited revolutionary practices. In some cases, these paths also intersected with processes of professionalization.

Secondly, when analysing continuities in the trajectories of these women activists after exile, I showed how queer and feminist activism provided them a space for a "multiple identifications" of their meanings of engagement. Whether they were involved in "homeland" politics or local initiatives, the earlier processes of reconversion or orientation indeed facilitated their exploration of spaces for engagement once in exile. Furthermore, in line with their political experiences during the revolution, this occurred through the search for horizontal and creative practices.

In this way, while aligning with the existing literature that examines the sustainment of feminist engagement at the meso-level, this study has equally highlighted the continuities of feminist engagement by directing the attention to the micro-level of analysis. Furthermore, it has explored how a focus on the continuities of activism can offer new insights not only into how political engagement is sustained on the micro-level across temporalities and geographies but also, more broadly, on the processes through which the "gendered order" is maintained, negotiated or re-adjusted across women's experiences and their interpretations of engagement. However, while the strengths of this study lie in its in-depth explorations on the paths and meanings of engagement of these women, further analyses can enhance a more comprehensive understanding of the relations between political engagement and the "gendered order". For instance, comparing the experiences of these women with the political paths of men of their same political generation or focussing on these women's shifting positionalities across time and space could provide new valuable insights on this topic.

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APPENDIX

A: Organisations of Ben Ali's left-wing space of dissent (a selection) [10]

Type of structure	Name of organisations
Cultural spaces	FTCA (*Fédération Tunisienne des Cinéastes Amateurs*); FTCC (*Fédération Tunisienne des Ciné-Clubs*)
Trade unions	UGTT *(Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail)*; UGET *(Union Générale des Etudiants de Tunisie)* active in universities
Association for women's rights	ATFD (*Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates*)
Political parties and organizations	PCOT (*Parti Communiste des Ouvriers de Tunisie); Watad* (before 2011) converged in the Democratic Patriots' Unified Party (after 2011)

B: List of interviews

a) Lina, life history interview, June 2022, France
b) Aziza, life history interviews, August 2021 and June 2022, France
c) Reem, life history interview, May 2023, online
d) Haifa, life history interview, July 2021, France
e) Halima, life history interview, July 2021, France
f) Laila, life history interview, June 2021, France

C: Political trajectories of the six women activists

Activists	Political socialisation (Ben Ali)	Activism (after 2011)	Disengagement from	Activism after disengagement	Activism after exile
a) Lina	FTCA FTCC UGET	FTCA FTCC UGET	UGET	Mawjowdin	Falgatna
				Professionalization	Professionalization
b) Aziza	PCOT	PCOT	PCOT	ATFD	Falgatna Intersectional networks (local)
				Professionalization	Professionalization
c) Reem	ATFD FTCC	Chouf and feminist transnational networks	ATFD	Chouf and feminist transnational networks	Exit from Chouf Transnational networks/Global activism
					Professionalization
d) Haifa	Watad	Democratic Patriots	Democratic Patriots		Falgatna Intersectional networks (local)
				Professionalization (orientation)	Professionalization
e) Halima	ATFD	UGET PCOT Mawjowdin	PCOT UGET	Mawjowdin	Falgatna
				Professionalization	Professionalization
f) Laila	Street politics	Street politics	Street politics	Chaml and ATFD (orientation)	Falgatna Intersectional networks (local)

[10] This list does not encompass the entirety of the left-wing dissident space under Ben Ali, but rather focuses on the organizations in which the six women activists have been engaged. For further references on the spaces of dissent active under Ben Ali consider Ayari (2016) and Zederman (2018).

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All Growing but Differently: Two Ideal-typical Forms of Continuity and Expansion Followed by Young German Activists

Lia Duran Mogollon

Abstract. This paper seeks to further the discussions about what continuity in activism can look like, about the differentiated trajectories that activists can follow and how growth and continuity (as trait shared by all activists) might be differently patterned by factors at the micro- meso- and macro- levels. For this, the present analysis zooms into the trajectories of 9 activists and proposes two ideal typical kinds of trajectories (the abeyant-experimental and the lineal sustained) based on the patterns of growth, expansion, and change as narrated by the participants. The interview analysis suggests that activism has been experienced as an in-flux process during which growth and change have been constant. Participants report about gaining specific skills, expanding their networks, adopting new routines and repertoires of action, adopting different frames of cognition and even a experiencing changes in their self-perception due to their political engagement. The study proposes an analytical concept to further the analysis of activist trajectories and stress the differentiated expressions of growth and expansion revealed by activists.

Keywords: activism, abeyant-experimental, lineal sustained, political engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The last decade has witnessed numerous and diverse expressions of sporadic and sustained activism; the fast growth of networks and organisations like Fridays for Future, Last Generation, a revival of organised labour protest in many countries, the social protests in Colombia and Chile, the recent wave of protests in France, among many others. Consequently, media and academic debates have discussed the profile of the actors, the repertoires of action used, etc. Scholars have shown that networks and organisations have become important spaces for sustained political socialisation (Crossley 2003, 2004) and thus, help to produce more activists and an 'activist ethos'. Even more, analyses that take the actors' perspective reveal that activism is a fluid process that involves constant negotiation and growth (Corrigall-Brown 2020; Fillieuele and Neveu 2019; Crossley 2003, 2004), and that activists often shape their own trajectories combining sustained action, sporadic events and different repertoires of action (Coe *et al.* 2016, Norris 2002, Dalton 2017, Pickard 2019).

This study assumes a definition of sustained activism as a long-term commitment with political causes that includes some regularity of activities and embeddedness in specific activist networks. This is usually channelled through an organisation, a grass-root initiative, or a network (Corrigall-Brown 2020; Pickard 2019; Fillieule and Neveue 2019). Following this definition and building on the previous literature that has explored sustained activist trajectories, I attempt to further the discussion about continuity in activism, the differentiated trajectories that activists can follow and how growth and continuity (as traits common to all activists) might be differently patterned by factors at the micro- meso- and macro-levels. For this, the present analysis zooms in on the trajectories of nine activists, and proposes two ideal-typical kinds of trajectories (the experimental and the lineal) based on the patterns of growth, expansion, and change, as narrated by the participants.

The analysis is based on nine biographical interviews conducted in Cologne between 2018 and 2020 as part of the EURYKA Project (Horizon 2020 grant agreement no. 72702). At the time of the interviews, participants were between 18 and 35 years old, and they were all active members of at least one activist group including political parties (3), a workers' union (1), a student union (1), an LGTBQ collective (1), a large environmental organisation (1), a left-libertarian grass-roots group (1), and a solidary economy collective (1).

2. ACTIVIST TRAJECTORIES AND SUSTAINED ACTIVISM

Sustained activism is a dynamic process (Corrigall-Brown 2012, 2020; Bosi *et al.* 2022, Klandenmans and Crossley 2003, 2004) shaped by different factors at the micro-meso-and macro-levels (Fillieule and Neveu 2019; Passy and Giugni 2000; Corrigall-Brown 2012, 2020; Bosi *et al.* 2022). Sustained activism can have long-lasting effects on views, career paths, and networks (McAdam 1989; Crossley 2003, 2004). Additionally, it has a strong socialisation potential given that through the sustained interaction with the group, there is an ongoing peer-to-peer political socialisation, and activists gain networks, identities, and routines, but also develop a 'taste' for protest and activism (Crossley 2003, 2004; Fillieuele and Neveu 2019).

Researchers have stressed the importance of availability, values, collective identity, and harmonic articulation between activism and personal life (Passy and Giugni 2000; Downtown and Wher 1998; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Goodwin *et al.* 2009). Downtown and Wehr (1998) distinguish between situational and attitudinal availability; the former refers to the (given) life circumstances that facilitate (or not) sustained participation, while the latter refers to the possibility of creating time and acquiring resources necessary for activism. Among others, attitudinal availability relies strongly on an already existent belief in the relevance of 'the cause'.

Passy and Giugni (2000) emphasise the interplay between the person's "spheres of life" (work, family, leisure, activism), and present qualitative data suggesting that maintaining balance and harmony between life spheres is an important condition for long-term activists. The authors argue that besides ideological commitment, resource availability and embeddedness in networks, scholars need to consider the meanings given to activism, the group, and the causes. In this vein, they argue that the importance of the networks is not only to facilitate access, but also to be engaged in communities in which the meaning of activism, and the cause, is constantly reinforced (*Ibidem*: 121).

Some analyses have explored activists' trajectories (or careers) showing different stages activists undergo during their engagement (Klandermans 1997; Fillieuele and Neveu 2019; Fillieule 2010; Corrigall-Brown 2012, 2020; Bosi *et al.* 2022). Corrigall-Brown (2012) expands on Klandermann's (1997) activist trajectories (initial, persistent, and disengaged activists) to include the abeyant trajectory that, according to her research, accounts for over 50% of activist trajectories. The researcher contends that Klandermanns' persistent activist is extremely committed and experiences unusually profound consequences of their activism (Corrigall-Brown 2012, 229). Thus, she argues, that after the initial stage, many activists neither fully disengage nor do they display the profound commitment indicative of persistent activists. More frequently, activists will follow non-lineal pathways and go through stages of fluctuating commitment, and phases of disengagement and re-mobilisation; in such cases, they will draw from their acquired networks, know-how, routines to re-engage with the same or a different organisation (*Ibidem*). Activist trajectories are shaped by micro- meso- and macro-dynamics, meaning that biographic changes, personal crises, but also organisational dynamics and societal phenomena, can strongly shape activist engagement trajectories (Fillieuel and Neveu 2019; Bosi *et al.* 2022; Corrigall-Brown 2020).

Personal characteristics might shape an activist's decision to mobilise and choose an organisation (Corrigall-Brown 2020; Paschou and Durán Mogollón 2022), and persistence has been attributed to organisational factors (such as internal harmony, strong identity, affective networks, ideological direction, level of formalisa-

tion, routines), and how activists accommodate themselves to them (Bosi *et al.* 2022; Goodwin 2009; Corrigall-Brown 2020). Scholars identify four main factors that facilitate sustained activism: ideology, resources, availability, and social networks (*Ibidem*: 21, Fillieuele and Neveu 2019; Crossley 2003). Given the interaction between micro- meso- and macro-factors, activism is experienced differently by activists, depending on their own profiles, the organisational dynamics and routines, and the societal developments.

Further analyses highlight the importance of the organisation in shaping the activists' trajectories: Bosi *et al.* (2022) present evidence of how the level of bureaucratisation, political orientation and the forms of action can shape activist trajectories at different stages of their engagement. The scholars reveal that during the mobilisation stage, the political orientation of the organisation appeared to be more relevant than the other aspects, but the level of bureaucratisation and forms of action gained salience in the stage of sustained activism. Additionally, the study reveals the importance of assuming specific roles and positions of responsibility in shaping activists' trajectories. Organisational dynamics, such as shared rituals, shared identities, regular spaces of encounter, internal harmony, and affective ties all influence activists' sustained activism, in particular the decision to continue engaging or not (Bunnage 2014; Corrigall-Brown 2020; Polletta and Jasper 2009; Klandermans 1997; Goodwin *et al.* 2009,). Naturally, organisational aspects do not occur in a vacuum, hence some scholars link these to personal and structural changes, which also change the activists' view of the engagement. Ideology is a «necessary but not sufficient condition» when it comes to accounting for participation, and specially for sustained participation (*Ibidem*). Social scientists have discussed a decline in formal organisational memberships (Dalton *et al.* 2017; Norris 2000) and have revealed the changing forms of political participation, many of which imply a greater interest in actions and networks that prioritise individual expression and creativity (Pickard 2019; Norris 2000; Dalton *et al.* 2017; Gozzo and Sampugnaro 2016; Alteri *et al.* 2016). Furthermore, some of these new forms of engagement are also linked to issue-based platforms (instead of broad overarching platforms) loser networks and a stronger interest in lifestyle politics. Lastly, the precarity that many young people experience creates additional hurdles not only for their own personal development (Furlong 2017), but also in shaping their relationship with politics, making them more prone to having sporadic relations with activism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

This article constructs two ideal-typical trajectories to present a direct comparison of the experiences in activism as recalled by participants themselves. The first one is a 'lineal trajectory', which includes characteristics of 'conventional' 'professionalised' forms of engagement: sustained activism within highly professionalised organisations (Dalton *et al.* 2017; Busse *et al.* 2018; Spannring *et al.* 2008). In addition, these trajectories expose less proclivity to disengage or experiment, and an interest in effectiveness. Conversely, the experimental trajectories were followed by activists who were more interested in individual, expressive and creative forms of engagement, including sometimes lifestyle politics (Pickard 2019; Dalton *et al.* 2017; Alteri *et al.* 2016); they were more likely to combine different forms of engagement or to start their own grass-roots initiatives or protest actions. Likewise, these trajectories revealed some traits of abeyance (Corrigall-Brown 2020); some of the activists had periods of disengagement during which they retreated from organised structures, but maintained an individual form of activism and were able to draw from their acquired networks and know-how to re-enter the spaces of organised action.

This analysis focuses specifically on the stages after activists' first enrolment, thus the stage called sustained activism (Klandermans 1997; Corrigall-Brown 2020; Bosi *et al.* 2022). It specifically zooms in on the ways in which activists have been making sense of the personal and political transformations they have experienced since they first mobilised, and also how they view a continuity in their activism and link the different stages to specific aspects in their lives, at the organisation and also structural levels. This article seeks to contribute to the discussions about the (micro- meso- and macro-) factors shaping activist trajectories by bringing nuance and details about different types of trajectories, and how these are narrated by the protagonists.

3. METHODOLOGY

Considering the appropriateness of qualitative approaches for this research purpose (Mattoni 2014, Blee/Taylor 2002), this analysis is based on a sub-set (9) of the total of 40 biographic interviews conducted in Cologne (Germany) between 2018 and 2020. The sampling sought to maximise variation along organisational and socio-demographic lines: activists with diverse educational, socio-economic and personal backgrounds engaged in groups of different sizes, ideological orientation, levels of structuration, repertoires of action, etc. Participants were between 18 and 35 years

old at the time of the interviews, and had been engaged in sustained activism for at least three years. They were recruited for the project through a snow-ball procedure that sought to interview at least four respondents from the following types of organisations: centre-right political party, a centre-left political party, a solidary economy group, a left-libertarian group, feminist/LGTBQ collective, a students' union, a major environmental organisation, and a workers' union. Additionally, a few further interviews with mixed activists were conducted given the researchers' interest in the peculiarities of specific trajectories. The sub-sample was constructed based on an initial stage of analysis, during which trajectories and their main characteristics were identified. This initial analysis revealed ideal-typical models of trajectories followed by interview participants. The sub-sample was constructed to maintain and best express the diversity of trajectories and the diverse ways in which activists make sense of their own engagement and what they expect from it. Hence, the sample analysed in this paper reflects some of the original organisational diversity (along ideological and structural lines), some diversity in sociodemographic origins but, more importantly, variation in the traits of the trajectories.

All interviews were conducted in person at locations chosen by the interviewees. They lasted between 60 and 120 minutes, and the conversations were digitally recorded and transcribed to facilitate the analysis. Prior to the interviews, participants were fully informed about the project's goals and asked to give written consent for the recording of the conversations.

The analysis is based on a multi-stage coding process. Initially, the process was more deductive, based on well-known categories developed by social movement scholars (Bosi *et al.* 2022), then was followed by more inductive steps of open coding in which new categories and concepts emerged (Strauss and Corbin 2008). During this stage, codes and subcodes were used to label excerpts from the text. Examples of such codes and subcodes included: first enrolment, expectations, personal connection, meaning of activism, turning points, personal transformations, political transformations, etc. The codes related to the turning points, transformations and expectations were interconnected to have an interpretative reconstruction of the activists' trajectories. Following these, trajectories were compared and grouped according to similarity. These steps followed an 'inductive but theory-sensitive approach' (*Ibidem*). The two ideal-typical trajectories were based on the trajectories of two activists, and represent the points of reference for this analysis.

The following table presents the full sub-sample analysed for this study, including their self-reported sociodemographic information, as well as a summary of their trajectories. All the names have been replaced by pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. The names of the organisations or groups have been either deleted or changed.

3.1. The local and temporal context

Cologne is the third largest city in Germany, with around one million inhabitants and is the location of numerous universities, centres for apprenticeships, private education centres, which become 'pull-factors' for young adults from other German regions, as well as other countries (Euryka 2019). The city hosts numerous organisations and activist networks. In a nutshell, 'the two worlds of political activism' present in Germany are represented in the city: on the one hand, a well-funded, highly professionalised and structured sector (including a robust segment of political parties, environmental organisations, workers' unions, etc.) and, on the other hand, a dense population of loose networks, grass-roots initiatives and more spontaneous forms of activism (Busse *et al.* 2015: 120). In addition to this, the activist worlds in Cologne reflect a strong middle-class bias (Dalton 2017; Kiess 2021; Gaiser *et al.* 2010), strong parental influence in the case of activists in more formalised segments of activism (Busse *et al.* 2015), and a significant under-representation of people of migrant descent and working-class origin in spaces of activism, especially in the more formalised spaces (*Ibidem*). In retrospect, the years 2018-2019 did not witness the intense upheavals of previous years, like the refugee crisis in 2015 and the intense backlash of xenophobic groups like PEGIDA, and they were certainly less intense than the years of the COVID-19 crisis. Nonetheless, at the time of the interviews, there were a number of issues that captured attention at the national and particularly at the local level/s: strong environmental protests, particularly the occupation of the Hambach Forest, which polarised activists and public opinion, intense protests against new police code, protest initiatives demanding affordable housing, the need for new apprenticeship positions and labour opportunities, among others. At the core, these issues continue to be highly relevant today, even if some new actors have emerged. Moreover, some other long-standing issues, such as the right to asylum, feminism, anti-racism, inequality, have strongly shaped many of the debates and positions of the interviewees.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. From outsider to insider

Participants described their trajectories as a succession of stages and events related to their sustained activism until the time of the interview. All of them see the start of their activist lives as the moment when they decided to officially join an organisation or network, even if they all reported about prior experiences attending demonstrations, volunteering for electoral campaigns, or in civic engagement. Thus, the analysis reveals a clear-cut differentiation between being occasional supporters of specific causes and being an enrolled activist.

As they talked about their first enrolment, participants often linked the decision to their prior socialisation and to situations linked to their interpretation of events at the micro-meso-and macro-level/s (Paschou and Durán Mogollón 2022). The choice of organisation was framed as an autonomous decision mostly linked to the organisations' political orientation (Bosi *et al.* 2022). Furthermore, most of their first enrolments took place at times of transition; after moving out of the family home, or locating to another city, or after spending time abroad, or starting university or a new traineeship. These were usually phases of change during which they were open to new experiences and contacts, which highlight the importance of availability (Earl *et al.* 2017) and the advantages of universities for mobilising and organising (Pickard 2019, *Earl et al.* 2017).

The trajectories after this first enrolment were described as continuous processes of transformation during which they went from 'wallflowers' to embeddedness in affective and organisational networks. Lisa (Pol. Party Centre-Left) and Juan (Students' Union/ European Youth Network) talked about their early stages:

> *Lisa: Definitely. There are so many abbreviations and so many procedures, like how to bring in a proposal. There is, for example, GO (German initials) which means Rules of Procedure* […]*, and then there are different hand gestures that are used. I don't even think about these anymore, but at the beginning, that did confuse me (to see) all of a sudden people raising their hands in the air while everyone stopped talking; I had no idea what was happening. By the way, there are seminars for new members where we have lists with all the abbreviations so people can read this* […] *So we hand these things out at the beginning so that everyone can understand because it is really like a language of its own.*

> *Juan: It was hard to find myself within the group… most people had academic backgrounds and a university education.*

Lisa and Juan's statements exemplify the feeling of 'otherness' that most participants recalled from their early days as activists; they lacked the knowledge about the groups' rituals and procedures, as well as the emotional bonds and shared language and identity. Still, these feelings of otherness were also nuanced: Juan stressed that at the start, he felt like an outsider because he was new, but also because of (perceived) differences in social and academic backgrounds between him and the rest of the group. This perceived otherness was shared by the other activists of migrant descent (Seyran and Dilek) and, to a lesser degree, by Lukas, who self-described as coming from a poor household.

During their early days, activists either connected or disconnected to the organisations on a personal, ideological, and/or tactical level. As they described the establishment of these connections, most of them talked about the personal affinities, opportunities of exchange, gaining skills and their own availability (Klandermanns 1997; Corrigall-Brown 2020; Bunnage 2014). Those who did connect (Lisa, Marius, Christian and Seyran, Sarah, Anna, Juan, Ludwig) reported a gradual process of shared political socialisation (Fillieule and Neveu 2019; Crossley 2003, 2004) during which they gained skills, established new friendships, and found a place within the organisation. Those who did not connect (Lukas and Dilek) concentrated on the lack of personal affinity; Dilek linked this to feeling like the cultural 'other' due to her familial and social background, and to the internal conflicts of the organisation. Lukas, on the other hand, was not convinced by the organisation's routines and personnel, and also stressed that he did not feel like spending much time with the people in the group.

Still, all activists continued embedded (albeit differently) in networks of deliberation and political socialisation. Whether they persisted with their initial groups, or shifted to combine or develop their activism in accordance with personal, organisational, and structural changes (Coe *et al.* 2016; Corrigall-Brown 2020), they described the trajectories as continued processes of socialisation and reflection during which they experienced different forms of personal and political transformation:

> *Lukas (Left-Libertarian): I actually know all of this through my political activity… (to) use encrypted telecommunications or turning off the phone during meetings and discussions. It's unusual to even think about those things in this society; we are all buying Alexa or Google Home or Siri […] these are all microphones… fucking shit. So, I would say this whole thing with data security and data sovereignty I have learned through my political activity. I have learned a lot about this and I have also learned that*

for good political work, you need to debate a lot, this plenum culture […] So I think it is a broad learning field, this (exercise of) finding solutions together, as a group, and I think I learned my political engagement this through.

Juan: In general, you become more sensitive and you learn to deal with the media more critically and not just (say things) like: "Angela Merkel needs to go!"; that's a thing (people are saying) now, but instead, you should ask why? Because you become more sensitive… so when you listen to the radio you watch out for (news about) Europe and politics… and this is directly interesting, right? So, you are awake right there (if you hear the words Europe, Politics).

Lukas and Juan were not the only ones who recognised significant personal transformations thanks to their activism. Besides gaining rhetorical and deliberation skills, participants admitted that their engagement has shaped their interpretations and led them to often frame problems politically. In addition, interviews reveal an overall positive view of activism where they recognise the 'costs', but overwhelmingly stress the positive transformations they have experienced: extended friendship networks, feelings of belonging and recognition, contextualising specific knowledge, critical and rhetoric skills, teamwork, new routines, recognition and a stronger self-identity. In most cases, these transformations reveal a process of development and self-recognition, wherein each participant has found and capitalised on their own strengths for the good of a specific cause:

Seyran: I give seminars and then (seeing) this "click effect" on people's faces, that's my motivation to give the next seminar. Because you talk about something like capitalism and redistribution and how much money the rich have and how much money the rest of the world has (and) witnessing this "click effect" on people when you explain it to them […] I also have been told that I am a funny guy when I give seminars and I think that's my strength.

In addition, sustained activism inspired Seyran and Juan to pursue their advanced school certificates and apply to university. Both of them had initially completed apprenticeships and often stressed how this made them different from most other activists, sharing an assumption of a middle-class academic over-representation in these spaces (Dalton *et al.* 2017, Pickard 2019).

4.2. Moving in different directions: lineal and experimental trajectories

The way in which interviewees reflected about their post-enrolment experiences was shaped by what they understood as their first enrolment and what their expectations from activism were. Interviewees reveal how their sustained political engagement is characterised by constant peer-to-peer socialisation (Fillieule and Neveu 2019; Crossley 2003, 2004), and frequent changes in the intensity and the nature of their engagement (Bunnage 2014; Corrigall-Brown 2020; Klandermans 1997). Moreover, in making sense of their pathways after the initial enrolment, activists see themselves as agents who are constantly changing, as are the organisations and the broader societal contexts.

4.2.1. Lineal Trajectories

The lineal trajectories were those of activists who experienced less movements of disengagement or transfer, and who reported about a strong ideological, tactical, and personal connection with a specific organisation. These activists tended to attribute most of their growth to the organisation, and their narratives suggest they have 'found a place' within these groups. Marius (centre-right party) and Lisa (centre-left party), as well as Seyran (workers' union) were the ones with pathways closest to this ideal-typical trajectory. They remained at the organisation of their first enrolment; they had barely any activities as independent activists outside of the organisation. Besides them, Christian, an environmental activist in a large organisation (ENVGROUP), also reported about a trajectory closer to this ideal-typical model: he remained active in the organisation of his first enrolment; he had acquired roles and networks within the organisation and had a strong identification with it. Marius talked about the ideological connection that drove him to the party and how the organisation has fulfilled his expectations ideologically, tactically, and personally:

Marius: The other political parties seemed to be too stubborn and too focused on certain things. For example, the Green and Left (parties) are, in my view, too ideological, because I have a moderate approach to issues and don't approach them with a fixed opinion or stick to a specific area. What convinced me was what I have said several times; this idea of doing politics with a sense of moderation, which is important, and to be reflective and to approach everything with serenity. For me, this party best represented these ideas at the time and, so far, this has been confirmed.

Marius and Lisa preferred broad platforms and conventional actions over issue-based and confrontational activism (Dalton 2017; Pickard 2019). Marius stressed his ideological connection with the party and referred to macro-phenomena, such as the refugee crisis, the hous-

ing crisis, the environmental crisis, to assert that these discussions keep confirming that he is in the right place, given that he feels his party continues to present 'moderate' positions. Even more, the interpersonal affinity, and the adoption of roles of responsibility, have strengthened his connection with the party:

> *Marius: I am a member of the district's board of directors, so yes, I feel committed. I don't know what others think of me, but I get along pretty well with the group, […] and many of them have become my friends.*

Lisa had a similar experience, as she managed to quicky connect with the group and grow within the organisation. She attributed her quick adjustment to the group to her family's social-democratic orientation, to the fact that she knew a few of the other party militants before, and to her positive experience as a campaign volunteer. Besides connecting her permanence to specific organisational and personal factors, (Corrigall-Brown 2020, Goodwin *et al.* 2009, Bosi *et al.* 2022), she also mentioned macro-phenomena that created the conditions for a better start in the organisation, as well as greater feelings of commitment and relevance to her own activism (Corrigall-Brown 2020):

> *Lisa: I mobilised in the summer of 2015, and that (the refugee crisis) started in the autumn, that means right on time.* […] *We offered help to refugees, so we offered language courses together with the student union* […] *so you could immediately do a lot of things at the local level and so you could see something happening; the refugees were arriving at the train station so you had to directly figure out what to do and that was really helpful at the beginning. Politics can be very abstract; you write proposals and then they land somewhere* […] *and at the time, I saw my work made a difference and, in that sense, it was good that I caught this specific point in time to start because it really motivated me.*

Interestingly, by the time of the interview, Lisa felt much more confident with the procedures and with drafting proposals and, in general, with the "abstract" aspect of activism. But she still valued that her start was shaped by a great deal of direct hands-on action, which gave her an instantaneous feeling of gratification and recognition. Seyran followed a similar path in that he also established a shared identity and deep feelings of friendship and commitment with the workers' union (Goodwin *et al.* 2009; Fillieuele and Neveu 2019). One of the caveats he brings into the picture is that he attributed much more of his initial political socialisation to this precise organisation and the possibilities for interaction and politicisation that it offered (Crossley 2003, 2004), and the second one is his assertion that he has managed to turn his 'cultural otherness' (being a working-class activist of migrant descent) into an asset:

> *Seyran: I have an advanced degree now, so depending on the audience, I know how to talk to them; I can bring out my 'academic slang' or my ghetto-slang.*

Lineal trajectories are also the result of interaction and negotiation between the activists' expectations, their lived realities, the ideological and personal realities of the groups, and the changes at the societal level (Passy and Giugni 2000; Corrigall-Brown 2020; Fillieule and Neveu 2019). Moreover, as reported by the activists, even the more consolidated organisations are not completely homogeneous actors, but are also shaped by different and contending factions. In that sense, for some of the activists, the lineal trajectory implied finding roles but also finding specific spaces within the factions and learning to negotiate the disagreements.

> *Lisa: There are factions within the party. Our local group here is very centrist, which means it's not leaning in any particular direction; Manheim is very pragmatic and then in Berlin, for instance, if I went to Berlin, that would be too far left […] In Manheim, there were definitely more people who agreed with me than here; here I have to fight more often.*

Lisa recognised some of the ideological lines within the party yet still confirmed that this was the right place for her. Similarly, Marius and Seyran also acknowledged a few ideological or inter-personal conflicts, but the attachment to the organisations is strong enough to stay. Christian addressed some of the criticism often made to ENVGROUP and its vertical and highly bureaucratised structure:

> *I think that's a matter of effectiveness. I don't think it would be as effective if everything was decided democratically at every single level… that's what I think, that's why I like it the way it is conceived and no one is limited; if someone wants to work on a completely different issue, they can do it maybe outside ENVGROUP.*

These reveal their continuity and their engagement as a constant process of negotiation and growth, in which they are aware of the limits and the boundaries between their ideas and those of the group, and still choose to remain. Lisa, Marius and Seyran are deeply embedded within their respective organisations: they have positions of responsibility, they have ideological and personal connections and have created a shared identity with the group (Fillieule 2013; Klandermans 1997; Goodwin *et al.* 2009); they see this as a constant

process of shared socialisation (Fillieule and Neveu 2019; Crossley 2003) and considered combining their affiliation with a secondary one, but the interviews revealed that the commitment is very high and they have lacked situational and attitudinal availability (Downtown and Wehr 1998). Christian was the only one who was active in a second organisation, one engaged in local action related to environmentalism and re-distribution. Still, he stressed that ENVGROUP was his central affiliation, given that he lacked significant affective or ideological ties with the second one; he had positions of responsibility at ENVGROUP, as well as important routines, identification, and personal ties. Activists closer to this ideal-typical category were members of more structured and bureaucratised organisations (Davis *et al.* 2015; Bosi *et al.* 2022). The exception to this was Dilek, whose first enrolment was in a political party and she, nonetheless, followed an experimental trajectory.

4.2.2. The middle ground: between lineal and experimental trajectories

Constant political socialisation and reflection about the macro- meso- and micro-levels triggered new interests and expanded issues of concern in all activists, which led to further forms or intentions of commitment and activist development (Crossley 2003, 2004). Shifting allegiances, or at least combining multiple activism (Coe *et al.* 2016) was often considered, but the ways in which they lived and dealt with the idea of multiple allegiances varied. Likewise, the reasons behind these shifts were also nuanced.

Sarah (solidary economy-environmentalism), Anna (feminism/LGBTQ environmentalism) Juan (Students' Union, Pro Europe Network) and (to a lesser extent) Ludwig (Students' Union, LGBTQ networks) came around the middle of the spectrum between lineal and experimental because they were actively looking for different possibilities, but they did not really abandon their organisations, and they retained a clear idea of what their main engagement was. Anna and Ludwig both identified their first enrolment during their school years: she joined an environmental project, triggering her interest in environmentalism, and he started as a class-speaker and grew within school politics. They both recognise the socialising effects of these early experiences and see a continuity between them and their ensuing steps. The first shifts took place because they outgrew school, but both continued in similar forms of engagement; Anna started her own environmental group and he joined university politics. The expansion to LGBTQ networks is linked to personal identities and to the expansion of their networks and the acquired ability to frame issues politically (Crossley 2003, 2004; Fillieuele and Neveu 2019).

> *Ludwig: I am very active and connected to the students' unions from other universities, and then I've met people from political parties, too; I have very good relationships with them, as well. Because of this, I came in contact with the LGBTQ networks and this is part of my identity, so I think it's important to get involved and talk about these issues.*

> *Anna: […] I have very good arguments and I have good videoclips to really say 'look, this (feminism) makes sense.' If you look into everyday life, and say, ok I'll do my heteronormative thing and I'll adjust, then you really don't need it (feminism) because you don't run against the boundaries because you fit into the system; that's my theory, at least, and that has a lot to do with my outing […] I no longer fit into the system.*

Perhaps the most salient caveat is that Ludwig's trajectory is still closer to the lineal one, and his expectations for the future remain closer to institutionalised action (Pickard 2019; Dalton 2017), while Anna has a strong identity as an independent activist and values creativity, horizontal structures, and alternating between groups and issues (Pickard 2019). Much like Marius, Lisa and Seyran, Sarah established positive connections with the organisation she first joined: she found thematic, personal, and tactical affinity (Corrigall-Brown 2020; Bosi *et al.* 2022). Additionally, she was pleased that the organisational structure allowed for horizontal decision-making, creativity, and individual input (Pickard 2019). Still, the ongoing political socialisation and increased interest in political and societal issues, have led her to combine this primary affiliation with two other projects with a pragmatic approach, waste reduction and a local emphasis:

> *Sarah: I have been with (solidary economy) for about three and a half years, but then I felt like the issue of reducing waste or plastic was missing. I felt like this is an increasingly salient topic and it really bothers me, plus I also wanted to do something at the local level and we do operate locally with Rescue Groceries, but it was somehow not enough, I was missing something. With Reduce Rubbish, I really completed this.*

Sarah combined all three affiliations and the amount of attention and time devoted to each depended mostly on organisational aspects (pending projects, availability of members, etc.). She recognised that many of her fellow activists were also members of two or all three organisations, and that it was common for them to alter-

nate between different organisations, to occasionally support environmental and consumption-critical events. In sum, she revealed strong and multiple ties and, at the same time, a strong interest in self-expression and creativity in activism (Coe *et al.* 2016; Pickard 2019). These expectations were well-met by the organisations' repertoires of action, political orientation and levels of bureaucratisation (Bosi *et al.* 2022).

Juan highlights his strong ideological and personal identification with PEN, as well as the paramount relevance of this organisation in his political socialisation and connection with networks of activists (Crossley 2003, 2004; Fillieuele and Neveue 2019). Precisely this expansion triggered important personal transformations: returning to education, reading more about politics, having an interest in leadership. He joined the students' union, and, at the time of the interview, he had managed to combine both high intensity engagements with his studies. Besides this, he was exploring political parties because he wanted to engage in his main priorities: environmentalism, healthcare, and inequality. In his case, he has constructed his own activism, alternating between movements (Coe *et al.* 2016), but with a strong tendency towards more bureaucratised groups (Bosi *et al.* 2022), closer to institutionalised and more conventional forms of action (Pickard 2019; Dalton 2017). His story resembles Ludwig's in that they have both had positive experiences within institutionalised participation, they both feel comfortable in positions of leadership and feel motivated to find a place for themselves within partisan structures. Moreover, through their first engagement, they have both explored further interests and connected with activists outside their own groups. The middle-ground reveals a mixed-bag; some of them are activists who can make strong commitments to single organisations while maintaining an element of lifestyle politics, individual expressions of activism and a general interest in experimentation (like Sarah and Anna). In contrast, some are activists whose expectations come closer to those of the lineal activists (Juan and Ludwig), but who combine allegiances in line with their personal identities and the general conditions of their own organisations. They sought to expand partly because their organisations did not offer long-term perspectives, or had a narrow scope, compared to political parties. Hence, it makes sense that both Juan and Ludwig have expressed interest in joining political parties in the future.

4.2.3. Moving sideways: Experimental trajectories

Activists who reported about experimental trajectories were those with a greater tendency to switch or alternate between issues, networks, organisations, and individual action (Corrigall-Brown 2020; Pickard 2019). These activists were more inclined to combine different forms of action (Dalton 2017; Pickard 2019), more likely to be initiators (of new groups and/or projects), to have extended and dispersed networks across issue lines, and strongly self-identify as independent activists. Furthermore, they were more likely to reveal contentious elements in their view of activism, since they tended to engage in groups that challenged power and sought to open new spaces and mechanisms of action (Tarrow 2008; Dalton 2017). Dilek and Lukas followed experimental trajectories; they have both moved within contentious networks (Tarrow 2008), and within a left-wing spectrum. They both come from working-class backgrounds and saw themselves as 'exceptions' in the spaces of activism. They were dissatisfied with many organisational aspects (internal harmony, repertoires of action, bureaucratisation) after their first enrolment and disengaged from their initial organisation. Still, they recognise a continuity in their trajectories, precisely because their dissatisfaction was rooted in organisational aspects (Corrigall-Brown 2020; Bosi *et al.* 2022), though not in a lack of determination to remain politically active.

> *Lukas: I was in ENVGROUP […]; they have these rigid structures and procedures and meetings every two weeks, and I found this sort of interesting, but it was clear (that) everything was so pre-made; (it is) such a rigid structure organisation. And I didn't feel like I could make a real contribution, so I thought that I would like to do something with my friends, instead of engaging in ENVGROUP with people you don't really get along with. In my current group, we are close friends, and we want to do this together.*

> *Dilek: When I started studying, the local campus group was relatively new, I mean the party's campus group […] Apparently there were some internal problems in the group, as I found out later, and there were also language barriers. I didn't understand the discourses and I didn't have the impression that they were trying to integrate the newcomers because they were in their own bubble, and so I abandoned the group pretty quickly. I was still politically interested and also active, and I did attend some demonstrations whenever I cared about something; I met with people, discussed, and read a lot.*

After they disengaged from their initial enrolment, Dilek and Lukas established networks of like-minded peers, engaged in discussions, supported demonstrations and different small-scale grass-roots initiatives. They report about important experiences of peer-to-peer socialisation, and a growing interest in activism and social justice (Crossley 2003, 2004). Moreover, they have

been able to draw from their gained experiences, know-how and networks to engage in different forms of activism (Corrigall-Brown 2020). Dilek decided to return to the party after some time:

> *Dilek: I started engaging there again; what enraged me at the time was that there was a lot of discussion about racism in the group, but there were very few people there who had actually experienced racism.*
>
> *Dilek: Yeah, so this was the problem and that's why it was important for me to be active, and I think this initial hurdle that I encountered was no longer there… firstly, because the personnel had obviously changed and secondly, because of my own readings, my activities and my own research, I understood certain things better, […] because I had dealt with them, so it was no longer so difficult to be part of the group.*

After she returned to the party, Dilek quickly developed and established strong emotional connections, became acquainted with the jargon, repertoires of action and even assumed positions of leadership (Goodwin *et al*. 2019, Corrigall-Brown 2020; Crossley 2003). Still, she preserved a strong identity as an independent activist, and combined different forms of action and affiliation (Coe *et al.* 2016; Pickard 2019): she was a member of the student parliament, joined a small reading and discussion group for peoples of colour, and organised "safe spaces" at the university. As she recalls, she became deeply embedded in friendship and activists' collaboration networks: «I could organise a demonstration for basically any issue… climate change, feminism, anti-capitalism, racism because I know the people», and decided to alternate between different forms and spaces of action (Coe *et al*. 2016). Her second disengagement is linked to a structural factor with repercussions in the local group: public statements made by then party president, Sarah Wagenknecht, about migrants triggered intense discussions which led her to question her own support for this party and to "re-orient" politically (Corrigall-Brown 2020). Throughout this time, and until she returned to the party, Dilek remained active in networks linked to capitalism-critique, environmentalism, anti-racism.

Lukas' story bears some similarities in that he also became embedded in strong affective and political networks of friends who are also activists; this furthered his political socialisation (Crossley 2003, 2004) and his interest in hands-on creative and individualised forms of activism (Pickard 2019). He started his own group and remained active, both individually and within other networks. He realised the importance of personal affinities in doing activism (Goodwin *et al.* 2009) and in having flexible, creative, and individualised action. Besides his networks, ideologies and expectations, Lukas mentioned that becoming a father had also shaped his trajectory, leading to his continued engagement, but devoting less time:

> *Lukas: Political engagement for me includes going with a spray can and writing political statements in specific places, where it is important for me to get people thinking. Maybe in a very rich mansion to ask to what extent is it cool to have something like this in the city. I find in this way protest is individualised and I can do it easily whenever it suits me…*
>
> *Lukas: what I'm still doing are some of my independent projects, like, for instance, a film screening about police brutality, which is already planned, and invite people from our circle; we already have a long mailing list of people.*

Experimental trajectories reveal pathways in which the main commitment is rooted in specific causes or aspirations to social justice, rather than in organisational loyalties. Furthermore, these trajectories, and the ways in which Dilek and Lukas have negotiated their sustained political engagement, reveal much about their expectations from activism: both have a tendency towards contentiousness (Tarrow 2008) and have created strong personalised networks and activities to best express their values (Coe *et al.* 2016; Pickard 2019).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper zooms in on the details of sustained activism and reconstructs the stories based on the testimonies of activists. In doing so, it provides a nuanced picture of the interplay between expectations from activism (including ideology, tactics, personal connections, perceived effectiveness, personal growth) and the realities of the experience. The ideal-typical trajectories propose a conceptual tool to bring greater nuance to the continuities and transformations that shape activists' experiences, by taking the actors' perspective and seeking to understand how the interplay between activist, group(s) and societal context is experienced differently.

The sample provides important variations in organisational types and orientation, and the analysis reveals how these traits influenced the decisions made by activists (Bosi *et al.* 2022). Additionally, the article brings nuance to the processes of persistence, disengagement and shifting since participants alluded to different organisational, personal, and structural reasons (Corrigall-Brown 2022; Bosi *et al.* 2022), and to the development of activist identities (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Goodwin *et al.* 2009).

All participants identified as activists and saw this as a crucial part of their personal identity, but these identifications were rooted differently, either in organisational instances, affective networks, or notions of social justice. Personal identities, self-perception, and even personal backgrounds, proved relevant in adopting new issues (as was the case of those who entered LGTBQ networks), finding common ground within the activist groups, and even in framing issues politically. Interviews reveal that activists with migrant and working-class backgrounds often perceived themselves as 'cultural others' in activist circles, which resonates with much of the literature (Dalton *et al.* 2017, Pickard 2019, Kiess 2021). Still, interviews also suggest that some organisational settings (such as Seyran's union, Juan's Pro Europe Network) might have dynamics and structures that facilitate the incorporation into the group. Even if the activists mostly framed their narratives with personal and organisational themes, the reference to macro-phenomena served participants as points of reflection to either confirm or question their sustained participation, or even to motivate them to explore other options, and alternate between different activities.

Emotional and personal ties, as well as a feeling of commitment, the adoption of routines, and frames of analysis were common to all activists, regardless of the type of trajectory they followed. Likewise, they all saw a continuity between their experiences, networks, and transformations. The salient difference is that those closer to lineal trajectories experienced most of these transformations within a given organisation, whereas those closer to the experimental lived these transformations alternating between organisations, networks, and issues. Lineal trajectories were most common among activists who joined more professionalised and formalised organisations; this can be linked to the expectations and ideas that many of them have of activism, the meanings attached to this, and also to the very possibilities offered by these types of organisations. Conversely, experimental trajectories were more common among those who valued self-expression and individual input. Dilek was an interesting example of a partisan activist with ties within institutionalised and bureaucratised spaces, and with the more spontaneous grass-roots ones

Further research could explore how the trajectories of activists engaged in non-mainstream parties might vary with respect to those who militate in mainstream parties. Furthermore, the salience of biographic availability (Earl *et al.* 2017) was raised by activists in this sample, but this aspect could be addressed in greater detail by further research focused on activists with longer trajectories patterned by numerous turning points. Lastly, scholars could take the meso-perspective and explore the losses and gains for organisations of having fluctuating and changing memberships.

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SOCIETÀMUTAMENTOPOLITICA
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Passim

L'analisi scientifica del potere: il contributo della sociologia politica

Antonio Costabile

Abstract. The article examines the evolving field of political sociology and highlights the need for a modern reassessment in the context of rapid global changes. The aim is to distinguish the framework of political sociology from that of other social sciences such as history, law and economics. The article emphasises the importance of understanding political power and its transformations in the context of crises such as economic downturns, pandemics and geopolitical conflicts. Reflecting on the seminal theories of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, the discussion highlights how political power, legitimacy and the interplay with other forms of power (economic, technological, etc.) shape contemporary governance. Finally, the article suggests a focus on the dynamics of political power and its legitimacy in the globalised era, noting the growing influence of technological power and the complex challenges posed by modernity.

Keywords: political sociology, power, legitimacy.

1. PREMESSA

Con questo articolo, dopo tanti anni di ricerca nel campo della sociologia politica, ed anche alla luce della mia esperienza di coordinatore della sezione dell'AIS dedicata a questa disciplina, vorrei offrire un contributo di riflessione alla nuova generazione di sociologi politici, che ha davanti a sé, a parere mio in maniera ineludibile, una questione assai complessa, quella di ridiscutere il profilo della sociologia politica, cioè la cornice scientifica del lavoro comune, in un periodo di straordinari cambiamenti interni e internazionali. Ovviamente, tale discussione non implica nessuna pretesa di rifondare *ex novo* la disciplina, bensì di lavorare insieme per rafforzarla nel contesto contemporaneo, caratterizzato da grandi interrogativi.

L'obiettivo da raggiungere consiste, a mio avviso, nell'evidenziare e distinguere la prospettiva epistemologica e metodologica della sociologia politica da quella delle altre scienze sociali, con le quali collaboriamo intensamente nella ricerca scientifica sulla politica: politologia, storia, scienze giuridiche, filosofia, antropologia, economia, psicologia, demografia, geografia, senza dimenticare naturalmente, in primis, la sociologia del diritto e le altre discipline sociologiche. Per raggiungere tale scopo, c'è bisogno di mettere in luce l'angolazione dell'analisi sulla politica che ci contraddistingue, in relazione al nostro baga-

glio teorico-metodologico, che ci porta a investigare e ad interrogarci su un oggetto di studio comune alle altre citate discipline – appunto la politica – con chiavi di lettura specifiche, per intero sociologiche, aperte al confronto ma originali, che ci permettono di avanzare distinte e peculiari domande di ricerca. In sintesi, non l'oggetto politica, ma la prospettiva dalla quale ci poniamo nello studiarlo configura la sociologia politica.

Nel mentre affermiamo tale prospettiva (tutt'altro che scontata, anzi a volte rigettata da altre scienze sociali, nell'illusoria pretesa di stabilire una primazia sugli oggetti di ricerca), dobbiamo fare attenzione al fatto che intanto l'oggetto stesso – la politica – è in tumultuosa trasformazione sotto i nostri occhi di studiosi e di cittadini.

Qualche esempio per intenderci: l'anno 2008, con la più grave crisi economica mondiale dopo il 1929, effetto dei nuovi e turbolenti rapporti tra l'economia e la politica; si tratta della prima colossale delusione rispetto alle visioni palingenetiche della globalizzazione, altre delusioni già c'erano state, come gli attacchi terroristici dal 2001, altre sarebbero seguite; l'anno 2020, con la pandemia, che ha causato molti milioni di morti e che si collega ai nuovi rapporti tra salute, politica, ambiente, scienza e sviluppo umano e sociale; l'anno 2022, con il ritorno della guerra in Europa, che ha evidenziato la rinnovata centralità dei rapporti tra potere tecnologico e potere militare, i nuovi assetti geopolitici in costruzione, e la contemporanea, sconvolgente "scoperta".

Che la convivenza pacifica, dentro (l'assalto a *Capitol Hill*) e alle porte dell'Occidente, non è più scontata, al contrario di quanto si è a lungo pensato; gli anni 2023-2024, con la guerra in Terra Santa, che tuttora continua. Segnali assai preoccupanti di un cambiamento radicale degli equilibri mondiali, che si fa più minaccioso e ravvicinato. Difatti, sempre più spesso sentiamo parlare di "permacrisi"[1], cioè di società in accelerata, frenetica e s-regolata trasformazione, e di crisi profonda della politica, sul piano partecipativo e organizzativo (caduta partiti di integrazione di massa e debolezza estrema delle organizzazioni politiche, astensionismo a volte maggioritario) e istituzionale (deficit diffuso della capacità di governo e di regolazione e bassa fiducia nelle istituzioni pubbliche), a livello interno e internazionale, dopo l'insuccesso della "illusione neoliberista" e del modello unipolare post-1989.

2. LA DOMANDA E IL CONTESTO

Per effetto di tutto ciò, siamo chiamati a ripensare e a riflettere, criticamente e autocriticamente, sui concetti e sulle categorie fondamentali che solitamente utilizziamo per definire che cos'è la politica nelle società attuali, provando a dare un nome attuale e condiviso alla nostra bussola scientifica. Una bussola quanto mai indispensabile, per evitare di smarrirci mentre analizziamo fenomeni e processi continuamente cangianti, sempre nuovi e spesso contraddittori tra loro all'interno del mutamento globale, se manca una radice di significato comune, o peggio, dando per scontato di averla, senza che ciò sia vero. Beninteso: l'analisi empirica dei singoli fenomeni e processi e delle continue novità che si producono nelle relazioni politiche è il nostro lavoro quotidiano ed è indispensabile per la ridefinizione di tale radice; tuttavia, penso che si debba essere consapevoli che, senza la bussola di cui si diceva, l'oscillazione tra "quantofrenia" e microspecializzazione indebolisce e danneggia gravemente le nostre ricerche. Una domanda provocatoria: che cos'è la politica oggi per un sociologo? Siamo sicuri di attribuirle lo stesso significato nel mondo dei sociologi e nell'ambito delle scienze sociali?

Quindi, è in discussione il senso e il contenuto della nostra attività e la nostra stessa identità scientifica. Affermare che bisogna ripensare l'identità evoca un concetto importante ma pure, se malinteso, fonte di pericolose ambiguità. Rifiutiamo l'idea di identità come richiamo a un canone rigido, riduttivo, puramente difensivo, anche quando apparentemente giustificato per evitare il rischio della miscellanea incoerente; al contrario, il nostro riferimento è rivolto alla costruzione-revisione, continua e condivisa, di un nucleo di contenuti comuni, radicati nella nostra storia scientifica, nazionale e internazionale, elaborati e rielaborati in maniera aperta alle sfide poste dal mutamento sociale e dal dialogo interdisciplinare, nelle sociologie e con gli altri[2].

[1] Edgar Morin per esprimere questo concetto ha preferito utilizzare il termine *policrisi* (2017).

[2] A tale proposito, è opportuno rammentare la Declaratoria del Gruppo scientifico-disciplinare (GSD 14/GSPS-07), di recente approvazione che, definendo la sociologia della politica, precisa: «Il GSD Sociologia della politica, del diritto e della devianza accoglie le ricerche e la didattica che, nella connessione tra mutamento sociale, politico e giuridico e in riferimento alle teorie e ai metodi della sociologia, si dedicano: all'analisi teorica ed empirica delle forme di costruzione, legittimazione e trasformazione del potere politico e della sua differenziazione dagli altri poteri sociali; all'analisi dei processi di istituzionalizzazione giuridica delle dimensioni normative delle società e della loro specificità rispetto ad altre forme di istituzionalizzazione». Per poi aggiungere: «La sociologia della politica approfondisce, anche in una prospettiva di genere, i modi della socializzazione, della partecipazione e della rappresentanza, in particolare nelle trasformazioni delle democrazie. Analizza i processi sociali, culturali e comunicativi e i conflitti in cui prendono forma la sfera politica e le sue istituzioni pubbliche, le asimmetrie di potere e la costruzione delle élite e delle leadership, i processi e i modelli di decisione, di istituzionalizzazione politica e di agire amministrativo, anche in riferimento alle dimensioni dell'ecologia politica e delle relazioni internazionali».

Dopo queste precisazioni, possiamo procedere e ricordare ancora:

a) gli interrogativi molteplici rivolti da ogni parte e dagli studiosi di tante discipline alla politica, ai suoi protagonisti, ai ricercatori che dedicano la loro vita intellettuale a questo complesso argomento, tant'è che in molti recenti convegni di sociologia diversi relatori si sono chiesti: dov'è oggi la politica? Non si dimentichi che, negli ultimi tempi, pure alcuni importanti "protagonisti" delle ricerche e delle applicazioni riguardanti l'intelligenza artificiale (AI)[3] stanno lanciando ripetuti allarmi e chiedendo regole alla politica, per evitare che, anziché benefici, questa nuova rivoluzione produca disastri di varia natura, a partire dall'ambiente umano, sociale, lavorativo e naturale;

b) a fronte di ciò, colpiscono i titoli di molti testi sulla politica, pubblicati in anni più o meno recenti, che propongono definizioni ormai entrate nel linguaggio giornalistico, ne ricordo alcune: "post-politica", "iperpolitica", "antipolitica", "subpolitica", "transpolitica", "metapolitica", "criptopolitica" (Ceccarini 2022; Sloterdijk 2020; Mete 2022; De Kerckhove e Susca 2008; Badiou 2001; Beck 1997) e così via dicendo. Uno sforzo lessicale che traduce e conferma la difficoltà concettuale di fondo che si incontra oggi nel definire che cos'è la politica, mentre dalla società viene chiesto a gran voce.

Si tratta di contributi senz'altro significativi, più volte pregevoli; tuttavia, questi lavori risultano per lo più inseriti entro visioni dicotomiche (meta-anti-post-trans: che cosa con precisione?), che non soddisfano la domanda che ci poniamo. Difatti, tali dicotomie faticano a mettere a fuoco e a spiegare la differenza tra gli epifenomeni politici (come il movimento "ICS" di breve durata), i fenomeni politici di spessore (supportati da dati di fatto più robusti, evidenti e in qualche misura durevoli, come per l'appunto la sfiducia e la disaffezione verso la politica o il populismo); i processi politici (più volte dimenticando però che la diacronicità non richiama soltanto la lunga durata, ma pure la comparazione) e le categorie analitiche vere e proprie, approfonditamente argomentate e non soltanto individuate come il contrario, oppure come una parte della definizione precedente dell'oggetto studiato. Approcci che, soprattutto, non riescono ad evidenziare qual è e come sta cambiando il nucleo, ovvero il nocciolo costitutivo di ciò che chiamiamo politica, di cui abbiamo bisogno per indagare e dialogare, senza per l'appunto smarrirci.

c) Tentiamo – allora – di invertire l'ordine del ragionamento e di cambiare prospettiva: anziché concentrarci sulle manifestazioni contingenti e cangianti di un non ben definito oggetto "politica", proviamo a ripensare con attenzione al modo ed ai contenuti con i quali definiamo e analizziamo tale oggetto. Prendiamo le mosse, quindi, dalle domande e dalle questioni sociali più evidenti ed interroghiamole alla luce del nostro bagaglio teorico di sociologi politici, assumendoci la responsabilità esplicita di una selezione, "sulle spalle dei giganti": per farlo, è necessario concentrarci sui rapporti tra politica, potere e mutamento sociale.

Primo Passo: riconosciamo le 2 dimensioni costitutive della politica, derivanti dall'originario termine *polis*-città/stato e quindi, da una parte, il *to police,* inteso come "mettere ordine/governare", e, dall'altra parte, la *agorà*, cioè la piazza, l'assemblea, la partecipazione della popolazione al confronto (Bobbio 1995). La prima dimensione, come la storia insegna, c'è sempre, perché non esiste né può esistere società umana senza una qualche forma di ordine e di governo, anche gli studi antropologici sulle società primitive (Lewellen 1987) lo ribadiscono; la seconda dimensione, viceversa, non è sempre presente (non lo era neppure nell'antica Atene, dove le donne e gli schiavi erano esclusi dalla partecipazione politica), anzi in passato era del tutto assente e continua a mancare in molti paesi contemporanei.

Secondo Passo: ricordiamo la definizione di massima verso la quale convergono molti studiosi: "la politica è quell'attività umana che riguarda il governo di uno spazio e di chi vi abita attraverso atti e apparati amministrativi forniti di forza fisica legittima".

Terzo Passo: concentriamoci sul rapporto mutevole che esiste tra il potere politico e gli altri poteri sociali e, di conseguenza, principalmente sulla coppia coercizione fisica-legittimità e sulle relazioni tra poteri legittimi e non legittimi; infatti, come sociologi, siamo chiamati a studiare la politica, l'autorità e il potere, a livello teorico ed empirico, all'interno dei processi di mutamento storico-sociale, dove si svolge la lotta per il potere, come ci ha insegnato Max Weber, vale a dire il classico dei classici, così lo definisce giustamente Hans Peter Muller (2022).

Precisiamo ora l'itinerario di riflessione teorica che proponiamo, selezionando due specifici contributi tra i tanti altri possibili. Nel corso del secolo passato due tra i maggiori filoni teorici di impronta sociologica riguardanti l'analisi scientifica della politica sono nati dagli studi di Max Weber e di Talcott Parsons. Dopo alcuni richiami alle loro teorie[4], proseguiremo con alcuni riferimen-

[3] Gli esempi sono molto numerosi, cfr. le interviste rilasciate a questo proposito nell'ultimo anno da Gates, Bezos, Musk, Zuchenberg, tutti maschi, guru, mecenati, proprietari di colossi multinazionali.

[4] I commenti e le interpretazioni delle teorie di Weber (vedi ad esempio D'Andrea e Trigilia 2018) e Parsons sono, come noto, assai numerosi e diversificati, io seguirò una linea interpretativa che non pretende di essere né originale né migliore rispetto alle altre, anche perché gli studi più recenti confermano che le loro opere contengono aspetti controversi

ti al contributo all'analisi della politica contemporanea derivante dalle teorie sulla modernizzazione e, infine, concluderemo con uno sguardo sul potere politico debole nell'attuale società globalizzata, che non esclude anzi, per certi versi, favorisce una molteplicità di nuovi fenomeni, di inediti interrogativi politici e, come dicevamo, di una nuova, per quanto confusa, "voglia di politica".

Evidenziamo, preliminarmente, uno spartiacque assai rilevante: il contenuto e l'utilità di questi due approcci teorici (weberiano e parsonsiano) è collegato direttamente alla nascita e all'affermazione dello Stato nazionale di diritto e poi democratico, con economia capitalistica, libero mercato, welfare (cioè è valido fino agli anni Ottanta del Novecento); bisogna oggi verificare cosa quelle due lezioni sono state in grado di dirci sugli avvenimenti dei successivi decenni e, soprattutto, cosa hanno da dirci sull'attualità, quanto esse siano utili ai nostri giorni, "oltre i confini dello Stato", nell'età globale e nella competizione mondiale tra il potere politico ed i poteri sociali extrapolitici (Beck 2014).

3. LE RADICI. RI-COMINCIAMO DA MAX WEBER (ALLA RICERCA DEL SENSO E DELLA LEGITTIMITÀ INTERNA DEL POTERE)

Come noto, la sociologia politica weberiana è sociologia del potere e, al suo culmine, dello Stato, ed è costruita, in una visione storico-comparativa della vita sociale, a partire da una concezione della politica caratterizzata da un mezzo specifico – la coercizione fisica a garanzia della effettività delle decisioni – e da un senso altrettanto specifico – la legittimità –, vale a dire da un motivo di giustificazione dell'esercizio della forza fisica affidata ai detentori del potere di comando. La legittimità è essenziale perché unisce i governati ai governanti, siano essi sudditi e monarchi come in passato, oppure liberi cittadini e loro rappresentanti, come nelle democrazie moderne. Qui si rende necessario un chiarimento, per sgombrare il campo da potenziali equivoci: la celebre definizione weberiana («la politica per noi significherà aspirazione a partecipare al potere e alla sua gestione o a esercitare una qualche influenza sulla distribuzione del potere, sia tra gli Stati sia, all'interno di uno Stato, tra i gruppi di uomini che esso comprende nei suoi confini» [Weber 2001: 45]), se riduttivamente interpretata, può indurre a pensare che, come conseguenza di essa, tutto il potere è politico. Al contrario, Muller ad esempio, ricordando il realismo che impronta l'intera analisi weberiana, sottolinea che per il sociologo tedesco la vita è lotta e, nella dimensione politica, è lotta per il potere, allo scopo di realizzare i fini più disparati, dalla solidarietà universale alle politiche di esclusione e di discriminazione tra classi, popoli, religioni e culture. La straordinaria differenza/opposizione tra i fini, che la storia passata e presente confermano, è frutto della presa di posizione, personale e collettiva, in nome di certi specifici principi (ideali e/o materiali), che porta a rifiutarne alcuni e ad apprezzarne altri, oppure viceversa[5].

Quindi, è autenticamente politico il potere che si occupa di governare un territorio e chi vi abita mediante decisioni fornite di autorità e garantite dal monopolio della coercizione fisica dei trasgressori mediante un apparato a tale scopo addestrato e legittimato, perché poggia su fondamenti di senso dell'azione condivisi (quanto meno in larga parte) dai governati. Ricordiamo Bobbio (2004, 2014) che legge Weber: nello stato di diritto moderno la dotazione esclusiva dei mezzi di coercizione da parte del potere politico (difatti fa le leggi che stabiliscono regole e penalità che valgono per tutti i cittadini e ha al suo fianco le burocrazie civili e militari che le applicano) rende per quest'ultimo, e solo per esso, necessaria la ricerca della legittimità-giustificazione, in quanto ogni uomo desidera essere libero, rifiuta pertanto la coercizione, tranne i casi nei quali risulta ai suoi occhi validamente motivata. Ecco, secondo Weber, dove ha origine la differenza con il potere economico moderno, che poggia, invece, sulla forza dei capitali e del denaro e si sviluppa in contesti di libera concorrenza e di contratti formalmente liberi; come pure la distinzione dal potere ierocratico, che si basa sulla coercizione psichica collegata alla concessione o al rifiuto di beni sacri. Il potere politico è, dunque, obbligato alla continua ricerca della legittimità all'interno del popolo che governa, nelle modalità proprie delle diverse fasi storiche, per evitare la trappola della tirannia-rivolta, con conseguente precarietà e breve durata. Al contrario: la massima legittimità del potere coincide con la sua sacralizzazione. Weber a tale proposito, come noto, precisa che esistono fondamenti di legittimità esterni all'attore sociale (paura; convenzione), oppure a lui interni (le chiama credenze nella legittimità del potere e sono di tre tipi, la tradizione, il carisma, la razionalità legale, ovvero la credenza nella legalità). La domanda centrale che si pone allora per lo studioso, di ieri e ancora più dei nostri anni, è la seguente: la legittimità del potere politico, in quello specifico

o addirittura contraddittori. Seguirò quindi un percorso interpretativo riferito a precise fonti e che ritengo a mio avviso convincente.

[5] «La politica trova il suo fondamento in una serie di decisioni mediante cui l'agire umano prende posizione nella lotta tra valori, risultando coinvolto in tale lotta […] la categoria di scelta rappresenta pertanto la categoria fondamentale non solo della riflessione metodologica weberiana, ma anche dell'analisi che Weber conduce sul senso della scienza e della politica» (Rossi 1971: 358).

contesto che intendo analizzare, è interna (quindi fondata su credenze, bisogna poi individuare di quale tipo, cioè tradizionali, carismatiche o razional-legali), oppure è esterna (prodotta da paure e bisogni primari vissuti in chiave individualistica, particolaristica, corporativa, territoriale?). Se è interna, cioè se poggia su credenze, la domanda successiva è: sono esse, in ultima analisi, di origine extrapolitica (religiosa o plutocratica o tecnologica) oppure direttamente politica (cioè derivano da ideologie e programmi legati a una visione precisa della società elaborata nelle sedi politico-istituzionali?). Ancora il realismo weberiano ci ricorda che, all'interno delle motivazioni che spingono effettivamente i governati ad obbedire, le forme di legittimità esterna (timori, emozioni, costumi e bisogni primari) e le adesioni collegate ad un'intima convinzione, sono spesso mescolate, ma ciò non toglie che il ricercatore possa e debba lavorare allo scopo di individuare e tipizzare le tendenze prevalenti.

a) Si rende qui opportuno un successivo chiarimento: quale traduzione italiana della coppia di termini weberiani *macht* ed *herrschaft* preferiamo? Quella di potenza/potere, oppure quella di potere/dominio? La questione è stata ed è tuttora assai dibattuta. Propongo di restare nel solco della più diffusa traduzione italiana di Economia e Società, quella usata da decenni nella versione curata da Pietro Rossi (1981), che ci ha abituato a usare la coppia potenza/potere.

Macht-Potenza (nell'altra versione tradotto con il termine potere; Hanke 2018 cit. in Muller 2022): si tratta di un concetto indeterminato, che richiama la forza travolgente della città sulla campagna, del capitalismo industriale sulle forme economiche precedenti, come pure il ruolo economico-militare dei grandi imperi nel mondo della *machtpolitik*. La definizione così recita: «la potenza designa qualsiasi possibilità di far valere la propria volontà, entro una relazione sociale e anche di fronte ad una opposizione, qualsiasi sia la base di questa possibilità» (Weber 1981: 51) è un concetto amorfo, utilizzabile a livello macro oppure mesosociale, oggi ai nostri fini utile per individuare le grandi costellazioni di forze economiche e, per esteso, il potere dell'economia moderna e contemporanea, che non poggia su comandi ma sui capitali e sulla ricchezza, sul successo nel mercato, e, come dicevamo, sulla libera competizione.

Herrschaft-Potere (nell'altra versione tradotto con il termine dominio): al contrario, indica una relazione ben determinata, verificabile, con un rapporto preciso tra comando-obbedienza, difatti «per potere si deve intendere la possibilità di trovare obbedienza, presso certe persone, a un comando che abbia uno specifico contenuto» (*Ibidem*; e per disciplina: l'obbedienza pronta, automatica, schematica grazie a una disposizione acquisita, l'esempio più comune di disciplina è l'esercito, mentre un altro esempio più vicino a noi è rappresentato dalle norme emanate nel periodo del *lockdown*). È agevole comprendere che questo secondo tipo di relazione, sia se lo chiamiamo potere sia se lo chiamiamo dominio, si distingue chiaramente dal primo, perché è empiricamente analizzabile, ha carattere relazione e motivazionale, sia dalla parte di chi emana il comando che dalla parte di chi obbedisce. L'idealtipo weberiano del potere non implica, in alcun modo, preferenze antidemocratiche o peggio autoritarie, in quanto le società esistono nella forma di una convivenza pacifica e ordinata a condizione che vi siano regole rispettate-obbedite dalla grande massa dei cittadini (la devianza deve necessariamente restare circoscritta). La democrazia trasforma i contenuti e i processi decisionali che portano alla definizione delle regole, ma non abolisce le regole: forze armate, vigili urbani, polizia stradale, guardia di finanza, carabinieri, ministri, sindaci, rettori, direttori scolastici operano in forza di regole, applicandole e punendo i rei; nuovi e più avanzati diritti, quando si affermano, si traducono necessariamente in nuovi contesti regolativi, che segnalano nuovi trasgressori potenziali e richiedono, per la loro applicazione, nuova burocrazia (Costabile 2002).

b) Il mutamento impresso dalla modernità, a partire dall'Occidente, fondato sulla progressiva razionalizzazione dell'intera vita personale e sociale (Schluchter 1987; Boudon 2021) e sui correlati processi di differenziazione (Durkheim 1977) e formalizzazione (Simmel 1998), a livello sociale e istituzionale, ha contrassegnato negli ultimi secoli le tappe dell'evoluzione dei rapporti tra i poteri sociali, i loro conflitti e le loro alleanze, e quindi le trasformazioni del potere politico. Si è, infatti, passati dalla tendenziale unificazione dei poteri, religioso, politico ed economico, che ha caratterizzato molte società premoderne – si pensi alla figura dei vescovi-conti e proprietari terrieri del Medioevo, esaminati da Poggi (1988), ed all'analisi della politica originariamente "debitrice" verso la religione e l'economia di cui ci parla Pizzorno[6] – alla differenziazione moderna dei poteri. Quest'ultima si realizza allorché ognuno di essi definisce e circoscrive il proprio spazio di azione all'interno della nuova realtà statale, con una graduale e generalizzata spinta ad assegnare al potere politico il carattere di potere sovrano,

[6] «La politica come categoria distinta ha un'origine storica recente […] in precedenza religione e politica vanno considerate indifferenziate […] il linguaggio della politica ha bisogno di prestiti. La nozione di interesse gli veniva dal linguaggio economico, quella di conversione dal linguaggio religioso. Ma non è soltanto questione di prestiti linguistici. È la materia stessa della politica che è fatta di calcoli simili a quelli economici fino a un certo tratto; più in là, di sentimenti simili a quelli religiosi, almeno nella politica in Occidente, che è poi di questa, e non della politica in generale, che siamo in grado di fare teoria» (Pizzorno 1993: 14).

perché fa leggi obbligatorie, prevedendo punizioni per i devianti dalla norma, per tutti i cittadini, anche nei campi di azione degli altri poteri sociali[7].

Poggi (1988) e Farneti (1971) nei loro studi ci hanno mostrato, in proposito, le due fasi dell'emancipazione della politica: la prima, contraddistinta dalle nuove strutture burocratiche-statali prodotte per la prima volta nel periodo delle monarchie assolute del Sei-Settecento europeo, poi evolutesi in direzione pienamente universalistica e impersonale, antipatrimoniale, nello Stato di diritto e costituzionale; la seconda, realizzatasi con la mobilitazione delle classi e dei ceti inferiori e popolari, in precedenza esclusi dalla contesa politica e dalle istituzioni, fino a giungere al suffragio universale e alle democrazie, con l'affermazione dei partiti politici di massa e delle loro visioni ideologiche (intese come sistemi secolarizzati di fede) ed, infine, con la piena affermazione dello stato sociale.

In proposito, giova ricordare, come sopra dicevamo, che la politica come gestione-partecipazione al/influenza sul potere, come lotta per il potere, è stata sempre presente nella storia sociale universale, ma si è specializzata ed emancipata soltanto negli ultimi tre secoli, mediante lo Stato e il potere razionale legale, liberandosi dal primato premoderno dell'«economico» e da quello delle autorità religiose. In tale dinamica storico-sociale sono nati il conflitto e la dialettica tra poteri sociali e potere politico. Questo è il cuore weberiano della sociologia politica: stiamo parlando del potere razionale legale sotto forma di Stato di diritto e nazionale, e poi democratico e sociale, nel quale il potere politico in nome della sovranità popolare è appunto sovrano, aconfessionale (laicizzazione e separazione stato/chiese), autorizzato e capace di normare anche in campo economico, pure a sfavore dei poteri di fatto non legittimi (per contrastare le disuguaglianze e produrre redistribuzione della ricchezza nazionale anche a sostegno delle aree sociali e regionali più deboli, come afferma, ad esempio, la nostra Costituzione). Quindi, riepilogando, nelle società premoderne si osservano in prevalenza forme di fusione tra i poteri e di dipendenza, di quello che oggi noi chiamiamo potere politico, dai poteri religiosi ed economici, che avevano le risorse materiali e simboliche per armare gli eserciti e amministrare in maniera patrimoniale. Più tardi, con l'avvento della modernità, si avvia una dinamica inesauribile fatta di fasi di differenziazione e/o di compenetrazione tra i poteri sociali, difatti ogni potere interagisce necessariamente con gli altri, se ne serve e viene a sua volta utilizzato in una competizione incessante. Per effetto di ciò, la politica ha bisogno della prosperità economica per guadagnare il consenso, l'industria ha bisogno del sostegno dello stato per consolidarsi e, soprattutto, per rinnovarsi nei periodi di recessione ed evitare il fallimento e la disoccupazione di massa, le Chiese hanno bisogno dei contributi, fiscali e di altra natura, per svolgere i loro compiti e così via dicendo, in un circuito di sostegni, alleanze, conflitti.

4. PARSONS (IL POTERE POLITICO COME FUNZIONE LEGITTIMATA DA FONTI EXTRAPOLITICHE)

Nel concludere questa parte del nostro ragionamento, non possiamo dimenticare che Weber, avendo elaborato le sue teorie cento e più anni fa, sulla scorta dell'analisi del mondo sociale di fine Ottocento-inizi Novecento, non ha potuto vivere e indagare su ciò che è avvenuto durante il ventennio del fascismo e del nazismo o durante lo stalinismo, né sull'assai maggiore complessità sociale e politica tipica delle società del secondo dopoguerra. Non ha quindi potuto analizzare, per esempio, la politica in azione nei sistemi sociali complessi, di cui ha trattato ampiamente Talcott Parsons, né le crisi delle democrazie occidentali, né i processi di modernizzazione in società non-occidentali, tanto meno le dittature civili e militari successive alla decolonizzazione e meno ancora la società globalizzata del terzo Millennio, vale a dire la nostra epoca, quella caratterizzata dalla compenetrazione competitiva tra i poteri, su scala interna e mondiale.

Veniamo allora alla seconda prospettiva teorica (Parsons 1975, 1996), guardando alla politica nella compenetrazione novecentesca dei poteri; infatti, il processo di compenetrazione diventa nel corso del Novecento, e in particolare dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale, la cornice entro cui continuano a svilupparsi le spinte alla differenziazione sociale e strutturale. Ricordiamo che Talcott Parsons ha formulato, tra gli anni Trenta e gli anni Sessanta del Novecento, una complessa teoria del sistema sociale e delle parti che lo compongono, chiamate sottosistemi funzionali, uno di essi è il sottosistema politico. Secondo Parsons la sociologia politica deve analizzare la funzione della politica all'interno della società, da lui suddivisa come si diceva in quattro sottosistemi[8],

[7] I caratteri comunemente attribuiti al potere politico e che lo distinguono da ogni altro potere sociale sono «l'esclusività, l'universalità e l'inclusività» vale a dire: «a-il monopolio della forza fisica legittima; b-la capacità, detenuta soltanto dai detentori del potere politico, di prendere decisioni valide e legittime per l'intera collettività; c-la possibilità di intervenire autoritativamente in ogni settore della società» (Bobbio 2004).

[8] Il sottosistema che riguarda l'adattamento (l'economia), il sottosistema che riguarda il conseguimento dei fini e (la politica), quello dell'integrazione e quella della latenza (i fondamenti culturali). Sebbene nella sociologia italiana la ricezione e l'applicazione della teoria parsonsiana sia stata complessivamente ridotta, anche nel campo della sociologia

quindi ha il compito di indagare sul sottosistema politico. All'interno dello schema AGIL, che riassume questa impostazione di carattere struttural-funzionalista, la politica si occupa dell'esercizio del potere e delle istituzioni pubbliche fornite di autorità[9], nell'ambito del più vasto sistema sociale e nell'integrazione con le funzioni svolte dagli altri sottosistemi. Quella svolta dalla politica è una funzione essenziale per ogni grande sistema sociale, i cui molteplici interessi e bisogni sono tradotti dalla politica in azione di governo attraverso atti imperativi[10].

Nel quadro del ragionamento che stiamo sviluppando, questo è il passaggio fondamentale della prospettiva parsonsiana: egli distingue in maniera netta l'autorità dal potere; infatti, sostiene che «l'autorità è essenzialmente il codice istituzionale in base al quale l'uso del potere come mezzo è organizzato e legittimato…essa deve essere concepita come la controparte istituzionale del potere, la differenza principale sta nel fatto che l'autorità non è un mezzo circolante come la moneta» (Parsons 1975: 474-475). Tale divaricazione tra autorità, intesa come principio istituzionale, e potere, inteso come strumento del primo, ha come inevitabile conseguenza che l'autorità, cioè la fonte di legittimazione del potere politico, è, nei confronti di quest'ultimo, esterna e superiore e – secondo questo modello teorico – ha la sua radice principale nel sottosistema della latenza (la cultura – la religione civile – l'educazione)[11]. Ribadisce infatti Parsons più avanti: «un mezzo simbolico generalizzato di interscambio ha due componenti primarie, che la linguistica ha chiaramente distinto come messaggio e come codice. Un codice è una struttura normativa nel cui ambito i messaggi, cioè le espressioni linguistiche, possono essere formulati con l'aspettativa di essere compresi dai ricettori delle comunicazioni», e poi aggiunge: «a mio avviso il termine autorità può essere usato appropriatamente per designare il codice in base al quale l'uso del potere costituisce la classe dei messaggi che ha un significato nel suo ambito» (Ivi: 593).

In questa accezione, la teoria parsonsiana del potere costituisce, almeno in parte, anche un'originale rielaborazione, in un mutato quadro sociale e scientifico, della teoria weberiana, alla quale il sociologo statunitense fa più volte riferimento, per giungere, in verità, ad esiti ben diversi. Entrambi gli autori ritengono che il potere politico viene riconosciuto attraverso lo strumento che usa (la coercizione fisica) e non attraverso gli innumerevoli e contrastanti fini che, di volta in volta, può perseguire, nelle diverse epoche e nei differenti regimi[12]. La distanza maggiore tra le due prospettive scientifiche consiste nel fatto che Parsons tende a ipostatizzare anziché conflittualizzare il campo dei valori (come, viceversa, fa Weber) e, di conseguenza, tende a dividere la funzione del potere dalla sua legittimazione, con l'effetto finale di schiacciare la motivazione sulla funzione e di circoscrivere il senso del potere politico in nome del suo rendimento, riferito a principi elaborati fuori di esso. Per tali motivi, la visione parsonsiana implica, nel caso del potere politico, la sua subordinazione alle funzioni richieste da un sistema sociale che può avere di fatto, al suo vertice, altri centri e altri ruoli non politici (derivanti dalla sfera della latenza-cultura e da quella dell'economia), che stabiliscono, in ultima analisi, i codici sui quali poggia l'autorità che il potere politico deve servire. Si può osservare facilmente quanto la vicenda storico-politica specifica degli Stati Uniti, i rapporti tra politica, religione, società ed economia costruiti nel tempo in quel paese, e che sono a fondamento di quella democrazia industriale e multietnica, abbiano costruito nei secoli dei rapporti sociopolitici in parte diversi dalla storia europea, influenzando pure la costruzione teorica parsonsiana. Dopo Parsons, i continuatori della sua prospettiva di analisi hanno in vari modi approfondito le tematiche riguardanti la politica, concentrandosi innanzitutto sulle molteplici interazioni e dinamiche che si producono all'interno del sottosistema politico (per esempio tra forme di partecipazione e sostegno, partiti, assemblee elettive e organi esecutivi, amministrazioni pubbliche ecc.) ed anche nei confronti dell'ambiente esterno e internazionale (Costabile 2002). Uno sviluppo originale della prospettiva sistemica è quello proposto da Niklas Luhmann, secondo il quale le società contemporanee hanno raggiunto un livello tale di complessità da porre alla base di ogni sistema sociale la selettività, ovvero la capacità di scelta che deve tradursi in riduzione della complessità. Anche secondo la sua teoria ogni sistema sociale è for-

politica, le categorie analitiche del sociologo statunitense (ad esempio quelle di particolarismo e di universalismo) e ancor più l'utilizzazione del linguaggio e del modello dell'analisi sistemica hanno esercitato una rilevante influenza sugli studi sociologici e politologici.

[9] «Il controllo dell'uso e dell'organizzazione della forza relativamente al territorio rappresenta sempre un centro del sistema del potere politico e, in un certo senso, il suo centro decisivo» (Parsons 1996: 134).

[10] Easton, politologo allievo di Parsons, li definiva «assegnazioni imperative di valori per una società» (Easton 1963).

[11] Anziché nella partecipazione politica di massa e nell'elaborazione politico-culturale dei movimenti e partiti politici i quali, nel modello italiano ed europeo, scrivono le regole e alimentano le fonti di legittimazione.

[12] Luciano Cavalli, uno dei maestri della sociologia politica italiana, nei suoi studi ha dedicato spazio all'analisi parsonsiana ed ai rapporti di quest'ultima con la teoria weberiana, con particolare riferimento al potere carismatico (1970; 1981). In questo contesto, nella lettura parsonsiana proposta da Cavalli, appare rilevante il richiamo alla legittimità come "applicazione istituzionale" del carisma e la successiva sottolineatura che, per Parsons come già per Weber, non può esistere un ordine legittimo senza qualche elemento di carattere carismatico (derivante, nel linguaggio weberiano, dal carisma del capo, oppure dal carisma del sangue tradotto in tradizione, oppure dal carisma della ragione).

mato da sottosistemi, ognuno dei quali è riconducibile a un codice che esprime una specifica capacità di riduzione della complessità, il codice politico è il potere, che in passato si è servito prevalentemente della forza fisica, invece oggi del diritto (Luhmann 1982). Anche in questo caso la sua visione del potere tende a valorizzare le dimensioni procedurali del diritto e della democrazia, ritenuti ormai sistemi troppo complessi per essere compresi e condivisi dai cittadini, i quali necessariamente sono chiamati a seguire un insieme di regole formali che, nei fatti, tendono ad autogiustificarsi in nome della loro funzione di riduzione della complessità.

Dalla riflessione sulle teorie della società e della politica di Weber e di Parsons emerge che la legittimità moderna del potere politico può derivare da fonti extrapolitiche (la ricchezza, con o senza armi; le religioni, storiche o civili; poi i massmedia), oppure può essere prodotta dagli stessi attori politici, anche quando questi ultimi elaborano in maniera originale un messaggio religiosi, come nel caso del giuramento Padri Pellegrini in America, oppure nel caso dei padri costituenti di fede cattolica in Italia, e per esteso, nell'azione dei partiti di ispirazione religiosa e di altri movimenti ideologici. Questo nodo è particolarmente complesso, perché incrocia il seguente interrogativo: le forme e i contenuti della legittimità provengono da spinte esogene o da ragioni endogene? Tale ultimo interrogativo è particolarmente valido quando ragioniamo sui rapporti tra le grandi tradizioni religiose, le ideologie politiche e la credenza nella legalità. Infatti, il carattere fondamentale che sostanzia ogni credenza capace di generare effettiva obbedienza è, per Max Weber, il seguente: obbedisco "come se" i contenuti del comando li avessi formulati io stesso[13], per questo motivo mi riconosco nella fonte del comando e lo eseguo senza imposizioni esterne. Questo "meccanismo" di identificazione interno al soggetto fonda ogni autentica comunità politica e fornisce una cornice di giustificazione generale ai detentori del potere. Però, mentre le manifestazioni del "come se" e le motivazioni che le sostengono sono immediatamente evidenti nei casi del potere carismatico e del potere tradizionale[14], le cose cambiano profondamente quando si tratta di verificare l'esistenza o meno di tale modello di identificazione in un moderno stato di diritto, cioè entro una popolazione governata dal potere razionale-legale, il quale esige la credenza nella legalità come primo criterio di regolazione politico-istituzionale. Il problema consiste nel fatto che, in quest'ultimo caso, si tratta di una credenza paradossale in termini razionali, in quanto pretende, da parte dei governati, l'obbedienza "senza se e senza ma" tipica di un atto di fede, che come tale non ha bisogno di prove empiriche né di conferme (come per l'appunto in ogni autentica credenza, sul modello di quella originaria, di contenuto religioso), però questa volta la pretende nei confronti della legge positiva, che per principio non è assoluta (neppure nelle sue espressioni più alte, come le Costituzioni), bensì umana, storica, quindi per sua natura imperfetta, mutevole, soggetta a conferme e verifiche, revocabile, interna anziché superiore al pluralismo di preferenze e interessi ed ai conflitti presenti tra le diverse parti sociali e politiche. Infatti, la credenza nella legalità (poggiante sulla razionalità giuridica) è nata in un preciso periodo storico (tra il XVII e il XVIII secolo) e in uno specifico luogo, l'Occidente[15], vale a dire in un contesto avente ben determinate caratteristiche sociali ed economiche e precisi prerequisiti religiosi e culturali, di impronta cristiana e greco-romana assai diversi dal resto del mondo, dove successivamente il modello dello Stato nazionale di diritto si è faticosamente e contraddittoriamente affermato. Contraddizioni collegate proprio alla presenza di altre tradizioni e culture e percorsi di crescita sociale, che hanno reso assai debole la fonte di identificazione e legittimazione derivante dal "come se" riferito alla legge impersonale-statale e, di conseguenza, hanno reso altrettanto problematica l'affermazione del potere politico visto come potere sovrano, fondato sulla razionalità della legge universalistica.

5. OLTRE WEBER E PARSONS, LE MODERNIZZAZIONI MULTIPLE E LA REGOLAZIONE DEL MUTAMENTO

Alla luce dell'eredità di Weber e Parsons, molti studiosi, come ad esempio Roniger (2022), Rokkan (1982) e diversi altri, a partire dagli anni Settanta e Ottanta del secolo scorso, allo scopo di studiare la politica all'interno di società ancora più vaste e internazionalizzate, hanno provato ad indagare sul mutamento socio-politico da diverse angolazioni, utilizzando parti dell'impianto teo-

[13] «Per potere deve quindi intendersi il fenomeno per cui una volontà manifesta "comando" del detentore del potere vuole influire sull'agire di altre persone ed influisce effettivamente in modo tale che il loro agire procede, in un grado socialmente rilevante, "come se" i dominati avessero, per loro stesso volere, assunto il contenuto del comando come massima del loro agire "obbedienza"» (Weber 1981: 49).

[14] Ovvero in presenza della dedizione al leader che si ritiene dotato di virtù straordinarie o sovrumane, che rendono indiscutibili i suoi comandi, oppure della dedizione al sovrano che è l'erede di una dinastia secolare, in quanto "si fa come il sovrano dice perché così si è sempre fatto". Senza dimenticare la doppia legittimazione derivante dal fatto che le dinastie -un potere di tipo tradizionale- sono nate, di regola, da un capostipite dotato di forza carismatica.

[15] Contemporaneamente all'affermazione del capitalismo, che poggia sulla razionalità del calcolo economico, quindi in un processo generale di razionalizzazione e secolarizzazione della società (Bochenforde 2006; Weber 1977).

rico sistemico di origine parsonsiana all'interno di una prospettiva weberiana in vario modo riveduta. Hanno così evidenziato che funzione e senso del potere politico, fonte della sua legittimità e modalità di esercizio, strutture e culture, conflitti, caratteri delle élites e mobilitazione popolare, si collegano in ciascun paese in un modo originale, diverso dagli altri paesi, sulla base dei propri caratteri sociali, tradizionali, economici, geografici, culturali, religiosi (Shils 1981).

In tale quadro scientifico, è nata a suo tempo con Eisenstadt (1997, 2010) una prospettiva teorica che pone il contenuto e l'esercizio del potere politico, i suoi fondamenti storici, religiosi e culturali, nazionali e locali, le sue forme di legittimazione, di istituzionalizzazione, di distribuzione al centro dei processi di regolazione sociale e politico-istituzionale del mutamento (Fantozzi 1993). Tale prospettiva parte dalla constatazione che l'ordine sociale, nella modernità avanzata, è un processo continuamente in fieri e non un dato di fatto caratterizzato da lunghi periodi di continuità e stabilità. L'ordine del passato è infranto per sempre (Dal Lago 1983), in quanto il potere politico si trova a governare società giunte a un grado di complessità mai conosciuto in precedenza e continuamente in espansione, che induce molteplici effetti, tutti da indagare, sulle visioni dell'essere vivente e del mondo (antropologia), sulle forme di conoscenza (la gnoseologia), di socializzazione e di relazione (anche sul piano del genere), sulle forme di mobilitazione, sull'agire istituzionale, sulla composizione e circolazione delle élites (sociologia). La fonte del potere politico è ora da cercare nell'intreccio dinamico tra elementi repressivi e normativi (tradizionali o moderni) ed elementi cognitivi. Per questo motivo la categoria di ordine, evocatrice di relazioni di potere verticali e di stabilità durevole, risulta superata, mentre la categoria di regolazione esprime meglio il carattere inevitabilmente più orizzontale, graduale e processuale della costruzione contemporanea del potere. E le crisi di regolazione politica, aggiungiamo, spiegano bene le radici della richiesta di ordine che proviene da molte parti del pianeta negli ultimi anni. Eisenstadt sottolinea sempre nei suoi scritti che, nella vita sociale concreta come nell'analisi del potere, le strutture non sono separabili dalle culture e dai fattori cognitivi, comprendendo in questi termini per l'appunto i presupposti religiosi, le concezioni ontologiche e antropologiche, le forme di vita comunitaria tipiche di ogni società e che tutto ciò determina il carattere diversificato con cui la modernità ha preso forma e si manifesta nel mondo contemporaneo.

In conseguenza dell'intreccio di cui dicevamo, non esiste una sola modernità bensì, al contrario, modernità multiple[16], difatti ogni paese cambia e si modernizza a suo modo, in una originale sintesi di fattori endogeni ed esogeni di cambiamento, che rendono le società accomunate da alcuni elementi (per esempio sul piano del primato dell'urbanizzazione, della produzione industriale e dei consumi, della scienza, dell'impianto statale) e differenti per molti altri aspetti della vita sociale e politica. Risultano di conseguenza pure differenti le combinazioni tra senso-funzione del potere, in relazione a distinti:

- *processi di razionalizzazione*, in quanto esistono razionalizzazioni multiple: il programma culturale occidentale, spiega Eisenstadt, poggia su uno specifico modello occidentale di razionalità cognitiva, che esprime una sintesi originale della razionalità di calcolo-scopo e della razionalità al valore, realizzata attraverso un cammino plurisecolare elaborato a partire dal Rinascimento[17], e poi sottolinea che esistono nel mondo anche altre forme di razionalità, non europee e non occidentali, ancorate ad altri valori di riferimento, collegate ad altre religioni, ad altre visioni di società e di vita comunitaria, che hanno a loro volta alimentato molteplici vie di modernizzazione socio-politica;
- *processi di secolarizzazione religiosa* (Berger 1984, 2010; Norris e Inglehart 2007), in una serie di manifestazioni concrete assai ampia, sia in passato che ai nostri giorni. Le diverse religioni, a seconda dei loro contenuti (credenze, strutture, modelli di autorità, forme di proselitismo ecc.), nella vicenda storica delle società umane hanno, infatti, intessuto con il potere politico e le sue autorità delle relazioni polivalenti e mutevoli, che vanno, a un estremo, in direzione della ierocratizzazione della politica, con il predominio delle norme e autorità religiose sulle attività politiche e di governo, all'altro estremo,

[16] Scrive Eisenstadt: «mentre processi come l'urbanizzazione, l'industrializzazione o la diffusione dei sistemi moderni di comunicazione sono effettivamente comuni a tutte queste società moderne, le risposte istituzionali concretamente date a tali problemi tendono a differenziarsi profondamente, in stretta relazione, ovviamente, alle concezioni fondamentali di ordine sociale e politico sviluppatesi all'interno di ciascuna società. La natura di tali scelte si manifesta nel tipo di regime politico -autoritario, pluralista, totalitario-, nella strutturazione delle gerarchie sociali, nell'organizzazione industriale, oltre che in molti altri aspetti del contesto istituzionale» (1990: 54). E poi precisa che l'opera di selezione tra le scelte è svolta dalle élites sociali e politiche, il cui compito di guida non comporta l'esclusione e la repressione dei movimenti di protesta, la cui voce può essere al contrario accolta e istituzionalizzata nei regimi pluralisti entro forme di regolazione politica democratica del mutamento.

[17] Lungo un percorso che procede dall'*homo faber suae quisque fortunae* al giusnaturalismo, poi dall'illuminismo alle rivoluzioni industriali e politiche, e ancora dal positivismo fino alla scienza e alla tecnologia del '900, contemporanei al trionfo della nuova politica, fondata sulla cittadinanza, la legalità, le ideologie collettive e la democrazia. Sui rapporti fra razionalizzazione e tradizione cfr. Eisenstadt 1974.

viceversa, in direzione della politicizzazione della religione secondo gli scopi dei governanti politici (o addirittura fino alla repressione brutale contro le religioni e i loro fedeli, in nome della divinizzazione dell'autorità politica). Le democrazie moderne hanno il merito di aver contenuto le due tendenze estreme all'interno di un alveo costituzionale di contenuto universalistico, che garantisce, in nome della laicità e aconfessionalità dello stato, la libertà, il pluralismo e il proselitismo religiosi, al pari di quelli dei non-credenti e dei sostenitori di qualunque ideologia, purché rispettosa del primato della legge.

6. IL POTERE TECNOLOGICO

Per ragionare sui nostri anni bisogna innanzitutto sottolineare che, nella dialettica tra i poteri, è intervenuto da tempo un nuovo protagonista, un potere prima inscritto nel potere economico ma negli ultimi decenni resosi sempre più autonomo, il potere tecnologico. Quest'ultimo ha prodotto una dinamica di differenziazione ed innovazione che è sotto i nostri occhi, che pervade la vita quotidiana (Elliott 2021) con caratteri a volte entusiasmanti (come quelli relativi alla riduzione degli indicatori di povertà assoluta nel mondo, alle conquiste nel campo sanitario e all'allungamento della vita) e a volte inquietanti, per la mancanza di controlli democratici sulle fonti di questo potere e sulle decisioni da esso assunte. Il potere tecnologico non è solo l'evoluzione-espansione del potere della scienza e della tecnica su cui poggia l'intera società moderna, è qualcosa di altro, di più e di diverso, che investe direttamente la produzione e la riproduzione della società e tutte le forme di istituzionalizzazione (Latour 2007; Esposito 2021). Cosicché il confronto tra i poteri è diventato ancora più articolato (Stiegler 2019b) e turbolento appunto per l'affermazione e la crescita dell'autonomia del potere tecnologico (nelle sue diverse fasi computerizzazione, digitalizzazione, automazione, intelligenza artificiale, AI generativa) o, se si preferisce dirla alla maniera classica con Severino, della tecnica (Severino 2009). I sociologi fanno osservazione scientifica, evitando le forme di pessimismo disperato come pure quelle di ingenuo ottimismo, per cui non possiamo sottovalutare le potenzialità positive e neppure i pericoli da più parti denunciati a proposito di questa nuova rivoluzione, che riguardano innumerevoli campi della vita sociale: l'occupazione, la manipolazione delle scelte e delle preferenze elettorali, i processi educativi, la riproduzione della vita e la salvaguardia del pianeta (Jonas 1990; Popitz 1990; Beck 1997). A quest'ultimo proposito, ci viene incontro uno dei padri fondatori della sociologia, Georg Simmel, il quale, trattando degli effetti dell'economia monetaria e del denaro sulla vita moderna, già nel 1896 aveva colto diversi pericoli collegati all'origine e alla direzione che può assumere il processo di tecnicizzazione dell'intera società, definendoli con queste parole: «Quanto più la tecnica – cioè il sistema dei mezzi e degli strumenti – diviene intricata, sofisticata, articolata in tutti gli ambienti della vita, tanto più la si percepisce come un fine ultimo in sé soddisfacente, oltre il quale non ci si interroga più» (Simmel 2005: 86)[18]. Dunque, ci interessa studiare e comprendere il potere della tecnica e gli effetti di questa sulla società e sulla politica, per evidenziare i gravi rischi insiti in ogni forma di cieco adattamento (Stiegler 2019a).

Già oggi, alla luce delle ricerche sociologiche e di quelle realizzate nel campo delle scienze sociali, emerge che questo potere modifica ed altera i legami e le relazione sociali, dalla sfera micro a quella macro, dalla procreazione, dall'educazione e socializzazione infantili al mondo produttivo e del lavoro; che esaspera le spinte alla frammentazione politica in nome di un marcato individualismo, in cui ognuno è più volte spinto a vivere da solo, a livello individuale e con le dotazioni tecnologiche di cui può disporre, le contraddizioni sociali generali (Giaccardi e Magatti 2022; Bauman 2002); che trasforma in profondità il quadro delle motivazioni e delle alternative dell'agire personale e istituzionale; che si allea preferibilmente con il potere economico, anzi diventa esso stesso potere economico; che favorisce ovunque la diffusione delle tendenze securitarie[19], esaltate dalla disponibilità di opportuni dispositivi tecnici (la tecnica è ovviamente patrimonio degli esperti e non del popolo sovrano, che non è in grado di comprendere e legittimare questo potere esclusivo, ma è chiamato ad essere disciplinato e obbediente). In verità, la tecnicizzazione della società e della politica avanzava da tempo, a partire dagli *spin doctor* e dai *mental coach*, dalla centralità della figura del tecnico-esperto di saperi indispensabili

[18] Weber, dal canto suo, in alcuni suoi scritti aveva evidenziato la tendenza della razionalità tecnica ad autolegittimarsi come potere in virtù della superiorità dei suoi effetti pratici, per esempio nelle pagine dedicate alla "superiorità" dell'amministrazione burocratica, la più razionale amministrazione dal punto di vista tecnico-formale e, di conseguenza, «oggi, per i bisogni dell'amministrazione di massa, semplicemente inevitabile» (Weber 1981: 218).

[19] Zuboff (2019), esplora in profondità i caratteri di questa nuova forma di capitalismo, fondato sui big data e sulla intelligenza artificiale, che ha generato un nuovo modello di capitalismo, con nuovi attori (i capitalisti della sorveglianza cioè i padroni di Google, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon), capaci di accumulare privatamente una quantità immensa di conoscenze e quindi di potere di controllo, in assenza di una verifica pubblica del loro operato (le aziende di questo settore sanno molte cose sui cittadini, i quali viceversa non sanno quasi nulla su come questi dati che li riguardano vengono utilizzati).

alla gestione delle nostre società complesse a tutti i livelli della comunicazione e del governo, tant'è che il cosiddetto marketing politico, con le sue tecniche ed i suoi esperti, esisteva negli USA già alla fine degli anni Cinquanta. Tutto ciò non a caso si è manifestato contemporaneamente alle spinte, di cui parlavamo, alla personalizzazione, privatizzazione e concentrazione verticistica del potere registrate ovunque negli ultimi anni (Poguntke 2005) e può purtroppo, in certe condizioni, potenziare le tendenze antidemocratiche e belliciste. Da questo punto di vista, il potere della tecnica sta già trasformando le democrazie contemporanee sotto diversi aspetti, per l'effetto combinato dell'uso degli strumenti digitali di calcolo nella comunicazione politica e nell'amministrazione dello Stato e, simultaneamente come dicevamo, della forte tendenza alla verticalizzazione del potere, sempre più spesso affidato ad esperti[20] prestati alla politica, provenienti dal settore pubblico e da quello privato, i quali più volte diventano figure di governo ai massimi livelli, senza selezione elettorale né alcuna responsabilità politica diretta.

Siamo quindi di fronte alla forte espansione di un potere di fatto non legittimo che, a differenza del potere economico (al quale si allea assai spesso, come dicevamo, sia per il costo delle ricerche che per il successo economico prodotto dalle conquiste tecnologiche), si presenta silenziosamente come una forza capace di governare in supplenza (o in sostituzione) del potere politico democratico. E c'è di più: si tratta di una forza che aspira alla sacralità[21], in quanto promette non solo sviluppo (come l'economia competitiva) ma pure uguaglianza di opportunità, oggi e in futuro, attraverso la fruibilità delle sue conquiste da parte (potenzialmente) di tutti gli abitanti del pianeta. Quindi, cerca di presentarsi come la risoluzione alternativa e indolore, anziché conflittuale, di molti problemi ambientali, economici, etici e politici. La domanda: chi governa la tecnologia e per fare che cosa? esprime il livello più alto al quale è giunto nel nostro tempo il confronto e lo scontro tra i poteri in quanto interseca le relazioni tra politica, religione, economia e tecnica dal piano individuale alle maggiori questioni di portata mondiale, come le migrazioni, la tutela ambientale, gli scontri militari, il benessere, le disuguaglianze, il colossale debito che grava sugli stati e quindi sui cittadini.

[20] Per una esposizione del concetto di epistocrazia (il potere della scienza e dei sapienti che dovrebbe proteggere le società liberali dai pericoli prodotti dall'ignoranza, disinformazione, umoralità del cittadino comune; cfr. Brennan 2023).

[21] Il simbolo della mela morsicata di Apple parla da solo, esprimendo la promessa di un nuovo regno umano della conoscenza emancipato dal condizionamento e dai limiti delle prospettive religiose tradizionali, in questo caso di origine cristiana (cfr. Bovalino 2024).

7. LA PROBLEMATICA LEGITTIMAZIONE DELLO STATO DEMOCRATICO

Da un differente e interessante punto di vista scientifico, il filosofo e giurista tedesco Ernest Wolfang Bockenforde (2010), nel suo lungo lavoro di ricerca sui rapporti tra politica, religione ed etica, ha analizzato l'intero processo che abbiamo fin qui descritto, mettendo in luce un paradosso che riguarda direttamente anche la nostra ricerca sul senso e la funzione del potere politico nel mutamento sociale. Egli, infatti, sostiene che la modernità occidentale, nella sua forma politica e statale, non riesce più a mantenere le premesse universalistiche di libertà, diritti e giustizia sulle quali è cresciuta e poggia. E scrive: «di che cosa vive lo Stato e dove trova la forza che lo regge e che gli garantisce omogeneità, dopo che la forza vincolante proveniente dalla religione non è e non può più essere essenziale per lui?» (*Ibidem*: 66). L'Autore sottolinea che fino all'Ottocento, all'interno di società che rappresentavano sé stesse come comunità sacre, «la religione era sempre stata la forza vincolante più profonda per l'ordinamento politico e per la vita dello Stato. Ma è possibile fondare e conservare l'eticità in maniera del tutto terrena, secolare?» (*Ibidem*). Precisa poi che, da questi interrogativi, emerge una domanda fondamentale, vale a dire: «fino a che punto i popoli uniti in Stati possono vivere sulla base della sola garanzia della libertà, senza avere cioè un legame unificante che preceda tale libertà?» (Ivi: 67). Secondo Bockenforde l'idea di nazione, una volta subentrata a quella basata sulla religione, ha fondato e garantito per alcuni secoli una nuova omogeneità, questa volta politica[22]. Tuttavia, aggiunge ancora, all'interno di questa realtà si è continuato «a vivere sulla base della tradizione della morale cristiana. Questa nuova omogeneità cercò e trovò la sua espressione nello Stato nazionale. Ma da allora l'idea di nazione ha perduto questa sua forza formatrice, e non solo in molti paesi europei[23]. Anche nei giovani Stati dell'Asia e dell'Africa la sua forza forma-

[22] «Il processo della secolarizzazione fu anche un grande processo di emancipazione dell'ordine temporale dalle autorità e dai vincoli religiosi imposti dalla tradizione. Esso trovò il proprio compimento nella Dichiarazione dei diritti dell'uomo e del cittadino, che affidò il singolo a sé stesso e alla sua libertà. Ma con ciò si poneva necessariamente, dal punto di vista dei principi, il problema di una nuova integrazione: perché lo Stato non cadesse nella disgregazione interna, la quale porta con sé la cosiddetta "eterodirezione", occorreva che i singoli emancipati trovassero una nuova comunanza, una nuova omogeneità. In un primo momento questo problema restò nell'ombra, in quanto nel XIX° secolo una nuova forza unificante prese il posto della vecchia, l'idea di nazione» (*Ibidem*).

[23] Al pari di quella collegata alla forza unificante dei grandi partiti politici di massa fondati su ideologie politiche di ispirazione cristiana o socialcomunista.

trice ha avuto breve durata: l'individualismo dei diritti umani, condotto a piena efficacia, emancipa non solo dalla religione ma anche, in uno stadio successivo, dalla nazione (intesa come popolo) in quanto forza omogeneizzante […] La domanda circa le forze vincolanti si ripropone quindi di nuovo, e ora nel suo vero nucleo: lo stato liberale secolarizzato vive di presupposti che non riesce a garantire» (Ivi: 68). In altre parole, Bockenforde ci invita a riflette sul fatto che la frammentazione sociale tipica della società degli individui pone inediti e radicali problemi sul senso del legame sociale nei processi di mutamento, che la politica fatica, prim'ancora che a risolvere, a mettere a fuoco e poi ad interpretare nella loro radice antropologica, religiosa e culturale (Berger e Luckmann 2010; Descola 2021). Ovviamente, questa debolezza interna dello stato democratico contemporaneo è destinata a dilatarsi sotto la pressione dei processi di internazionalizzazione.

Qui di seguito un ulteriore esempio di questo paradosso che riguarda i fondamenti etici della politica: uno dei pilastri del modello di modernità esportato dall'Occidente nel mondo, la credenza nella legalità, risulta da più parti e per molti versi indebolita, difatti le ricerche registrano da tempo una forte crisi interna del modello di legittimità fondato sul potere razionale legale e sulla pace formale (quella che poggia sulla tolleranza reciproca in un mondo pluralista anziché sul trionfo di una verità contro le altre). Questo simbolo moderno del primato politico e della sua eticità è ripetutamente messo in discussione, sia con riguardo al suo nucleo identificativo (il "come se" di cui abbiamo detto), sia per quanto concerne l'equilibrio interno tra i poteri istituzionali (vedi i conflitti tra politica e magistratura) e la neutralità dei poteri pubblici non elettivi, come pure in merito ai conflitti di interesse tra ricchezze private e ruoli pubblici e al discredito diffuso verso i leader politici, a causa dei frequenti casi di corruzione, di gestione neopatrimoniale (Breuer 1996; Coco e Fantozzi 2012) dei beni pubblici, come pure a causa degli innumerevoli processi e condanne di tanti capi politici per reati di cui, viceversa, dovrebbero garantire la condanna proprio per il loro ruolo[24].

In questo quadro di debolezza del principio fondamentale dello Stato moderno e democratico, che si collega non a caso alla riduzione degli spazi di giustizia sociale (Gallino 2023), aumentano a dismisura le disuguaglianze sociali e regionali, che si manifestano anche nella separazione crescente e variabile, nel mondo e all'interno dei paesi occidentali, tra la rivendicazione di nuovi e più avanzati diritti civili, a cui sono assai sensibili le parti della popolazione più evolute e garantite, e la contemporanea perdita/mancanza dei diritti di prima, seconda, terza generazione ritenuti inviolabili (diritti umani o di libera espressione; diritti politico-elettorali, elementari diritti sociali) in aree più estese della popolazione, sia sul piano sociale che su quello territoriale e su quello di genere.

8. POTERI E POLITICA NELLA SOCIETÀ GLOBALE: SFIDE E QUESTIONI APERTE

Veniamo all'oggi, cioè alle sfide, agli stimoli, alle questioni aperte per noi nel 2024, che riguardano il senso e la funzione del potere politico a livello statale, sovrastatale, substatale[25], in un mondo inedito in cui ogni paese ha seguito modelli di modernizzazione diversi, che richiamano, come abbiamo visto, la modernizzazione politica nei suoi tratti costitutivi originari (come la costruzione dello stato nazionale, i rapporti tra istituzioni politiche, religiose ed economiche, tra potere e diritto, come pure i modelli di stato sociale e di partito – di apparato o notabilare/elettorale) e gli interrogativi presenti posti dalla globalizzazione. La sociologia politica del terzo millennio studia quindi il potere politico in movimento, "debole" nella società globale, al di fuori della dimensione statale, e le ricadute interne, infranazionali, di tale debolezza, insieme ai tentativi (per il momento incerti) di riaffermazione e rilancio. Osserviamo la presenza e la tensione tra le spinte populiste e sovraniste e i tentativi di rivincita interna di una politica "forte nei confini statali, chiusi a doppia mandata all'esterno", e, per converso, i tentativi di costruzione di autorità politiche sovranazionali, infracontinentali (UE) e mondiali, con una ricca realtà di nuovi soggetti e protagonisti politici a livelli locali e superiori ed anche di innovative esperienze di governo e di amministrazione. Il dato evidente: il primato della politica è da tempo ovunque contestato e in crisi, prevalgono le compenetrazioni competitive o peggio conflittuali, sregolate e spesso confuse tra i poteri, sempre più a fatica mantenuti in forme pacifiche.

Ci troviamo, in sostanza, all'inizio del terzo Millennio, in un passaggio epocale di ridefinizione delle relazioni tra i poteri. Come dicevamo, al periodo di integrazione *ordinata* oppure *conflittuale* tra i poteri, prevalentemente interna agli stati, che ha caratterizzato le liberaldemocrazie e i regimi dittatoriali nella prima

[24] Come Trump, Sarkozy, Berlusconi, Boris Johnson e molti altri.

[25] Difatti, l'indebolimento dello stato nazionale nei confronti dei centri di potere sovranazionale è coinciso con il riacutizzarsi delle antiche fratture regionali e con l'emersione di nuovi movimenti indipendentisti (Perri 2023) e di nuove spinte verso la trasformazione federale degli stati unitari (Fantozzi e Mirabelli 2017).

metà del Novecento, sono seguite, nel postconflitto (nei paesi occidentali e in un mondo ora diviso in 2 blocchi), una prima fase di compenetrazione ancora regolata dalla politica, (i "30 gloriosi", dalle fine degli anni Quaranta alla fine degli anni Settanta, con il successo del welfare state e della piena cittadinanza) e, dopo, una seconda fase di compenetrazione competitiva, sempre all'interno dei paesi (il momento di svolta è stato il biennio 1979-1980, con l'affermazione di R. Reagan e M. Thatcher), caratterizzata dal trionfo del neoliberismo, e quindi dai processi di deregolamentazione, di finanziarizzazione[26], di privatizzazione, di aziendalizzazione dei servizi, in una parola di economizzazione della politica (Poggi 2000), guidati dall'illusione del primato delle *policies* sulla politica. Infine, dopo la caduta del regime sovietico e dei suoi alleati, si è entrati, già a fine Novecento, nella fase di compenetrazione *sregolata e conflittuale* dei poteri, sul piano internazionale (e ovunque), con il fallimento delle aspettative di costruzione di un mercato economico mondiale unico e autoregolato e di contemporanea esportazione delle democrazie *manumilitari*, con l'aggravante di pesanti ricadute di natura autoritaria all'interno degli stati. Possiamo dunque notare ciò che segue: fino a quando lo stato di diritto e democratico non è stato travolto dai processi di globalizzazione, il potere politico è rimasto tutto sommato sovrano, poi il quadro è profondamente e disordinatamente mutato. Ma questa tendenza all'instabilità e alla precarietà del potere politico è irreversibile? In verità, guardando nel 2024 in una prospettiva di più lunga durata, possiamo osservare che la domanda è incompleta. Infatti, la sovranità indiscussa del potere politico statale e della "politica assoluta" ha riguardato una fase storica in definitiva limitata, coincidente con una lunga parte del Novecento e realizzatasi in forma pienamente democratica in un numero ridotto di paesi del mondo, prevalentemente occidentali. Successivamente, dagli anni Ottanta, l'internazionalizzazione avanzata ed infine la globalizzazione hanno aperto una nuova fase di gioco dei poteri (Poggi 1998), nella quale il potere economico corre spregiudicatamente, il potere tecnologico dilaga, il potere religioso varca facilmente i limiti statali e fa proselitismo globale, mentre il potere politico arranca. Questo accade perché gli manca una forza analoga a quella posseduta precedentemente all'interno degli stati, oltre i cui confini non detiene né la forza fisica (il sogno di un mondo unipolare è presto tramontato) né la legittimità (i diritti umani e di cittadinanza universali sono soltanto in embrione). Siamo, in verità, di fronte a quella che Weber chiamava una nuova fase di "distribuzione della potenza" (*Ibidem*), questa volta però non solo in Occidente ma nella società globale (Magatti 2009). Ovviamente, il potere politico attraverso la forza dei singoli Stati e delle loro alleanze e anche dell'Onu è tuttora ben presente, attivo, rilevante in molti modi, anche innovativi a volte (come, a livello regionale, il processo di unificazione europea e, a livello mondiale, gli sforzi sul tela della sostenibilità), ma nel complesso risulta inadeguata sul piano regolativo, mentre crescono gli appelli alla disciplina (che non ha bisogno di legittimità propria come il potere autenticamente politico) e i processi di riarmo, dopo decenni di disarmo.

In breve, la spinta propulsiva delle democrazie appare dunque colpita e indebolita sia all'esterno (con il tramonto delle guerre per fini umanitari e per l'esportazione democrazia) che all'interno dei paesi (con la rivincita di forze reazionarie e sovraniste che utilizzano i perdenti e gli sgomenti della globalizzazione per proporre un anacronistico ritorno al primato dei singoli stati, questa volta con minore democrazia e maggiore disuguaglianza, a vantaggio dei poteri di fatto non legittimi). Eppure resta ben presente e viva, innanzitutto nelle società e nelle aree del mondo nelle quali mancano tuttora le libertà e i diritti politici e di cittadinanza sociale, ma anche nei paesi avanzati, dove si osserva l'emergere di nuove forme di cittadinanza attiva insieme a una molteplicità di nuovi movimenti sui temi dell'ambiente e della sostenibilità, della pace e dell'accoglienza, delle parità e dei diritti, del contrasto alla corruzione, alle mafie, alla violenza di genere, alle forme di disagio, esclusione e di povertà. Ovunque si registra una crescente domanda di nuove leadership all'altezza dei tempi (Viviani 2022). È evidente, ogni giorno di più, che siamo di fronte a uno scenario per molti versi sconosciuto, di estrema complessità e problematicità, nel quale il ruolo della ricerca scientifica qualificata e indipendente è quanto mai rilevante.

9. CONCLUSIONI

Dunque, il *quid* della sociologia politica, secondo il contributo che ho provato ad articolare e ad offrire alla discussione, è nella riaffermazione del legame diretto e costitutivo tra la politica e il potere (la vita è lotta; il potere non ammette vuoti) nonché nella distinzione e nella correlazione tra due approcci, cioè tra il "senso" e la "funzione" del potere politico, tra la legittimità interna e la legittimità esterna, e nelle convergenze oggettive tra l'una e l'altra, analiticamente studiate in forma comparata e collocate nel mutamento globale in corso e nei conflitti tra i poteri (vecchi e nuovi) che lo caratterizzano.

Infatti, come abbiamo visto, i grandi poteri che hanno contraddistinto la storia umana, quello religioso,

[26] Cfr. Gallino (2015) che tratta dell'intreccio tra finanziarizzazione, crisi ecologica e crisi politica.

quello politico, quello economico attraversano da tempo gravi crisi, cercano per questo motivo di estrarre reciprocamente risorse dagli altri poteri, al fine di non soccombere, nel mentre continuano a differenziarsi al loro interno (le Chiese si dividono, i partiti si frammentano, le economie si aggrediscono) e a compenetrarsi, competendo molto duramente per resistere e provare a consolidarsi, mentre, per altro verso, il potere tecnologico avanza prepotentemente, con i suoi saperi e le sue ricette, i suoi profeti, leader ed esperti, le sue ricchezze economiche, e prova ad affermare la propria centralità.

Dunque, per lo studio e la ricerca sulla permanente e multiforme dialettica tra i poteri sociali, che definisce i caratteri contesto della vita sociale nell'età globale, alla ricerca del senso e della legittimazione del potere politico, è tuttora indispensabile l'insegnamento weberiano. Parimenti, non si può trascurare il contributo ancora attuale della lezione sistemica di Parsons, in quanto le relazioni tra i poteri sono condizionate dalle funzioni reciproche e in permanente mutamento (nel tempo e nello spazio) che si stabiliscono tra gli attori, anche per l'intervento di nuovi protagonisti, che stanno producendo trasformazioni antropologiche e ambientali di vasta e, al momento, incalcolabile portata. Processi e fenomeni che si realizzano entro società sempre più protese a massimizzare, entro cerchie ridotte, i vantaggi della globalizzazione e, viceversa, a socializzare gli svantaggi dell'età globale scaricandoli sui soggetti più deboli (paesi, categorie sociali, minoranze). Come si può agevolmente osservare, le maggiori questioni teoriche (la definizione essenziale di politica; il senso e la funzione del potere politico) possono e devono essere affrontate nel vivo della lotta in corso tra i poteri, sono pertanto inseparabili dall'indagine empirica sulle turbolente trasformazioni in atto.

Qui è la sfida. E qui bisogna stare, senza velleità e presunzione, ma pure senza paura di rischiare: la politica e il suo potere, diceva Weber e ricorda Muller, sono intimamente "tragici" (perché trattano materie come vita, morte, disuguaglianze e ingiustizie, basta pensare alla guerra, alla malasanità, ai femminicidi, ai rigurgiti razzisti) e, nel contempo, sono creativi e generativi di sviluppo, libertà e giustizia, conquiste e benessere, democrazia. La politica, diciamolo ancora una volta, è lotta tra valori, materiali e immateriali: provare a spiegare scientificamente quali sono le forze in campo, la loro azione e le loro dinamiche che sempre più spesso, anche grazie alle nuove tecnologie, restano vaghe e nell'ombra, nel segreto, allontanandosi spesso e in maniera preoccupante dalla legalità e dall'etica della responsabilità, costituisce la presa di posizione attiva del sociologo politico, che si accompagna al suo legame indissolubile con la liberaldemocrazia.

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Liminalities: Social Vulnerabilities Between Participatory Processes and Digital Space in the Neoliberal Era

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Abstract. This article explores the development directions of liminal spaces and cities as a whole within the broader framework of neoliberalism in the Italian metropolitan context. First, neoliberalism was defined and considered in the context of liminal spaces and urban development, according to the international literature perspective. Then, with specific reference to the Italian case, through semi-structured interviews, it was found that liminal spaces, despite facing marginalisation, translocalisation and defamiliarisation, acted as antagonists and nuclei of resistance to the encroaching framework of neoliberalism. The article also explores the role of digital ecosystems as tools for empowerment; it also emphasizes the role of liminal spaces in fostering communitarianism while resisting the change experienced and brought about by the surrounding urban spaces.

Keywords: neoliberalism, liminal spaces, digital ecosystems, urban spaces.

Scholarly discourse at the global level has extensively addressed the concept of the neoliberal city (Pinson and Morel Journel 2016), highlighting distinctive features in the context of the United States (Hackworth 2019) as well as in selected European case studies (Chevalier 2023). Earlier, the work of Henry Lefebvre (1999) highlighted the role of urban spaces as relational places, while David Harvey's analysis focused on the disruptive role of neoliberalism in the transformation of cities.

Understanding the directions of cities' development and their relationships with transformations in the public sphere is impossible unless viewed within the broader framework of neoliberalism. However, defining neoliberalism is necessary, since there remain, even in the academic literature, several ambiguities that often result from ideological differences. Particularly, we can identify different interpretative frameworks and at least two defining ambiguities.

1. THE PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF DEFINITIONS

The first ambiguity refers to an (increasingly narrow) area that considers neo-liberalism a sort of "invention" by those who would not have understood

that it is nothing more than an evolutionary direction of liberalism. In this case, a conceptual overlap between classical liberalism and contemporary neo-liberalism is produced, often in bad faith. However, this is a stretch, since neo-liberalism is based on conceptual assumptions and economic practices very different from those of classical liberalism. The second defining ambiguity interprets neo-liberalism as a set of monetary economic policies, based on austerity logics, substantial marketisation of public life and "commodification" of social relations. A third perspective – which turns out to be more convincing – is one that assumes neoliberalism as a global political rationality that inverts the logic of capital, making it the new normal of social organisation, «to the point of making it the form of subjectivity and the norm of existence» (Dardot and Laval 2019: 5). This new global rationality not only reproduces social inequalities, but above all feeds itself with the systemic crises that it itself produces, and whose only (apparent) way out is the paradoxical re-proposition of those same recipes that provoked the permanent state of crisis, since «neoliberalism reproduces itself as it is» (Pope Francis 2020: 168). The idea that neo-liberalism constitutes global political rationality is consistent with the perspective of those who consider it a social image. Indeed, neoliberal global rationality can decline as an imagination that arises as an outcome of the narrative forms of new social stratifications. It feeds a reservoir of narratives that have also become established because of communicative ecosystems in which the struggle for control of opinion has become a diriment.

The use of the concept of the "imaginary" to define neoliberalism is also useful in terms of its application to "spaces" and "territories". Manfred Steger, for example, defines social imaginaries as «macromappings of social and political space through which we perceive, judge and act in the world, this mode of deep understanding provides the more general parameters within which people imagine their communal existence» (Steger 2008: 6; see also Blokker 2022).

It is precisely within the horizon of the neoliberal imaginary that new buzzwords have emerged, mostly related to the value of governance and its application. The success of the concept of "governmentality" represents an important step in affirming the new global rationality of neoliberalism. The concept of governmentality has progressively replaced that of governance. It is perceived to be too closely linked to a medium- to long-term political project and, therefore, intrinsically dangerous because it was inevitably based on a kind of "democratic design". Governmentality has thus become rooted in values typical of business, such as competition, self-interest and the "need" for strong decentralisation, understood as the possibility of individual empowerment and the substantial devolution of central state power to local units that are more easily controlled (if only because of their size). At this level, one notes the weight of depoliticisation processes located at the intersection of different variables and constitutes an important point of convergence between new technocratic paradigms and contemporary populism. This is an unexpected convergence, but one that is not surprising, especially considering the development of what has been termed "government populisms", especially in the context of right-wing or centre-right governments. Even the rhetoric on the "light state" has been contradicted by instances of the "neo-liberalisation of the state", which has become "heavy" again, provided that it benefits the few; Yves Sintomer (2010) had lucidly foreseen this, effectively pointing out that the light state is such, in reality, on the social and economic level, but not on the military level where, on the contrary, the increase in expenditure and "weight" has led to a true hypertrophy of the system. This political horizon includes hyper-securitarian drives, the demonisation of democratic conflict (Harvey 2005) and the substantial expulsion of vulnerable or fragile subjects from public life.

2. COMMUNITIES AND URBAN PRACTICES

The disintegration of the traditional community is probably a fact of post-industrial societies, where the process of individualisation and fragmentation of the experience of everyday life has been profound both in intensity and in its incorporation into collective imagination and memory.

However, communities have not disappeared but have undergone transformation and multiplication: the very idea of a community understood as a stable structure, continuous over time and with well-defined internal relations, has been replaced by more dynamic definitions. The differences between traditional communities and modern societies in sociological studies can be summarised in the dichotomies of stability/uncertainty, temporal continuity/discontinuity and stable internal relations/multiple relations. However, if we remain within this distinction, we lose sight of the transformations that have taken place in the last three decades, which have multiplied the types of possible communities, the places where communities can be made (onsite, digital, onsite and digital together), the density and quality of relationships and the differentiated temporality.

Spatiality has assumed centrality in people's social and media practices (Couldry 2004; Couldry and Hepp

2017; Couldry 2022), transforming the way of doing community towards greater flexibility and widespread molecularization on the one hand and towards unprecedented forms of social innovation and resistance on the other, at least in some respects. For example, some micro-community experiences also seem to have taken up the characteristics of the workers' mutualities of the late 19th century, but with a focus on ties with the territory rather than on ties born within the work context or summing up both aspects, as in the case of the collective linked to the experience of the GKN of Campi Bisenzio near Florence, which was born from work experience, has turned into a sort of modern Workers' Mutual Aid Society, capable of also moving into the sphere of training and cultural promotion in the territory.

Urban spaces are not only those where contemporary community experiences can be traced, but also those where it is possible to trace a higher relational density among the members that make it up, or to which they say and feel they belong. The feeling of belonging to a community puts the question of emotions at the centre, which becomes relevant for many experiences born and consolidated within digital spaces (Papacharissi 2014). On the other hand, on critical positions regarding the role of digital worlds as emotional and communal spaces, Sherry Turkle (2016; 2019) highlights the pitfalls and problems of isolation associated with digital media practices. Regardless of the positions regarding the role played by digital, emotional and value-based belonging is a further element that changes how community is made today, adding a dimension of complexity that, although present in the past, today takes on unexpected centrality. Regarding relational issues, Andorlini *et al.*, (2019: 9-16), referring to experiences of social innovation, speak of places with high relational intensity, in which a captured value is produced, capable of producing the difference between territories according to relational density. This value, moreover, is closely connected to the concept of "capital bridging" (Putnam 2000; Woolcock 2001), which, precisely, builds bridging links between people.

Building on the recent reflections of Stephansen and Trerè (2020: 3-22), the concept of social practice was conceived in an attempt to overcome the dualism between structure and *agency*, determinism and voluntariness (Shove *et al.* 2012: 3) and challenges prevailing ways of thinking about subjectivity and sociality. Practice Theory encompasses a variety of approaches. Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) habitus theory and Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which in different ways attempted to reconcile the structure/agency dualism in social theory, are commonly regarded as "first generation" theories of practice. The turn of the 21st century saw the emergence of a "second generation" of practice theorists who sought to systematise and extend practice theory by refining definitions and elaborating on the relationship between practices, social order and social change (Schatzki 1996; Schatzki *et al.* 2001; Reckwitz 2002; Spaargaren *et al.* 2016).

Although there is no universally agreed upon definition of practices, most social practice theorists agree that they encompass a combination of activities and shared material and cultural objects.

In a more elaborate definition, Reckwitz describes a practice as:

> *a type of routinised behaviour that consists of several, interconnected elements: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, things and their use, basic knowledge in the form of understanding know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge* (2002: 249).

Similarly, Shove *et al.* (2012) developed an understanding of practices that consists of three main elements: materials (objects, technologies and tangible physical entities), competencies (skills, know-how and technique) and meanings (symbolic meanings, ideas and aspirations). A practice, therefore, is conceived as a block whose existence depends on the existence of these elements and specific interconnections (Reckwitz 2002: 249-50). Taking social practices as a starting point allows for open-ended questions about what people do about media and how these media-related practices combine and intersect with other social practices, thus facilitating an analysis of the broader social processes in which media practices are part (Couldry 2004, 2012).

In our reasoning, social and medial practices are deeply intertwined and constitute the "core" of social ties that can be traced within territorial communities, where different social ties operate, usually based on four variables (transactions, attachment, interdependencies and constraints), as in Taljia Blokland's (2017) theorisation.

3. URBAN AND COMMUNITY LIMINALITY

The research work we present focuses on "liminal spaces", defined as spaces characterised by both (1) processes of refiguration (Knoublach and Löw 2017) due to poly-contextualisation, deep mediatisation (Hepp 2020) and translocalisation (Hepp 2015), as well as by (2) processes of marginalisation, vulnerabilisation (Castel 1995; Brown *et al.* 2017), gentrification (Sennet 2018) and defamiliarisation (Blokland 2017; Blokland *et al.* 2022). A "liminal space" lies "on the border of two dominant

spaces, not fully part of either" (Dale and Burrell 2008). Spaces such as these are not easily defined in terms of use and are not clearly "owned" by a particular party. This is in direct contrast to dominant spaces that are defined by main uses, which have clear boundaries and where practices within them are intertwined with social expectations, routines and norms. These are spaces in transition where individual and collective identities remain fluid or anchored to the even deviant specificities of the territories; they belong to such spaces that they become familiar and are taken for granted in the landscape of everyday life (Blockland 2017: 54-60). We assume that when communities inhabit liminal spaces and consider them vital and meaningful in their everyday lives, they cease to be ambiguous spaces and become transitional dwelling places that give meaning to the activities, languages and instances that develop there (Casey 1993).

Liminal communities are refigured spaces undergoing profound transformation owing to both endogenous and exogenous phenomena, where the first major change concerns figuration. To analyse the process of the construction of social reality, Elias (1990) introduced the term "figuration" as a conceptual tool to grasp the complex problems of interdependence that the coexistence of large numbers of humans generates and how these problems are solved. Elias argues that social change is always partly a change at the figuration level. Following Elias, the fundamental idea is to understand the enduring social formations of human beings as figurations constituted by the interdependencies and interactions of the individuals involved. They can be characterised by a certain «balance of power» (Elias 1990: 131), i.e. by power relations constituted by the interdependencies themselves. The boundaries of each figuration are defined by the shared meaning that the individuals involved produce through interrelated social practices, which is also the basis of their mutual orientation. Liminal communities are understood as figurations of figurations (as several figurations coexist within them) in a transition. In addition to traditional figurations such as families, formal and informal interest groups, social conformations living in complete illegality (e.g. organised crime) or on the borders of legality (e.g. precarious undeclared and piecework work), social actors in civil society with organizational and management peculiarities, precarious small-scale crafts and entrepreneurial paths and formations constitute liminal communities.

Regardless of the value connotations we assign to the figures, they all experience external pressures for change and multiple internal pressures to find a new balance in the social practices of everyday life.

The second aspect that characterizes the process of the re-figuration of liminal communities, poly-contextualisation, refers precisely to the multiplication of contexts and frames to which people simultaneously react, sometimes creating overlaps, sometimes conflict, or even mutual indifference.

The presence of very different cultures and subcultures within the same social space is one of the most important concepts of co-contextualisation, as it has been fuelled in the last 30 years in Western countries by numerically significant migration processes (Ambrosini 2020). However, this is not the only cause because, for example, one should not underestimate both the emergence of sub-cultures linked to local specificities that have become rooted and radicalised. This is seen in the case of the presence of organised crime in some contexts in Southern Italy, and as Reckwitz (2020; 2021) points out, the growth and search for multiple singularities that have developed in almost all new social classes. Therefore, liminal communities cannot be enclosed in a place with well-defined boundaries; however, their singular and unique nature also allows Reckwitz's conceptual categories to be used to interpret the processes of change and evolution.

Another relevant aspect is social capital. Many liminal communities have a high intensity of social relations, but are more segregated than other communities, even spatially contiguous ones.

Rather than *bonding* or *bridging* social capital (Putnam 2000), it becomes more important to speak of segregated and privatised social capital (Blokland and Rae 2008: 23-39). In some cases, this type of social capital becomes a resource for liminal communities. For instance, when it is crucial to connect social practices to transform them into resistance practices. However, in other cases, this type of social capital is a brake on the potential development that could result from connections and confrontations/clashes with other communities (liminal or otherwise). That is, one can observe completely different actions, ties and social practices in geographically neighbouring spaces without having any kind of contact or relationship that can be classified as social capital. This tendency is typical of the processes of neo-liberalisation of society, which tend to weaken or break social cohesion. It is precisely on the dimension of social cohesion that the theme of universal vulnerability is grafted: «For theorists who adopt a 'universal' approach, vulnerability is a fundamental feature of the human condition, biologically imperative and permanent, but also linked to the personal, economic, social and cultural circumstances within which individuals

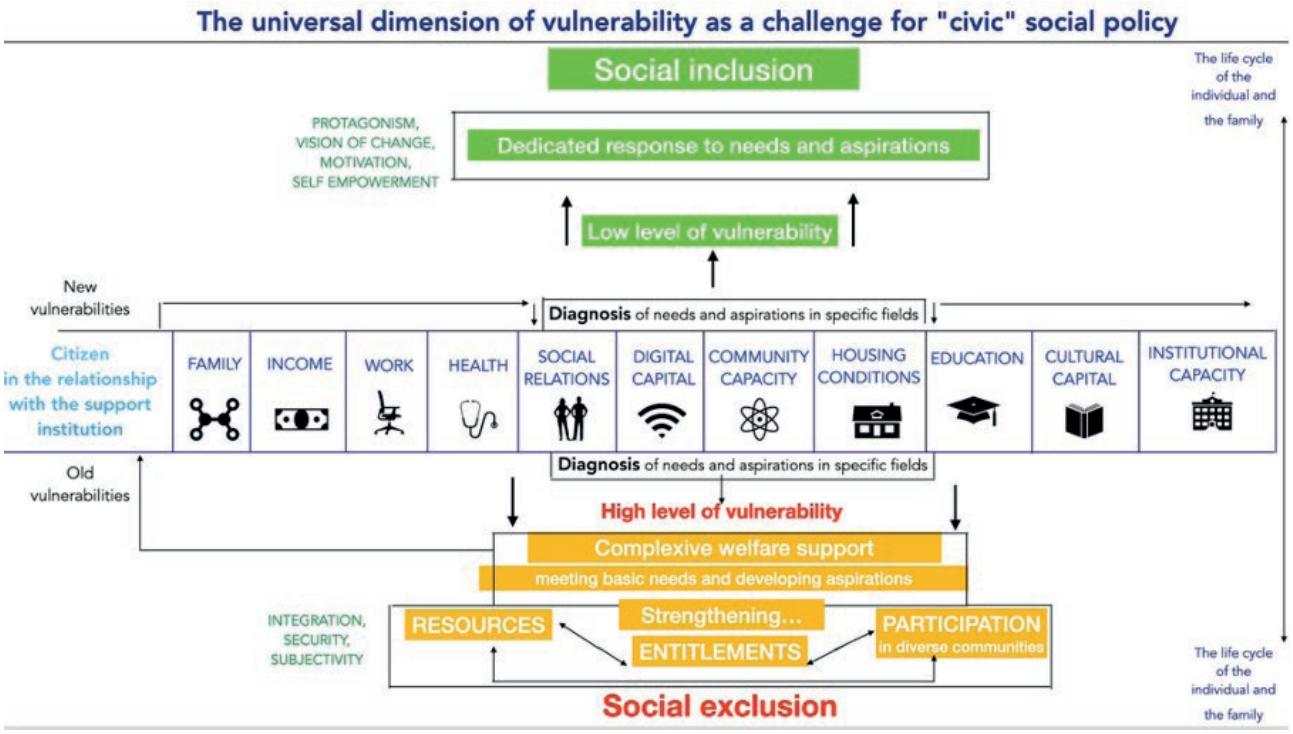

Figure 1. Universal vulnerability. *Source:* Karwacki and Volterrani 2024.

find themselves at different points in their lives» (Brown *et al.* 2017: 505).

Martha Fineman (2016: 13-23) elaborates on the idea of vulnerability by highlighting its universality as well as its dependence on relationships with other humans and on relationships with the communities to which they belong in terms of available goods (physical, relational, social, ecological, environmental and existential), both individually and collectively. In the latter case, transformation into common goods makes it possible to imagine a different response and reactivity concerning vulnerability because there is a mutualistic and collective element that sustains the individual. Within liminal communities, the vulnerability processes are relevant to all spheres of life. Social vulnerability (Castel 1995) is the path of impoverishment of a potential subject who can pass through life from the area of integration (insertion in a stable employment circuit and availability of solid relational support, especially family support) to the area of disenfranchisement faced by individuals in conditions of extreme poverty, characterised by processes of decay and self-abandonment, inability to control physical space, profound rupture of social ties and loss of the ability to convert goods into life opportunities. This transition occurs through microfractures in the participants' experiences, both at the work and relational levels, generating situations of precariousness and fragility. This area of social vulnerability is strongly connected to the processes of widening inequalities typical of neoliberal rationality.

In Figure 1, the theme of vulnerability has been made more complex and articulated by adding participatory processes and resources in a broad sense and rights, as well as the question of the relationships between needs and aspirations (Appaduraj 2004) and the detailed articulation of the spheres of life where old and new vulnerabilities can arise, such as digital vulnerability, but also the ability to be in the community and to relate to institutions.

In the diagram, the life cycles of individuals and families are not embedded in abstract contexts; instead, they are rooted within the communities to which they belong, where individual spheres of life interact with each other and, above all, with others and the available social and digital spaces. This aspect is particularly relevant to better understand the dynamics of liminal communities that involve both individuals and collective actors (the figure mentioned earlier), especially since the widespread processes of vulnerability add up to other characteristics, causing a stratification of marginality and vulnerability that is often difficult to understand and address. However, the need to start with needs

and aspirations, and possible processes of participation to build a more detailed analysis of liminal communities and possible *educommunication* paths (Barbas 2020) that allow empowerment and potential conscientization (Freire 1970) for individuals or groups of spheres of life. This is to avoid, as is often the case, imagining policies and actions in liminal communities that tend to be exclusively restorative in nature and/or in reaction to specific events, and not following an approach that starts precisely from the processes of vulnerability.

Media ecosystems play a particularly important role in changing the spaces and perceptions of liminal communities. It is not new that "electronic" media have played a role in the change of space and its perception (Meyrowitz 1993), but what has happened with the spread of digital media has radicalised the change to the extent that some authors speak of profound mediatization (Couldry and Hepp 2017; Hepp 2020). Regarding the change in space in relation to liminal communities, it is interesting to highlight two aspects: the expansion of translocal relations and the role played by commercial and non-commercial digital platforms. It is precisely translocal relationships that people can build through the use of digital media that have increased exponentially (Hepp 2015: 223). Despite this, local community building through face-to-face contact continues to be central in building a sense of belonging. However, what is important as a function of our research is that local community-building processes and corresponding communities are also mediated in the sense that their articulation of a shared sense of belonging occurs through media.

Hepp (2015: 208-10) helps us distinguish (Figure 2) *mediatised communities* and *mediatising communities in* order to better understand the processes between what has taken place in home communities and subjectively chosen communities on the one hand, and between static communities and communities under construction. Local processes that also include the media refer to mediatised communities (family, groups of friends and liminal communities), whereas translocal processes are characteristic of mediatising, or newly established communities.

In liminal communities, both types of mediatization are co-present with potential processes of both profound territorialisation and profound de-territorialisation. The processes of territorialisation are those that characterise a community's rootedness in a specific territory, while those of de-territorialisation are those that break the link between "nature" (the territory) and the community's culture (Canclini 2000). In the first case, the depth of the relationship with the territory in liminal communities makes one imagine a closure towards those who do not belong to the community itself, with the sharing of even "perverse" cultures of daily life of an illegal nature.

Figure 2. The mediatisation of local and translocal communities. *Source*: Hepp (2015: 209).

In the second case, paradoxically, as a mirror, other cultures are adopted, some of which come from migration processes, many of which belong to the digital popular culture of social media.

This hybridisation is not only characteristic of liminal communities, but it is here that the contradictions, conflicts and shifts in meaning between subgroups, even temporary subcultures, and micro-interests between the legal and the illegal emerge the most. In this context, the effects of the platform society (van Dijck *et al.* 2019) make users feel most powerful because they intervene

in strong and territorially rooted identity processes by modifying their characteristics and peculiarities in unexpected directions.

For example, the use of social media in liminal communities sometimes does not go in the direction that platforms imagine for all other contexts of intensifying relationships. Rather, it is used to maintain social ties that only take meaning in the everyday lives of liminal communities.

On the other hand, the media ecosystems of liminal communities are flattened at the level of commerce and, thus, consumption, greatly limiting opportunities for the growth of public and collective spaces. There are, of course, attempts at emancipation from commercial platforms that allow for autonomy and singularity in the media ecosystems of liminal communities (as in the case of platform cooperativism experiences). However, this clashes with the more general problem of growing digital inequalities that interact with existing economic, cultural and social ones.

4. HYBRID PARTICIPATION

Along with the dynamics of democratic participation traditionally defined in international textbooks, we also considered hybrid participation processes involving online perspectives (as indicated in Figure 3).

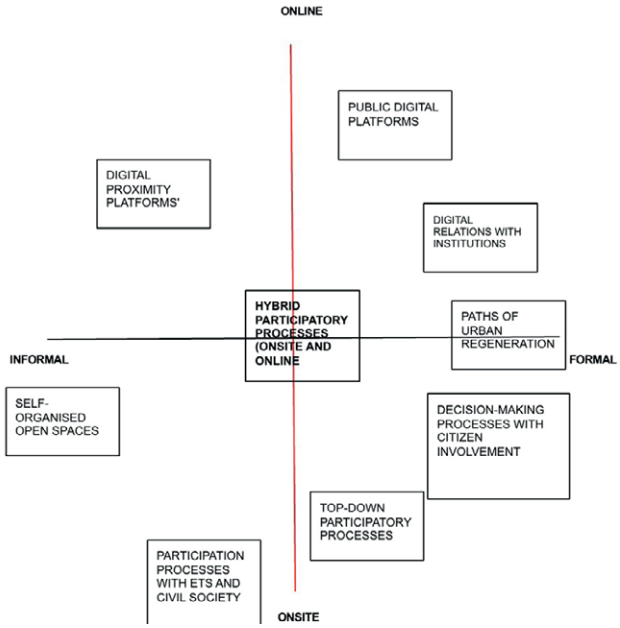

Figure 3. The dimensions of hybrid participatory processes.

The first dimension lies on a continuum at the extremes of on-site and online participation. This does not mean that we will have onsite participatory processes in a certain amount and online ones in the remaining amount. However, hybridisation with a different configuration in each context also takes on singularity characteristics (Reckwitz 2020). For example, it is imaginable to activate a participatory process on how a public space should be managed for the younger generations, to continue discussions on social media with those who could not be present, and then to return to the territory with a higher number of participants and a greater awareness of the necessary actions to be taken. There is a continuity between on-site and digital that is now established in life experiences, even among non-digital natives (Boccia Artieri *et al.* 2017). The second dimension of hybrid participatory processes lies on the continuum between formality and informality. Examples of the first are participatory processes that can be imagined and constructed within urban regeneration paths within a public institutional framework. They often have the characteristics of a top-down process, with the sole purpose of building consensus on choices that have already been made without giving people a chance for real and effective participation (Sorice 2021). Examples of the second aspect, on the other hand, are the participatory processes that arise spontaneously based on different stimuli (a specific problem linked to the environment, an exceptional event, a change in the social context, etc.) and which see the use of tools that allow the opportunity to participate to be given to people who want it. We must still point out that in hybrid participation processes, the issue of digital inequalities does not disappear but is, at least partially, mitigated by the opportunity to be able to participate on-site without losing the thread that connects the entire participatory process for those with little digital capital (Ruiu and Ragnedda 2020). What we would like to emphasise is that there are no "perfect" participatory processes, but rather paths that intersect the processes of refiguration of liminal communities, developing spaces and contexts sometimes of development, often of resistance (even to the mobilising logic of populisms) and innovation.

5. THE RESEARCH

5.1. The context

Italian metropolitan cities constitute a platform for interesting subjects to study to understand the nature and orientation of urban transformation, especially in peripheral and liminal areas. With more than 8,000 municipalities, Italy has a limited number of large cities, understood as integrated and complex urban contexts, seats of economic and institutional services, inhabited by socially diversified communities and served by metropolitan-level infrastructure (transport, waste cycle, energy and water resources). In 2010, to provide some of these large cities with an administrative statute aimed at promoting integration with peri-urban and regional territories, the Metropolitan Cities Law was passed, indicating the 14 cities that could benefit from this new statute and outlining the competences related to the integration of local services. The reform was approved by Law 56 of 2014 and introduced metropolitan cities as new second-tier administrative entities (made up of capital municipalities, Tier I cities, which are closer to the major urban centre, and Tier II cities, which are more remote), overcoming the system of provincial authorities and defining the number of large cities, throughout Italy, considered "metropolitan cities". At the same time, the Law 56/2014 reform redefined the competences and functions of metropolitan cities, assigning them integrated responsibilities in key areas, such as urban planning, transport, environment and economic development. In a recent contribution by ISTAT (2023), the main characteristics of metropolitan cities that make these urban contexts special observatories of Italy's large cities were considered based on physical-structural, economic, socio-demographic, cultural and local public service indicators. The multi-thematic

analysis of ISTAT 2023 first of all highlights the "original" Metropolitan Cities, designated in the 2014 reform: "territorial bodies of vast areas" that replaced the provinces in 10 urban areas of the Regions with ordinary statutes: Rome, Turin, Milan, Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Bari, Naples and Reggio Calabria. The corpus of metropolitan cities also includes four additional large metropolitan areas located in regions with special statutes: Palermo, Catania, Messina and Cagliari. The large urban areas examined have been central in discussions about spatial renewal and transformation. This focus is highlighted by limited national efforts, notably the 2016 National Suburbs Plan and a substantial urban redevelopment and safety program for metropolitan suburbs, initiated by the 2016 Budget Law. In 2017, 2.6 billion euros were distributed to 120 urban projects. Despite these efforts, many urban areas remained neglected, leading to the development of local-level regeneration policies. In this environment, grassroots movements led by social actors, including social cooperatives and civic groups, have emerged to promote social, artistic, and cultural rejuvenation. Our study examines how non-neoliberal, community-based initiatives contribute to urban transformation in marginalized areas, driving social innovation beyond just physical rejuvenation. In a context where neoliberal strategies dominate and large-scale spatial regeneration is usually left to urban regimes actors, non-profits, social entrepreneurs, and citizen-led initiatives using participatory approaches are increasingly focused on social, cultural, and artistic renewal, particularly in areas typically ignored in major urban redevelopment projects. Our research involved extensive case studies across 14 Italian metropolitan areas, identifying groups that collaborate with local communities for comprehensive social and spatial change. This led to 14 in-depth interviews with leaders in social innovation in these areas. Each interview, tailored to a specific city, explored the project's beginnings, partnerships with various sectors, disruptions from the Covid-19 pandemic, current challenges, and prospects.

5.2. Material and methods

The divergence in the 14 regeneration approaches adopted by the interviewees contributed to outlining a broad panorama of strategies and methodologies concerning the specific challenges and opportunities encountered in each case study. From a methodological perspective, we proposed leveraging the characteristics of the qualitative analysis model, which appears to be the most suitable reference for innovative experiences of spatial and social regeneration in liminal contexts.

According to the well-established perspective of Wessel (1996: 41) a phenomenological approach was adopted, focusing on the directly lived experience of the realities involved in regeneration projects in liminal contexts, reading and noting their subjectivity as fundamental for understanding the development of these regenerative actions, seeking, eidetically, to identify the essences or fundamental structures of the experiences, both through the subjectivity of the interviewees and through the subjective reading of the interviewers. The basic vision derived from the assumption of this perspective is that the social actors involved in these urban regeneration projects in the liminal segments of the city are, on one hand, interpreters of the social reality in which they are organically inserted and, on the other, contribute to socially constructing its development through their actions. Thus, through an analysis that holds as the object of the research the forms of action and social interaction of the subjects active in these projects, we move within the context of an inductive, cumulative and progressive search for meaning through the different forms that the regenerative practices, as individuals and as parts of an articulated complex, suggest to the researcher, who confronts them with an open, flexible and dialoguing approach. The identification of the instrument of the semi-structured interview, built around open heuristic dimensions rather than coded questions, was a direct consequence. During the course of the interviews, the identified tool allowed us to reserve the necessary margins of flexibility to consider all the different experiences of urban regeneration in selective liminal contexts, while simultaneously guaranteeing the opportunity for in-depth analysis of the interviewees' responses.

The ability to combine flexibility and adaptability to very diverse subjects, contexts and experiences, with the in-depth study necessary for an "understanding" sociology (Sbalchiero 2018; 2021) of the innovative phenomena analysed offered the interviewers the opportunity to access to a more significant extent the local contexts and cultures in which the experiences of urban regeneration in liminality were being carried out, gathering details, practices and experiences otherwise elusive with other survey techniques. The survey technique involved administering in-depth interviews in a structured outline with the same questions and prompts to all interviewees in the 14 metropolitan cities. The experiences and actors involved in this analysis are summarised in Table 1.

This background phase was followed by field research with contact between the identified realities and the realisation of interviews. On the text approved by the interviewees, textual analyses were conducted using

Table 1. The interviewees for the fieldwork.

City	*Name*	*Organisation*	*Intervention*	*Website*
Rome	Trees in the suburbs	Voluntary organisation	Planting and community fostering of trees in the Roman suburbs	https://alberiinperiferia.it/
Milan	The City Around Community points	Special banking foundation project	Establishment of multi-functional community points	https://lacittaintorno.fondazionecariplo.it/
Turin	I live in Barriera/ Aurora	Network for the promotion of social and cultural activities of associations	Networking social and intercultural practices in the Aurora and Barriera di Milano areas	http://www.vivoin.it/
Florence	Blade	Social enterprise	Temporary and meanwhile use of spaces for Manifattura Tabacchi – innovation hub in Rifredi	https://agenzialama.eu/
Naples	Gridas	Non-profit cultural association	Implementation of community activities on an artistic and environmental basis in Scampia	https://www.felicepignataro.org/gridas
Reggio Calabria	Macramé	Consortium of social cooperatives	Local community development pathway in the Pellaro, Arghillà, Modena-Ciccarello districts	http://www.consorziomacrame.it/
Bologna	Dumbo	Multifunctional Urban District	Path of recovery and re-dedication of temporary social functions to an abandoned railway complex	https://dumbospace.it/
Genoa	Fourth Planet	Voluntary organisation and public-non-profit coordination	Introduction of musical, artistic and cultural events in the former psychiatric hospital in Genoa Quarto. Introduction of a health home in the complex. Pathways of socio-medical integration in the field of mental health	https://www.facebook.com/people/Quarto-Pianeta/100069720229944/
Venice	Neighbourhood Gatekeeper Project Community Outpost	Special project of CESV CAVV, Centro Servizi Volontariato di Venezia	Creation of help and assistance spaces for vulnerable people in difficult urban contexts	https://www.csvvenezia.it/progetti/brbrportinerie-di-quartiere-avamposto-di-comunitabr_9.html
Bari	Domingo Park	Social promotion association	Regeneration of a green space with urban garden and cultural association space	https://www.facebook.com/apsparcodomingo/?locale=it_IT
Messina	Messina Community Foundation	CapaCity Project	Urban regeneration in the south-eastern part of Messina and creating new housing and social opportunities	https://fdcmessina.org/riqualificazione-urbana/capacity/
Palermo	New La Zisa Workshops	Hub for local development, training and environmental sustainability	work and training space with equipment, workshop rooms to experiment with new techniques, co-design and co-produce new artefacts together with other craftsmen.	https://www.nuoveofficinezisa.com/
Catania	Librino platform Librino Social Network	Social network and programme platform for regeneration	Art and art education interventions in schools for the regeneration of urban space	https://www.ioamolibrino.it/
Cagliari	Urban Centre Project The Salt Gallery	Special project of non-profit organisation	Open-air gallery in a place of transition between urban space and nature park	https://www.urbancenter.eu/progetto/galleria-del-sale/

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Figure 4. The word cloud of the interview text corpus. *Source*: Authors' own elaboration.

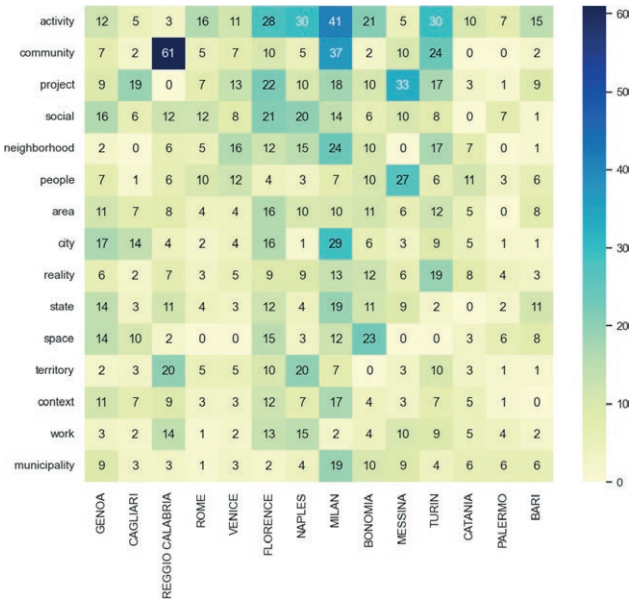

Figure 5. Heatmap of keyword frequency by interview. *Source*: Authors' own elaboration.

computer tools with the use of NLP (Natural Language processing) and LDA (Latent Dirichl location) models. Operationally, Python libraries such as the Natural Language Tool Kit (NLTK), NetworkX, Plotly, WordCloud, Gensim and Scikit-learn were used on the entire corpus of the fourteen interviews to find elements of convergence between the different experiences of urban regeneration. In order to enable this first section of automatic analysis of the corpus of interviews, a series of operational steps were carried out to prepare and "clean" the textual data. Subsequently, tokenisation, a process of segmentation of textual units, was carried out by subdividing the text into homogeneous blocks of answers to the same questions asked during the interviews.

5.3. Results

The words with the highest relative frequency were activity, project and community, testifying to the fact that the selected urban regeneration cases were able to combine a marked operational tendency with the dimension of social involvement and participation in the actions. Marked operational tendency is the idea that multiple activities can be carried out and that the regenerative project dimension is a priority. The emphasis on the social and community dimension is further underlined by the presence, among the terms of secondary frequency in the wordcloud, of the word "people", positioned close to terms such as "state" and "party". This observation, which emerges from the analysis of the textual data, suggests notable attention of the interviewees towards the community and its human components, which can be traced back to the fundamental concept of active engagement of the local community in the transformation process of the liminal areas subject to intervention. The interviews revealed that this openness towards the community dimension and the active inclusion of people are decisive factors in ensuring that regeneration processes are in line with the needs and aspirations of local contexts while simultaneously helping to promote social inclusion within these regenerative dynamics.

The second elaboration on the corpus of interviews concerned the analysis of the frequency of keywords within each interview using a "heatmap", a graphic representation of the textual data in which the individual values contained in a matrix (based on most frequent terms on the one hand and location of the city in which the interviews were conducted on the other) are represented with colours of different intensity. This is an effective visual mode for visualising complex and interrelated data and identifying patterns, correlations and trends. In the specific case of the textual analysis of the interviews, the heatmap is useful for highlighting the frequency of the same words in the different regeneration contexts in which the interviews were conducted and for highlighting, on the other hand, those experiences and practices which, due to differences in the language used, seem to diverge more than the former. A heatmap of the textual corpus of the interviews on urban regeneration in the 14 metropolitan cities considered is shown in Figure 5.

Further analysis was conducted by developing a graph configuration of the recurring words in the different metropolitan contexts considered in the interviews. A graphical representation of the interviews is shown in Figure 6.

Conceptually, a graph representation visualises a network of connections between different keywords and

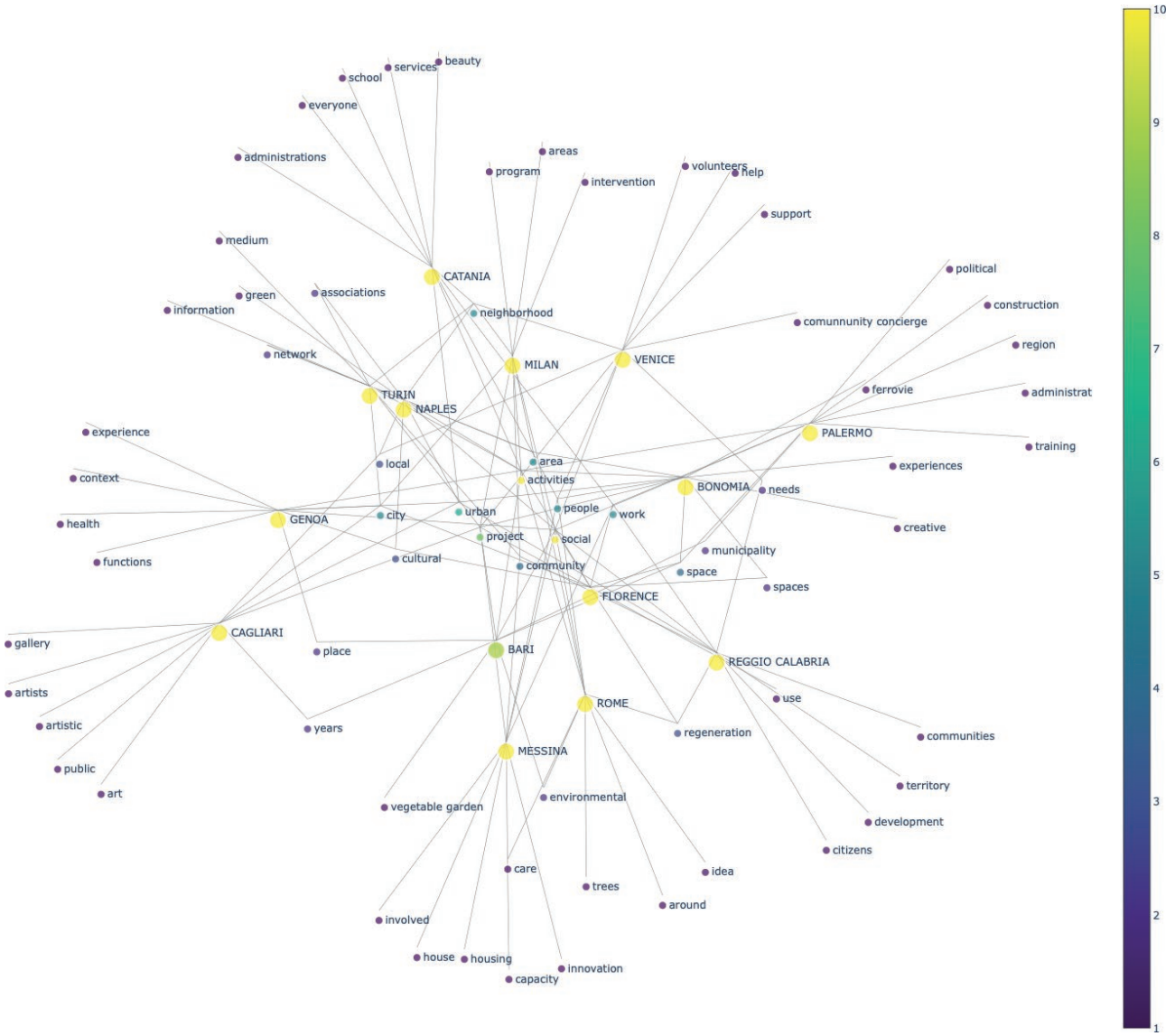

Figure 6. Graph representation of the relationships between words used in the interviews and urban regeneration experiences in the 14 metropolitan cities. *Source:* Authors' own elaboration.

Italian cities, creating a distribution over networks. Each node or point on the graph represents a keyword, and its size and colour reflect the frequency of the word within the textual corpus of the interviews. The links depicted by the lines between the nodes represent the co-occurrence of keywords in the same interviews, attempting to delineate a conceptual relationship between them. From the representation constructed from the interviews, it can be observed that the cities of Milan, Venice and Genoa are highlighted with larger and darker nodes, showing that common themes are discussed with a particularly high frequency or importance in the interviews relating to these cities. Lemmas such as "project", "community" and "citizens" show significant nodes with each other and with other words, manifesting multiple connections with different metropolitan contexts. This element not only indicates that these are central concepts in the interviews analysed but also provides cues to a complex network of relationships between the keywords that emerged from the analysis. This interrelationship between headwords and the underlying concepts that emerged during the interviews reflects the multidimensional nature of the approach to urban regeneration in the liminal areas considered. For example, the term

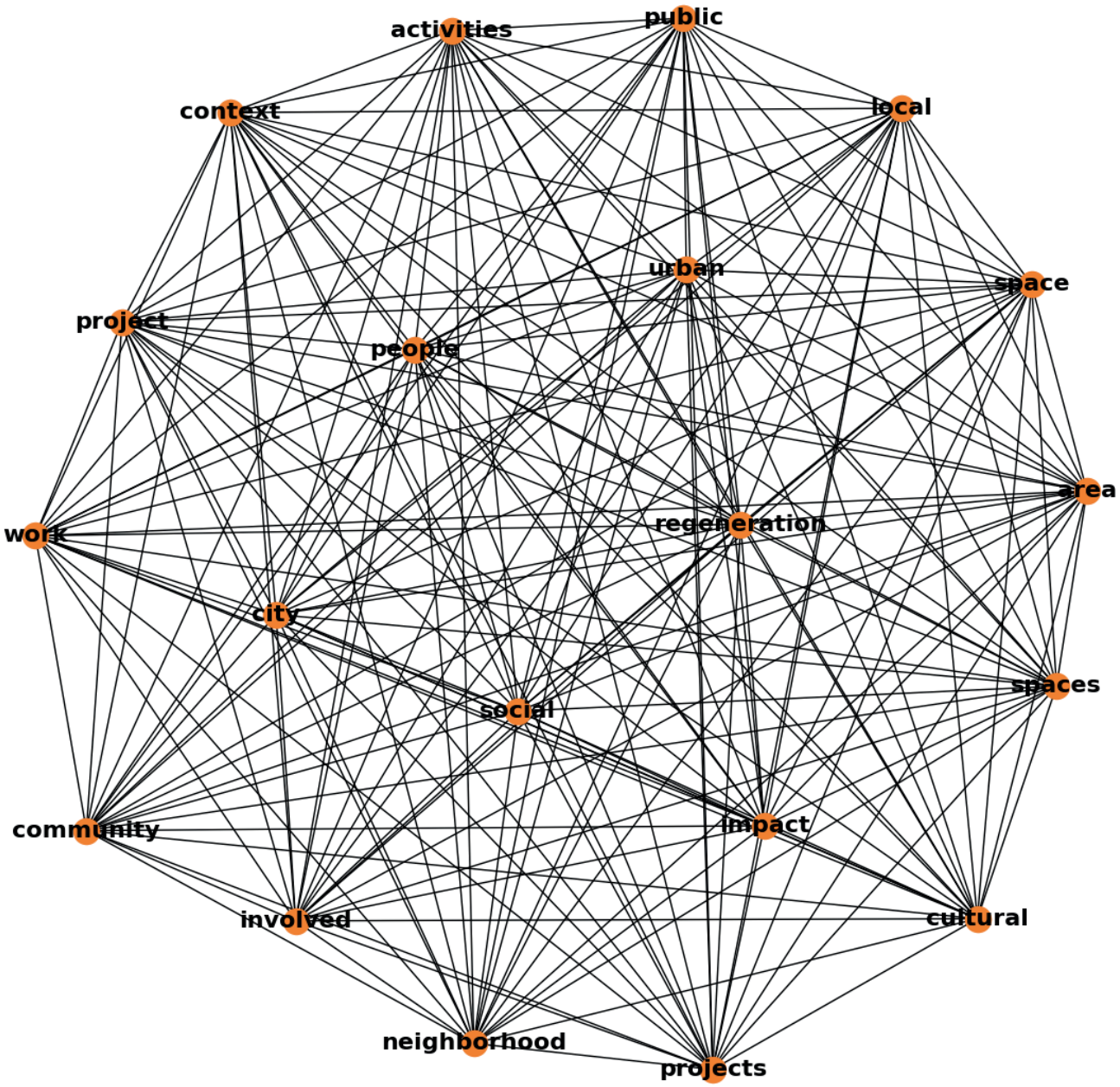

Figure 7. Representation of the semantic network of interviews. *Source:* Author's own elaboration.

"citizens" co-occurs with several other lemmas in the graph, which stimulates reflection on the emphasis on the active role of citizens in the urban regeneration processes discussed.

A final type of analysis was conducted to create a graphic visualisation of a semantic network – an association graph – to represent the interconnections between lemmas and the underlying concepts found within the lexical corpus of the 14 interviews. The points or nodes represent the individual lexical units that emerged most frequently in the interview corpus, whereas the connections or arcs describe the interrelationships between the different lexical nodes. The semantic network of the interviews is shown in Figure 7.

The analysis of the interview text corpus reveals three pivotal elements: the communal aspect, the projective nature of interventions, and the imperative for genuine participatory engagement with citizens. From an academic standpoint, these elements underscore the dominance of community engagement, active citizen-

ship, and participatory planning. These intersect with the needs of community contexts, aligning with the viewpoint of non-profit actors who advocate for the primacy of social regeneration over spatial regeneration, particularly in areas overlooked by neoliberal urban regeneration strategies.

The frequency and co-occurrence of specific lemmas within the corpus substantiate that regeneration in liminal contexts is only truly impactful and transformative when it is pursued collectively. This requires the facilitation of bottom-up participation, spearheaded by social innovation agents, and enhanced through hybrid communication methods.

These identified dimensions distinctly characterize social and cultural regeneration in peripheral spaces, laying the foundation for an alternative regeneration model. The emerging model is distinctly community-focused, participatory, and oriented towards the cultural and social dimensions, presenting a stark contrast to the spatial regeneration model prevalent in neoliberal urban settings. This alternative approach advocates for a social and cultural paradigm of regeneration, diverging from the conventional neoliberal urban framework, while at the same time presenting patterns of reference for other international experiences of urban regeneration of liminal spaces.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Even in liminal contexts, although permeated by elements of resistance, transition and experimentation, it is impossible not to notice the presence of a framework typical of a neoliberal city. Although such spaces are often left to their failure to design regenerative interventions, the drive towards maximising value extraction from urban spaces and communities asserts itself as the prevailing norm. Acknowledging that a substantial segment of the public discourse on urban regeneration in the Italian context fits fully into this neoliberal paradigm also implies revealing the dimension of power over space and urban communities implicit in this model.

Liminal spaces and communities, as highlighted in the literature on the subject, are identified not only as peripheral contexts but also as areas in rapid transition, facing dramatic phenomena of marginalisation, experiencing dynamics of translocalisation and defamilisation, alongside a profound mediatization of communicative processes. However, such spaces and communities, precisely by virtue of this condition of being about to undergo imminent change, are distinguished by divergent modes of action, organisation and public representation and are configured as nuclei of resistance to the dominant logic of neoliberal transformation.

These liminal spaces, at the threshold of an as-yet-undefined change, host heterogeneous urban communities operating in the interstitial spaces of a social and relational regeneration that stands as a potential antagonist to neoliberal regeneration. This counter to dominant urban neoliberalism is cultivated through bottom-up participatory practices that are authentically meaningful, durable, mutualistic and not standardised, as is the case with standardised tools that are adopted by local institutions, often episodically. Communities of experimentation and resistance to liminality and their participatory practices experience this innovative function through the direct recovery of abandoned spaces, with their transformation into places of sharing, art, environment, culture and care. In acting out these transformation practices, the protagonists of liminal regeneration give rise to unprecedented experiences of social, environmental, cultural and artistic experimentation, always with strong relational anchorage.

At the same time, collective action constitutes a sort of strategic "asset", according to a logic of unpaid commitment and sharing with the liminal community that is authentically antagonistic to both the neoliberal model and the modes of engagement of contemporary populisms, which are much more connected to neoliberal logics than one might imagine. In the perspective of these collective subjects, social and relational regeneration founds a "communitarian" element of tenacious and active resistance in those places and communities that, according to neoliberal logic, should change in accordance with the rest of the urban space or be abandoned to their fate.

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Making Social Work More Socially Sustainable Through Participation: Rhetoric or Innovation?

Luca Pavani

Abstract. This paper aims to explore the connection between social sustainability and participatory processes in the realm of social work, through a theoretical reflection. The guiding research questions for the work are: a) How can user participation enhance the social sustainability of social work? b)What should be the dynamic of participation between institutions and users to ensure the social sustainability of social work? In an effort to address these inquiries, we will initially conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current state of social sustainability literature to underscore the significance of user participation in social work. Subsequently, our focus will shift towards examining various forms and dynamics associated with user participation at the meso level of social work practice within the domain of welfare services in Italy. Our aim is to advocate for the adoption of co-creation processes, characterised by a bottom-linked dynamic, as an innovative approach with the potential to enhance the social sustainability of social work.

Keywords: partecipation, social sustainability, social work, welfare services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a prominent topic in academic debate and political discourse, providing an opportunity to connect social justice concerns with environmental issues (Becker *et al.* 1999). Traditionally, sustainability is depicted as the point of convergence among the three pillars of the economy, environment, and society, which are commonly represented as intersecting circles (Khan 1995, Kunz 2006, Pope *et al.* 2004, Schoolman *et al.* 2012, Vogt and Weber 2019). The representation of sustainability as tripartite and intersecting highlights the interdependence of the economic, environmental, and social aspects.

While the economic dimension pertains to a production process geared towards capital maintenance (Khan 1995) and the environmental dimension involves managing waste emissions in the environment without causing harm (Goodland 1996), the social dimension lacks a universally agreed-upon definition in the literature (Vallance *et al.* 2010, Cuthill 2010, Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017, Purvis *et al.* 2019).

Nevertheless, the importance of the social pillar in sustainability discussions has risen, driven by the recognition that economic and environmental

crises disproportionately impact vulnerable individuals and communities (Moldan *et al.* 2012). Indeed, central to the concept of social sustainability is the emphasis on fostering inclusive and equitable societal structures that empower individuals and communities (Bramley and Power 2009, Dempsey *et al.* 2011, Murphy 2012, Åhman 2013, Eizenberg and Jabareenè 2017).

In this context, participation is defined as a methodology (Cuthill 2010) to achieve social sustainability, as it enables the active involvement of individuals and communities in decision-making processes that affect their lives, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and taken into account. This dimension of social sustainability recognises the intrinsic link between social well-being and the involvement of all stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies, projects and initiatives.

In the realm of welfare services and social work, the literature on user participation has a long tradition (*inter alia*: Beresford 2001, Carr 2007, Loeffler and Bovaird 2021), while the sustainability debate, especially in the social work literature, focuses mainly on the environmental and economic dimensions. Although participation is encouraged in theory and by law, pieces of empirical evidence show that it is often limited to single projects (Bifulco 2018, Fazzi 2021). This highlights a discrepancy in which institutions struggle to involve citizens in continuous and lasting participatory processes. It shows that participation has not yet been systematically incorporated into the widespread approach to the implementation of welfare policies.

Therefore, this paper specifically focuses on the social dimension of sustainability and aims to address the following questions through theoretical reflection: a) How can user participation enhance the social sustainability of social work? b)What should be the dynamic of participation between institutions and users to ensure the social sustainability of social work?

In an effort to address these inquiries, we will initially conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current state of social sustainability literature to underscore the significance of user participation in social work. Subsequently, our focus will shift towards examining various forms and dynamics associated with user participation at the meso level of social work practice within the domain of welfare services in Italy. Our aim is to advocate for the adoption of co-creation processes, characterised by a bottom-linked dynamic, as an innovative approach with the potential to enhance the social sustainability of social work.

2. SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL WORK

Economic crises, characterised by rising unemployment, inflation, and financial instability, have a disproportionate impact on those who depend on precarious and poorly secured sources of income. Similarly, environmental crises such as climate change and pollution have a disproportionate impact on low-income communities, who often live in vulnerable areas or work in sectors with high environmental exposure. The social pillar has emerged because it is now clear from the sustainability debate that those who suffer most from the consequences of economic and environmental crises are the most vulnerable individuals, groups and communities in our societies (Moldan *et al.* 2012).

The purpose of social sustainability is not limited to addressing the environmental impact of human activities. Instead of restricting the social dimension to poverty alleviation and environmental justice, which oversimplifies the sustainability discourse into a mere competition between economic and environmental perspectives, the broader goal is to protect and promote social justice (Parra 2013).

However, the social dimension remains the most elusive aspect in the academic debate, often mentioned in relation to other concepts such as social capital, social justice and equity. Participation emerges as a cornerstone of social sustainability, acting as the pivot that binds together various conceptual elements. As Goodland (1996) argues, achieving social sustainability requires systematic community engagement and the development of civil society. This multiplicity of concepts has generated confusion and disorder in the debate, as several authors have pointed out, making its definition and measurement arduous (Vallance *et al.* 2010, Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017, Purvis *et al.* 2019, Vogt and Weber 2019). Although social sustainability is a concept that can be difficult to grasp, there have been efforts in the literature to clarify it.

Cuthill (2010) proposes an interpretation of social sustainability that distinguishes itself from others and aims to organise the various associated concepts. Indeed, social sustainability is often linked to the concepts of social justice, social capital, and communities. However, the utility of these social concepts and their role in the discourse on sustainability is limited by definitional debates, a lack of clear operational direction, and a lack of consensus on monitoring them as noted by the author. Cuthill argues that there is a pressing need to develop a more robust conceptual understanding of the social dimension of sustainability, which is closely

linked to and rooted in everyday life policies and practices. The author based his reflections on two fundamental premises: a) environmental issues are primarily social problems, and addressing these concerns must begin with holding individuals responsible for the impact they have on the environment; b) economy should serve people by prioritising individuals rather than viewing them as serving economic interests.

To provide a theoretical framework for studying and conducting research on social sustainability, Cuthill suggests considering a) social capital as a starting point, b) social infrastructure as an operational perspective, c) social justice and equity as an ethical imperative, and d) participation as a methodology that renders processes socially sustainable. Although Cuthill's contribution is rooted in urban studies, it suggests that welfare services and social work can be socially sustainable when they foster the development of social capital through participatory processes guided by social justice and equity.

It is crucial to recognise that these factors are not new in social work, even if they are not directly related to the concept of social sustainability. The subsequent section aims to provide a critical analysis of participation in the field of social work.

2.1. Participation in social work between rhetoric and critical approach

First of all, citizen participation has been at the centre of the debate since the origins of the profession. Indeed, as early as 1902, Jane Addams urged social workers to involve residents of the neighbourhoods in which they operated in defining their needs, devising solutions, and participating in programs aimed at improving their community. Similarly, Mary Richmond (1917) advocated for active collaboration between social workers and service recipients, aiming to identify suitable solutions and develop intervention plans that respected the individual's desires and needs.

Although both authors were criticised for prioritising control and paternalism over care and aid, Addams and Richmond suggested that citizen participation can serve two functions: advocacy and empowerment. The advocacy function involves actions that raise awareness about the processes that create conditions of disadvantage and influence the decisions behind interventions, projects, or policies that affect these processes (*inter alia*: Henderson and Pochin 2001). Empowerment refers to individual and collective processes that provide people with the confidence, skills, and awareness necessary to regain control of their lives and actively participate in society (*inter alia*: Rappaport 1981).

In addition, social work upholds the dignity of the individual as one of its core values, which is often operationalized as self-determination (Fargion 2009). Self-determination is a prominent value in social work, as the discipline and profession adopt a care model, which differs from the cure model. In the medical and healthcare context, the professional (doctor) involves the patient in the diagnosis process by listening to them and prescribing the best possible therapy/drug to treat the presented symptoms. Nevertheless, in the realm of social work, the professional (social worker) cannot technically solve the life problem, since these are troubles that affect the entire existence and require a comprehensive reorganisation of the current lifestyle at the moment the problem arises in order to be managed or resolved (Folgheraiter 2011). In the care model, professionals observe and accompany the development of coping actions, which are resilient responses to internal and external mechanisms that impact people's lives.

Moreover, numerous citizen-user movements have been mobilised across various domains, advocating for equal involvement in both the assistance processes directed towards them and the formulation of social and healthcare policies. In a nutshell, service users have asserted their experiential knowledge and demanded increased participation in decisions affecting them (Beresford and Boxall 2012). Especially notable is the acknowledgment of service users as experts by experience, particularly in the field of social work education. In this context, they actively participate as trainers for the next generation of social workers, establishing themselves as crucial contributors to social work degree programs worldwide (Ramon *et al.* 2019).

Additionally, service users are recognised as key stakeholders in the research processes, as it is recognised that it is important to build theory from practice and not just from academia. This approach, known as practice research (Uggerhøj 2011), combines research methodology, field research, and practical experience. In this context, participation serves to co-create the knowledge, developing practice while validating different types of expertise within the partnership between service users, social workers and researchers.

At the same time, critical theories have played a pivotal role in shaping social work theories and practice, developing a significant awareness of user participation. Arising from the fundamental concept of social justice (*inter alia*: Fraser 2013), these theories have offered a critical perspective to comprehend and tackle structural inequalities in society, diverging from the notion that social issues stem solely from individual origins. The anti-oppressive social work approach promotes precise-

ly that (Dominelli 2022, Baines 2011). It provides social workers with cognitive tools and intervention strategies not only to understand and analyse the structural origins of social issues but also to prevent the replication of oppressions faced by individuals within the context of the dynamics of organisations and the helping relationships (Allegri *et al.* 2022). The foundational premise is that individuals who experience oppression must take on active roles as agents of personal, cultural, and societal change. To facilitate this process, individuals may require an initial intervention phase in which the social worker assists them in reconstructing their personal narratives. This provides a framework for acknowledging the negative emotions they may be experiencing. Once these objectives are achieved, anti-oppressive social work places significant emphasis on collaborative group efforts, including community engagement. The practice encourages oppressed individuals within a group to openly discuss the challenges they face and offers support in critically analysing their shared experiences.

Eventually, especially in Finland, since the late 1990s, the ecosocial work approach has developed which is «understood as a holistic way of viewing living environments, and as a concrete way of involving people in local policy and city planning, as well as an attempt to achieve theoretical conceptions of social work which would be compatible with sustainability» (Matthies *et al.* 2000: 46). Ecosocial work highlights the imperative for social workers to actively participate in the 'round table negotiations of sustainability' (Närhi 2004) where diverse actors and perspectives converge, giving new lens to the social work practice. In addressing current multifaceted challenges, social work must consider the potential adverse effects of environmental policies, such as the emergence of energy poverty, particularly impacting marginalised and vulnerable groups. Ecosocial work aims to take a profound and transformative approach to sustainability within social work practice (Boetto 2017). This involves critically assessing its own worldviews and subsequently reconfiguring the role of humans within the broader natural world. In this case, user participation ensures that social work practices are both relevant, sustainable and responsive to the specific needs of the communities involved. Simultaneously, it takes into consideration the relationship between humans, the environment and non-human animals living in it (Bozalek and Pease 2022).

While the social work literature doesn't explicitly connect participation with social sustainability, it seems that all the necessary elements are in place to embrace Cuthill's perspective, which positions participation as the methodology for ensuring that processes and services are socially sustainable. To summarise, from the academic debate emerges that participation comes up as core element of social work theory and practice that allow to:

a) Coping people's life problems, by making them more empowered;
b) Influencing decision-making processes;
c) Contributing to the creation of social work knowledge;
d) Giving an active role to marginalised groups in the ecosocial transition.

Whereas user participation seems intrinsically necessary in casework, which is about working with people at the micro level, one of the most challenging aspects of social work is facilitating user participation at the meso level of intervention. When an institution is responsible for planning and organising a (new) welfare service, how can user participation be effectively pursued? What are the current options available? The following section aims to answer these questions by reconstructing the possible dynamics that participation processes can activate, giving some examples from the Italian context.

3. USER PARTICIPATION IN ITALIAN WELFARE SERVICES

When examining participation, Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969) is frequently cited, serving as a crucial reference in academic literature on the subject. Arnstein emphasised that citizen participation is fundamental to democracy because it should result in the sharing and redistribution of power. This allows even the less privileged individuals to participate in determining methods of sharing information, defining goals and policies, allocating economic resources, managing programs, and distributing benefits. However, it is important to note that this does not occur in every participation process.

Arnstein's participation ladder graphically represents eight levels of citizen involvement, corresponding to the degree of power they hold in determining the final outcome of the participatory process. From bottom to top, the levels are as follows: a) Non-participation; b) Tokenism; c) Informing; d) Consultation; e) Collaboration; f) User Involvement; g) User-Initiated Empowerment; h) Citizen Control. Arnstein defines the first two levels as "non-participation," as they do not imply a genuine sharing of power. The levels at the centre (c, d, f) are referred to as "tokenism" because they permit restricted participation without guaranteeing any real change in the status quo, thereby leaving power in the

hands of those who already have it. In the final levels (f, g, h), participation approaches an empowerment process, wherein citizens have a real opportunity to influence decisions that affect them.

Notwithstanding its criticism for being inflexible and inadequately contextualised (Connor 1988), and recognizing that power-sharing with citizens may not always be advisable (Fung 2003), this scale remains a useful instrument for examining the diverse dynamics that characterise participatory processes. In particular, concerning citizen participation in the planning and implementation of welfare services, the literature describes two main dynamics: the top-down and the bottom-up. Below we will reconstruct the top-down dynamic, using the area plans and the administrative tools of co-programming and co-design to observe this dynamic. Then, we will return to the overall bottom-up dynamic to see it materialise through the care leavers network.

The European Commission has acknowledged the importance of the top-down participation dynamic in its publication of the "Plan D for Democracy" (2005). The plan envisions the establishment of institutional connections to strengthen citizen participation associated with civic organisations, which is considered crucial to meet the evolving expectations of citizens (Paci 2009). The top-down dynamic involves an institution deciding to involve citizens in decision-making processes, as seen in participatory budgets where citizens are engaged in decisions regarding expenditure forecasts and investments.

One form of participation that has developed over time, based on Habermas' studies, is deliberative democracy, which has taken various forms such as participatory budgets, deliberative committees, surveys, territorial agreements, and more. According to Habermas (1992), citizen participation in decision-making processes, defined as discursive practices, contributes to the improvement and strengthening of the representative democratic model based on citizen voting. In the Habermasian perspective, public decisions must be made through a process that involves the creation of a network for communicating information and viewpoints, which provides a space for public discussion. Deliberative democracy entrusts citizens with the pursuit of the best solution to social problems through their participation in a public discourse where the best argument prevails. In Italian welfare services, this form of participation can be attributed to local plans and administrative tools of co-programming and co-design. It should be noted that local plans represent a more structured and systematic approach, while the latter are isolated and occasional experiences.

The local plans (*Piani di zona*) are introduced by Law 328/2000 and bring about at least four changes in the traditional practice of planning welfare services (Bifulco and Facchini 2013): a) interventions and policies within the same sector are synthesised, bringing together planning traditions and funding sources that are traditionally separate and autonomous; b) there is a shift from government-led planning (exclusively public governance) to a governance perspective, involving the mobilisation of various public entities, social private entities, and civil society; c) planning is approached with a focus on promoting local development; d) joint planning with local health companies is carried out to promote true socio-health integration. Extensive research on the topic have revealed that local plans often fail to transcend existing structures and refrain from evolving into a comprehensive and community-driven public policy (Bosco *et al.* 2012). They tend to rationalise the existing framework, losing sight of social change and the emerging needs it presents (Ranci 2005). The local plans may be at risk of becoming a "hollow shell" (Giddens 1999), characterised by formal compliance and procedures that lack genuine participation, as Piga (2016) notes. Additionally, users and families are not actively engaged in designing the measures within the local plans, according to Bifulco and Centemeri (2007). Lastly, it's important to mention that in several Italian regions, despite Law 328/2000 still being in force, local plans are no longer implemented.

On the other hand, both in welfare services and in literature, there is significant interest in the administrative tools of co-programming and co-design, introduced by the third sector reform of 2017. The former is "aimed at identifying, by the relevant public administration, the needs to be addressed, the necessary interventions for this purpose, the methods of implementation, and the available resources" (art. 55, Legislative Decree 3/2017), while co-design aims at defining and possibly implementing specific service projects or interventions aimed at satisfying the needs defined in the planning phase. Similarly, in this case, despite incorporating the 'co-' prefix, these tools are positioned as the principal alternative to the conventional tendering process. This approach precludes the involvement of service users in the planning and design of services, as these tools were specifically crafted to define the relationship between the State and the third sector.

For these reasons, regarding Arnstein's scale, one criticism of top-down participation is that it places forms of participation with such dynamics in the lower section of the scale, specifically, that of non-participation. It is important to note that various levels of partici-

pation are possible and situations commonly considered participatory may actually constitute forms of false participation. This suggests that citizens can either play an instrumental role or be limited to non-participation. Is it for this reason that these top-down processes are periodically presented by institutions to citizens but ultimately prove unsustainable in the long run?

Moini (2012) stands out among authors who are highly critical of the theme of participation. Moini's thesis revolves around the capacity of participatory processes to stabilise neoliberal policies through functions such as conflict de-escalation, co-responsibilization, depoliticization, and compensation. According to the author, neoliberalism is a discursive institution, playing a significant role in shaping how ideas, concepts, and values are formulated, transmitted, and understood at various levels of society. Moini's critique of participatory processes is grounded in the awareness that participation can have positive effects on social interaction, the creation of social capital, and the quality of decision-making and transparency. However, the author highlights "the dark side of participation", namely, the uncertainty regarding the impact of such processes on public choices. In other words, the author emphasises that participatory processes may not significantly influence the content of public decisions. It is important to underline that the empirical research on which the author's reflections are based comes from an analysis of participation processes with a top-down dynamic. It is important to note that these processes cannot be considered authentic participatory endeavours. Therefore, Moini's conclusions may be limited by the choice to focus on a dynamic not fully representative of participatory processes.

Another form of participation that has developed over time, also influenced by the crisis of representative democracy, can be attributed to grassroots participation initiatives. This form does not involve direct engagement by institutions but pertains to individuals or groups coming together, requesting institutions to involve them in or allow them to influence decision-making processes (Della Porta 1996). Within the context of Italian welfare services, one very interesting example of the movement that is gaining considerable success in terms of memberships and outcomes is the care leavers network (Belotti *et al.* 2021), led by the Agevolando Association. The first aim of this movement is to unite individuals known as "care leavers". These are young adults who transition out of care in foster families or educational facilities and may lack the opportunity or desire to return to their original families. Moreover, the association supports care leavers in building their future by working at various institutional levels to advocate for the rights and equal opportunities of care leavers. This is achieved through the establishment of stable networks with public, private, and third-sector entities. In the Italian context, this movement has successfully raised public awareness and secured the formation of ministerial structural funds to support autonomy projects for care leavers. Furthermore, it is playing an increasingly active role in training future professionals in the field of child protection (Fargion *et al.* 2021) and in research activities as co-researchers (Long 2023).

As highlighted in the literature, participation in social movements is characterised by three main features (Diani 1992): a) conflict, which translates into protest actions; b) collective identity, which unites people and groups around collective feelings of belonging; and c) the network between actors, which facilitates the organisation of protest actions. Similar to the care leavers network, these actions aim to influence political structures and authorities, improve the status quo, promote change, or resist undesirable changes. This form of bottom-up participation has opened avenues for listening and consultation processes by institutions. However, in reference to Arnstein, it does not ensure a genuine sharing of power or a sincere commitment by institutions to consider citizens' demands. These forms of participation, therefore, exhibit a high level of tokenism, enabling those without power to express themselves while retaining the decision-making privilege for those already in power. What occurs when movements lack the strength to make their voices heard and influence the decisions that impact them?

As a result, we argue that both forms of participation, whether they manifest a top-down or bottom-up dynamic, cannot be fully attributed to the description of user participation in social work given in the previous paragraph. It does not appear that these forms of participation enable individuals to cope with life problems by enhancing their empowerment or influencing decision-making processes. Furthermore, these forms of participation do not contribute to the generation of social work knowledge or afford an active role to marginalised groups in the ecosocial transition. Therefore, they cannot make social work socially sustainable. The question then arises, how can socially sustainable social work be achieved through user participation?

4. BOTTOM-LINKED DYNAMIC AND CO-CREATION PROCESSES

Addressing this inquiry, we need to take a step back and deal with the concept of governance, as user par-

ticipation at the meso level pertains to how institutions manage the res publica. Indeed, governance is often contrasted with government: the latter refers to the exercise of public power, implying a vertical and hierarchical process, whereas governance is a broad term that deserves some clarification.

First and foremost, there is a plurality of meanings in the literature, among which stands out the position of Segatori, who suggests that governance has emerged due to the impossibility of managing and addressing collective problems solely with public resources. According to the author, globalisation has cracked the supremacy of the political sphere over the economic one (Segatori 2012), favouring, among other things, the decline of the welfare state. Governance is thus defined as «the process of elaboration, determination, and implementation of policy actions, conducted according to criteria of consultation and partnership between public and private or third-sector entities, in which all participants contribute resources, assume responsibilities, exercise powers, and consequently, enjoy to some extent the benefits expected from the outcomes of these policies» (*Ibidem*: 235). From Mayntz's perspective, on the other hand, governance refers to a «new style of government, distinct from the hierarchical control model and characterised by a greater degree of cooperation and interaction between the state and non-state actors within mixed public/private decision-making networks» (Mayntz 1999: 3).

The term governance has been applied in different areas, including institutional, political, and economic, indicating significant changes in how public policies are managed and implemented in democratic contexts. Governance promotes mechanisms for decision-making through a network of actors that engage in multilateral exchange and mutual adaptation based on negotiation, consultation, and social dialogue. This ensures that decisions are not solely made by the public actor, who is recognized as the sole source of authority, but rather through a collaborative effort (Belligni 2004).

In the literature, there is an additional perspective suggesting that governance accommodates the complexity of society, which has encountered economic, environmental, and health crises over the past two decades. This is achieved by promoting forms of participation that present a third dynamic, defined in the literature as «bottom-linked» (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019). The bottom-linked dynamic is characteristic of participatory processes that advocate for openness and flexibility on the part of institutions in embracing diverse perspectives, creating new practices with the aim of developing and promoting a more cohesive and democratic society. In practice, this dynamic involves the institutionalisation of grassroots initiatives through institutional activities that promote and support them, for example by providing formal and financial support (*Ibidem*). Actually, the term bottom-linked originates from the literature on social innovation (Moulaert *et al.* 2013), which identifies as socially innovative those processes that aim to address social problems by redefining the relationships between the State, civil society, and the market through changes in the actions of individuals and institutions. Social innovation is based on the belief that contemporary society's complexity cannot be managed solely by the State. The State should not uncritically integrate or adopt grassroots demands in its decision-making (*Ibidem*).

The form of user participation that can exhibit a bottom-linked dynamic can be attributed to co-creation and co-production processes. As highlighted in the systematic literature review conducted by Voorberg and colleagues (2015), there is no distinction between co-production and co-creation processes. Therefore, the use of co-creation in this paper is entirely arbitrary. Co-creation processes involve "public service organisations and citizens making better use of each other's assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency" (Loeffler and Bovaird 2021: 41).

The inclusion of the comparative adjective 'better' in this definition implies a more nuanced specification within the broader concept of participation, potentially suggesting a form of engagement that goes beyond mere active involvement to also encompass passive participation.

Thus, co-creation is a broad concept that involves citizens in some or all of the stages necessary for the activation of a service. It encompasses the 'Four Co-' approach proposed by Bovaird and Loeffler (2013): a) Co-commissioning: defining priorities; b) Co-design: designing services; c) Co-delivery: Collaboratively working in service delivery; d) Co-assessment: Evaluating the provided service. At the core of co-creation processes, therefore, is the assumption that citizens are recognized as experts by experience (Russell 2021) and not merely as recipients and beneficiaries of a service. For this reason, in co-creation processes, citizenship is seen as an essential collaborator in activities necessary for the implementation of a welfare service.

According to this theoretical perspective, co-creation processes, when characterised by a bottom-linked dynamic, occupy higher levels in Arnstein's participation scale, involving citizens in a systematic relationship with institutions. These relationships are promoted by institutions themselves, acknowledging the inability to govern the complexity of the contemporary world in isolation, aiming to create and implement public services.

The crucial element of processes defined as bottom-linked lies in the connections built between various public, private, and citizen actors at different levels of governance, as social innovation involves transforming context-specific relationships. For a co-creation process to be considered within the bottom-linked dynamic, governance must play a dual role: as a framework and as a field.

The framework refers to the governance context shaping relationships in the co-creation process, encompassing institutions, rules, and practices defining responsibilities and relationships among involved actors. On the other hand, governance also functions as the field where co-creation processes unfold, influencing and altering governance structures and dynamics through the process itself. This can lead to the creation of new decision-making mechanisms, collaboration forms, and solutions addressing specific social issues in the given context. In summary, governance acts as a framework outlining the context of the co-creation process and as a field where interactions and transformations within governance itself occur.

Consequently, co-creation processes seem to trigger collaborative and inclusive transformation in welfare services aimed at promoting models where different stakeholders – first and foremost service users – find representation, space to be heard and space to act. This aligns co-creation processes with participation as – a methodology proposed by Cuthill (2010), which would make social work and welfare services more socially sustainable.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we focused on two central questions: a) How can user participation enhance the social sustainability of social work? b) What should be the dynamic of participation between institutions and users to ensure the social sustainability of social work?

According to the literature, user participation is crucial in social work. It enables individuals to address life challenges by enhancing their empowerment, influencing decision-making processes, contributing to the generation of knowledge in social work, and granting an active role to marginalised groups in the ecosocial transition. In other words, user participation improves the social sustainability of social work by avoiding the design of welfare services that promote a passive state of dependency. This dependency creates an unsustainable situation, as it places individuals in a passive waiting position, consuming both human and economic resources. User participation empowers individuals, encouraging them to proactively engage in overcoming life's challenges. However, it is important to acknowledge the potential risks, such as contractualization and individual responsibility, as witnessed in the case of Italy's Reddito di Cittadinanza (Gori 2023).

Connecting this issue to the theme of social sustainability, it can be argued that top-down participation is often just rhetoric, failing to generate genuine engagement. Conversely, bottom-up participation processes are often marked by conflict and advocacy, raising the question of what happens when grassroots movements lack the tools or strength to influence decision-making processes. The co-creation process emerges as an innovative pathway, when characterised by a bottom-linked dynamic, holding the potential to make social work more socially sustainable. In essence, co-creation processes appear well-positioned to foster welfare services driven by social justice, contributing to the creation of social capital (Cuthill 2010).

As co-creation processes do not yet seem to be fully implemented in the field of social work (Voorberg *et al.* 2015), this work theoretically highlights how co-creation processes can be a valuable resource for social work practice at the meso level. Indeed, these processes enable the creation of welfare services embracing a critical and anti-oppressive model of care, while also possessing the elements to make social work more socially sustainable.

What comes next? Two considerations emerge.

Firstly, research is needed into the 'doing' of co-creation at the meso level in welfare services. This effort can uncover important themes, best practices, and critical issues in social work. Social work research (Allegri 2022) initiates by tackling the challenges encountered in social work practice, with the objective of enhancing practice, albeit without a prescriptive nature (Sicora and Fargion 2023). The aim is to articulate and establish theories in the field of social work.

Secondly, it is essential to broaden the scope of research at the macro/structural level because, as also highlighted in other studies (Boetto *et al.* 2020), this level is challenging to discern. Therefore, a theoretical and empirical commitment is required to better understand the role and the impact of user participation at the macro level and how it contributes to making society more socially sustainable.

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Per una storia del Movimento 5 Stelle incentrata sul nesso comunicazione-potere

Giovanni Barbieri, Lucia Montesanti, Francesca Veltri

Abstract. This study aims to reconstruct the history of the Five Star Movement by taking the connection between communication and power as our main reference point. This choice is not accidental, given that this connection has acquired a greater relevance in our epoch, characterized by the emergence of mass self-communication and the so-called web society. Furthermore, so-called digital parties, whose activities are mainly based on digital technology, are currently spreading in many areas of the world. The main goals of this study consist of understanding how the communication-power link in the Five Star Movement has changed over time, identifying who actually holds power within it, and evaluating whether it is possible to still define it as a digital party.

Keywords: Five Star Movement, political communication, leadership, digital parties.

1. INTRODUZIONE

La data di nascita del MoVimento 5 stelle risale ormai a quindici anni fa. I cambiamenti che, nel corso del tempo, sono intervenuti nella sua leadership, nella sua struttura organizzativa e nelle sue modalità comunicative sono molteplici. Molto si è scritto su di esso, e non mancano ricostruzioni accurate della sua storia. In cosa, dunque, si discosta la ricostruzione che si tenterà di compiere in quest'articolo da quelle che l'hanno preceduta? E può essere di qualche utilità per il lettore?

Va anzitutto segnalato come il presente studio abbia potuto prendere in considerazione gli ultimi sviluppi del MoVimento, quelli, per intenderci, che vanno dalla caduta del secondo governo Conte all'approvazione del nuovo statuto nel marzo del 2022, che sembra condurre il partito in una fase di stabilità. Inoltre, l'ottica dalla quale si tenta di ripercorrere la storia del MoVimento è del tutto peculiare, in quanto incentrata sul nesso comunicazione-potere. È proprio ponendo al centro dell'attenzione lo snodo comunicazione-potere, infatti, che si tenterà di "leggere" i numerosi cambiamenti, a vari livelli, cui il partito è andato incontro nel corso del tempo.

L'utilità di tale chiave di lettura risiede, a nostro avviso, proprio nella crescente centralità che il legame comunicazione-potere ha assunto nelle società contemporanee. Non è del resto un caso che tale questione abbia ormai da tempo attirato l'attenzione di studiosi di diversi ambiti disciplina-

ri. Il motivo di tale interesse è tutto sommato piuttosto semplice. Da un lato, infatti, il potere si esprime attraverso la comunicazione, si serve della comunicazione per convincere, legittimarsi, perfino manipolare; il potere si dà attraverso la comunicazione, non può prescindere da essa, pena la sua totale perdita di effettività. Ciò non implica negare gli aspetti più strettamente coercitivi connaturati al concetto stesso di potere (Segatori 1999). Dall'altro, chi ha comunicazione, ovvero ne detiene il controllo o è in grado di influenzarne il flusso, ha potere, determinando i temi che saranno al centro del dibattito pubblico, inquadrandoli all'interno di uno specifico e funzionale frame interpretativo, strutturandone la narrazione.

Se ciò è sempre stato vero, lo è ancor di più nella nostra epoca, caratterizzata dall'abbondanza informativa (Bimber e Davies 2003), dall'affermazione di un sistema mediale ibrido (Chadwick 2013), dall'emergere dell'autocomunicazione di massa e della cosiddetta società in rete (Castells 1996; 2009).

Se molti partiti, specie quelli tradizionali, sono stati costretti ad adattarsi a questo nuovo scenario, altri ne possono essere considerati i "figli". Questi ultimi sono rappresentati dai movimenti o partiti digitali, definiti anche come partiti anti-establishment o anti-partito o partiti genuinamente nuovi (Sikk 2005) o cybercratici (Calise e Musella 2019), quali i partiti Pirata, il MoVimento 5 Stelle, Podemos, France Insoumise e Momentum (Gerbaudo 2020).

Pur presentando specifiche peculiarità, diverse storie e differenti orientamenti ideologici, tali forze politiche condividono delle caratteristiche che rendono possibile la loro classificazione entro un'unica categoria. Anzitutto, la tecnologia digitale viene sfruttata dai partiti digitali non solo, come accade nei partiti tradizionali, per scopi di comunicazione esterna, ma anche per promuovere una radicale trasformazione della loro organizzazione interna e delle procedure democratiche e decisionali adottate.

I partiti digitali condividono la stessa ideologia partecipazionista, che considera la partecipazione non più come un mezzo, ma come un fine in sé. Secondo quest'approccio, la realizzazione di una democrazia più autentica e trasparente è resa possibile dall'avvento della tecnologia digitale. Di conseguenza essi si basano su un esiguo staff, non dispongono di una sede centrale in cui riunirsi, sono virtualmente accessibili da qualsiasi dispositivo e promuovono una partecipazione politica svincolata dalla compresenza fisica; si dotano di portali partecipativi, permettendo agli iscritti di discutere e votare su determinate questioni, seguire attività di formazione, selezionare i candidati alle elezioni e avanzare proposte di legge (*Ibidem*).

Va segnalato però che il processo di disintermediazione politica che si realizza grazie all'avvento delle tecnologie digitali produce in realtà una reintermediazione di livello superiore (Lusoli e Ward 2004; Pederson e Saglie 2005; Gerbaudo 2020). I partiti digitali sono infatti spesso dominati da leader e dal loro "cerchio" o micro-oligarchia digitale, che detengono la gestione e il controllo delle piattaforme informatiche, determinando di conseguenza le strategie politiche e comunicative del partito, coordinandone l'organizzazione e fissandone gli obiettivi e il posizionamento. Mai come oggi, dunque, la comunicazione è potere.

È proprio su tali questioni e, in particolare, sul nesso comunicazione-potere, che si concentrerà l'attenzione di questo studio, prendendo in esame il M5s, alle sue origini il più radicalmente digitale dei partiti citati, dato che (a differenza ad esempio del Partito Pirata e di Podemos) per circa un decennio ha sostituito totalmente le assemblee decisionali fisiche con quelle virtuali e ha avuto un capo politico non eletto e senza limiti di mandato caratteristiche, come vedremo, profondamente modificatesi in seguito.

I principali obiettivi che tale studio si propone sono comprendere come sia mutato nel tempo il legame fra comunicazione e potere in questo partito, individuare chi detenga effettivamente il potere al suo interno, e valutare se può essere ancora appropriato definirlo come partito digitale. Per raggiungere tali obiettivi si tenterà di abbozzare un quadro sintetico dei continui mutamenti nelle dinamiche di potere interne al M5s, facendo riferimento alla parabola subita dai principali strumenti e simboli del potere a 5stelle: Blog e rete Meetup nella prima fase del MoVimento; marchio, piattaforma e anagrafe degli iscritti nella seconda fase. È molto importante, infatti, mettere in luce sia chi, all'interno del MoVimento, detiene il possesso e la gestione dei dati (piattaforma e anagrafe degli iscritti), ed è così in grado di conoscere ogni aspetto della sua vita e di controllarne l'organizzazione, e sia chi detiene la proprietà giuridica degli strumenti utilizzati. Si prenderà inoltre in considerazione lo scontro tra leader alternativi e i cambiamenti di leadership avvenuti all'interno del MoVimento.

Nel seguire tale percorso, lo studio adotta un tipico approccio cronologico, soffermandosi prima sulle origini del MoVimento (§ 2) e in seguito sulle fasi contrassegnate dal succedersi di tre differenti diadi di "potere/comunicazione": quella iniziale di Beppe Grillo e Gianroberto Casaleggio (§ 3), quella intermedia di Luigi Di Maio e Davide Casaleggio (§ 4), quella attuale che vede protagonisti Giuseppe Conte e Rocco Casalino dietro le

quinte (§ 5). Il saggio si chiude con una breve riflessione sulla trasformazione del MoVimento da partito digitale a partito personale (§ 6).

2. I PRODROMI DELLA NASCITA DEL MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE

Nel 2004 Gianroberto Casaleggio fonda la Casaleggio Associati, una società dedicata alle strategie di Rete. La mission dell'azienda è di tipo commerciale – offrire consulenze a gruppi e organizzazioni riguardo al nuovo mercato – ma ha anche un lato di "messianesimo digitale" sintetizzato dai video promozionali Gaia e Prometeus (Bordignon *et al*. 2013); al di là dello spirito provocatorio, affiora in essi l'idea che la rete segni la fine di ideologie, partiti, religioni, lasciando il posto a una volontà generale di rousseauiana memoria, in cui confluiscano le istanze dei singoli, finalmente liberi da fazioni che ne deformino gli interessi per il proprio tornaconto. Questa duplicità (tra mercato e politica, tra azienda e partito), caratterizzerà tutto il controverso rapporto tra la Casaleggio Associati, il suo presidente e il futuro M5s (Iacoboni 2018).

A inizio 2005, Gianroberto Casaleggio offre a un leader credibile, Beppe Grillo – capace di influenzare un vasto pubblico e di comprenderne i bisogni e le proteste – un nuovo tipo di palcoscenico sul quale esibirsi: il blog. Si tratta di una novità assoluta in un Paese dove Internet, ancora ignorata dalla politica istituzionale, rappresenta un territorio pressoché inesplorato. Al blog viene rapidamente associata la piattaforma Meetup, per dare una forma organizzata alle istanze e iniziative delle migliaia di commentatori, sulla scia di Howard Dean (che attraverso l'uso della rete riesce a imporsi come terzo polo nella corsa alle presidenziali americane del 2004) e del gruppo di pressione MoveOn (Karpf 2011).

La piattaforma offre la possibilità di impostare rapidamente un'organizzazione minima: ogni gruppo può creare un elenco di membri. È inoltre possibile invitare altri utenti, far circolare foto, segnalare eventi, discutere e lanciare sondaggi. L'organizzazione di gruppi su Meetup cresce in modo esponenziale (nel 2008 in Italia se ne contano oltre 500) e consente allo staff di Casaleggio di osservare i dibattiti che si svolgono nei forum principali, individuando le idee più diffuse.

Un programma politico embrionale su energia, trasporti, economia, salute e informazione viene quindi presentato ai meetuppers, invitati a lasciare sul glog i loro commenti. Lo staff della Casaleggio Associati distingue tra i suggerimenti da accettare, quelli da ignorare e da rifiutare. La versione definitiva sarà proposta pubblicamente ai partiti, chiedendo chi di essi sia interessato ad adottarne i principi. Si tratta di un pacchetto di idee «né destra né sinistra» già ampiamente presenti nel pubblico dei potenziali votanti, sostenute da un famoso testimonial e da una rete di attivisti territoriali (*Ibidem*).

L'iniziativa promossa da Grillo e Casaleggio può essere letta secondo gli schemi delle tradizionali strategie di marketing politico, quali quelle elaborate, circa un secolo fa, dal padre fondatore della scienza delle relazioni pubbliche e precursore della consulenza politica: Edward Louis Bernays (2012 [1920]). L'aspetto del marketing politico è stato per certi versi finora lasciato ai margini nelle riflessioni sullo sviluppo e le trasformazioni del M5s, sebbene esso abbia una particolare rilevanza, anzitutto per il fatto che tra i suoi co-fondatori c'è Gianroberto Casaleggio, responsabile di un'azienda che del marketing digitale ha fatto la sua mission principale, come dichiarerà pubblicamente nel 2012[1].

Applicando il modello di Bernays – che si struttura sull'interazione fra il venditore (produttore e grossista di tessuti), il prodotto (tessuti), il testimonial, il cliente (grandi magazzini) e il pubblico (acquirenti) – alla sfera politica, emerge il seguente quadro: un opinion maker o esperto di pubbliche relazioni produce un tipo di idee politiche, in prima battuta autonomamente, in seguito servendosi di sondaggi, raccolta e analisi di dati, etc., che vuole vendere. Il mercato delle idee politiche è però in crisi ed egli deve trovare un buon testimonial (e successivamente dei propagandisti territoriali) per convincere all'acquisto il pubblico. Questi ultimi vogliono idee riconosciute come familiari e desiderabili; di conseguenza i partiti competono per acquistarle e poi riproporle sotto forma di programmi.

Attraverso questo schema, Grillo e Casaleggio iniziano a pensare di introdurre sulla scena politica italiana un terzo polo, destinato a superare gli sbarramenti ideologici destra/sinistra per dar voce alle istanze dei cittadini. A facilitare l'operazione troviamo la trasformazione del pluripartitismo della Prima repubblica in una competizione bipolare (Chiaramonte 2010). Con un mercato politico più simile al contesto americano e anglosassone, è possibile identificare un politico che (come Howard Dean) voglia rompere con i due poli principali e creare un terzo polo, che potrebbe essere sponsorizzato da una rete già strutturata, acquistando il prodotto offerto.

I soggetti interessati all'appello del testimonial (Beppe Grillo) lanciato sul suo blog, saranno i Verdi, il Partito Radicale, Rifondazione Comunista e l'Italia dei Valori. Quest'ultima rappresenta un elettorato ristretto (circa il

[1] Lettera inviata al Direttore del Corriere della Sera e pubblicata il 30 maggio (https://www.corriere.it/politica/12_maggio_30/casaleggio-rego-le-mov-5-stelle_9e8eca9c-aa1a-11e1-8196-b3ccb09a7f99.shtml).

4%), ma più ampio di quello di Radicali e Verdi (circa il 2%) e non ha la forte connotazione ideologica di Rifondazione Comunista, quindi viene scelta per diventare il partner politico della rete Meetup Amici di Beppe Grillo.

Dal gennaio 2006 la Casaleggio si occupa di gestire la comunicazione dell'Italia dei Valori (IdV), in particolare il blog di Antonio Di Pietro. Quando nel 2007 questo ultimo viene nominato ministro delle Infrastrutture per il centrosinistra, i fondatori della Casaleggio Associati (Gianroberto Casaleggio, Luca Eleuteri e Marco Bucchich) diventano i consulenti per la comunicazione del suo ministero. Per elezioni europee 2009, Beppe Grillo chiede agli attivisti della piattaforma Meetup di sostenere le candidature di Sonia Alfano e Luigi De Magistris, indipendenti presenti nelle liste dell'IdV, che raddoppia il suo consenso medio, arrivando al 9%.

La collaborazione tra la Casaleggio Associati e IdV si interrompe nel 2009. Di Pietro, nel 2012, ne spiega le ragioni: «Lui [Casaleggio] voleva spendere tutta la comunicazione e le energie del movimento andando contro il sistema dei partiti. Voleva […] che ci presentassimo alle elezioni da soli. Io, pensavo che fosse determinante essere nelle istituzioni, e che quindi fosse necessario creare alleanze» (Cremonesi e Presi 2012: 17).

Nell'autunno dello stesso anno appare sulla scena politica italiana un nuovo partito: il MoVimento 5 Stelle.

3. LA NASCITA DEL MOVIMENTO E L'ERA DI GRILLO E GIANROBERTO CASALEGGIO

Mentre il rapporto con l'IdV sta per concludersi, il passo successivo può sembrare rischioso, ma allo stesso tempo è razionalmente comprensibile: quale cliente migliore di un partito creato direttamente dall'azienda con la collaborazione del testimonial?

A distanza di oltre dieci anni dal suo cosiddetto coming out, è innegabile il ruolo di Gianroberto Casaleggio e della sua azienda nella creazione di quella che sarà poi definita come una nuova forma di partito: il partito digitale o web party.

Fin dalle sue origini, il M5s assume quelle caratteristiche tipiche del partito digitale che si sono mostrate nell'introduzione a questo lavoro. La tecnologia digitale, in particolare, viene utilizzata non solo per fini di comunicazione esterna, ma anche, e soprattutto, per promuovere nuove modalità e forme di organizzazione, di partecipazione e di decisione. Va in questo senso sottolineato come gli elementi sui quali si impernia la vita e l'organizzazione del MoVimento nella sua fase iniziale possano essere ravvisati nel blog, nel marchio e nella piattaforma partecipativa.

Nel Non-statuto elaborato dal M5s nel 2009, il blog diventa l'unico punto di riferimento di una forza politica totalmente virtuale. Sul blog vengono lanciati i comunicati politici del leader, attraverso i commenti (moderati dallo staff, che può cancellarli a suo insindacabile giudizio); si espleta la decantata democrazia partecipativa; si organizzano gli incontri pubblici con il leader; si s-comunicano le iniziative non autorizzate e vengono espulsi coloro che il leader reputa colpevoli. Il vero problema del Non-statuto attiene la sua compatibilità «con i requisiti di democraticità [… dato che] *a)* è stato scritto da chi formalmente in quella organizzazione si occupa delle strategie di marketing, e che *b)* anziché regolare la vita democratica interna, si preoccupa […] di garantire ai suoi fondatori la *proprietà* dell'organizzazione e dei suoi simboli» (Corbetta e Gualmini 2013: 40-41).

Leader, blog, Rete Meetup sono essenziali fino alla creazione del partito e della sua partecipazione alle elezioni; a quel punto, anche altri elementi acquisiscono importanza, quali il marchio (brand), sotto cui si affrontano le competizioni elettorali, e la piattaforma di voto, che permette di selezionare i candidati e di decidere via via la linea politica, tramite consultazioni online degli iscritti.

Nei primi anni di vita del nuovo partito, il potere del marchio all'interno del M5s è forte, identificandosi con quello del *testimonial* di cui porta il nome e a cui appartiene legalmente. L'art. 3 del Non-statuto stabilisce infatti che il nome del Movimento e il suo contrassegno sono «registrati a nome di Beppe Grillo, unico titolare dei diritti d'uso dello stesso». Come rilevato da Corbetta e Gualmini (Ivi: 55), tale articolo «configura il Movimento come una sorta di 'impresa commerciale' al cui vertice sta un padrone che ne è il proprietario».

A segnare il carattere del partito è, inoltre, la presenza della piattaforma di voto (prima definita come Sistema Operativo del Movimento, poi piattaforma Rousseau), che lo rende un *unicum*, diverso da tutti gli altri partiti presenti sulla scena politica nazionale e internazionale. Fatto salvo un programma politico destinato a sollecitare un consenso tanto generico quanto trasversale (connessioni gratuite, energie rinnovabili, accesso all'acqua, tutela dell'ambiente, etc.), evitando accuratamente di prendere posizioni che rischino di etichettarlo in un senso o nell'altro, il progetto del M5s è che siano gli iscritti a decidere i contenuti e che non sia tanto importante il cosa si decide, ma il come lo si decide. L'estrema flessibilità anti-ideologica del M5s trova la sua ragion d'essere nell'ossessione per la democrazia diretta e la scelta insindacabile degli iscritti, riuniti via piattaforma in una volontà generale, capace di spingere il Movimento da un lato all'altro della vita politica loca-

le e internazionale. Prevista fin dal 2009, la piattaforma appare solo nel 2012 per selezionare i candidati alle politiche 2013. Essa, gestita inizialmente dalla Casaleggio Associati, promette che a fare legge e a dettare la linea sarà la maggioranza degli iscritti, rigorosamente online.

L'analisi dei processi gestionali di tali elementi strutturali – blog, marchio e piattaforma partecipativa – evidenzia come il processo di disintermediazione politica legato alla tecnologia digitale produca in realtà, come ipotizzato nell'introduzione, una reintermediazione di livello superiore, i cui protagonisti sono Grillo e la micro-oligarchia digitale formata dai proprietari e i consulenti della Casaleggio Associati.

Il blog è – in apparenza – il regno incontrastato del *testimonial*, di cui porta il nome. Eppure, come racconta Casaleggio Senior a Marco Travaglio nel 2014, riguardo ai post «Io e Beppe ci sentiamo sei-sette volte al giorno per concordarli, poi io o un mio collaboratore li scriviamo, lui li rilegge, e vanno in Rete»[2], mentre lo staff che gestisce gli interventi del pubblico è composto dai dipendenti della Casaleggio.

Dato che il MoVimento è un partito privo di tesseramento (e non esistendo, fino al 2012, una piattaforma cui iscriversi), l'unico modo per formalizzare le espulsioni è negare a chi ne viene colpito l'uso del marchio a 5stelle, di proprietà personale di Grillo. Presentarsi alle elezioni senza il marchio significa condannarsi a una sicura sconfitta, come sperimentano i primi espulsi.

Nel 2012, ad affiancare il partito giunge l'Associazione Movimento 5 Stelle, fondata da Grillo, da suo nipote l'avvocato Enrico Grillo e dal suo commercialista Enrico Maria Nadasi, cui successivamente si unirà in qualità di socio Gianroberto Casaleggio. Nell'atto costitutivo e nello statuto dell'associazione viene disposto che la titolarità esclusiva e la gestione del contrassegno e del blog spettano a Grillo, che li mette a disposizione della costituita associazione.

4. LA SCALATA DI LUIGI DI MAIO E DAVIDE CASALEGGIO

Nel libro *Supernova*, Nicola Biondo e Marco Canestrari (2018), ex collaboratori del Movimento e della Casaleggio Associati, ricostruiscono il conflitto di potere fra il gruppo parlamentare, o suoi ampi settori, e la diarchia Grillo-Casaleggio, che si innesca successivamente all'entrata in parlamento (2013) e alla comparsa della malattia di Gianroberto Casaleggio (2014) e che condurrà alla scalata alla leadership di Luigi Di Maio e, assieme a lui, di Davide Casaleggio.

Tale conflitto è generato da una serie di cause, fra cui, seguendo quanto sostenuto dai due autori, possono essere ravvisate le seguenti:

a) le crescenti ambizioni e il protagonismo dei parlamentari, spesso in contrasto fra loro;
b) l'inadeguatezza dei due leader nel gestire il MoVimento e la complessità della politica e nel fornire risposte politiche;
c) l'influenza di Renzi sul MoVimento e la convergenza fra Renzi e Di Maio.

Il processo di indebolimento del ruolo di Grillo e di Casaleggio è graduale. A fine 2014 nasce il direttorio, un organo che, nelle condivisibili intenzioni dei promotori, avrebbe dovuto rendere più veloci le scelte assembleari e avrebbe dovuto affiancare Grillo nella gestione e nel coordinamento del MoVimento. Formato da cinque deputati – Luigi Di Maio, Alessandro Di Battista, Roberto Fico, Carla Ruocco e Carlo Sibilia – il direttorio rappresenta in realtà un modo per spostare l'asse del potere da Milano (e Genova) a Roma, e, al tempo stesso, un trampolino di lancio per la leadership di Di Maio. Nel 2015 lo statuto dell'Associazione Movimento 5 stelle viene modificato dai tre soci fondatori più Gianroberto Casaleggio, sostituendo al marchio un nuovo brand dove non appare più il nome di Beppe Grillo, e di cui l'associazione è unica titolare. Essendone Grillo il presidente, e la maggioranza dei soci a lui saldamente collegata, il passaggio del marchio da proprietà personale a proprietà collettiva non suscita conflitti. Nello stesso tempo si procede ad un ridimensionamento del ruolo dei MeetUp, che da luoghi di dibattito e cittadinanza attiva divengono aggregazioni cui sono attribuiti compiti di manovalanza nel corso delle campagne elettorali o degli eventi che vengono di volta in volta organizzati.

Sempre nello stesso periodo Davide Casaleggio inizia a sostituire il padre, indebolito dalla malattia, nella gestione della comunicazione sia del blog sia del MoVimento e allaccia più stretti rapporti con Di Maio. I post pubblicati sul blog non sono più opera di Casaleggio Senior e Grillo, ma di una rete formata dall'apparato di comunicazione, deputati di maggiore rilievo e Pietro Dettori, collaboratore di Grillo nell'organizzazione dello *Tsunami tour* nonché dipendente della Casaleggio.

Il vero e proprio passaggio di consegne fra Casaleggio padre e figlio avviene però solo quattro giorni prima della morte di Gianroberto Casaleggio, avvenuta il 16 aprile 2016 a causa di un tumore al cervello. Ciò solleva alcuni dubbi sulle reali capacità del fondatore del MoVimento di portare a termine l'operazione di trasferimento dei poteri.

[2] Intervista di Travaglio a Casaleggio (https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/05/21/travaglio-intervista-casaleggio-1-ecco-come-sono-passato-dalla-rete-alla-politica/3153433/).

L'8 aprile, infatti, presso l'Istituto Auxologico italiano di Milano, dove Casaleggio è ricoverato in fin di vita, viene fondata l'Associazione Rousseau, composta dai due Casaleggio, cui è affidata la gestione della piattaforma che porta lo stesso nome e il cui presidente potrà essere solo uno dei soci fondatori. Il 20 dello stesso mese, dopo la morte del padre, Davide Casaleggio modifica lo statuto e accentra la gestione e la rappresentanza dell'associazione su un solo amministratore, ovvero su sé stesso (Biondo e Canestrari 2018).

Ai semplici iscritti è richiesta totale fiducia nel gestore della piattaforma. Dall'esterno non è possibile conoscere il numero di votanti né dei voti ricevuti dalle alternative in campo, se non attraverso i comunicati pubblicati sul blog. La piattaforma fornisce inoltre per la prima volta la possibilità di contare gli iscritti, che automaticamente sono considerati iscritti al partito. L'anagrafe di essi è tuttavia esclusivamente nelle mani dell'Associazione Rousseau.

Per anni messa in ombra da questioni di maggiore impatto (la gestione della piattaforma o il possesso del marchio), l'anagrafe è in realtà un tema caldo già dagli inizi del M5s. Il primo regolamento successivo al Non-statuto del 2009, pubblicato sul blog nel dicembre 2014, prevedeva che (a parte le espulsioni o la selezione delle candidature) fosse il capo politico a scegliere gli argomenti su cui gli iscritti avrebbero votato; in alternativa, sarebbero stati messi in votazione temi proposti da almeno il 20% degli iscritti. In assenza di una lista pubblica, era tuttavia impossibile per questi ultimi accordarsi, di conseguenza non è mai stato messo in votazione un tema proveniente dalla cosiddetta base.

In definitiva, «Davide diventa gestore a vita dei big data del movimento, delle sue procedure decisionali, lega a sé, anche economicamente, le sorti del primo partito italiano con un'associazione privata» (*Ibidem*: 283).

Dopo un tentativo (fallito) di rinnovare lo statuto, nel 2017 il ruolo di capo politico passa Luigi Di Maio, che viene anche indicato come candidato premier. Selezionato dall'alto, privo di un reale consenso interno (la sua elezione sulla piattaforma viene approvata con 30.936 voti su 37.000 votanti, ma gli aventi diritto al voto, che coincidono con gli iscritti al MoVimento, sono più di 140.000), Di Maio sembra la figura perfetta per favorire il passaggio degli elettori dalla fidelizzazione nel testimonial a quella verso il brand, il marchio (da cui nel frattempo è sparito il nome di Grillo), elemento fondamentale nel marketing del prodotto politico. Gli eventi che seguono mostrano tuttavia, oltre ai vantaggi, anche i limiti di questa decisione.

Nel 2017, Davide Casaleggio e Luigi Di Maio creano una nuova Associazione Movimento 5 stelle, della quale Grillo diventa il garante, che rivendica il possesso del marchio. La questione si trasferisce su un piano legale, ma nel frattempo Grillo accetta un compromesso: la sua Associazione concede temporaneamente l'uso gratuito del marchio all'Associazione Rousseau (che accetta al contempo di farsi carico di alcuni debiti della prima). A livello giudiziario, del resto, non vi è dubbio che l'Associazione di Grillo sia la proprietaria del marchio, ma resta in discussione la possibilità per i parlamentari, eletti sotto quel simbolo, di continuare a farne uso.

Tuttavia, ormai le eventuali espulsioni/sanzioni disciplinari sono regolate da un nuovo statuto e vengono comminate tramite un dibattito fra collegio dei probiviri e comitato di garanzia: esiste una piattaforma e una lista degli iscritti, di conseguenza il potere – un tempo assoluto – del possessore del marchio nel decidere fra chi è dentro e chi è fuori non è più tale. Ormai, il brand è tornato alla sua funzione tradizionale, attirare cioè il consenso elettorale di chi si riconosce in quel simbolo e nei suoi contenuti, tappa fondamentale nella normalizzazione del M5s.

5. L'AVVENTO DI CONTE E CASALINO

Ben presto si profila sulla scena pubblica un nuovo testimonial, cooptato dal M5s come capo del governo giallo-verde, Giuseppe Conte (Biorcio e Natale 2018). L'equilibrio di forze tra Lega e M5s impedisce che sia il leader dell'uno o dell'altro partito a diventare primo ministro. La carica viene dunque offerta a una personalità esterna alla politica, un professore universitario di diritto privato che, in pochi mesi, grazie anche alla regia di Rocco Casalino (che da uomo di fiducia della Casaleggio Associati diventa *spin doctor* del presidente), guadagna un consenso personale in rapida ascesa, perfino durante il periodo della pandemia, quando deve assumersi la responsabilità di decisioni radicali come il totale lockdown nella primavera 2020. In questo modo, le velleità di Di Maio di divenire presidente del consiglio dei ministri svaniscono e il suo protagonismo viene fortemente ridimensionato.

Conte, l'uomo pacato in perenne giacca e cravatta, dalla bellezza classica alla Marcello Mastroianni, è l'alter ego opposto e complementare a Grillo: sempre sorridente, si esprime in tono privo della minima enfasi, riuscendo a far crescere un consenso personale trasversale, a prescindere dal governo che dirige: di destra prima (insieme alla Lega) e di sinistra dopo (insieme all'esecrato PD). L'intervento comunicativo di Casalino e del giovanissimo Dario Adamo è particolarmente efficace durante l'addio di Conte a Palazzo Chigi: oltre un milio-

ne di like in meno di 24 ore. Oltre 2 milioni fra reazioni e commenti. Più di 5 milioni di interazioni e quasi 11 milioni di persone raggiunte. Mai nessun politico, in Italia, aveva raggiunto numeri simili.

Come ha scoperto a sue spese Matteo Salvini – quando nel 2019 tenta di far cadere il primo governo Conte di cui era ministro dell'Interno, sicuro che un'altra maggioranza non fosse possibile e che nuove elezioni lo avrebbero consacrato primo ministro, ritrovandosi invece all'opposizione del secondo governo Conte – anche Davide Casaleggio si trova a fare i conti con un testimonial che – seppure diversissimo da Grillo – diventa più ingombrante di questi. Non è un caso che in questo periodo venga messo in discussione un altro degli strumenti simbolo del potere a 5stelle: la piattaforma di voto. Dopo la morte di Gianroberto, Davide Casaleggio beneficia dell'aura d'influenza creatasi intorno al padre, aura che nel tempo va indebolendosi, al punto che i parlamentari iniziano a chiedere, in modo sempre più evidente, un cambio di rotta, la messa in discussione dell'uso di Rousseau e la sua sostituzione con un'altra piattaforma, concomitante con l'arrivo di un nuovo leader e la trasformazione in "partito di centro".

La convocazione degli Stati Generali del 2020, da parte del reggente temporaneo Vito Crimi – braccio destro di Casaleggio Senior fin dalla fondazione del primo Meetup, quello di Milano, di cui è responsabile – cerca di smorzare queste tensioni con una decisione di compromesso: la piattaforma Rousseau resterà lo strumento decisionale del M5s e al posto del capo politico si attiva una gestione collegiale (il comitato direttivo), che potrebbe offrire un più forte contrappeso all'azienda, mediando i conflitti interni. I partecipanti chiedono inoltre la costituzione, fino ad allora tabù, di sedi territoriali esterne a quella virtuale, non più vista come simbolo di democrazia assoluta ma piuttosto come strumento sul quale iscritti ed eletti non hanno mai avuto un reale controllo.

Dopo la conclusione del suo secondo governo, Conte si propone come nuovo capo unico di un M5s in piena crisi di consenso – soprattutto per ciò che in molti hanno considerato l'ultimo "tradimento" del partito, ossia il voto di fiducia al governo di Mario Draghi. Conte gode infatti di un ampio consenso tra gli elettori dei 5stelle e l'idea che il M5s abbia avallato la crisi provocata da Renzi, che ha sconfessato il premier uscente in un momento estremamente delicato (gestione dei fondi europei per la ripresa post-covid, vaccinazioni di massa, etc.) ha un impatto devastante fra eletti e attivisti (che fuoriescono) e gli elettori.

A bloccare quest'evoluzione e a mantenere il potere decisionale in bilico fra Davide Casaleggio e Giuseppe Conte, è ormai il possesso dell'anagrafe degli iscritti – di cui l'Associazione presieduta da Davide è l'unica depositaria – senza cui il Movimento non può indire una votazione per modificare il risultato degli Stati Generali e tornare al capo politico unico. D'altronde, per la stessa ragione, non può nemmeno formare un nuovo direttorio eletto.

Davide Casaleggio gioca su quest'impasse, affermando che in assenza di rappresentanti legali, le norme sulla privacy impediscono il passaggio di consegne dei dati di cui possiede l'esclusiva. Come alternativa, propone il voto per il leader sulla piattaforma Rousseau e la successiva consegna della lista a chi dovesse risultare eletto. Tuttavia, il rapporto di fiducia sul quale si era da sempre basata l'accettazione implicita dei risultati del voto su Rousseau è ormai incrinato. La proposta viene rifiutata, si va per tribunali. Dopo il pronunciamento a lui sfavorevole del garante per la privacy, Casaleggio cede, scrivendo il suo addio sul blog da cui tutto ebbe inizio.

Ciò segna la fine del partito di Grillo com'è stato conosciuto per oltre dieci anni e la nascita del partito di Conte. La famiglia Casaleggio, che ha dato vita al primo partito italiano per numero di consensi nelle politiche 2013 e 2018, non ha più alcun ruolo al suo interno, sebbene Conte dichiari sul proprio profilo facebook che «Casaleggio è un nome che evocherà sempre la storia del Movimento e chi non rispetta la propria storia non rispetta sé stesso».

Davide Casaleggio usa toni assai più duri per narrare la sua rottura con il partito, affidando la propria versione dei fatti a un post sul blog delle Stelle, un tempo coincidente con il blog di Beppe Grillo, strumento che per anni ha costituito il centro nevralgico, organizzativo, decisionale e comunicativo del M5s. Le parole di Davide segnano la fine «del progetto che insieme a mio padre avviammo nel 2005». Tuttavia, il ruolo e la visibilità di questo strumento, tipico del web 1.0, è ormai in caduta inarrestabile e diventa ogni giorno meno rilevante in un universo politico dominato dai social media. Il post di Davide Casaleggio raccoglie poco più di 200 commenti (una cifra minimale, se consideriamo che il suo concomitante post su facebook ne raccoglie oltre 3.000). En passant, le dichiarazioni di Conte su facebook, pubblicate lo stesso giorno, raccolgono quasi 20.000 commenti e oltre 100.000 reazioni.

L'uscita di scena di Davide Casaleggio dal M5s segna la definitiva affermazione di Conte, e, per molti aspetti, anche quella di Casalino. La metafora teatrale per cui si paragona il rapporto tra sceneggiatore e attore a quello tra comunicatore e leader politico è calzante in un'epoca dove il leader è il partito, ed è sul corpo del leader che si costruiscono e si perdono consensi (si pensi alla diade Morisi/Salvini o Longobardi/Meloni: quanto potere riveste chi costruisce il personaggio del leader, restando alle

sue spalle, senza un effettivo ruolo istituzionale, eppure con la possibilità di influenzare in maniera determinante gli equilibri in campo politico?). Casaleggio Senior ha portato all'estremo questo rapporto, dichiarandosi il co-fondatore del partito insieme a Grillo; oggi, Casalino, che all'interno della Casaleggio Associati ha mosso i suoi primi passi nella politica istituzionale – uscendo vincitore dai conflitti con i suoi parigrado, come Nicola Biondo, e poi anche con il suo ex capo, Claudio Messora, i cui contratti con l'azienda furono risolti legalmente – sembra avere con Conte il rapporto quasi simbiotico che quest'ultimo non ha mai avuto con la Casaleggio e il suo presidente.

Il giorno dell'addio di Casaleggio, mentre Grillo e Di Maio sui propri canali social parlano d'altro, sono tre le personalità che ciascuno a suo modo immortalano l'evento: Davide, per l'appunto, secondo cui «Se si cerca legittimazione politica in un tribunale, vuol dire che la democrazia interna è fallita»; poi Conte, che parla già da capo politico: «Il tempo dell'attesa e dei rinvii è finito, il Movimento 5 Stelle entra, forte delle sue radici, in una nuova storia».

6. DA PARTITO DIGITALE A PARTITO PERSONALE

L'avvento di Conte alla guida del M5s produce una radicale trasformazione dell'apparato organizzativo e comunicativo del MoVimento, così come viene sancito dal nuovo statuto, in vigore dall'11 marzo 2022.

Se l'art. 1 del Non-statuto del 2009 definiva il MoVimento come una «non Associazione», una «piattaforma e un veicolo di confronto e di consultazione» che ha come punto di riferimento il blog di Grillo, e la cui sede, coincidendo con il sito web di Grillo, è di natura esclusivamente virtuale, ora invece non si ha timore nel riconoscere il suo carattere associativo, viene eliminato ogni riferimento al blog e al sito web, e viene dotato di una sede fisica.

Mentre nel Non-statuto si specificava (art. 4) che il MoVimento intendeva «realizzare un efficiente ed efficace scambio di opinioni e confronto democratico […] senza la mediazione di organismi direttivi o rappresentativi», ora esso acquisisce una struttura formale, fondata su cinque organi: l'Assemblea, le Assemblee territoriali, il Presidente, il Garante, il Consiglio Nazionale, il Comitato di Garanzia, il Collegio dei Probiviri e il Tesoriere. È però vero che già l'atto costitutivo e lo statuto dell'Associazione Movimento 5 Stelle, fondata nel 2012 da Grillo, suo nipote e il suo commercialista, prevedeva una minima strutturazione basata sui tre organi (Assemblea, Consiglio Direttivo e Presidente, carica che era attribuita per i primi tre anni a Grillo). Se il Presidente dura in carica 4 anni, e può essere rieletto una seconda volta, il Garante, invece, resta in carica a tempo indeterminato. Entrambi possono essere sfiduciati e revocati.

Ai gruppi locali MeetUp (che, essendo online, consentivano sia l'iscrizione di persone geograficamente distanti, sia la partecipazione a più gruppi), si sostituiscono i Gruppi territoriali (art. 13 dell'attuale statuto) di carattere comunale, sub-comunale, inter-comunale e estero. L'iscrizione a un gruppo è subordinata all'avere la residenza o la domiciliazione nel territorio di riferimento del gruppo, e non è possibile iscriversi a più gruppi, salvo che non sia diversamente previsto dal Regolamento.

I gruppi territoriali possono inoltrare proposte progettuali e iniziative legislative al Comitato nazionale progetti, ma, come in passato, è data facoltà anche ai singoli iscritti di presentare proposte di legge (art. 5.5).

La centralità un tempo attribuita da Grillo e Casaleggio, sia padre che figlio, alla rete e alle piattaforme partecipative, nel nuovo statuto appare attutita, pur se non si rinuncia a un loro possibile utilizzo per l'effettuazione delle consultazioni on line. Si stabilisce, infatti, che l'Associazione «al fine di consentire lo svolgimento in modalità telematica delle consultazioni dei propri Iscritti […] nonché delle connesse attività di gestione delle votazioni, di convocazione degli Organi Associativi, di pubblicazione di […] avvisi e/o provvedimenti e/o direttive e/o decisioni, *potrà* [corsivo nostro] ricorrere a piattaforme digitali e/o a strumenti informatici propri o affidati a società di servizio anche esterne» (art. 1.e).

Come si è rilevato più volte, il blog ha rappresentato in passato il centro decisionale e comunicativo del MoVimento, mentre nel nuovo statuto si fa riferimento ad esso solo per ricordare che l'Associazione intende raccogliere l'esperienza maturata al suo interno, come anche all'interno dei MeetUp e delle altre iniziative. Viene inoltre attribuita al Presidente la funzione di direzione e coordinamento della comunicazione delle attività del MoVimento e dei suoi eletti.

La comunicazione avviene soprattutto tramite l'uso dei social media e si incentra sulla figura di Conte; non vi è, dunque, una sostanziale differenza fra la traiettoria seguita dal MoVimento e quella percorsa da altri partiti italiani, che oggi si configurano, nella loro maggioranza, come partiti personali. Conte ha come responsabili della sua comunicazione personale Casalino, per quella televisiva, e Adamo, per quella digitale, che, precedentemente, svolgevano attività di consulenza comunicativa per il MoVimento nel suo insieme.

L'uso dei social da parte di Conte è cambiato nel tempo, in particolare, se ci riferiamo alle sue esperienze di governo, dal periodo pre-pandemico a quello pan-

demico. Nel 2018, infatti, Conte mostrava un approccio timido e insicuro alla tecnologia digitale, mentre successivamente allo scoppio della pandemia egli ha reso sé stesso una presenza pubblica. Come viene riconosciuto da Rullo e Nunziata (2021: 326), «[t]he successful welding of the two main functions of contemporary personal leaders […], that of (digital) communicator and that of (digital) decisor, made Giuseppe Conte the true *dominus* of the Italian Covid-19 pandemic emergency». I suoi post pubblicati su Facebook hanno, ad esempio, favorito un progressivo ampliamento della sua base di follower, passati da meno di un milione a circa quattro milioni dal gennaio 2020 al gennaio 2021, e una crescita dei livelli del *digital engagement*. Inoltre, si è assistito a un passaggio della comunicazione istituzionale dalla sfera pubblica a quella privata. Conte, in altre parole, ha preferito espletare la sua comunicazione istituzionale per lo più su un livello personale e privato, utilizzando, ad esempio, non l'account ufficiale della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, ma il suo account personale (Rullo e Nunziata 2021; Amoretti, Fittipaldi e Santaniello 2021).

Il M5s, in definitiva, sembra aver oggi assunto la fisionomia di un partito tradizionale, maggiormente orientato, almeno sulla carta e rispetto agli altri partiti, all'utilizzo delle tecnologie digitali, e dai tratti fortemente personalistici.

7. NOTE CONCLUSIVE

Fin dalla sua nascita, come si è visto, il M5s è stato attraversato da lotte di potere inerenti sia la proprietà dell'organizzazione e dei suoi simboli sia il possesso e la gestione dei dati. Ciò è sotto molti aspetti piuttosto comprensibile, dato che il MoVimento, almeno quello delle origini, rappresenta un tipico partito digitale, ovvero una forza politica che fa ampio ricorso alla tecnologia digitale, si dota di piattaforme partecipative che consentono la discussione e il voto degli iscritti e promuove un'ideologia di stampo partecipazionista.

In questi tipi di partiti, infatti, il potere e il controllo dell'organizzazione sono nelle mani di chi è giuridicamente proprietario e di chi gestisce gli strumenti concreti di cui quei partiti si servono: il blog, il marchio, le piattaforme partecipative, l'anagrafe degli iscritti, etc.

Frutto, almeno in parte, di un'operazione di marketing politico, il MoVimento, come si è cercato di mostrare, ha vissuto due passaggi conflittuali di consegna del potere: dalla diade Grillo-Casaleggio Senior alla diade Di Maio-Casaleggio Junior e da questa a quella formata da Conte e Casalino. L'unica figura che ha attraversato indenne le tre fasi è quella di Grillo, che oggi però conserva solo il potere simbolico di Garante e padre nobile del MoVimento, cui è attribuito il ruolo di custode dei valori del MoVimento e di interpretazione autentica delle norme contenute nel nuovo statuto (art. 12.a).

Ad innescare queste lotte per il potere vi sono numerosi fattori, primo fra tutti la malattia che colpisce Gianroberto Casaleggio e la sua morte. Possono poi essere menzionati: l'inadeguatezza politica dei fondatori nel governare il rapido e probabilmente inaspettato successo elettorale, le responsabilità che ne sono conseguite e, più in generale, la complessità della politica; l'ambizione e il protagonismo politico di alcuni dei parlamentari di primo piano del MoVimento, lo scontro fra ampi settori del gruppo parlamentare e i due leader della forza politica, le influenze esercitate dalle altre forze politiche e le divergenze in merito alle possibili alleanze da formare (sì o no al PD di Renzi).

Se il passaggio dalla prima alla seconda fase segna un cambiamento dei protagonisti – da Grillo e Casaleggio Senior a Di Maio e Casaleggio Junior – ma non una trasformazione del MoVimento, che resta saldamente ancorato agli strumenti digitali che lo avevano caratterizzato fin dalla nascita – il passaggio dalla seconda alla terza fase comporta invece anche un suo profondo mutamento. Da partito digitale e impresa commerciale si passa a un partito con una struttura piuttosto tradizionale e di tipo personale, che ha come capo politico Conte e come consulenti per la comunicazione Casalino e Adamo.

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Contentious Interation in *Ultima Generazione* (*Last Generation*). A Preliminary Analysis on Radicalization and Spin-off Movements

Fabio de Nardis, Angelo Galiano

Abstract. With this article, we attempted to analyze the radicalization process of the Italian environmental movement with a particular focus on the birth and the practices of the group called *Ultima Generazione* (Last Generation). Using a qualitative-quantitative approach that integrated PEA (Protest Event Analysis) and participant observation, we tried to understand how a new insurgent consciousness emerged from the experience of the mobilizations promoted by *Extinction Rebellion*. In this sense, Last Generation is analyzed as a specific case of spin-off movement.

Keywords: social movements, climate justice, spin-off movements, ecological class, action repertoires.

1. CLIMATE MOVEMENT AND THE "NEW ECOLOGICAL CLASS"

The aim of this work is to offer a preliminary analysis, descriptive for the moment, of the specific case of the "Last Generation" movement as a specific case of a spin-off movement within the broader climate movement that, in recent years, has become central to the international scene. The climate movement is experiencing a paradoxical situation in which both governments and social movements are not addressing the climate crisis seriously and with the right means. Malm uses Lanchester's paradox to define some of the trends of this historical phase (Malm 2021). John Lanchester is a British novelist and essayist, author of the book *Warmer, Warmer* in which he asks why climate activists have not yet committed "terrorist" actions in light of the catastrophic situation in which the world finds itself. Lanchester's paradox thus expresses a twofold inability to respond: one coming from the disinterest of governments in addressing the causes of the climate crisis, and the other dictated by the use of protest modes that are inadequate to the seriousness of the situation.

To date, in fact, climate activists have never indulged in violence, much preferring an action repertoire inspired by the American civil rights movement, marked by more assertive and perturbative performances, symbolic and dilemmatic actions that fall under the strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience (Burkett 2016; Dietz and Garrelts 2014; Chenoweth and Stephan 2013).

There has been a shift from a conventional or semi-conventional repertoire typical of environmental movements to a more perturbative one. What we are faced with is a climate movement that has made nonviolent civil disobedience its hallmark and instead sees violence as a strategy that leads social movements to failure rather than achievement (Chenoweth and Stephan 2013). The use of nonviolent methods, as the leading theorists as well as activists of the climate movement, Bill Mckibben and Roger Hallam, have argued, is not the result of a moral and ethical choice but strictly instrumental. A choice, as argued by some scholars, that sanctions the shift from moral to strategic pacifism (Engler and Engler 2017).

The climate movement has so far experienced several cycles of activity, some punctuated by self-education and information campaigns, others by intense to repeated protest. Each of these has spanned a larger scale than the last (see Dietz and Garrelts 2014; Cassegard *et al.* 2017; Cheon and Urpelainen 2018). The first of these cycles crossed Europe between 2006 and 2009, especially Great Britain, where a group of Plane Stupid activists invaded the runways of most of the country's airports, organizing festivals, assemblies, and demonstrations in front of the sites deemed most responsible for climate pollution. The wave then reached Denmark, at Cop15 in Copenhagen.

On that occasion, the climate movement brought more than 100,000 people into the streets but did not get a real response from governments. The second cycle began in 2011, in the United States, when President Barak Obama failed to pass the *Cap and Trade Act* dealing the death blow to the spirit of COP15. Again, thousands of activists took to the streets bringing disarray and anger. Activists later converged on New York City for the People's Climate March in September 2014, where some 400,000 people paraded, tripling the Copenhagen attendance. The third cycle opened with the large cloud over Sweden's sky that led Greta Thunberg to demonstrate at the gates of the Swedish Parliament. Thus began the wave of school strikes known as Fridays for Future that swept across Europe and the rest of the world, including Antarctica. This cycle of mobilization was interrupted by the Coronavirus crisis in 2019 that froze the enthusiasm and energy patiently nurtured over the years. Since then, the climate movement has alternated between large cycles of demobilization and small cycles of re-mobilization. One of these is the one that began between December 2021 and January 2022, inaugurated by a number of protest actions born in the spirit and on the legacy of Extinction Rebellion, such as those carried out by Just Stop Oil in Britain, Dernière Rénovacion in France, Letzte Generation in Germany and Ultima Generazione in Italy. These mobilization projects are part of an international network, the A22 Network, which since April 2022, hence the acronym, has been mobilizing, in a systematic way, more and more activists in various parts of the globe, to try to defend and save current generations and those to come from climate collapse.

As Marwell and Oliver (1984) state, defining a social movement is a theoretical nightmare. The literature is vast and widely differentiated. Some scholars use the phrase "social movement" to cover much or all of the overlapping area between conflict and collective action (Frickel and Gross 2005). Others such as Tilly and Tarrow (2008) define a social movement as a prolonged campaign of claims that makes use of repeated performances to publicize protest that relies on the organizations, networks, traditions and solidarity that can sustain it. Still others see social movements as networked entities that allow actors with different perspectives, interests and visions to mobilize in specific ways by determining their own contribution to the achievement of common goals (Gerlach and Hine 1970; Diani 1992). Marxist thought, on the other hand, places the analysis of capitalism at the center of inquiry as a determining condition to the formation of a social movement (Goodwin and Hetland 2013; Nilsen and Cox 2006; Barker 2013; Berberoglu 2019; Della Porta 2015).

Very broad definitions, however, make it difficult not only to analyze the transitions between different forms of conflict, but also to compare the foundations on which contentious politics develops and the campaigns that promote it, stifling the work of identifying the mechanisms and processes useful for describing and explaining the rise and decline of a social movement. Therefore, in the following sections, we will adopt an approach more suitable for analyzing these processes and mechanisms in their internal dynamics. First, to understand along what conflicting lines what we might call the "family" of the climate movement has emerged and is developing, we must necessarily refer to capitalism and its internal contradictions. For the moment, it seems that it is the immense diversity of conflicts that prevents us from giving these struggles a coherent definition. However, some scholars, such as Latour and Schultz (2019) in a recent paper, have spoken of an "ecological class", referring to those who, with varying intensity, and beyond internal composition, are taking up the issue of the habitability of the planet.

The climate movement has used this discourse as its main means of social appropriation in an attempt to incorporate already pre-existing political actors into other movements, networks or groups and at the same time, convert actors who are not yet politicized or far

from the cause. What is emerging is a multiplicity of conscious leadership elements that, through conflict, begin to find a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world, stepping outside "popular science" and common sense (Guha 2008). From this point of view, there is a conflict that is strictly materialist in the sense that these movements define themselves in relation to the material conditions of their existence. It is certainly not the same materiality within which the old labor movement was born, but it is closely associated with that kind of materiality. Survival and reproduction, according to the Marxian tradition, are the first principle of all societies and their history. According to Latour and Schultz (2019), today we find ourselves in a social configuration in which production alone no longer defines our horizon. To be materialist today means to consider, in addition to the material conditions favorable to human reproduction, the socio-ecological conditions of habitability of the planet. We must shift our attention from the traditional crisis generated by the contradictions between productive forces and relations of production, to the crises generated within capitalist relations of production and the very conditions of capitalist production, that is, the capitalist relations and forces of social reproduction (O'Connor 1998). It is not only James O'Connor who directs attention to the so-called second contradiction of capitalism, but also other authors such as Karl Polanyi (1974). In The Great Transformation, the scholar analyzes the tendency of capitalism to economize social and environmental conditions in order to increase the volume of trade in the capitalist market and thus the accumulation of profit. Nancy Fraser (2022) also argued in a recent paper that capitalism drives global warming not accidentally but by virtue of its very structure. This is not to say that ecological crises occur and have occurred only in capitalist society, but that the ways of organizing production, circulation, exchange, and the conditions of production contain within them an ingrained tendency toward ecological crisis. In other words, some crises are general and not specific to the capitalist system, while others are typical and peculiar to that model of wealth production and accumulation.

Marx identified three types of conditions of production: i) external physical conditions; ii) labor power; iii) communal and general conditions of social production. As O'Connor (1998) argues, in a nutshell, external physical conditions are analyzed in terms of the vitality of ecosystems; labor force is analyzed in terms of the physical and mental well-being of workers as productive social forces and biological organisms in general; and finally, community conditions are analyzed in terms of social actors, infrastructure, communications, more generally the relationship between individuals and the environment.

From this perspective, the social relations of reproduction of the conditions of production become the target of social transformation and thus probable lines along which conflict arises. The protagonists of this transformation are the social movements engaged in the internal struggles in the production process of health, occupational safety, environmental protection, pollution, toxic waste production, personal care and conditions of habitability of the planet. When the effects of "ecological contradictions", to use the term used by Nancy Fraser, become so obvious and insistent that they cannot be mitigated, hidden or ignored, the organization of the relationship between the system of production and nature appears dysfunctional, unjust, unsustainable and thus becomes the object of contestation. The effect is to activate what Gramsci called "terrains of struggle", or others have called "contested terrains", "arenas of strategic action", or "fields of strategic action" (Edwards 1979; Fligstein, McAdam 2011; Jasper 2011). As Manski (2019) states, the analytical utility of these terms, beyond individual nuances of meaning, lies in the fact that they describe the practice of activists as they engage in conflict. Just as physical terrains involve multiple types of features -geological, climatic, biological – social terrains of conflict can be understood as meta-structures that emerge from sets of organizations, institutions, cultures, geographies, etc. Who defines these terrains of struggle? Who is struggling? What are they struggling against and how do they interpret this struggle? These questions lead us to identify the conceptions of actors engaged in struggle about the dimensions of their struggles. Those who are mobilizing to defend the habitable conditions of the planet have developed an awareness, still in the making and not fully unified, of the dimensions of the struggle in which they operate, and these dimensions become the elemental claims that are shaping the movement's trajectories. Thus, we are faced with a climate movement family that shares ideas and claims with respect to the end of the planet and its defense, but still contains within it fragmented and disordered elements that probably distinguish a class, but not consciousness about it. So, before speaking of an ecological class, it would be necessary to study the "spontaneous" and "elemental" passions of these movements, as well as the social practices and representations that invest this nascent subjectivity that is defined in a plurality of hybrid, mobile, "prediasporic" relations and affiliations (Gramsci 1975; Hall 2019). In any case, this crisis and the struggles that are characterizing it are deeply intertwined with other kinds of crises and struggles, also rooted in the structural con-

tradictions of the capitalist system. The new struggles tend to subsume the old ones. Today there are struggles against environmental racism, for environmental justice, eco-feminist struggles that fully cut across issues of ecological destruction, class, race, and gender (Fraser and Jaeggy 2018; Fraser 2022; O'Connor 1997).

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper combines various empirical materials: from the collection of newspaper articles and social media releases, to the analysis of testimonies and impressions reported on field notes obtained through participant observation. In fact, a qualitative-quantitative approach combining participant observation and Protest Event Analysis was used. The role of participant observer underwent different nuances between July and December 2022. According to the ethnographic methodological literature, the participant observer can assume different roles and this depends on two essential factors: the epistemological approach and the initial research question (Balsiger and Lambelet 2014). This role may change during the course of the research. According to Watt and Scott (2010), the different roles the observer can assume are as follows: "full observer", who merely observes from the outside; "observer as participant", who observes for short periods of time and then complements the research with interviews or other techniques; "observer who participates", building a relationship that oscillates between militancy and neutrality; and "full participant observer", who is completely absorbed in his or her research object. These roles are not well defined and often the boundaries tend to overlap and sometimes disappear.

The channels of entry within Last Generation (UG) are fluid and reflect the kind of attitude that Pizzorno called "surplus participation" and that Bosi and Zamponi consider typical of the current era, in which participation in collective networks of a directly political stamp is experiencing a marked crisis (Andretta and Mosca 2008; Bosi and Zamponi 2019). A type of participation, then, that responds, in most cases, to the need to do something for others and the need to do things to make sense of one's life (Bosi and Zamponi 2019). In light of this, the barriers to entry are not insurmountable, even for those interested in participating on an individual, occasional basis and without particular political-ideological connotations. Therefore, it was not difficult to carve out a role within the movement. Over the course of the ethnographic experience, the role of the observer underwent several developments in line with the needs of an observational practice concentrated in a limited time frame: from mere "curious" to "interested observers", from "helpers in organizing individual events" to "activists". Each type of role, however, was a means of becoming more familiar with the object of study. Thus, participant observation, from this point of view, is not to be understood as the determining part of the study, but it served to understand the mechanisms, processes and internal dynamics of the movement and to integrate qualitative data with quantitative data collected through PEA. The latter technique served to reconstruct the event history of the protest and to be able to identify the different repertoires of conflict used in protest campaigns, through a comparison with the other movement we are considering, Extinction Rebellion (XR). Thus, we identified the point at which the "initiator" movement generated the "derivative" one or the *spin-off*.

PEA is a technique that turns words into numbers (Franzosi 2004; Krippendorff 2004) and thus makes them analyzable through multiple statistical tools. Through the collection of newspaper articles, leaflets, archival material, press releases, and sources derived from social media, we were able to produce a longitudinal analysis capable of reconstructing waves of protest in space and time, their changes based on their interaction with the environment in which they emerged, and their relationships with other movements or groups (Klandermans and Staggenborg 2002; Hutter 2014; Fillieule 1996). This approach has served to make sense of the persistence of protest, the degree of disruption, the difference in individual conflict performances, and finally the radicalization of protest dynamics. It is important to point out that there is a media selection bias toward protest events, as only a portion of them gain visibility (Hutter 2014). However, the importance of this bias as argued by some scholars is strongly contested (e.g. Hocke 1998; Portos 2021; Earl *et al.* 2004). In this regard, the reported portion of events will never be a representative sample, much less a random one, but by necessity, influenced by media logic (Della Porta 2014).

3. EXTINCTION REBELLION AND ULTIMA GENERAZIONE (LAST GENERATION)

According to Gramsci, an organic crisis opens when certain social groups break away from their traditional political affiliations, no longer recognizing in those forms and ruling classes the political expression of their needs and necessities (Gramsci 1975). In other words, the reasons for organic crises originate from those oppositions and fractures that fail to be integrated within the limits defined and selected by the ruling

classes and tend to fuel the entry of hitherto passive social groups, which to a certain extent, can then converge in campaigns and movement projects (Della Porta 2017; Cox and Nielsen 2013). *Extinction Rebellion Italy* (from now XR Italy) and *Ultima Generazione* (from now UG) are the manifestation of one of these steps and present themselves on the stage of history as alternative and oppositional forces to the inadequacy on the part of the ruling class to address not only old debates, such as those related to strictly economic aspects of daily life, but also on other issues, such as those of the climate crisis and the habitability of the planet. While in the previous section we tried to identify the new terrains of contestation on which new political subjectivities are taking shape, we will now try to show the processes of internal transformation that these movements are facing in order to cope with the climate crisis.

3.1. Extinction rebellion

"We are heading for extinction, let's rebel!" this is the slogan that appears upon opening the website of XR Italy. XR is a decentralized international nonpartisan movement that bases its strategy on nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience. The movement was born on October 31st, 2018 in London during a day of protest in Parliament Square to denounce the British government's immobility in the face of the climate and ecological crisis. From that day on, there were a series of "rebellion" days in the United Kingdom, in which activists from across the United Kingdom and beyond sought, through various forms of protest, to draw government and public attention to the climate issue. The "call to rebellion" quickly became global, and various "rebel" groups were formed around the world. Currently, the movement is extensive on a global scale. In Italy, XR Italy was founded in November 2018 and is mainly rooted in Turin, Bologna, Milan, Venice, Palermo and Rome.

Underlying XR's strategic action principles is the choice to adopt a nonnegotiable form of nonviolent protest.

According to the literature, action repertoires play a key role in the process of spreading protest, acting both outside the movement and within it (Della Porta and Diani 2020). On the one hand, they serve to activate public and government attention to specific issues; on the other, they are the means through which shared identities and solidaristic bonds are created and transmitted (Pizzorno 1993; Rochon 1998). In this way, XR activists have used, sometimes emulating, often innovating, the earlier forms of action used in the cycles of nonviolent mobilization inspired by Gandhi in India and Luther King in the United States, as a "crystal seed" for building new patterns of cyclical mobilization and new collective identities (McAdam 1995). The choice of using this type of nonviolent action not only shows how forms of action used in previous campaigns can be reused in new ones and thus the reproduction not only in space but also in time of the repertoires of protest, but also shows a choice of symbolic proximity with previous movements (Tilly 1978, 1986, 1995, 2002; Rochon 1988). The literature tells us that emulating and/or innovating forms of action that belonged to other movements can also serve to legitimize the protest itself by referring to the myths and heroes of the past (Whittier 2004; Rochon 1988). From the data processed through PEA with reference to the month of December 2022, XR Italy has been involved in 65 conflict episodes using a repertoire of conventional protest as shown in Table 1.

As Table 1 shows, activists have never used violent forms of protest, preferring a repertoire exclusively consisting of conventional and semi-conventional actions. According to the model developed by Tilly and Tarrow, we can distinguish conflict performance into three broad categories: conventional, disruptive/perturbative, and violent (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). The degree of disruption, threat, surprise and even lawlessness changes as each category is passed. XR Italy in this case made almost exclusive use of a repertoire consisting of demonstrations in front of specific sites and symbols of climate pollution, marches, public assemblies, and garrisons, and then switched to a slightly more perturbative repertoire through practices such as hunger strikes, chainings, sit-ins, and flash mobs.

In 16 cases, however, it preferred to use a more perturbative repertoire of conflict, not characterized by violence but by the use of particular symbolic resources to arouse surprise, tension, and willingness to react. Specifically, in 10 cases activists decided to sit in the middle of a street to block traffic, and in 8 cases they decided to daub the headquarters and offices of those they held most responsible for the climate crisis with colored paint. Figure 1 shows the number of conventional, semi-conventional, perturbative, and violent episodes, and we can see how XR Italy preferred to use an almost exclu-

Table 1. Repertoire of protest (XR).

Repertoire	*n. contentious episodes*
Conventional	40
Semi-conventional	9
Perturbative	16
Violent	0
Tot	65

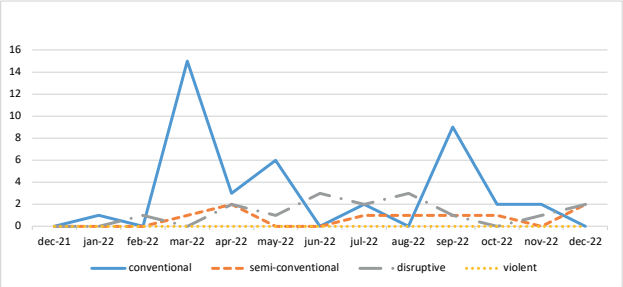

Figure 1. XR Italy repertoire of protest.

sively conventional repertoire throughout the mobilization cycle.

As Table 2 shows, in the vast majority of cases, 36 times, protests took place in public squares and places of public passage, seeking to engage and bring to the attention of the citizenry the gravity of the climate crisis. In 9 cases, activists chose to focus their protest action by targeting road traffic, choosing to disrupt and/or obstruct ordinary and high-speed roads such as ring roads, highways, and provincial roads. In 7 cases, on the other hand, targets were chosen that referred to the institutional and governmental world without ever going beyond the regional dimension.

Regarding the area of diffusion of the protest, as seen in Figure 2 the city most involved was Turin, a place where, evidently, the XR Italy group is much more structured and manages to mobilize activists in a more systematic way. Next, we find Venice, Milan and Rome, which helps shift the center of gravity and spread of the protest. The big absentee is the South, the only cities involved by XR Italy in the mobilization were Palermo in two cases, then Naples, Bari in one case, but closely related to the participation of small groups of XR Italy in the climate strikes promoted by the Fridays for Future movement.

Table 2. Targets chosen by XR Italia.

Targets	*n. episodes*
Square and/or large public place	36
Municipal road	4
Provincial road, ring road, GRA, highway	5
School, University	2
Local or Regional Institution	7
Office and/or private company headquarters	4
Sports event, music, entertainment	5
Natural place	2
tot.	65

Figure 2. Major areas involved in the XR Italy contention.

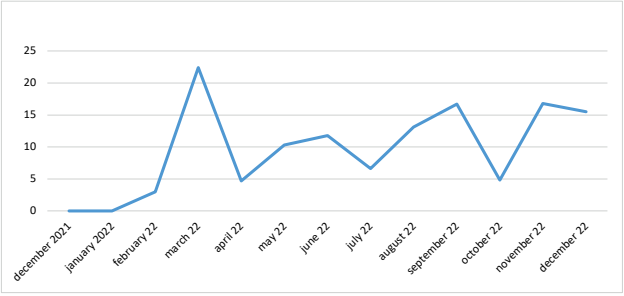

Figure 3. Number of XR Italy activists per protest episode.

A final figure considered was the number of activists, obtained by calculating the average number of participants for each protest episode, according to the configuration shown in Figure 3.

From data processing, the average number of activists that XR Italy involved in the mobilization cycle is less than 11.

Finding a synthesis from the perspective of the contentious repertoire, XR Italy is a movement that does not follow the "logic of numbers", much less the "logic of damage" since it never resorts to violent protest (DeNardo 1985). The strength of the movement, in fact, does not depend on the large number of its supporters, but on their proverbial commitment and the attempt to show through their presence, their bodies and the continuous reiteration and repetition of nonviolent forms of protest,

the presence of a vital problem for the fate of society and the planet. Therefore, the logic underlying the choices employed by XR Italy Rebellion is that of "testimony", and the goal, or rather the attempt, is to change individual consciences through symbolic action with high emotional content, so as to get as much visibility as possible in the public debate in order to increase the degree of political possibilities (Jasper 2013).

In terms of internal organization, XR Italy presents itself as a movement based on autonomy and decentralization, reproducing XR's international organization. Barriers to entry are very easy to overcome even for those interested in participating only occasionally. One of XR's goals is to create real communities of rebels, and to do this it uses local groups rooted on a territorial basis without, however, being exclusively localist. In fact, joining the group does not require formal membership or a fee; it is enough to identify with certain principles, such as that of nonviolent civil disobedience. Local groups come together to create, through aggregative, solidaristic processes, a sense of belonging, sociality, relationships, and identity in a local territorial area, building support and acting in accordance with the aims and demands defined by XR.

Each local group, in turn, has both key figures such as coordinators, who act as a transmission belt between the movement's grassroots and the center, and other subgroups, the working groups that plan activities and promote community creation, growth and outreach. These groups have wide degrees of freedom, establishing goals, missions and tasks in autonomous decision-making. They deal with issues related to internal organization, planning events with the outside world, retrieving resources and materials, managing media relations, and training, involvement and support activities. It is, therefore, a hybrid system based on internal differentiation and the integration of horizontal and vertical elements of coordination (Kriesi 1996). There are also structures that work at the trans-regional level: XR Support Italy aims to facilitate cooperation between individual XR Italy groups and XR groups around the world.

Actions are again organized by specific groups that may or may not involve other activists. Under the principles of autonomy and decentralization, any local group can organize actions without seeking permission from XR's decision-making bodies, the only discriminating factor being the type of action, which must always remain nonviolent. When planning the action, the local group also decides on the "level of legal risk" they may incur, and each activist is made aware of the risks and dangers through the guidance provided by the legal support group. During the planning process, individual roles are established through specific pre-action (briefing) and post-action (debriefing) assemblies. At these times, activists exchange information, mentally review the action to be taken, mistakes made, goals achieved, and emotions felt during the interaction in order to cement the bond between each individual activist and to help de-escalate emotional shocks.

3.2. Ultima Generazione (Last Generation)

`We are concerned about an impending social collapse that threatens Italy due to the climate crisis and the destruction of ecosystems. We are ordinary people who have left our jobs to engage in nonviolent civil disobedience as a strategy to achieve greater democratic participation» (XR Italy).

This is the statement issued by XR Italy activists on December 6th, 2021 once they were taken away by law enforcement after blocking the GRA (Grande Raccordo Anulare) in Rome for two hours. The blockade created a four-kilometer queue and saw the participation of 12 activists. The banners attributed responsibility as follows: "Climate and Ecological Emergency – Now Citizen Assemblies! – Last Generation – Extinction Rebellion". The statement issued a few hours later by the same activists carried the following words, "With this action the campaign to the bitter end began. Last Generation – City Assemblies Now! Extinction Rebellion".

This document is extremely important for at least two reasons: first, it helps us to precisely place the start date of the protest campaign; second, it returns a key piece of data useful for reconstructing the entire cycle of the protest, but more importantly, it helps us to bring into focus the processes and mechanisms that move the dynamics of the protest. As emerges from the statement, UG began as a movement campaign only to break away from it and become a movement itself with a recognizable symbol and identity, a repertoire that differs from that of XR, an internal organization that mimics that of XR, but above all a new resource to be employed in the protest, what Tarrow and McAdam call "the lessons of the early risers" (Tarrow 1994; McAdam 1995).

We can distinguish two major classes of social movements: initiator movements, which distinctly mark the widespread and recognizable beginning of a protest cycle, and a second class that includes the so-called spin-off movements, which in different aspects and degrees draw inspiration and impetus from the initiator movements. According to McAdam (1982), to understand how a spin-off movement emerges, one must not look for causes within the movement itself, but at the whole process of the protest cycle. The previous section attempted

to highlight how the last cycle of mobilization of the climate movement was frozen and depowered by the arrival of Covid-19, specifically by the measures of social distancing and confinement that effectively suspended much of the political action associated with the protest.

As several scholars assert, the assessment actors make about living in exceptional times can result in the disruption of daily routines and their rethinking, opening or closing new spaces for political participation (McAdam 1982; Della Porta 2018). The pandemic crisis was certainly an exceptional event. The structure of daily life was totally reconfigured, millions of people lived in conditions of social and economic deprivation, and institutions did not always succeed in coping, regulating and managing the emergency. In other words, we have moved toward what disorganization theorists call the "regulatory incapacity of institutions" (see Ash 1972; Hobsbawm 1963; Kornhauser 1959; Moore 1969). These situations lead people to break the ties that bind them to what Edelman calls the "comforting banalities" of everyday life and escape social control and the multiplicity of secondary associations and connections that normally control political behavior by erupting into protest (Piven and Cloward 1979). But for a protest movement to arise from these upheavals in daily life, it is necessary for subjects to perceive the state of deprivation and disorganization they are experiencing as both unjust and subject to change. With the end of social containment and distancing measures, protest has once again emerged, and the social order that was usually perceived as just and unchanging has begun to appear increasingly unjust and susceptible to change.

Our hypothesis is that the pandemic, while at first acting as a soporific agent for protest, at a later stage helped to accelerate and radicalize an ongoing process and trend. The process is both cognitive and cultural, and it is the process of "cognitive liberation" (McAdam 1988) that has seen the convergence in the public squares as a sign that change is possible precisely through collective action (Della Porta 2018). The trend associated with this process, on the other hand, is more strictly political and organizational and consists of the escalation provoked by a new insurgent consciousness. The latecomers of the climate movement have in fact seen how insufficient the strategies and tactics used by the first arrivals (initiators) of the climate movement have been at least from the perspective of governmental response to the climate crisis. Learning this "lesson" from earlier cycles of mobilization, they began a decidedly more perturbative and radical protest campaign to attract media coverage, attention, tension, and willingness to react on the part of the public and the authorities (Lispky 1965; Rochon 1988, Gitlin 1980). One can read these two mechanisms in the words of these activists:

> *When I attended a UG presentation, I was asked some questions, like, how do you feel? How could you help? My answer was: I feel displaced. To the second question I answered: I have to help. But displaced by what? Bewildered by realizing that all my environmental awareness, all my action was not reckoning with the changing weather, therefore, bewildered by realizing how in fact I was a climate denier, all my work up to that time was aimed at making sure that our living was more sustainable, even in comparison to what had happened to us a year earlier with the pandemic, but it was not reckoning with the emergency and the fact that our governments were rowing against us.* (Field Note 1)

> *Many people who see our actions think that it takes a lot of courage to act in these terms, however, I do not consider myself a courageous person at all and rather believe that what drives us to act is a sense of truth, a sense of deeply accepting the situation in which we find ourselves. To accept that as citizens we have responsibilities for our own future, for the people around us and future generations. Once you accept, once you look at the situation, we find ourselves in, it becomes impossible for me not to do everything in our power to try to change things.* (Field Note 2)

> *I believe that for everyone, truth is an important concept. We ask this of our children. We ask that truth be a value above everything, because we cannot have anything based on lies, on deception. Societies are based on truth, the coexistence of human beings is based on truth. But instead we are being told a bunch of lies. That of Denialism is a concept that we are all well aware of, we are well aware of Trump's denialism, which we put at a very high rung of denialism; then we have somewhat softer denialism, such as that of Merkel, Obama, and other heads of state who dig the hole to plant saplings.* (Field Note 3)

These three statements highlight the frames that structured the formation of a new insurgent consciousness. From this point of view, at least two quite obvious frames emerge, that of agency, of having to act to do something, of having to change a dangerous situation for the next generations, and that what has been done up to that point is no longer enough, more needs to be done. Another frame is that of injustice, of the fact that governments do not seriously consider the demands of their citizens and indeed "row against" them. If the latter is the master frame, inherited from previous struggles, from the climate movement that began to mobilize between 2006 and 2007, what is emerging is a new master frame, that of agency, which moves through a precise repertoire of conflict, that of nonviolent civil disobedience, more perturbative and challenging.

Figure 4 shows a higher number of semi-conventional and perturbative contentious episodes in the period from December 2021 to mid-March 2022, which coincides with the launch of the UG campaign. The two peaks essentially indicate the formation of a new insurgent consciousness and the subsequent creation of a new coordination that would be the one to convey UG out of XR Italy as will be seen even better in Figure 5.

In Figure 5 we have disaggregated the number of contentious episodes claimed by XR Italy as an autonomous movement, UG as a campaign of XR Italy, and UG as a spin-off movement. It can be seen that at the end of March, there were no more contentious episodes claimed by XR Italy, but the number of episodes by UG as an autonomous movement begin to increase.

In Figure 6 we note the escalation process undertaken by UG, leading the movement to gain its own recognizability through the repertoire of protest used.

Aggregating the protest repertoire data, as seen in Figure 7, we clearly notice the difference between the two movements from the significantly higher number of perturbative episodes in UG compared to XR Italy and the near absence of conventional repertoire within UG, which is very present in XR Italy.

What also changes are the targets of the protest identified by UG and how the protest affects the targets. As shown in Table 3, activists identify new terrain of conflict, seeking visibility by daubing orange/yellow paint on the headquarters of government institutions,

Table 3. UG Targets.

Target	*n. episodes*
large public squares and places	1
municipal roads	12
provincial road, ring road, GRA, highway	18
museum, art gallery, theater	10
School, university	1
Trade union or party headquarter	4
National government institution	22
office and/or private company headquarters	4
tot.	72

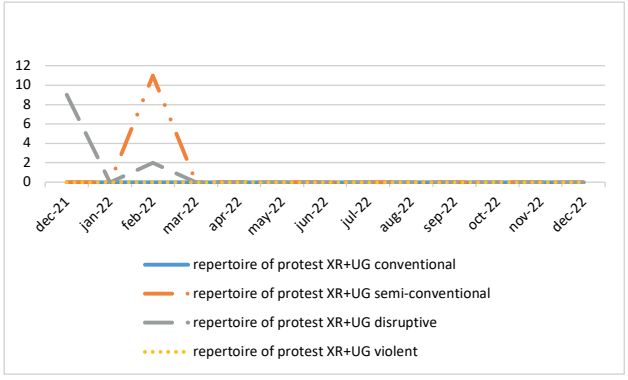

Figure 4. "UG campaign" of protest within XR Italy.

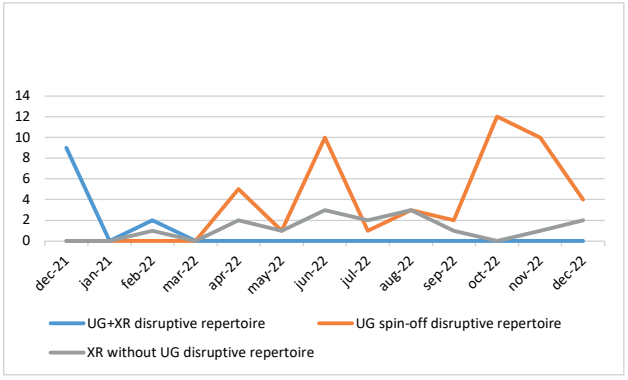

Figure 6. UG protest escalation by number of disruptive episodes.

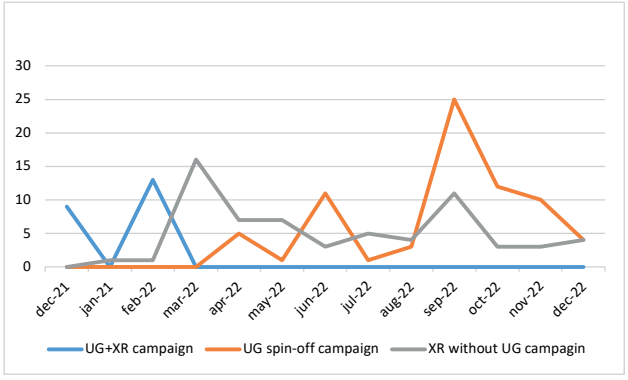

Figure 5. UG genesis as a spin-off movement.

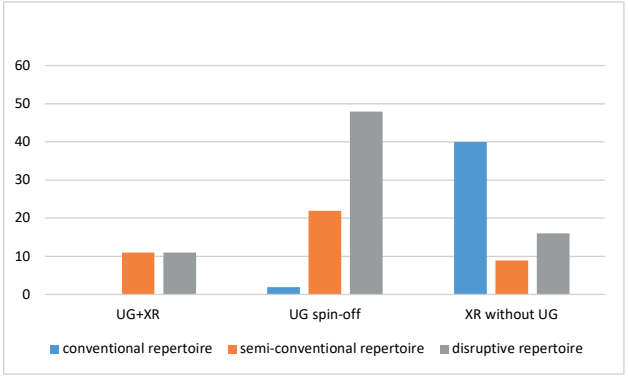

Figure 7. Comparison of each repertoire of protest.

Table 4. UG Contentious performance.

Performance	*n. episodes*
Rally, march	3
Roadblock	30
hunger strike, chaining	23
Building defacement (or similar)	16
tot.	72

important streets and art galleries. It is an unprecedented terrain of conflict.

Disaggregating the data collected for each individual conflict performance, we note that road blockade, along with defilement and hunger strike are the favorite repertoires of actions by UG activists.

UG like XR Italy also followed the logic of testimony rather than that of number. Figure 8 compares the data for UG and XR Italy and shows how the two curves often intersect. The average value that emerged from data processing for UG is 6.1 and is equivalent to a minimum of 5 activists to a maximum of 10 activists per protest, slightly lower than that of XR Italy, which ranged from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 15. As is evident from the words of an activist from UG.

> *Now, after some also quite strong actions that we have done we are not experiencing repression, though we know that it will come, because it has come for example in England and Germany. However, even when we begin to experience it we are prepared to go all the way. Each of our actions is associated with concepts of sacrifice and willingness to go all the way to the end of all legal consequences, including the possibility of arrest and imprisonment.* (Field Note 4)

In the case of UG we cannot speak of a logic of damage, but certainly the activists used a decidedly more perturbative repertoire than XR, which in some cases created annoyance, controversy, discussion, and a willingness to react, as in the actions of defacement in art galleries or the prolonged blockades in major thoroughfares. Rather than the logic of damage, we can speak of a "dilemmatic" logic, which leads precisely to the opening of a quasi-binary reasoning within public opinion, in which the observer can judge the protest acceptable and therefore support it, or unacceptable and therefore reject it totally.

One fact that clearly differentiates UG and XR Italy is that of the spread of the protest. UG unlike XR Italy has concentrated its forces on Rome. In fact, as seen in Figure 9, almost all the protests took place in the Italian capital. This does not reflect UG's rootedness in that specific area but a strategic choice, to channel all the forces into a single city, where most Italian institutions reside.

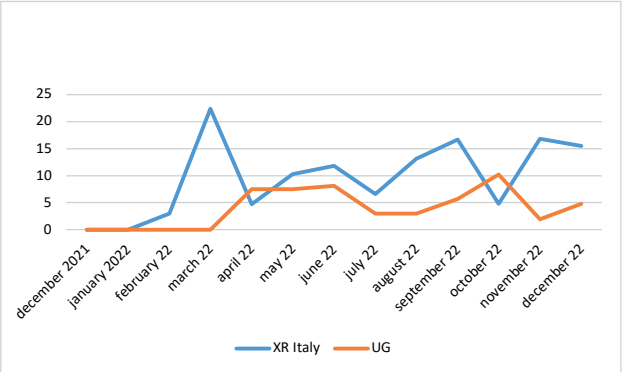

Figure 8. Average number of activists per XR Italy and UG single protest

Figure 9. Major areas involved in the UG contentio.

In addition to the radicalization process of the contentious repertoire, another process was activated that led to the emergence of UG as a spin-off movement of XR Italy, a process that is less manifest but equally important. The activists who created UG are not only the bearers of a new insurgent consciousness, they have not only treasured the lessons learned from previous

cycles of mobilization, but they are also those disillusioned by some of the mechanisms underlying XR Italia. This is clear from some of the testimonies.

> *I was considering how important it is to integrate diversity. Like going to work with the emarginated, figuring out how you can be more open to integrating more diverse people with each other. With XR, I always saw some difficulty. Even in going and getting people who were kind of on the margins, because initially in XR there were people who thought differently, and instead of integrating them we went and fished for people who were more conformist. So I saw the difficulty in breaking these patterns and trying to bring in people who were a little bit different.* (Field Note 5)

> *With XR we used to go to other people's initiatives, they used to come to ours, and that was it. Simply participating in other people's activities didn't make sense, because then we never really understood what we wanted to share and the points on which we wanted to unite with other movements. It was obviously frustrating and that was the moment when I said, I have to take a break from XR because this thing is not working. I think now the advantage that UG has is that it stands on its own, there is a notoriety and a strong identity, recognizable aspects to focus on.* (Field Note 6)

> *I'm in UG for several reasons, certainly to fight against climate disruption. In 2019 I was in XR but my participation in XR has been quite up and down because I find it a bit of a cumbersome movement, a bit inconclusive. A couple of months ago I approached UG, where I find very clear ideas, determination, very well-organized activities, and I also did a participation in a couple of actions as a support.* (Field Note 7)

> *I also read the strategy document for the next interation, and it really moved me. How did I experience it? I was busy with so many things, however, I really went wow! Something new is happening and you could see that something new had happened, that there was a quantum leap from XR. Here you really feel like you're a protagonist, you see the things you do being filmed on TV.* (Field Note 8)

Most of UG's activists come from past experiences in XR Italy, some of them disappointing, especially from the point of view of the degree of internal organization and the degree of individual participation within the movement, highlighting the existence of a fracture or weakening between the fringes of the movement, the grassroots and the top, the leadership. Indeed, it was the fringes of XR Italy that gave rise to UG. These critical issues were problematized, reworked and resolved within UG. The latter, in fact, is characterized as a movement that makes the personalization of protest the means through which to recruit new activists and attract media coverage. In other words, UG has succeeded in orienting the kind of participation that distinguishes contemporary, surplus participation – the individual's desire to do something for others and at the same time do something to make sense of his or her own life – into collective action and more or less shared ideals, such as, in this case, safeguarding the planet from the climate crisis (Burnham 2001; Flinders and Buller 2006; Bosi and Zamponi 2019; Marsh and Akram 2015).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this article we described the genesis of *Ultima Generazione* to which we assigned the label of spin-off movement from the original group called Extinction Rebellion. The UG activists have found new effectiveness through an obvious radicalization of action repertoire showing a strong ability to organize and construct new cultural significations.

The discourse on the cultural meanings of social movements includes two aspects that are often overlooked, although they have attracted the attention of sociologists of participation in recent years. We refer to conflict performances and emotions. Some scholars view collective claims as performances that link actors to the goals of the claims (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). According to Tilly, contentious performances are the ways in which each social movement advances certain claims on specific issues (Tilly 2008). From this point of view, he argues that every social movement presupposes a certain degree of WUNC (Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, Commitment), thus having to work on the public reputation of the movement, its compactness, its size, and the level of activist commitment. The greater the WUNC a movement can bring to bear, the greater the chances of success (Tilly 2006: 53).

Performances are thus strategic tools of social movements; through them, activists connect to prior cultural knowledge derived from previous repertoires of meaning (Alexander 2006: 32). At the same time, they enrich performances with new meanings that will become a cultural background for future movements. Each movement is in fact a system of cultural experimentation with new languages and practices. For example, the musical repertoire of social movements is crucial, as it becomes the soundtrack for confrontational performances, often combining different generations of activists (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). Thus, movements are not only fluid organizational formulas, but also forms of public action in which activists, participating in a performance, play roles and parts as in a play. By manifesting social discomfort, they contribute to cultural transformation and

the elaboration of new systems of meaning that they aim to disseminate in the society in which they operate.

Everything within the activists' cultural styles is part of this project of constructing new semantics. Lifestyles, rituals, arts, bodies, clothing, music and dance become a cultural component of performances, conditioning the expressive and emotional dimensions of movements. UG activists, disillusioned by past experiences have therefore fielded new forms of experimentation through new performances and more radical and perturbative action repertoires, gaining greater media visibility, proposing highly divisive actions that have animated public debate and mobilized emotions.

The issue of emotions is very important. They are central to all political processes, influenced by expectations, rules, individual personalities and usually conditioned by traditions, cultural patterns and collective learning processes (Goodwin *et al.* 2001). Love, hatred, anger, trust, and respect are emotions embodied in political action and can be short-lived, like fear or a panic attack, or long-lived, conditioning the entire course of action, as in the case of anger and indignation, two key feelings in conflict performances. Of course, emotions embody every activist action, but that does not mean they determine them. Conflict practices are not the outcome of emotions, but of specific worldviews. The emotional dimension is very important in the ascendant phase of a movement and in the phase of recruiting new activists. Anxiety, anger, hatred, but also hope, are all pre-political emotions that motivate political action after being politicized. Anger and hatred of an injustice, when charged with political meaning, become moral indignation, which is the predominant feeling in any confrontational political action (Gamson 1991; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1997).

Emotions also come into play in the growth phase of a social movement in which enthusiasm and joy prevail, as well as in the waning phase in which disappointment and frustration over perceived failure become the emotions that all activists must face. Indeed, the decline of a movement brings out envy, jealousy, distrust, all feelings that generate fragmentation. It is still too early to determine whether the new strategic course of the climate movement in Italy will be successful. For the time being, we have limited ourselves to describing its genesis with particular regard to the performative capacity and confrontational practices expressed by *Ultima Generazione*.

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Oltre il "paradosso di genere": l'identità di genere come "schema culturale" e "risorsa simbolica" nell'era delle singolarità

Silvia Cervia

Abstract. The analysis of the so-called gender paradox represents the starting point of a theoretical-interpretative framework which, through a structuralist analysis of gender identity, intends to introduce understanding criteria capable of shedding new light on a paradox that only appears to be such. After examining the achievements of the most recent sociological literature on gender, with particular reference to the multidimensional perspectives that look at gender as a structure in the Giddensian sense, the article proposes an original interpretative framework that explores the potentialities of structuration theory, delving into the dual nature inherent in structures, through the recurrence of "cultural patterns" and "symbolic resources". The second part of the article proposes a theoretical shift that assumes gender identity as a structure, to thematize the processes of social structuring that, starting from modernity, have led to the emergence of individuation processes, then declined, in late-modern societies, into individualization and singularization. The proposed interpretative framework allows, in the concluding part of the article, both to highlight how the gender paradox is not paradoxical at all, and to read the strong polarisation of the public debate around the redefinition of possible gender identifications as an expression of the new cleavage between hyper-culture and cultural essentialism.

Keywords: gender paradox, gender identity, structuration theory, singularization.

1. INTRODUZIONE

Il genere è entrato in modo sempre più prepotente all'interno del discorso pubblico. Da argomento elitario, riservato a ristretti e spesso marginalizzati circoli accademici o alle rivendicazioni dei movimenti femministi, ha progressivamente conquistato la scena pubblica divenendo, nel nuovo millennio, uno dei *contested-concept* attorno ai quali si concentrano dispute anche molto accese.

L'assunto originariamente acquisito come un dato, ovvero l'articolazione binaria uomo-donna, nel corso degli ultimi sessant'anni è stato progressivamente problematizzato, rivelando i limiti sia della semplificazione di una costruzione che assume a proprio fondamento l'esistenza di due categorie dotate di relativa omogeneità interna sia del binarismo in sé, favorendo lo

sviluppo di approcci intersezionali e consentendo l'emersione di generi multipli e fluidi.

L'istanza del superamento delle diseguaglianze di genere si è così tradotta, alle nostre latitudini, in discorsi ispirati al *framework* del *degendering* che trova nella degenderizzazione linguistica – con la promozione del ricorso a pronomi neutri, l'introduzione di segni grafici in sostituzione delle desinenze maschili o femminili (cfr. *, ə, *pl.* 3) o di bagni *gender-neutral* – la principale arma per ridurre i pregiudizi di genere e le distinzioni binarie (Liu *et al*. 2018). In breve, si assume che se non è possibile distinguere le persone in categorie fondate sul genere, diventa difficile trattarle in modo diverso. Una prospettiva che alimenta una dialettica accesa tanto nel dibattito scientifico che in quello pubblico.

Se nell'ambito del dibattito scientifico tali posizioni possono essere ricondotte al femminismo post-strutturalista, che sostiene la necessità di superare l'identità di genere *tout court* promuovendo politiche capaci di sovvertirne la sostantività (Butler 2013 [1990]), non mancano voci critiche che, dal fronte del femminismo della differenza o da versanti di matrice strutturalista, evidenziano come le pratiche di decostruzione delle narrazioni (ancorché naturalizzanti) rischino di oscurare, rafforzandoli e alimentandoli, i processi di diseguaglianze sociali (c.d. *regendering*) finendo per invisibilizzare sia la(e) storia(e) delle donne sia le dinamiche di esclusione e marginalizzazione sociale specificamente legate al genere (Lorber 2022).

Nell'ambito del dibattito pubblico le istanze di *degendering* si intersecano con la politica delle identità, offrendole nuovo alimento (Moran 2020) e dando forma alle antinomie che sostanziano la versione attuale del c.d. "paradosso di genere" (Lorber 1995). Se, negli anni Novanta, Judith Lorber denunciava la paradossale persistenza delle diseguaglianze di genere a fronte di un crescente successo del discorso sulla parità di genere sulla scena pubblica (*Ibidem*), oggi la stessa Autrice sottolinea come la persistenza delle prime coesista con una crescente messa in discussione del binarismo in sé (Lorber 2022). Ed è attorno a questa antinomia e alla sua possibile composizione che prende corpo il portato normativo insito nella lettura dell'Autrice: le «identità personali» (Ivi: 21), sempre più capaci di performare identità multiple e non binarie, dovrebbero allearsi per dar vita ad una «casa comune» di identificazione, «un terzo genere» (Ivi: 153), che non riesce a prendere forma a causa del «ribellismo individualistico» della molteplicità delle emergenti identità personali, orientate verso obiettivi estremamente eterogenei che impediscono loro di riconoscersi come alleate (Ivi: 21).

Ai fini del percorso interpretativo che si intende proporre, la prospettiva di Lorber ha il merito di porre al centro della riflessione il nesso tra genere e processi di costruzione identitaria, evidenziando come le istanze di *degendering* mettano in discussione i generi come categoria sociale, prima che linguistico-grammaticale[1]. Le categorie di genere emergono, così, quali strutture costitutive dei processi di senso (significazione[2]) agìti nella maggior parte delle interazioni con gli altri e con noi stessi, al punto da rappresentare il terreno di coltura delle stesse identità multiple e fluide (Lorber 2022), e la loro mobilitazione, imponendo di smettere di classificare automaticamente come uomini o donne tutti coloro con cui si interagisce e minando la stessa stabilità e validità dell'auto-identificazione in uomo o donna, genera confusione ed ansia nella maggior parte delle persone, destabilizzandole (Ridgeway 2011). Da questa intersezione, tra genere e identità, Lorber articola il paradosso e delinea rischi ed opportunità dei processi di *degendering*. Da un lato (rischi) la rinaturalizzazione delle differenze di genere e l'eliminazione totale delle identità di genere; dall'altro (opportunità) il superamento delle diseguaglianze fondate su una categorizzazione binaria attraverso l'elaborazione di un terzo genere (Lorber 2022).

Ma perché le identità multiple e non binarie sono «incapaci di riconoscersi come alleate» (cit. *supra*)? Perché i processi di mobilitazione attorno al genere non convergono attorno alla costituzione di un terzo genere quale «casa comune» di riconoscimento, rimanendo ancorati a quello che Lorber definisce «ribellismo individualistico»? E questa tendenza è compatibile, ed eventualmente come, con le istanze che «vogliono bandire le identità di genere per intero» (Ivi: 153)? Nell'affrontare questa sfida interpretativa l'articolo esplora le potenzialità della prospettiva strutturalista adottata dalla stessa Lorber per mostrare come, proseguendo sul sentiero tracciato dalla più recente letteratura sociologica che guarda al genere come struttura attraverso la teoria della strutturazione (Martin 2004; Risman 2004, 2018), sia possibile costruire un *framework* interpretativo capace di gettare nuova luce sulle dinamiche oppositive identificate dal c.d. "paradosso di genere" che si riveleranno tali solo in apparenza. Un percorso interpretativo che si configura come un recupero radicale della teoria della

[1] Si noti che anche i contesti connotati da *genderless language* (come il cinese, l'estone o il finlandese) hanno mostrato di essere attraversati da androcentrismo e pregiudizi di genere che rischiano di essere ancora più insidiosi (Crouch 2018).

[2] Sulla base di una consolidata letteratura ci riferiremo ai processi di significazione come a quei processi tramite i quali le cose, le persone, le relazioni e le situazioni, assumono un significato per l'attore sociale (Volonté 2017) e attraverso cui si forma la stessa percezione del sé (Ruspini 2008).

strutturazione la cui capacità euristica viene estesa fino a ricomprendere due aspetti attualmente in ombra: da un lato, la considerazione della natura intrinsecamente duale delle strutture e, dall'altro, la ricorsività dei processi di costruzione di individui e istituzioni.

2. SUL GENERE COME STRUTTURA SOCIALE

Nell'ambito del dibattito sociologico attorno al genere, il nuovo Millennio ha portato con sé un progressivo convergere verso cornici interpretative che guardano al genere come sistema di stratificazione che: esiste anche al di fuori delle caratteristiche individuali, varia lungo altri assi di diseguaglianza e agisce contemporaneamente, e in modo ricorsivo, sui tre livelli dell'osservazione sociologica: *micro*, *meso* e *macro* (Risman e Davis 2013; Risman, Froyum e Scarborough 2018). Una linea interpretativa che non solo rappresenta il presupposto del c.d. "paradosso di genere" ma consente, attraverso i concetti di istituzione (Lorber 1995, 2022; Martin 2004) e di struttura (Risman 2004, 2018; Risman e Davis 2013), interpretati alla luce della teoria della strutturazione, di superare la miopia dei precedenti *framework* che, oltre a focalizzarsi in modo esclusivo su un singolo livello di osservazione, si collocavano unilateralmente all'interno del paradigma della struttura o dell'azione, puntando l'attenzione ora sulla riproduzione del sistema di genere ora sulla capacità performativa e creativa dei singoli attori in interazione.

La cornice teorica che guarda al genere attraverso la teoria della strutturazione giddensiana ha progressivamente preso corpo a partire dall'ipotesi che guardava al genere come istituzione sociale, proposta per la prima volta da Judith Lorber (1995) e poi ripresa da Patricia Hancey Martin (2004) che ha esplorato le potenzialità euristiche del ricorso al concetto di istituzione *à la* Giddens. La ricorsività tra struttura e azione si manifesta, secondo Martin, nelle istituzioni sociali attraverso connotazioni precipue, tutte perfettamente applicabili al genere, che sottolineano la stretta interrelazione e interpenetrazione dei processi sociali che costruiscono il *micro* (individuo) e il *macro* (istituzione). Guardare all'uno (livello istituzionale) significa, necessariamente, prendere in considerazione l'altro (livello individuale) come reciprocamente intervenienti, al punto tale che nessuna delle caratteristiche strutturanti le istituzioni prescindono dall'individuo; le istituzioni vengono, infatti, ad essere connotate per il loro essere (1) profondamente sociali, in quanto sostanziate da (e in) pratiche condivise da specifici gruppi; (2) caratterizzate da una tendenza alla persistenza nel tempo e nello spazio; (3) alimentate da pratiche sociali specifiche e distinte agite dai singoli e da gruppi; (4) struttura abilitante e al contempo limitante il comportamento individuale e collettivo; (5) costituite da posizioni e relazioni collegate a specifiche aspettative, regole/norme e procedure; (6) costruite e ricostruite continuamente grazie a processi di incorporazione/ abitualizzazione; (7) interiorizzate nella stessa costruzione del sé dei membri del gruppo; (8) radicate in una ideologia legittimante; (9) attraversate da conflitti; (10) in continuo cambiamento; (11) organizzate in accordo con, e permeate da, il potere; e, infine, (12) costruite reciprocamente e ricorsivamente "con" gli individui. In questo modo la distinzione stessa tra *macro* e *micro* viene ad essere superata: le istituzioni "entrano" nella costituzione dell'individuo (caratteristica n.7) e al contempo risultano dotate di relativa autonomia (caratteristica n.2); con l'ulteriore vantaggio di permettere di considerare la possibilità di una scarsa coerenza o integrazione interna al genere come istituzione (caratteristica n.9) ma anche, attraverso la porosità delle istituzioni che si influenzano le une con le altre, di spiegare i processi di trasformazione e cambiamento (caratteristica n.10).

Ed è proprio a partire da queste connotazioni che consentono di leggere le istituzioni in termini di cambiamento piuttosto che di riproduzione che si situa il contributo di Barbara Risman che, ponendosi in linea di continuità con le elaborazioni appena illustrate[3], propone di ricorrere al concetto di struttura sociale piuttosto che a quello di istituzione, considerando come la struttura sia il concetto utilizzato dalla teoria della strutturazione per cogliere la capacità trasformativa dei sistemi sociali (2004; Risman e Davis 2013). Ricorrendo alla teoria della strutturazione Risman concettualizza quindi la dualità del genere, a partire dalla ricorsività tra struttura e azione, con il preciso obiettivo di prestare attenzione sia al modo in cui la struttura modella le scelte individuali e l'interazione sociale, sia al modo in cui l'azione umana crea, sostiene e modifica la struttura. Il genere come struttura, in questi termini, consente di considerare come la struttura di genere differenzi opportunità e vincoli in base alla categoria sessuale e agisca contestualmente e ricorsivamente su tre dimensioni (e, quindi, sui tre livelli dell'osservazione sociologica) che si influenzano reciprocamente: a livello *micro*, in relazione allo sviluppo individuale, in termini di sviluppo di sé di genere; a livello *meso*, orientando l'interazione situata di

[3] Una linea di continuità che se ad un certo punto del processo di elaborazione sembra quasi venire declinato in termini di coerenza sostanziale (Risman 2004) trova progressivamente modi e spazi per essere specificata e approfondita in argomentazioni che sottolineano l'autonomia e le specificità di questo paradigma rispetto al precedente (Risman e Davis 2013; Risman 2018).

uomini e donne a partire da aspettative culturali diverse anche quando occupano le identiche posizioni strutturali; e, a livello *macro*, permeando le istituzioni attraverso logiche culturali e norme di genere che sovrintendono la distribuzione dei beni materiali e delle risorse (Risman e Davis 2013; Risman 2018).

Per questa via Risman giunge a declinare, a ciascun livello di osservazione, la dualità tra paradigma (struttura) e sintagma (azione) propria della teoria della strutturazione, identificando due dimensioni distinte: la dimensione sintagmatica, da lei declinata come dimensione materiale, in cui l'azione dà corpo, attualizza, incarna le strutture, e la dimensione culturale, paradigmatica, integralmente virtuale, riferita alle cornici di possibilità che preesistono l'azione, al contempo limitandola e abilitandola (cfr. *infra* Figura 1). La reciproca strutturazione di struttura e azione, che agiscono e interagiscono contestualmente a ciascun livello di osservazione, contribuiscono a definire e ridefinire continuamente il genere come struttura (Risman 2018), secondo una logica che vede gli spazi di possibilità, culturalmente definiti, continuamente soggetti a processi di ridefinizione per opera dell'azione che trasforma in sintagma specifici contenuti del paradigma, aprendo così a nuovi spazi di possibilità che diventano "reali" solo quando agìti. Ma se l'azione rende possibile l'apertura di nuovi spazi perché, ad esempio, la costante azione performativa di identità multiple, fluide e non binare non conduce alla rivendicazione di una ridefinizione delle strutture e all'introduzione di un terzo genere quale casa comune di riconoscimento? Una questione cruciale, tematizzata e non spiegata dal c.d. paradosso di genere che, come cercheremo di mostrare, può trovare una diversa chiave interpretativa mutuando dalla teoria della strutturazione un altro importante tassello interpretativo che ha a che fare con la dualità intrinseca delle strutture. Guardare alla dualità delle strutture ci consentirà, nel prosieguo del testo, di connettere le strutture ai gruppi sociali (e alle relative identità) gettando nuova luce sulle implicazioni dei processi di ricorsività che legano struttura e azione, e sulle dinamiche che rendono possibile la permeabilità del paradigma, che delinea la struttura di genere come fonte di identificazione (e individuazione), al sintagma che sembra decostruire la stabilità e sostantività di questi processi.

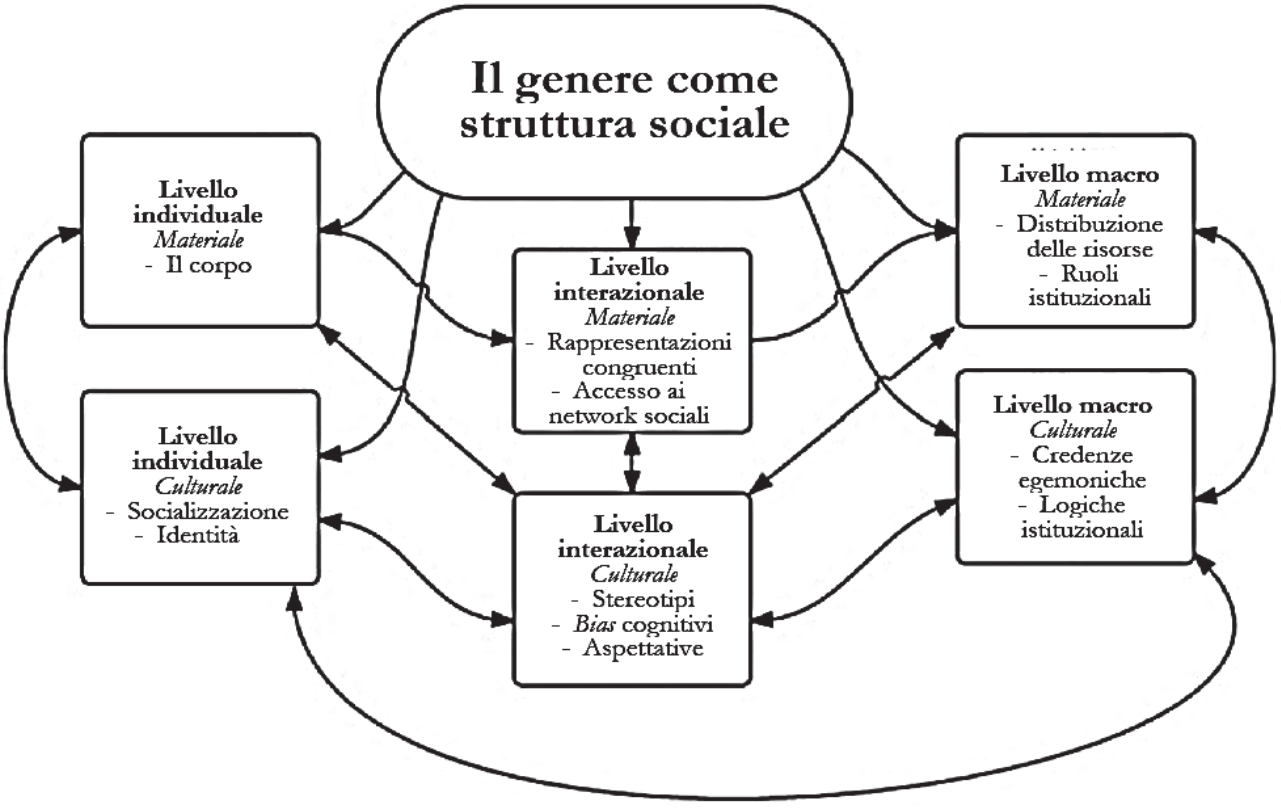

Figura 1. Il genere come struttura sociale. *Fonte*: Risman 2018: 31. Traduzione dell'Autrice.

3. LA DUALITÀ INTRINSECA DELLE STRUTTURE

Per esplorare le implicazioni relative alla dualità delle strutture nella teoria giddensiana è anzitutto necessario considerare lo statuto integralmente virtuale che Giddens assegna alle strutture, considerate paradigmi che si fanno sintagmi attualizzandosi nei sistemi sociali, attraverso le pratiche (Giddens 1990 [1984]). Le strutture vengono così ad essere configurate come «un ordine virtuale di differenze prodotto e riprodotto nell'interazione sociale come proprio mezzo e risultato» (Giddens 1979: 18), una virtualità su cui si fonda il loro essere simultaneamente costitutive tanto degli agenti che delle pratiche sociali (*Ibidem*). Come abbiamo avuto modo di accennare, Giddens sottolinea come le strutture siano intrinsecamente duali, essendo costituite dall'insieme di tutte le regole e di tutte le risorse preesistenti alle trasformazioni possibili, «regole e risorse implicate ricorsivamente nella riproduzione dei sistemi sociali» (*Ibidem*). Le prime (regole) si riferiscono a quelle procedure generalizzabili implicate nell'attuazione/riproduzione delle pratiche sociali in quanto «base organica della conoscenza-competenza umana» (Giddens 1990 [1984]: 364), mentre le seconde (risorse) sono definite da Giddens come «i mezzi attraverso cui la capacità trasformativa viene impiegata come potere nel corso abituale dell'interazione sociale» (Ivi: xxix) e possono a loro volta essere declinate in risorse d'autorità, capaci di generare il controllo/comando sulle persone, e in risorse allocative, che generano controllo su prodotti materiali o su aspetti del mondo materiale (Giddens 1979, 1990 [1984]).

Nella letteratura che applica il paradigma della strutturazione al genere la dualità intrinseca delle strutture non viene ad essere tematizzata in modo specifico e, quando evocata, è declinata come dualità tra «regole implicite con cui le persone mettono in atto la struttura» e «distribuzioni materiali e osservabili di comportamenti, risorse e potere che ne derivano» (Ridgeway 2011: 57), in un modo che riporta questa dualità al di fuori della virtualità intrinseca delle strutture riconducendola alla dialettica con la materialità. Una interpretazione che affonda le proprie radici nella mediazione che del paradigma della strutturazione offre William Jr. Sewell che, nel tentativo di chiarire l'utilizzo di termini «solo in apparenza intuitivi» (Sewell 2008 [2005]: 81), offre una disamina delle componenti della struttura che tradisce l'impianto giddensiano, in quanto mantiene nell'orizzonte della virtualità solo le regole, che riconduce alla dimensione culturale, e traspone le risorse nell'attualità della pratica, identificandole nei beni materiali che traducono le regole in un ordine reale di differenze di risorse e potere (*Ibidem*); secondo una dialettica molto simile a quella che Risman propone tra materialità e cultura ad esemplificazione della relazione tra azione e struttura (cfr. *infra* Figura 1). Una interpretazione, quella sewelliana, che tende a sovrapporre la dualità tra struttura e azione alla dualità interna alle strutture, depotenziando completamente il portato euristico di questa seconda intuizione giddensiana. Al contrario, mantenere inalterata la virtualità integrale delle strutture, e declinarne la dualità interna attraverso una cornice interpretativa che guardi a regole e risorse come a coordinate che delineano – in termini puramente paradigmatici – il campo del possibile, consente, a nostro avviso, di arricchire il *framework* che guarda al genere come struttura sociale di un importante strumento interpretativo che si rivela fondamentale per comprendere le pratiche e le azioni che attualizzano, nelle società occidentali, il genere come struttura.

In riferimento al primo concetto, quello di "regole", il contributo di Sewell consente di tematizzare come si tratti di un costrutto utilizzato per riferirsi a quelle procedure generalizzabili utilizzate dagli attori sociali per dare senso alla realtà sociale, rendendo le persone capaci di agire e, quindi, competenti (assunto fondamentale dell'intera teoria giddensiana). Per questo, piuttosto che ricorrere al concetto di "regola" che rimanda a «qualcosa di simile a prescrizioni fissate in modo formale» (Sewell 2008 [2005]: 84) Sewell propone di utilizzare quello di "schema culturale", con il vantaggio di richiamare la tradizione dell'antropologia culturale che ricorre al termine di cultura per riferirsi alle conoscenze delle persone, mobilitate per dare senso alla realtà e agire, e di riconoscere contestualmente la «varietà di schemi culturali» (*Ibidem*) che alimentano rappresentazioni sociali condivise, informando il pensiero e l'azione e sostanziando il senso comune di quel particolare gruppo. Una proposta interpretativa che permette, tra l'altro, di richiamare quella costitutività sociale del conformismo logico di durkheimiana memoria, che àncora i sistemi di conoscenze di un particolare gruppo a specifiche logiche di classificazione, dotate di validità simbolica (Durkheim 2005 [1912]). Logiche di classificazione che generano codici convenzionalizzati che consentono, tra l'altro, di articolare quella generalizzabilità sopra richiamata in: *intersoggettività*, in quanto sistemi di significazione comuni ad un certo numero di interpreti, *plurisituazionalità*, poiché dotati di una costanza di significazione in ogni situazione in cui si incontrano, *interconnettività*, essendo organizzati in sequenze determinate (Morris 1977 [1948]) e, anche, *normatività* e almeno parzialmente *costrittività*, in quanto associati ed associabili alla pressione sociale, più o meno esplicita e forte a seconda

dei contesti e delle situazioni, a usare "correttamente" il codice (Boccia Artieri, Colombo e Gili 2022).

In riferimento, invece, al secondo costrutto è necessario emendare la lettura sewelliana, che trasponendo le "risorse" nell'attualità della pratica le sottrae alla dimensione paradigmatica per farne sintagma. Per delineare la corniche della virtualità integrale delle strutture, riteniamo utile richiamare la distinzione originariamente proposta da Giddens (1979) che paragonava la distinzione tra struttura e pratica a quella di Saussure tra *langue*, regole astratte che rendono possibile la produzione di frasi, e l'effettiva produzione di frasi, *parole*, consentendoci di tematizzare come all'interno della struttura astratta che permette la produzione di frasi (*competence*) non ci siano soltanto le regole (o schemi) ma i mezzi, ovvero i segni, intesi come simboli, che vengono usati per produrre frasi. In questa cornice è possibile configurare le "risorse" come "mezzi", ovvero "risorse simboliche", segni che comunicano per interpretazione richiedendo forme di inferenza o associazione convenzionalizzate legittimate da precisi assetti di potere (Gili e Colombo 2012). Un legame che la distinzione giddensiana tra risorse d'autorità e risorse allocative sopra richiamata declina in riferimento alla capacità di inscrivere nei segni diverse combinazioni di potere e di dominio di alcune posizioni sociali su altre e alla capacità trasformativa del mondo materiale insite nei processi di significazione che plasmano i confini simbolici dei gruppi sociali (Norton 2019)[4].

Per comprendere appieno le potenzialità di questa implicazione è necessario recuperare la centralità del genere in relazione ai processi di costruzione identitaria, molto ben tematizzato dalla teoria della strutturazione che, come abbiamo visto, riconosce un processo di co-costruzione reciproca tra individuo e istituzioni. Un processo che l'articolo si propone di esplorare rintracciando gli "schemi culturali" e le "risorse simboliche" che la modernità e la tarda modernità hanno costruito attorno all'identità di genere, scindendo, in prima istanza, analiticamente l'identità dal genere, per ricomporre poi, nel paragrafo successivo, le implicazioni relative all'identità di genere come principio di strutturazione sociale.

4. INDIVIDUO, IDENTITÀ E PROCESSI DI STRUTTURAZIONE

Senza avere l'ambizione né lo spazio per entrare nel merito del lungo e articolato dibattito sociologico attorno all'«identità come […] invenzione moderna» (Bauman 1999: 28), il percorso euristico che qui indentiamo proporre assume a proprio fondamento questo legame costitutivo tra modernità e identità, e si dipana considerando i cambiamenti occorsi in quei caratteri socialtipici che alimentano e sostengono lo sviluppo dell'"identità-Io del singolo" rispetto all'"identità-Noi" (Elias 1990 [1987]). Il processo di modernizzazione interviene ridefinendo le forme organizzative sociali delle unità di sopravvivenza, che passano da unità ridotte e poco diversificate a unità sociali ampie, sempre più differenziate e complesse (*Ibidem*) che spingono l'individuo ad individuarsi[5], distinguendosi dagli altri. Una dinamica di cambiamento degli stessi processi di significazione che, proprio a partire dalla modernità, si misurano con una nuova "risorsa simbolica": in questa epoca, infatti, il concetto di individuo viene ad essere utilizzato per la prima volta per riferirsi al singolo "uomo", indicandolo e specificandolo come *unicum* della specie (*Ibidem*), un utilizzo che andrà progressivamente ad esaurire tutto lo spazio semantico del concetto di *individuum* precedentemente usato nella tradizione scolastica per riferirsi ad un caso particolare di qualsiasi specie (*Ibidem*).

Se nelle società tradizionali l'identità-Io coincideva con l'identità-Noi, per cui la personalità di ciascuno risultava plasmata attorno alle *personalità modali* definite da solide e totalizzanti identità-Noi (Besozzi 2021), la prima modernità guarda a ciascun singolo, l'individuo, per liberarlo dai legami sociali ascritti, in virtù dei nuovi principi di universalismo e acquisitività (Parsons 1965 [1951]). Un programma istituzionalizzato che delinea uno "schema culturale" nel quale la dignità dell'individuo è posta al di sopra dei fini privati (personali, di clan e tribù ecc.) a partire da processi di socializzazione che consentivano l'adattamento individuale, volontario e programmato, in nome di principi percepiti come sacri e universali (Durkheim 1992 [1898]). Un percorso che, come è stato sottolineato, ponendo a fondamento del programma razionalistico di emancipazione individuale i principi di universalismo e uguaglianza rimane "dimezzato" (Beck e Beck-Gernsheim 2002), in quanto la cogenza della tradizione viene ad essere sostituita dalla

[4] Questi segni sono creazioni sociali e culturali che svolgono: a) una funzione di rappresentazione della realtà, perché per mezzo di essi gli uomini conoscono il mondo, si fanno una certa immagine del mondo ed agiscono in esso; b) una funzione di comunicazione per cui si scambiano dei messaggi e possono comprendere le reciproche intenzioni attraverso i segni che le manifestano (parole e gesti); c) una funzione di partecipazione sociale, per cui i segni favoriscono o suscitano un senso di appartenenza a determinati gruppi o collettività (Gili 1997; Gili e Colombo 2012).

[5] In linea con una pratica adottata da numerosi autori ci riferimento a questo processo ricorrendo al termine di individuazione per riferirsi alle caratteristiche riscontrabili nella modernità, e al concetto di individualizzazione per indicare il divenire del processo nella modernità avanzata (tra gli altri si veda Sciolla 2010, 2017).

cogenza delle istituzioni sociali che, se garantivano agli individui la soddisfazione dei loro bisogni, costringevano l'esperienza individuale nell'alveo di modelli istituzionalizzati.

La fase successiva delinea una radicalizzazione degli "schemi culturali" introdotti dalla modernità ridefinendo nuovamente il rapporto identità-Io e identità-Noi. L'individuazione si fa individualizzazione, generando privatismo e pluralismo dei valori a partire dall'imperativo morale all'autosufficienza (Sciolla 2017). L'esistenza da destino diventa un compito, un dovere, che tocca tutti indistintamente – coloro che sono inclusi e riconosciuti e gli esclusi (Pizzorno 1991) – chiamati ad essere responsabili della propria vita e della propria identità (come progetto). La radicalizzazione del processo di differenziazione e ampliamento delle forme organizzative sociali di eliasiana memoria favorisce, infatti, una pluralizzazione e diversificazione delle appartenenze e impone una nuova interpretazione del principio di uguaglianza, che viene ad essere declinato come equità, a garanzia del riconoscimento, tutela e valorizzazione delle differenze. Si delinea una liquefazione delle appartenenze, sempre meno stabili e cogenti, che se non intacca la costitutività del binomio identità-Io identità-Noi – è solo a partire dal riconoscimento di altri che si producono identificazioni selettive e progressive prese di distanza (Sciolla 2010) – ridefinisce in modo radicale il rapporto tra individuo e società, delineando scenari non componibili in una cornice unitaria. Se per alcuni questi cambiamenti producono un progressivo e ineluttabile indebolimento di "schemi culturali" capaci di alimentare i legami sociali – l'individuo è sempre più solo, ripiegato su se stesso e alla ricerca di approvazione, di identificazioni/appartenenze che si declinano come mode consumistiche e momentanee o come reazioni conservatrici – per altri la piena affermazione del modello razionalistico-riflessivo della modernità e la forza dei "legami deboli" offrono potenzialità di ricomposizione del sociale, veicolate da "schemi culturali" che favoriscono la capacità di coniugare una forte componente identitaria ad orientamenti universalistici e spinte solidaristiche verso gli altri (Leccardi e Volonté 2017).

Una dicotomia che emerge anche nella più recente letteratura che interpreta l'individualizzazione come "schema culturale" alla luce dell'affermarsi della logica del particolare come logica sociale delle società tardo moderne. Una logica che emerge in tutte le sfere sociali (dalla produzione al consumo, dalle istituzioni ai legami sociali) e coinvolge (travolge) il processo di individualizzazione, singolarizzandolo. Una logica che interviene, ancora una volta, trasformando il principio di uguaglianza che viene trasportato al di fuori della logica dell'equità: al crescere della sensibilità per l'espressione delle singolarità aumenta infatti la tolleranza pubblica e privata verso le diseguaglianze, non più percepite come iniquità ma come esito di unicità che si singolarizzano. La valorizzazione dell'individuo si declina ora nel riconoscimento di un valore intrinseco alla sua eccezionalità e straordinarietà, che passa dall'essere possibile (nell'alveo dell'universalismo) all'essere richiesta (presupposta/pretesa), una declinazione che impone una logica processuale (performativa o esistenziale) in cui i soggetti sono chiamati a lavorare (più o meno consapevolmente) su e con la loro individualità, non in funzione di un obiettivo ma avendo come unico fine la propria singolarità. L'individualizzazione si fa singolarizzazione: il rapporto identità-Io/identità-Noi muta ulteriormente aprendosi a scenari opposti in base all'interpretazione dell'impatto della singolarizzazione sulla logica che governa la relazione particolare-universale.

In un caso, Martuccelli (2010), la singolarizzazione è interpretata a partire dalla centralità che nelle società tardo moderne assume il singolo, non in termini ontologici, ma esistenziali. L'esistenza del singolo nella sua singolarità si fa generalità a partire dalla centralità che assume la vita personale nel suo divenire e, in particolare, nel "fronteggiamento" dei problemi personali (prove/sfide) che non sono, in realtà, personali ma sociali, nel senso che sono un prodotto storicizzato, culturalizzato e iniquamente distribuito (Martucelli 2022). Questa generalità, fondata su esperienze singolari, comporta una ridefinizione dell'identità-Noi, che acquisisce oggi una nuova centralità come contesto abilitante cui il singolo si rivolge per trovare quei supporti politici e sociali necessari per fronteggiare le prove/sfide, e dell'identità-Io, in cui si registra il passaggio dalla differenza alla singolarità, come riconoscimento dell'eterogeneità interna al gruppo. L'individuo è così liberato dall'ultimo *diktat*, quello omogeneizzante all'interno di differenze intergruppi, in favore di una personalizzazione delle differenze, in una società che fa della diversificazione delle esperienze culturali, sociali, etc. la nuova regola sociale (*Ibidem*). La singolarità esistenziale viene così interpretata come espressione del passaggio da una concezione solipsistica della coscienza verso una concezione dialogica del soggetto: la singolarità risulta inseparabile dalla pluralità in quanto la singolarizzazione si costituisce come distinzione da altre singolarità (Nancy 2013). Siamo entrati in un periodo in cui spesso è con riferimento alla singolarità raggiunta e consentita che si giudicano le istituzioni e la loro standardizzazione (Martuccelli 2022).

Nel secondo caso, Reckwitz (2020), la singolarizzazione declina il processo di individualizzazione al di fuori del paradigma razionalistico-riflessivo di tipo

generalista, invertendo il processo costitutivo del principio di differenziazione sociale: non più divisioni sociali che si costituiscono a partire da articolazioni di tipo generale (classi, ceti, generi, etc.) ma divisioni sociali che si culturalizzano in stili di vita (che devono essere costantemente performati e che si fondano su forme di comunicazione non più basate sulla razionalità ma sull'emozione). Come per Martuccelli, le strutture universali della società sono chiamate a permettere l'attivazione dei processi di singolarizzazione, per cui il sociale si riarticola in infrastrutture generali per la produzione di particolarità che devono essere continuamente performate (*Ibidem*), ma, diversamente da Martuccelli, in Reckwitz l'articolazione della singolarizzazione in stili di vita porta all'emersione di una nuova frattura sociale, attorno a cui si riarticolano nuovi *cleavage*. Da una parte le soggettività singolarizzate della nuova classe media altamente qualificata, cosmopolita e capace di riflessività disintermediata, i cui valori sono il successo e il riconoscimento individuale, in grado di approfittare della logica di emancipazione in termini di unicità perseguita. Dall'altra tutti coloro che non partecipano di tale opportunità, gli "sconfitti", gli "esclusi". Non raggiungere gli standard della singolarizzazione si coniuga, nell'analisi di Reckwitz, con un inedito processo di chiusura, che coglie una nuova, pervasiva, frattura sociale, quella fra iper-cultura ed essenzialismo culturale. È qui che nasce l'altra faccia della moneta della società tardo-moderna, quell'essenzialismo culturale che opera sul versante della chiusura della contingenza attraverso forme di re-indirizzamento della soggettività a partire da nuove dimensioni di comunitarismo fondate sulla somiglianza culturale e non sulla condizione socio-economica. Così all'interno delle infrastrutture generali per la produzione di particolarità si confrontano due possibili esiti (gruppi): i "vincitori" di questo processo, soggetti singolarizzati incarnazione di un nuovo ibrido neo-borghese e neo-romantico espressione dell'iper-cultura, e i "perdenti", che si re-indirizzano verso forme di comunitarismo fondate attorno ad un essenzialismo culturale.

L'identità individuale si delinea così come struttura sociale della modernità, a partire dalla definizione del concetto di individuo come una nuova "risorsa simbolica", per assumere, in virtù delle modifiche introdotte agli "schemi culturali" che sovrintendono le connessioni tra identità-Io e identità-Noi, nuove e inedite implicazioni nella modernità avanzata. Giddensianamente è, infatti, possibile leggere il processo che attraverso individuazione e individualizzazione porta alla singolarizzazione come il prodotto della dinamica di interazione tra struttura e azione, in cui la prima ha progressivamente riconosciuto, tutelato, promosso e poi imposto la seconda come principio di funzionamento sociale, delineando una nuova normatività etica, quella dell'esemplarità. Guardare all'identità come struttura in questi termini consente di considerare come la struttura identitaria differenzi opportunità e vincoli in base ai processi di strutturazione delle differenze sociali, prima ascritte, poi istituzionalizzate e, infine, singolarizzate e agisca contestualmente e ricorsivamente su tre dimensioni (e, quindi, sui tre livelli dell'osservazione sociologica). A livello *micro*, in termini di costruzione del sé, l'individuo è oggi esposto ad un imperativo morale ad esistere come singolarità performata; a livello *meso*, l'interazione viene a situarsi singolarizzandosi, per cui le relazioni sociali sono sempre più percepite come relazioni umane, sempre meno mediate dai ruoli sociali e dai contesti istituzionali e sempre più esperite in riferimento alla singolarità di quella specifica situazione; e, a livello *macro*, si assiste ad una ridefinizione delle istituzioni come infrastrutture generali per la produzione di particolarità, generando tanto la frattura tra iper-cultura e essenzialismo culturale che processi di legittimazione o delegittimazione delle istituzioni stesse in base all'esperienza singolarizzata della capacità delle istituzioni di sostenere l'eccezionalità individuale (quando ciò non accade si genera disincanto nei confronti delle istituzioni e si alimenta la ricerca di infrastrutture altre, capaci di valorizzarla).

5. L'IDENTITÀ DI GENERE COME RISORSA SIMBOLICA E SCHEMA CULTURALE

In quest'ottica il genere si delinea come una delle istituzioni della prima modernità. Il programma di individuazione istituzionalizzato è, infatti, intervenuto sugli "schemi culturali" premoderni assegnando all'identità di genere una valenza ordinativa della realtà sociale, principio universale per l'assegnazione dei ruoli sociali. La stringente differenziazione dei ruoli in base al genere venne non a caso salutata come massima espressione dello stadio positivo di sviluppo (Morgan e Comte) nel quale, grazie all'approccio scientifico, l'organizzazione sociale traduce i dati biologici in strutture sociali. Ecco che prende forma uno "schema culturale" che delinea, in base ad una logica combinatoria razionalista-riduzionista (causa-effetto), processi di differenziazione sociale fondati sulle differenze biologiche. Una logica semplificatoria che è stata non a caso definita deduttivo-identitaria (Morin 2017), da cui trae origine la riorganizzazione delle "risorse simboliche", attorno a quattro principali dimensioni[6]: il sesso, l'orientamento sessuale, la perce-

[6] Considerando l'obiettivo dell'analisi le "risorse simboliche" vengono indentificate sulla base delle ricorrenze presenti nella letteratura di rife-

zione sessuata di sé e la costruzione (e presentazione) di un sé di genere.

L'interpretazione fondata sull'opposizione identico/diverso ha prodotto una codifica binaria (M/F) che ha distinto tra esseri umani maschi e femmine in base all'osservazione delle regolarità anatomiche e fisiologiche (Héritier 2004), «ognuno doveva avere un solo e unico sesso. Ciascuno doveva possedere la sua identità sessuale primaria, profonda, determinata e determinante» (Foucault 1979: viii). Le possibilità "altre", note fin dall'antichità, sono state simbolicamente e praticamente negate, anche "grazie" allo sviluppo della medicina moderna che ha reso possibile intervenire chirurgicamente per "correggere" gli errori biologici, ovvero l'intersessualità (*Ibidem*). La seconda dimensione relativa all'orientamento sessuale, o sessualità (Lorber 2022), delinea un campo semantico di categorizzazione degli esseri umani in base alle caratteristiche bio-fisiologiche delle persone da cui si sentono attratti e con cui instaurano relazioni sessuali, emotive/romantiche. Un "mezzo" che la modernità ha articolato in un'unica opzione legittima, l'eterosessualità, quale base e fondamento della moderna famiglia monogamica e nucleare. Non è un caso che la seconda possibile "risorsa simbolica" relativa a questa dimensione, l'omosessualità, sia stata introdotta per opposizione, nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento, allo scopo di identificare una categoria di persone accomunate da una particolare "aberrazione" sessuale con il preciso obiettivo di tracciare un limite tra "normale" e "anormale" (Foucault 1999 [1984]). Un confine che, come per la precedente dimensione, ha alimentato – ed è stato alimentato da – i processi di medicalizzazione. La terza dimensione, che ha a che fare con la percezione sessuata di sé, è stata costruita, in linea con la logica combinatoria adottata, attorno ad un'unica, legittima, possibilità: il cisgenderismo; stigmatizzando prima e medicalizzando poi le condizioni "altre" (ad esempio attraverso il *label* disforie di genere). La quarta dimensione ha a che fare con la costruzione di un sé di genere coerente con la tipizzazione sociale, culturale e psicologica delle differenze sessuali applicato al singolo individuo (Piccone Stella e Saraceno 1996). Un processo che nella modernità ha prodotto codifiche binarie, del tutto funzionali alla costruzione di ruoli complementari, come nel modello famigliare *male-breadwinner/female-homemaker*, alimentando processi di socializzazione che consentivano l'adattamento dell'individuo a modelli istituzionalizzati di genere, favorendo lo sviluppo di abilità, competenze, attitudini, aspirazioni legate al polo dell'espressività, emotività, remissività, dipendenza etc. nelle bambine e nei bambini comportamenti, visioni del sé, e orientamenti legati a strumentalità, razionalità, autoaffermazione, indipendenza etc..

Il passaggio verso la tarda modernità, con l'affermazione dei processi di individualizzazione e singolarizzazione, ha rappresentato il prodotto e, assieme, la condizione di una modifica sostanziale delle "risorse simboliche" e degli "schemi culturali" che sovrintendono i processi di significazione dell'identità di genere. Un'identità sempre meno costretta all'interno di categorie istituzionalizzate e sempre più legittimata ad utilizzare i mezzi di identificazione disponibili per esprimere la propria irripetibile unicità e singolarità. Un processo in cui l'iniziale trasformazione dell'uguaglianza in equità ha alimentato la pluralizzazione dei "mezzi" di identificazione possibili, a riconoscimento di differenze legittime (che comunque continuano ad essere caratterizzate da un diverso grado di legittimazione simbolica), per aprirsi, oggi, ai diversi scenari della singolarità. Il paradigma dell'equità ha portato così alla progressiva decostruzione del binarismo M/F, in favore di una articolazione che vede M/F come polarità di un *continuun*; al crescente riconoscimento, nella seconda dimensione, accanto all'eterosessualità, di possibilità altre, non solo l'omosessualità, ma anche bisessualità, asessualità, etc; all'emergere di "altre" identificazioni possibili, accanto all'ipotesi *cisgender*, quali *transgender, non-binary, gender-fluid, gender queer*; mentre la decostruzione di processi di costruzione di sé di genere all'interno di modelli aspirazionali e di ruolo legati alle proprie caratteristiche bio-fisiologiche, affonda le proprie radici nelle lotte femministe per garantire pari accesso, formale e sostanziale, ai diversi ruoli sociali (lotte che inizialmente hanno riguardato la sfera pubblica e poi, sempre di più, quella privata). Nuovi "mezzi" di identificazione la cui logica di combinazione è retta da "schemi culturali" che abbandonano progressivamente il modello deduttivo-identitario, decostruendo prima il primo assunto e poi il secondo. L'abbandono dell'elemento deduttivo, e della logica riduzionista causa-effetto, ha favorito l'emergere di composizioni identitarie a "geometria variabile" dove l'identificazione in ciascuna dimensione può combinarsi con qualsiasi identificazione possibile nelle altre dimensioni, e sul secondo fronte si è registrato un progressivo estendersi delle possibilità di minore "persistenza" e "stabilità" nel tempo di alcune identificazioni, inizialmente associate a specifiche "fasi di sviluppo" dell'individuo verso identificazioni future (Ruspini 2003), all'intero costrutto identità di genere, sempre più sorretto da "schemi culturali" caratterizzati dalla logica della fluidità che non prevede e non presuppone più né la permanenza e né la stabilità nel tempo di alcuna delle possibili identificazioni (Ruspini 2008, 2013, 2018).

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rimento (limitandoci ai testi citati nel presente articolo rimandiamo ad esempio a Ruspini 2003, Lorber 2022), ma ricorrendo alle "etichette" di senso comune.

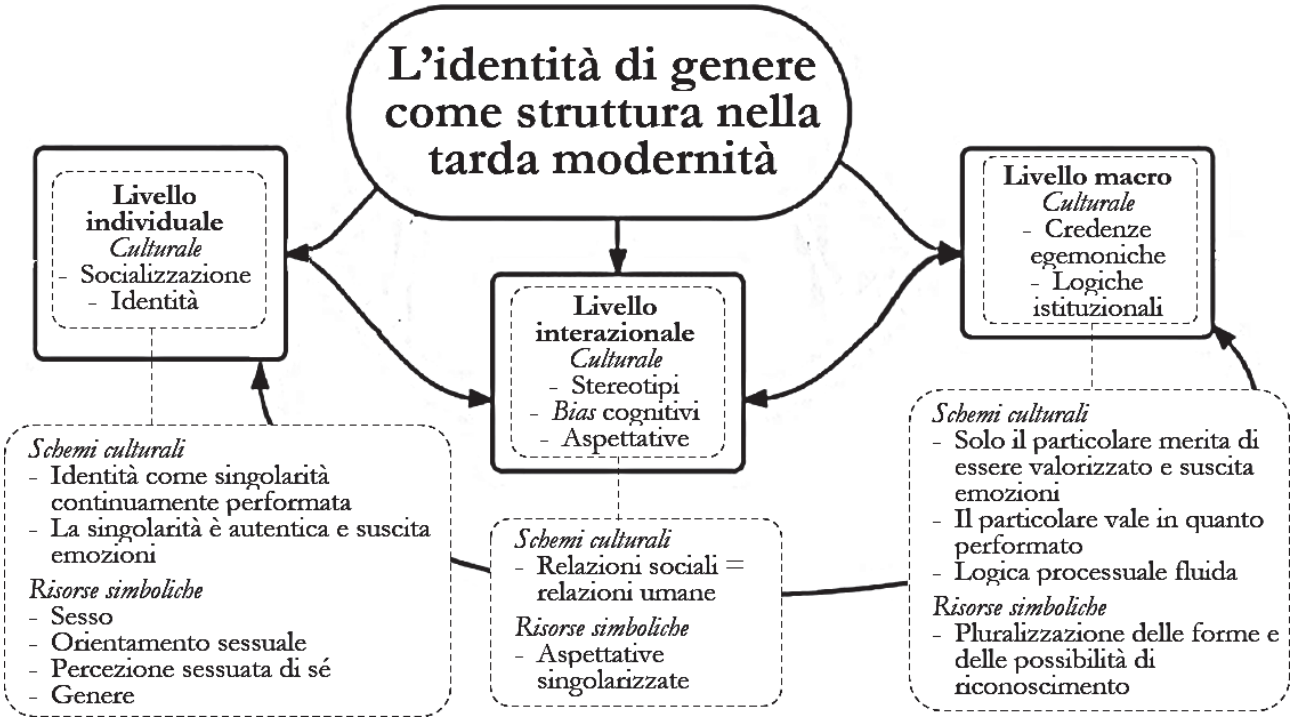

Figura 2. "Schemi culturali" e "risorse simboliche" che definiscono la dimensione paradigmatica (culturale) dell'identità di genere come struttura sociale nella tarda modernità. *Fonte*: elaborazione dell'Autrice a partire dallo schema proposto da Risman (cfr. *infra* Figura 1).

Assumere l'identità di genere come struttura consente, quindi, di considerare come l'imperativo morale alla definizione di una identità-Io *gendered* sia un portato squisitamente moderno, e sia collegato a processi di individuazione istituzionalizzati che orientavano i processi di socializzazione all'interno di cornici di *personalità di base* fortemente *gendered*. L'individuo viene riconosciuto e si riconosce come ontologicamente e biologicamente diverso da tutti gli altri esseri della specie e, grazie al principio di acquisitività, ha il diritto/dovere di ottenere/ottemperare al destino sociale che "si merita", un destino che, in un primo momento, poteva prender corpo all'interno di precisi binari socialmente precostituiti (istituzioni/ruoli di genere). Una costrizione che ben presto ha portato a tematizzare la presenza di questi "binari" e la loro compatibilità con il rispetto del principio di universalismo: prima assumendoli come un dato antropologico, di cui le società universaliste erano chiamate a farsi carico a garanzia dell'equità (e per evitare questo rischio era necessario che la società riconoscesse queste differenti antropologie e operasse attivamente affinché non si trasformassero in diseguaglianze), e poi decostruendo la sostanza culturale delle differenze (e, quindi, dei "binari" ad esse associate) evidenziando la capacità performativa dei confini tracciati tra le diverse antropologie, *in primis* del confine che separa uomini e donne. È lo sviluppo di questa matrice che porta alla declinazione esistenziale-performativa della singolarità, in cui l'individuo è liberato non solo dal destino sociale imposto prima dal principio di ascrittività e poi da quello di acquisitività moderna, ma dall'unitarietà costitutiva della sua individualità (da *in-divisus* a *divisus*). La tarda modernità declina una nuova concezione di acquisitività – non più ancorata a solide e unitarie antropologie che trovano nei processi di istituzionalizzazione la loro valorizzazione e tutela – in cui il riconoscimento sociale è legato alla capacità di performare/esistere la propria unicità/singolarità nel qui ed ora del continuo divenire delle interazioni sociali. Riprendendo l'esemplificazione proposta da Risman (cfr. *infra* Figura 1) gli "schemi culturali" e le "risorse simboliche" identificate possono essere utilizzate per delineare le cornici paradigmatiche che definiscono, nella modernità avanzata, l'orizzonte di possibilità che l'identità di genere come struttura mobilita rendendo possibile e al contempo limitando l'azione (cfr. *infra* Figura 2).

6. CONCLUSIONI: DUALITÀ, ANTINOMIE E NUOVE FRATTURE SOCIALI

Il percorso compiuto ha inteso evidenziare come l'identità di genere, costruita come struttura sociale dalla

modernità, non solo sia stata affrancata da traiettorie biografiche standardizzate in base al genere ma abbia progressivamente perso una connotazione ontologico-antropologica per assumerne una esistenziale/performativa, divenendo una risorsa per le singolarità.

Una traiettoria che può essere interpretata, nella prospettiva di Martuccelli, come espressione della capacità delle istituzioni sociali di sostenere il processo di singolarizzazione identitaria, riconoscendo e alimentando la progressiva fluidificazione tanto delle "risorse simboliche" che degli "schemi culturali" legittimamente mobilitabili. In questa cornice il "ribellismo individualistico" delle identità multiple e non binarie denunciato da Lorber non si configura affatto come incapacità di riconoscersi come alleate per dar vita ad un terzo genere come "casa comune" di riconoscimento ma, piuttosto, come espressione di identità personali singolarizzate, il cui riconoscimento non passa affatto dalla definizione di una nuova categoria sociale, una nuova istituzione o percorso biografico-identitario istituzionalizzato. Il paradigma è differente. La "casa comune" si definisce proprio in quanto è quella casa capace di sostenere ciascuna singolarità in quanto tale. Ma allora perché la ridefinizione tardo-moderna degli "schemi culturali" e delle "risorse simboliche" attorno alle identità di genere piuttosto che generare riconoscimento e fiducia nelle infrastrutture sociali che sostengono queste singolarità, produce paura e chiusura culturale?

Abbiamo detto di come il paradigma delle identità di genere moderne prenda forma a partire da una logica naturalizzante deduttivo-identitaria, fondata su rigide "risorse simboliche" e univoci e solidi "schemi culturali". Il passaggio da individualizzazione a singolarizzazione ha radicalmente messo in discussione questi schemi e risorse. Le risorse disponibili si pluralizzano, imponendo nuove categorizzazioni, e gli schemi culturali si fluidificano, non solo in quanto non sono più retti dalla rigida logica combinatoria razionalista-riduzionista o deduttivo-identitaria, ma perché declinano la combinazione stessa in termini performativo-esistenziali. Le composizioni sono sempre più a geometria variabile, non solo perché consentono tutte le combinazioni possibili, ma perché assumono a proprio fondamento la variabilità degli assetti nel fluire dell'esistenza, in una logica del particolare che si singolarizza e in cui il fenomeno *queer* viene ad essere letto come espressione della singolarizzazione in riferimento a genere e identità sessuale (Reckwitz 2020). Da qui prende forma, la specificità del confronto tra ipercultura delle identità di genere tardo-moderne ed essenzialismo culturale, rappresentato dal fronte che è andato coagulandosi attorno alla costruzione della c.d. *teoria gender/ideologia gender*. Un *label* che si costruisce, come la letteratura ha ampliamente evidenziato, attorno alla difesa dell'assunto deduttivo-identitario delle differenze di genere basato su differenze antropologico-ontologiche che fondano identità distinte e complementari, solide, stabili e costitutive di un ordine sociale a partire dagli assunti definiti dalla modernità: fondamento antropologico/ontologico delle differenze di genere (Garbagnoli 2014; Bernini 2016). Una forma di chiusura della contingenza che fonda una comunità che si definisce a partire da un nuovo essenzialismo culturale che si riconosce nel paradigma moderno di tipo deduttivo-identitario, opponendo così il riconoscimento mediato dalle istituzioni a quello singolarizzato, "contro-natura".

Ecco allora che lo stesso dibattito attorno al c.d. *degendering* viene ad essere completamente ritematizzato quale esito e al contempo presupposto di dinamiche di singolarizzazione che vedono fronteggiarsi da un lato i vincitori, coloro che sono in grado di rispondere ai nuovi imperativi della singolarizzazione ottenendo forme di riconoscimento contingente e singolarizzato, e dall'altro i perdenti, che re-indirizzano il riconoscimento verso forme di comunitarismo che si chiudono alla contingenza attraverso un essenzialismo culturale. Due fronti solo apparentemente opposti, entrambi pienamente radicati nei processi e nelle fratture che attraverso l'identità di genere riannodano i fili delle dinamiche di significazione attorno al legame tra identità-Io e identità-Noi.

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Politicizzare la cura per curare la democrazia

Sara Fariello, Irene Strazzeri

Riassunto. "Taking care" involves a politics of relationships. Care has both a subjective and a relational dimension: starting from subjectivity, everyone opens up to vulnerability, dependence, fragility. Care is above all a practical path of spillage from the self and return to the self, enriched by the experience of the other. This paper proposes a reflection that starts from the founding myth of the essentiality of care and crosses the feminist critique of essentialism and the dialectical tension between mysticism and devaluation. Focusing on the analysis provided by the so-called second school of ethics of care, it wants to reflect on the current possibility of making care a political paradigm for change and democratization of relationships and society.

Keywords: care, social reproduction, feminist ethics, democratization.

1. COS'É CURA?

Di cura si parla con una certa facilità, senza sentire l'esigenza di fare valere un certo rigore scientifico. La banalizzazione di temi importanti, tuttavia, rappresenta l'ostacolo peggiore al progredire della ricerca, poiché ostacola e impedisce che alcuni temi divengano o vengano effettivamente riconosciuti come centrali per far crescere la cultura di una società.

Il riferimento principale negli studi sulla cura in ambito filosofico è al testo di Heidegger *Essere e tempo* (Heidegger 2005 [1927]), in cui prevale il richiamo al concetto di *cura sui* di Seneca. Il rinvio a Seneca è stato messo in discussione da diversi studiosi, i quali hanno ritenuto che l'allusione all'espressione *cura sui* (Citti 2012), ed in generale alla traduzione latina del termine, sia incapace di tradurre la ricchezza del concetto di cura riferibile alla filosofia greca antica. Nella filosofia greca antica molti dei miti fondativi rimandano, infatti, alla "essenzialità" della cura. Nel politico di Platone, ad esempio, opera che affianca la sfera politica a quella della spiritualità, si ricorre al mito di *Kronos*, ossia il Dio del tempo, che secondo la mitologia accompagna il movimento dell'universo fino al suo compimento, prendendosi cura dell'intero (Cinti 1996: 79). Una volta compiutosi il movimento, Kronos si ritira, abbandonando gli esseri umani ad uno stato privo di cure, alla necessità di doversi curare da loro stessi, per poi ricevere le tecniche e saperi necessari alla loro vita da Prometeo (Ivi: 249). La condizione dell'essere chiamati a prendersi cura di sé da sé stessi si indica in greco con il termine *epimeleia*. Da questa condizione muovono le filosofie dell'esistenza: coloro che

si trovano gettati nell'esistenza, come afferma Heidegger, sono alle prese con il difficilissimo compito di prendersi cura di sé stessi. Un compito tanto più difficile nella nostra cultura moderna, dove regna incontrastato il principio dell'auto-affermazione, dell'assertività, dove i ruoli potenti e visibili sono proprio quelli esentati dalla fatica di chiedere, dove *deboli* sono quelli a cui manca qualcosa. La questione di fondo per queste filosofie era che gli esseri umani non fossero mancanti in un preciso momento, in conseguenza di precise circostanze storiche e sociali, ma che fossero mancanti in quanto tali, fragili e vulnerabili ontologicamente.

Un convegno scientifico internazionale, svoltosi nel 2018 in Oregon (USA), ha scelto come titolo *precariety* (precarietà) quale condizione necessaria da richiamare con forza per affermare la necessità della cura oggi[1]. Per gli studiosi che vi hanno partecipato la precarietà è una condizione in cui la perdita di sovranità sulla vita viene determinata dall'impossibilità di sceglierne i tempi. Questa difficoltà renderebbe faticosa la presa di coscienza da parte dei soggetti coinvolti, poiché la consapevolezza dell'assenza di sovranità sui propri tempi di vita sfocia nell'angoscia.

Per la filosofa Maria Zambrano l'assenza di sovranità su noi stessi/e comporta propriamente il risentimento e il rancore ed a questa disposizione d'animo occorre reagire progettando l'esistenza senza desiderio di onnipotenza. Al contrario, progettare l'esistenza significa per Zambrano portare l'essenziale nel poco (Zambrano 1996 [1950]). La vulnerabilità è, invece, la conseguenza dell'essere precari, fragili assieme alla consapevolezza di essere dipendenti dagli altri. Siamo così fortemente dipendenti dagli altri che la filosofia americana parla di cura come *dependency work* (Heartly 2004) in termini di lavoro della dipendenza e di bisognosità assoluta. Ortega y Gasset affermava che vivere significa convivere, vivere e stare con gli altri (Ortega y Gasset 1952: 77-78). Per questo la cura è necessaria sia come cura di sé sia come cura degli altri. Si parla spesso di etica della cura, di cura come *protè etikè*, di etica primaria, necessaria alla riproduzione sociale. Di qui, dunque, sorge la mistica dell'infinita dedizione, dell'infinita attenzione all'altro che, misurandosi con tempi storici ed energie umane finiti, dovrebbe essere complementare alla cura di sé e non soppiantarla. Ancora Zambrano suggerisce di fuoriuscire da un uso della razionalità che si mantiene all'interno della razionalità stessa per "entrare" nella realtà, per contemperare tempi ed energie proprie con la cura dell'altro/a (Zambrano 1996 [1950]: 65).

[1] Ci riferiamo al convegno *Care Ethics and Precarity*, the Care Ethics Research Consortium, Inaugural Conference 27–28 September 2018, Portland, Oregon, USA.

Similmente Hannah Arendt (Arendt 1978) sconsiglia la tendenza del pensiero all'anticipazione dei mondi, facendo spazio, aprendo un varco nella scienza e nella ricerca al sentire, senza il quale non si può fare lavoro di realtà e penetrare *en la realidad*. Sul lavoro di realtà che inerisce la cura si sono concentrati soprattutto gli studi femministi, elaborando in un primo momento una profonda critica all'essenzialismo, successivamente divenuta critica al *management* sentimentale o critica della cura sussunta nel capitale. La critica femminista all'essenzialismo parte dall'assunto che per capire cosa significhi cura si debba partire dalla dimensione pratica.

La cura è, insomma, una categoria empirica più che teorica, assai complessa da circostanziare. Pertanto, per parlare di cura occorre fare riferimento a specifiche esperienze e situazioni concrete, che possono variare a seconda del contesto culturale, sociale e politico in cui si agisce. La critica femminista all'essenzialismo sostiene, inoltre, che il concetto di cura sia stato tradizionalmente associato al ruolo delle donne in ambito domestico. Questa associazione ha creato e rinforzato stereotipi di genere che hanno limitato le opportunità delle donne nel mondo del lavoro e nella politica. Per questo motivo, per parlare di cura senza riprodurre gli stereotipi di genere occorre sviluppare un'analisi critica che tenga conto delle asimmetrie di potere che ne influenzano la pratica e la percezione. In sintesi, per parlare di cura in modo critico e non essenzialista occorre smantellare gli stereotipi di genere associati ad essa.

Le donne si ritrovano sempre collegate alla cura perché il lavoro di cura è automaticamente collegato a competenze ritenute femminili, nonché a ruoli di genere. Tali automatismi rinviano ad aspetti normativi; l'obbligo a darsi, l'imposizione di un modello di femminilità naturalmente amorevole e accogliente, aspettative funzionali, pressini emotive e morali che provengono dall'ambiente esterno. Molta dell'idealizzazione relativa al lavoro di cura ha origine, inoltre, nella figura stereotipata della madre e della cura materna come appassionata per definizione. Di qui proviene lo spettro metaforico della perfetta dedizione, che nutrendo trae il suo stesso nutrimento, in modo disinteressato, gratuito e privo di contraddizioni. Una dedizione che si allarga ad altre declinazioni: cura della casa, delle relazioni, nel lavoro, inserendo rimandi e significati che enfatizzano l'aspetto edificante, la dimensione etica del compito che, appunto, si ripaga attraverso il proprio contenuto simbolico. Questo genere di narrazioni ha sottaciuto a lungo la questione del valore della cura, tabuizzandola.

Per lunghi secoli, insomma, non viene né menzionato né tematizzato il valore della cura. Eppure, essa è data da rapporti sociali circostanziati nello spazio e nel

tempo, da cui derivano implicazioni sul piano socio-economico. La categoria della cura venne sussulta nel linguaggio politico femminista grazie alla riflessione delle donne sul lavoro femminile in ambito domestico. Si tratta di una riflessione acuta che si è sviluppata a partire dagli anni Settanta del secolo scorso e che prosegue fino ai nostri giorni. Decisiva è stata proprio l'analisi femminista sulla natura del lavoro domestico, la de-identificazione del suo essere funzione naturale, secondo la vulgata del patriarcato antico e moderno, per riconoscere la cura come costruzione sociale performativa, soprattutto durante la modernizzazione tra la fine del Settecento e l'inizio dell'Ottocento. In tal modo si imponeva non tanto, e non solo, la supremazia degli uomini sulle donne, quanto la funzione primaria della cura in ambito familiare, come predellino delle esigenze economico sociali della nuova fase capitalistica: la fase decisiva per l'avvento della borghesia e il consolidamento degli Stati nazionali contro la sovranità dei re e dell'aristocrazia.

Il lavoro domestico venne definito dal femminismo materialista degli anni Settanta, proprio per metterne in chiaro l'effettiva natura di lavoro, per niente inerente alla natura umana femminile, ma costruito socialmente sul crinale del produrre e riprodurre quelle condizioni di vita e di sopravvivenza umana, che sono al cuore della modernità capitalistica come molte studiose hanno dimostrato. Silvia Federici dimostra come la cura sia il lavoro essenziale che ha assicurato la manodopera necessaria al lavoro nelle nuove fabbriche e la forza militare fondamentale in quella fase della modernità per gli Stati nazionali (Federici 2020a). Purtroppo, però, le donne stesse hanno contribuito ad una de-valorizzazione del lavoro di cura, subendo il fatto che fosse considerato come secondario dall'organizzazione sociale ed economica. Chi si occupa di figli e della casa affronta lo stigma di una società fondata sul lavoro salariato che oggi tuttavia si va sgretolando. In altre parole, il concetto di cura ottiene inizialmente un posto limitato nell'analisi economica, benché si tratti di un processo fondamentale per il mantenimento e la prosecuzione della vita. Il femminismo ne ha mostrato l'importanza mentre gli economisti, soprattutto marxisti, lo reputavano improduttivo di plusvalore nel sistema capitalistico. Non è sufficiente, pertanto, affermare che la cura faccia parte della storia delle donne, a meno che non si pensi di ridurla ad attitudine ad un servizio complesso a disposizione di chi voglia impossessarsene.

È lecito, oggi, domandarsi se, nel presente, la cura, nel suo significato più esteso di riproduzione sociale (interazione e scambi nel tessuto sociale, processi cooperativi di convivenza e di relazione, intelletto sociale incarnato nei corpi, creazione di legami e forme di riconoscimento e sostegno reciproco non necessariamente parentali, non abbia assunto un ruolo più direttamente pervasivo per la vita economica. Parte della sfida nel rispondere a questa domanda richiede un'osservazione attenta dei contenuti della cura, ossia, di come la manutenzione della vita diventi esplicitamente fonte di plus valore (Dini 2016).

2. LA CRISI DELLA RIPRODUZIONE SOCIALE

Riflettere oggi sul concetto di cura vuol dire analizzare un'attività che, nella prospettiva femminista, non significa soltanto accudire persone non autosufficienti (bambini, anziani, disabili) ma significa "prendersi cura" del nostro mondo inteso come il frutto di relazioni complesse e vitali: cura, quindi, come manutenzione del vivente (Tronto 2015).

La cura è costantemente intorno a noi ma raramente si pensa ad essa: è la base sui cui poggia tutta la società ed è tradizionalmente legata al concetto di cure materne e alla divisione sessuale del lavoro. Si tratta di un lavoro silenzioso che non lascia taccia ma sul quale tutto il resto del mondo si regge: è la vita materiale per dirla con Marguerite Dumas (Dini 2016: 107). Le capacità e le risorse impiegate nel lavoro di cura sono sempre state considerate oblative e gratuite, doni offerti come una parte del ruolo materno e comportano legami di fiducia, intimità, interdipendenza e compartecipazione: è un «lavoro di amore» (Federici 2020b: 32).

Com'è stato sottolineato dal femminismo di stampo marxista, il lavoro di produzione non potrebbe esistere senza la riproduzione biologica degli esseri umani e le attività di cura svolte dalle donne nella sfera privata/domestica. L'oppressione di genere nelle società capitalistiche sarebbe radicata, quindi, nella subordinazione della riproduzione sociale alla produzione per il profitto. Cinzia Aruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya e Nancy Fraser (Aruzza *et al.* 2019: 24) ricordano, infatti, che le società capitaliste sono, per definizione, società di classe ma che esse sono anche fonti di oppressione di genere. Il capitalismo non ha inventato la subordinazione delle donne ma ha costruito una nuova e moderna forma di sessismo sostenuta da strutture organizzative e istituzionali: la sua "trovata" è stata quella di separare la produzione delle persone dalla produzione per il profitto assegnando il primo compito alle donne. Il lavoro riproduttivo – partorire, nutrire, accudire, curare, educare – è un lavoro che sostiene la vita in senso biologico ma serve a riprodurre la "forza lavoro" così come definita da Marx che, però, aveva trascurato l'importanza del lavoro di riproduzione nel processo di accumulazione capitalistica.

Questo importante lavoro è stato definito dal femminismo "riproduzione sociale" e viene del tutto disconosciuto: pertanto, il capitalismo, misconosce non solo il plusvalore ma anche il lavoro riproduttivo, che è la sua stessa condizione di possibilità. Tale meccanismo – costruito storicamente sulla base delle differenze biologiche – ha assicurato le condizioni per lo sviluppo e la sopravvivenza della società industriale. La separazione della sfera domestica dal mondo pubblico del lavoro orientato al profitto sarebbe, infatti, avvenuta con il passaggio dall'economia di sussistenza all'economia di impresa e al capitalismo: in questo passaggio si sarebbe realizzata la "recinzione della donna" nello spazio domestico dove ella è costretta a svolgere il "lavoro-ombra", un lavoro di vitale importanza ma del tutto ignorato, deprezzato e marginalizzato (Illich 1985).

L'idealizzazione del ruolo privato della donna – la mistica della femminilità, così ben descritta da Betty Friedan – si è consolidata all'interno della classe medio-alta dove i mariti erano in grado di mantenere la propria famiglia: la donna è stata nominata "angelo del focolare" mente l'uomo è diventato un procacciatore di reddito/salario e pienamente responsabile del sostentamento economico dei propri familiari. Il modello fordista/keynesiano aveva, infatti, bisogno di ruoli ben definiti e fortemente radicati nelle istituzioni quali famiglia, scuola e mercato per la riproduzione delle strutture sociali fondate sulla disuguaglianza di genere: la famiglia moderna nucleare ed etero-patriarcale ha essenzialmente istituzionalizzato il lavoro non salariato poiché ha spinto la donna a specializzarsi nel ruolo "espressivo" come *caregiver*, totalmente dipendente dal salario maschile, mentre l'uomo era impegnato nella sfera della produzione, come *breadwinner*.

Il lavoro domestico e di riproduzione è stato, di conseguenza, al centro delle analisi femministe a partire dagli anni Settanta: in Italia, già nel 1970, nel Manifesto di Rivolta femminile, Carla Lonzi, Elvira Banotti e Carla Acardi identificarono proprio nel lavoro domestico non retribuito «la prestazione che permette al capitalismo, privato e di stato, di sussistere». Tali analisi hanno contribuito a spiegare come tale lavoro sia stato imposto alle donne dopo essere stato trasformato in un attributo naturale del corpo e della personalità femminile, un'esigenza interiore, un'aspirazione radicata nella natura di ogni donna[2]. Perché «Negando un salario al lavoro domestico e trasformando questo lavoro in un atto di amore, il capitale ha preso due piccioni con una fava» (Federici 2020b: 33). Allo stesso modo, anche il movimento operaio è stato accusato di aver riprodotto le divisioni di classe che caratterizzano la divisione capitalistica del lavoro e di aver sancito la marginalità del lavoro domestico e della casalinga nel processo rivoluzionario: selezionando alcuni settori sociali come soggetti rivoluzionari sulla base dei rapporti salariali (il proletariato industriale), ha escluso le donne dalla lotta politica e ha prodotto la divisione tra donne che lavorano e donne che non lavorano. Così facendo ha implicitamente legittimato l'idea per cui le donne dovessero essere incluse nei rapporti di produzione capitalistici piuttosto che combatterli ossia lavorare di più ed essere maggiormente sfruttate. «Se le nostre cucine sono fuori dal capitale, le nostre lotte non riusciranno mai ad abbatterlo» scrivevano nel 1975 Silvia Federici e Nicole Cox (Ivi: 47).

Il femminismo materialista francese, d'altra parte, si è spinto oltre individuando nel patriarcato, non riconducibile al capitalismo, il nemico principale delle donne in quanto classe oppressa dagli uomini, da tutti gli uomini a prescindere dalla loro estrazione sociale: esso ha teorizzato l'esistenza di un modo di produzione patriarcale/domestico che opera accanto al modo di produzione capitalista – ma al di fuori del plusvalore – e che si basa sull'estorsione diretta del lavoro domestico (Delphy 2022 [1998]). Rielaborando la teoria marxista che non teneva nel dovuto conto altri tipi di sfruttamento come lo sfruttamento domestico o il servaggio, il femminismo ha, quindi, decostruito le nozioni classiche di madre e casalinga rinominandole come lavoro domestico non retribuito e riconoscendo il ruolo economico fondamentale della riproduzione ed il suo contributo ai processi di valorizzazione (Delphy 2020).

L'ingresso in massa delle donne nel mercato del lavoro nel corso del Novecento, se da un lato ha rappresentato il veicolo principale dell'emancipazione femminile, d'altra parte però, ha reso sempre più evidente la contraddizione tra produzione e riproduzione: il "contratto sessuale" su cui per secoli si sono basate le separazioni tra sfera pubblica e privata, tra lavoro produttivo e riproduttivo, fra personale e politico è saltato e ci troviamo di fronte alla crisi di un ordine simboli-

[2] Nel 1972 è nata la IWFHC ossia *International Wages for Housework Campaign*, una rete di donne che si batte per il riconoscimento e la remunerazione del lavoro di cura svolto dalle donne. Alcune femministe italiane hanno fortemente animato il dibattito e lanciato a Padova la campagna "Salario al lavoro domestico": obiettivo della campagna era aprire un processo di mobilitazione per costringere lo Stato a riconoscere il lavoro domestico come lavoro, attività che deve essere remunerata perché, contribuendo alla produzione della forza lavoro, permette che ogni altra forma di produzione possa avere luogo e quindi creare capitale. Consideravamo il salario, scrive Silvia Federici, una prospettiva politica rivoluzionaria non solo perché evidenziava la causa principale dell'oppressione delle donne nella società capitalistica ma perché smascherava i meccanismi attraverso i quali il capitalismo ha conservato il suo potere e diviso la classe operaria. La richiesta di salario avrebbe reso visibile quel lavoro e avrebbe costretto il "capitale" a ristrutturare i rapporti sociali. (Federici 2020: 23-35)

co che comporta una ridefinizione dei ruoli di genere e una riorganizzazione di tutta la società (Strazzeri 2014). Le casalinghe hanno iniziato a rifiutare il lavoro domestico e preferito un lavoro salariato mettendo in crisi la tradizionale divisione sessuale del lavoro e le politiche sociali che avevano determinato l'organizzazione della riproduzione sociale e della famiglia nel secondo dopoguerra. In questo quadro, la questione del "lavoro di cura" ha continuato a rivestire un ruolo centrale poiché le donne, impegnate nella sfera della produzione, della politica e delle professioni, hanno iniziato a combattere per conciliare tempi di vita e tempi di lavoro, per fare il cosiddetto "doppio turno" a lavoro e a casa (Hochschild 1989). Da un lato, esse hanno agito il "doppio sì", ossia la doppia presenza nella sfera pubblica e privata ma, dall'altra parte, la loro "fatica" è stata il risultato di una falsa e ingiusta struttura sociale dove diventava sempre più difficile conciliare tutte le dimensioni: quella lavorativa, affettiva e di cura[3].

Nonostante ci sia stata una riduzione del lavoro in casa dovuta da un lato, al controllo delle nascite e, dall'altro, ad una maggiore condivisione del lavoro domestico, il prezzo che le donne stanno pagando è decisamente alto soprattutto se pensiamo alle madri single e a quelle con bassi salari che spesso sono costrette a fare un secondo lavoro in nero per sbarcare il lunario. Inoltre, all'aumento dell'occupazione femminile non è corrisposta un'espansione dell'assistenza pubblica: alla fine del secolo scorso, sono stati indeboliti i sistemi di Welfare e sono stati privatizzati molti servizi che avevano offerto una parziale protezione alle persone per difendersi contro gli attacchi del capitale che tende a cannibalizzare la riproduzione sociale. Nello stesso tempo, il capitalismo contemporaneo ha precarizzato i rapporti di lavoro, chiesto sempre più ore ai lavoratori e alle lavoratrici e messo a repentaglio l'equilibrio delle famiglie: la soluzione alla mancanza cronica di tempo per le attività che riguardano la vita viene oggi largamente affidata alle "scelte" individuali e alle strategie familiari in risposta all'inadeguatezza dei servizi per l'infanzia e in assenza di politiche pubbliche efficaci. Ciò comporta spesso la rinuncia delle donne al lavoro fuori casa: oggi esse sono, infatti, sempre più frequentemente costrette a scegliere tra lavoro e maternità e a rinunciare all'uno o all'altra con le note conseguenze sul tasso di natalità in Italia e negli altri paesi europei (Fariello e Minello 2022). Negli altri casi, il lavoro di cura viene esternalizzato ossia delegato ad una donna meno avvantaggiata perché le donne della middle class, avendone i mezzi, assumono donne povere o migranti che puliscono le case e si prendono cura di bambini ed anziani. Il trasferimento di lavoro da donna a donna produce quelle che sono state definite le "catene globali di cura" poiché la femminilizzazione del lavoro in Occidente ha comportato la femminilizzazione delle migrazioni con la conseguente globalizzazione delle mansioni legate al tradizionale ruolo femminile (Ehrenreich e Hochschild 2004: 11). Il meccanismo della delega, per conseguenza, attiva una spirale negativa e genera una "esternalizzazione dell'oppressione" perché permette alle professioniste in carriera di farsi avanti appoggiandosi sulle spalle delle migranti cui vengono subappaltati i lavori domestici e di cura: donne che, loro volta, sono costrette ad abbandonare figli e genitori producendo un deficit di cura e di amore nel paese d'origine: diversamente dai datori/datrici di lavoro del Primo Mondo, esse non possono avere entrambe le cose ovverosia vivere con la propria famiglia e lavorare. Ciò che prende forma, dopo l'imperialismo violento del diciannovesimo secolo, è una sorta di importazione delle risorse emotive dai paesi poveri ai paesi ricchi, quasi come se l'accudimento e l'amore offerto dalle donne fossero diventati il "nuovo oro" (Hochschild 2004: 32). In questo modo, la distribuzione del lavoro di cura è, nelle nostre società, basata sul genere, sulla classe sociale e l'etnia, non funziona in modo egualitario e serve a conservare e rafforzare le strutture di subordinazione (Tronto 1993: 131).

È possibile affermare, dunque, che siamo in presenza di una crisi della cura e, più in generale, della riproduzione sociale poiché si stanno esaurendo le nostre capacità collettive e individuali di rigenerare gli esseri umani e di offrire sostegno ai legami sociali. D'altronde, anche la crisi generata dal Covid-19 si è trasformata in una crisi della cura su scala globale: quella *care crisis* di cui la letteratura sociologica e femminista parla da un decennio per indicare gli squilibri generati dal capitalismo finanziario e le ricadute sulle vite delle persone. Con lo scoppio della pandemia, l'insufficienza di tutti i sistemi di cura iscritti nella logica neoliberale è balzata agli occhi: i sistemi sanitari si sono rivelati inadeguati a rispondere ai bisogni di salute della popolazione, i sistemi di protezione sociale hanno lasciato scoperte intere categorie di lavoratrici e lavoratori, le residenze per anziani sono diventate luoghi di contagio e di morte e le case, pensate come unico spazio di cura alternativo al ricovero ospedaliero, sono divenute il luogo ove le persone, soprattutto le donne, hanno dovuto assumersi ogni responsabilità. Tutte le misure legate allo smart working e al telelavoro, di fatto, si sono tradotte in carichi di cura di cui le donne si sono sobbarcate insieme alla responsabilità del supporto emotivo: la letteratura internazionale parla, infatti, di un "terzo turno" per riferirsi al soste-

[3] Sul punto si legga: "Fatica" in Dieci anni di AdATeoriafemminista a cura di S. Tarantino, T. Dini, L. Cascella, N. Nappo, Orthotes, 2017, p. 215 e ss.

gno psicologico che le madri hanno offerto ai propri figli e ai familiari[4]. Durante i mesi del lockdown, la cura è tornata "a casa" ossia la cura si è affacciata alla coscienza come problema collettivo, non più come questione residuale e pratica invisibile ma come un problema che riguarda ogni essere umano (Serugheretti 2020).

La crisi pandemica, che è stata nella sua drammaticità un evento rivelatore, ha rimesso al centro la necessità della cura riportandoci alla nostra originaria condizione umana caratterizzata da fragilità, vulnerabilità, relazionalità e interdipendenza. La pandemia ha, quindi, svelato la centralità sociale del lavoro di cura che è stato nel tempo invisibilizzato, occultato e rimosso dal discorso pubblico: eppure, le attività di cura sono tutt'oggi generalmente svalutate, sottopagate e svolte da persone che si trovano in condizioni di svantaggio. La svalutazione culturale della cura si traduce, infatti, in una scarsa remunerazione del lavoro che, a sua volta, spinge i caregivers a trascurare sé stessi o la salute dei propri cari. Tutto questo produce anche sentimenti di privazione, paura e risentimento: quelle reazioni individuali e collettive che sono così spesso indicate come le radici del neopopulismo e della crisi della democrazia.

3. LA CRITICA FEMMINISTA ALLA RIFLESSIONE SULLA CURA

Quando si parla di lavoro di cura si intende normalmente, in senso stretto, il lavoro che risponde ai bisogni delle persone non autosufficienti: spesso, inoltre, la parola cura rimanda all'idea dell'accudimento materno. In inglese la parola *care* contiene i significati che rimandano alle cure prestate dal sistema sanitario, dai servizi sociali o dalle famiglie ma si presta anche ad una pluralità di altre traduzioni possibili, che includono l'attenzione e la preoccupazione per gli altri, e l'avere qualcosa a cuore, tenere a qualcosa o a qualcuno (I Care). Questa maggiore ampiezza linguistica/semantica induce alcune autrici a non tradurre la parola in italiano, per non rischiare la sua riduzione al solo significato medico e/o sociale.

Per Joan Tronto, che è considerata la capostipite della "seconda scuola dell'etica della cura", essa è un'attività che comprende tutto ciò che facciamo per mantenere, continuare e riparare il nostro "mondo" in modo da poterci vivere nel modo migliore possibile. Questo mondo include i nostri corpi, noi stessi e il nostro ambiente, tutto ciò che cerchiamo di intrecciare in una rete complessa a sostegno della vita[5]. Cura, dunque, come manutenzione del vivente[6]. In questo senso, prende le distanze dal filone inaugurato da Carol Gilligan nel 1980 perché pensa che l'etica della cura non sia una prerogativa o un'espressione della moralità femminile: associare il concetto di cura alle donne significa riprodurre lo schema della divisione sessuale del lavoro. A questo proposito, l'autrice individua quattro fasi della cura: il *caring about* ovvero il riconoscimento dei bisogni, il *caring for* ovvero l'assunzione di responsabilità rispetto al bisogno identificato, il *care-giving* ossia la cura effettivamente erogata e il *care-receiving* vale a dire le risposte dei beneficiari alle cure ricevute. Successivamente, ella integra questi quattro momenti con una quinta fase, quella del *caring with*: una fase che apre alla dimensione sociale e politica della cura e che consente a tutti i cittadini di partecipare ai processi democratici per decidere l'allocazione delle responsabilità di modo che tutti possano dire il loro parere (Tronto 2013). La cura non è, infatti, priva di conflitti: essa è un'attività generalmente svolta da persone senza potere formale e implica relazioni asimmetriche che devono essere continuamente discusse.

Quando pensiamo al cittadino, di regola, lo immaginiamo come un soggetto autonomo e razionale: il modello della razionalità economica ci spinge a pensare che la responsabilità sia da intendersi soltanto come imputabilità delle proprie scelte e questa impostazione rende ogni risultato raggiunto un merito personale mentre trasforma ogni fallimento in una colpa personale. In questa prospettiva, il cittadino ha la responsabilità di provvedere economicamente per sé e per la propria famiglia, mentre la richiesta di impegnarsi attivamente nella cura e assumersi la responsabilità per gli altri risulta incomprensibile. Il meccanismo perverso, che ha rimosso la dimensione della vulnerabilità umana dall'orizzonte del tecno-capitalismo dominate a favore di un'i-

[4] Da diversi anni, alcune autrici hanno iniziato a parlare di un "terzo turno" in riferimento a tutto quel lavorio mentale che accompagna le scelte delle donne fuori e dentro casa. Sul punto si legga il testo di Michele Kremen Bolton, *The Third Shift: Managing Hard Choices in Our Career, Homes, and Lives and Women*. Questo termine è stato di recente molto utilizzato per descrivere la vita delle donne americane che, durante la pandemia, hanno continuato a lavorare, a svolgere le attività domestiche e, contemporaneamente, hanno supervisionato l'istruzione a distanza dei propri figli occupandosi dei loro bisogni emotivi in un momento di grande stress.

[5] Questa definizione è stata proposta per la prima volta da Joan Tronto e Berenice Fisher nel saggio dal titolo *Toward a Feminist Theory of Care* in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives* del 1990; poi è stata ripesa nel testo *Moral Boundaries. A Polical Argument for an Ethic of Care* del 1993 (trad.it. Confini morali: 118), nonché riproposta in *Who cares? How to reshape a democratic politics* (2015: 3).

[6] In questo senso Tronto ricorda come alcune colleghe l'abbiano invitata a considerare la cura come parte dell'etica ambientalista o dell'eco-femminismo ma lei ha risposto che tali preoccupazioni formino solo una parte della cura.

dea di soggetto razionale e delle sue attività prestazionali ed economicamente produttive, ha implicitamente significato la corrispondente rimozione della cura (Menga 2023: 29).

Di fronte a un quadro simile, l'etica della cura come politica della cura propone un "mutamento paradigmatico" invitando non solo a porre la vulnerabilità dell'essere umano al centro delle attenzioni condivise, ma collocando la cura – la manutenzione e la perpetuazione del mondo da cui dipende la nostra vita – nel posto centrale oggi occupato dall'impresa e dal mercato, quale oggetto di preoccupazione democratica. Questa prospettiva, che proviene da decenni di teoria politica e sociale femminista, mette in gioco, com'è chiaro, il modello antropologico su cui si fondano le forme della convivenza sociale. Contro il "mito dell'autonomia" e della competitività, l'enfasi posta sulla vulnerabilità come condizione endemica e universale implica un completo rovesciamento dello sguardo sulla politica, rispetto a una tradizione che ha espulso il corpo e le donne dalla *polis* (Serugheretti 2020). Induce, cioè, a riconcepire i compiti della collettività verso i suoi membri partendo dalla corporeità, dai bisogni, dai rapporti di dipendenza dell'essere umano con gli altri e con l'ambiente naturale e sociale, dalle infrastrutture sociali necessarie alla vita. Una società che prendesse la cura sul serio, infatti, si impegnerebbe in una discussione delle questioni della vita pubblica non dalla prospettiva di attori autonomi, eguali e razionali, ciascuno dei quali persegue fini separati, ma dalla prospettiva di attori interdipendenti, ciascuno dei quali ha bisogni di cura e la fornisce in vari modi (Tronto 1993: 187).

Se fossimo disposti a concepire la crisi attuale come una "crisi della cura", ci troveremmo quindi di fronte ad un'urgenza ineludibile: ripensare la cura attraverso le procedure e i principi della democrazia. L'obiettivo di una società più inclusiva deve essere necessariamente perseguito ripensando e modificando le strutture sociali attuali che costringono alcune persone, generalmente le donne appartenenti a minoranze etniche o a classi sociali inferiori, ad occuparsi dei bisogni di cura degli altri, i quali possono continuare a perseguire la soddisfazione dei loro interessi. La cura non è, infatti, un'idea romantica, una preoccupazione delle donne né una questione morale secondaria ma un valore morale che deve uscire dal confine della sfera privata per arrivare a modellare la politica: l'etica della cura resta incompleta senza una teoria politica e soltanto pensando la cura come una categoria politica, sarà possibile realizzare la *Caring revolution*.

Per affrontare la crisi della democrazia contemporanea si può lottare, quindi, per una "democrazia che ha cura" poiché deficit democratico e deficit di cura sono strettamente legati. In un senso ancora più generale, mettere la cura al centro significa investire nelle linee di difesa e promozione di una vita umana piena, che includono i servizi per la salute, il sistema educativo, i servizi per l'infanzia e la vecchiaia, il contrasto alla violenza, ma anche le tutele occupazionali, il reddito di base, la protezione ambientale[7]. La cura non è semplicemente una nuova formulazione dei modelli del socialismo benché essa sia probabilmente anticapitalista perché assume che il massimo obiettivo sociale sia la soddisfazione dei bisogni piuttosto che la ricerca del profitto (Tronto 1993: 193). Politicizzare la cura, quindi, significa non solo renderla visibile come questione pubblica e invocare una più equa distribuzione – in relazione alle disuguaglianze di genere, razziali o di classe – ma valorizzarla come attività fondamentale che conferisce un significato alla vita. Se vogliamo vivere in una *Caring Democracy*, ciascuno/a di noi dovrà diventare più abile nel dare e offrire cura ossia praticarla di più: diventare più attenti ai bisogni altrui, più capaci di assumersi le responsabilità, più competenti e coraggiosi. Se iniziassimo a cambiare le istituzioni a noi vicine, nonché i luoghi ove si svolge la nostra vita e dove si pratica la socializzazione (scuole, luoghi di lavoro, spazi urbani, etc.) noi produrremo legami di fiducia e solidarietà.

> *Alcuni scrittori pensano alla cura in un contesto impolitico […] Al contrario, io sostengo che la pratica della cura possa modellare le pratiche della cittadinanza democratica. Se attraverso le pratiche del "prestare cura" e del "ricevere cura" dovessimo diventare esperti nella cura, penso che non solo saremmo diventati persone più solidali e morali, ma anche cittadini migliori in una democrazia. La qualità dell'attenzione, della responsabilità, della competenza e della capacità di rispondere non devono essere ristrette agli oggetti immediati della nostra cura, ma possono modellare le nostre pratiche come cittadini. Ci conducono ad una politica in cui, al centro, c'è una discussione pubblica si bisogni e una valutazione onesta dell'intersezione tra bisogni e interessi* (Tronto 1993: 187).

Reinventare la partecipazione democratica significa, in definitiva, immaginare cittadini/e che si impegnino a ricomporre, a partire dalla propria esistenza quotidiana, lo spazio e il tempo per la cura dei soggetti più bisognosi o fragili, fino alle comunità e agli ecosistemi con i diversi esseri viventi che li abitano. Questa è la pre-con-

[7] Nonostante Tronto scriva tenendo in considerazione il contesto della società statunitense, la sua riflessione risulta utile e stimolante anche nei paesi dell'Europa occidentale poiché, di fronte alla crisi dello Stato sociale, essa ci invita a non compiere ulteriori passi indietro nella direzione dello smantellamento del Welfare (dalla presentazione del testo *Confini morali* di Nicola Riva: XV).

dizione per ribadire e vivificare il principio di libertà ed uguaglianza negli Stati costituzionali di diritto ma anche per consentire una maggiore partecipazione dei cittadini. La rivitalizzazione dei processi democratici conduce, dunque, a ripensare le politiche di Welfare secondo uno schema partecipativo che implichi il coinvolgimento dei *care-givers* e dei *care-receivers* nel progettare politiche sociali a partire dal carattere relazionale della cura (Re 2020: 108).

4. DEMOCRATIZZARE LA CURA

Riconoscere "la cura" come tema fondamentale per la società e la politica, ovvero come questione costitutiva del nostro benessere e della qualità della vita e determinante per la salute la sicurezza significa richiede un ripensamento delle forme di organizzazione democratiche.

La cura si candida a costituire la porta d'accesso per gestire l'educazione, l'economia e la produzione, la cultura, il divertimento, gli affetti ecc. Non dobbiamo, tuttavia, ritenere che sia stata la pandemia, ovvero il recente contesto d'emergenza, a produrre tale "centralità". Al più essa si è limitata a disvelarla. Capovolgendo il discorso potremmo addirittura considerare l'impatto della pandemia come il risultato di una sottovalutazione della centralità della cura nelle nostre società ed economie, di decenni di politiche pubbliche orientate al neoliberismo, che hanno indebolito le infrastrutture sociali di supporto alla vita (Agostinelli 2020: 40).

La dimensione fondante della cura per la sopravvivenza di qualsiasi comunità umana e politica risulta essere storicamente occultata. Si tratta di un'esperienza considerata come lo sfondo implicito, sottointeso, sul quale potesse proiettare una certa rappresentazione del cittadino, impegnato nel lavoro produttivo e coinvolto nella sfera politica. Questa fuorviante cela, di fatto, l'origine dello sviluppo, della maturazione, dell'educazione del cittadino nei bisogni di sostegno e accudimento quotidiano che si soddisfano attraverso la cura. Come sottolineava Carol Pateman (1988) nel suo testo, divenuto ormai classico, *Il contratto sessuale*, la filosofia politica di stampo patriarcale ci ha trasferito, fin dall'antichità, un modello di società civile suddivisa tra una sfera pubblica, quale luogo del confronto politico e del dispiegamento delle libertà, e una sfera privata "naturalizzata" e depoliticizzata, preposta alla cura e alla riproduzione.

Pertanto, la visione dominante della politica e della libertà, così come dell'economia e della sfera produttiva, non contempla il lavoro di cura. Se la divisione tra pubblico e privato vanta una storia antica, l'avvento del capitalismo ha rappresentato una divergenza sostanziale. Il principio di accumulazione capitalistica, come ha ben sottolineato Maria Mies, è in buona parte fondato sul lavoro invisibile delle donne e sul lavoro di sussistenza dei contadini, sulla cosiddetta "economia informale" assai diffusa soprattutto nel sud del mondo (Mies 1998: IX). Il modello di sviluppo, sotteso alla società capitalistica, ha valorizzato la produzione delle merci, di oggetti, servizi, prestazioni economiche e finanziarie, in relazione alla loro utilità nella realizzazione di profitti, viceversa ha svalorizzato le necessità di riproduzione e di rigenerazione dei lavoratori e delle famiglie, occultando il complesso e articolato lavoro di mantenimento della qualità della vita e con esso le dimensioni relazionali di condivisione e reciprocità, nonché la rilevanza dello scambio tra beni e servizi nelle reti dei rapporti sociali che si collocano al di fuori del mercato.

L'invisibilizzazione del lavoro di riproduzione e di cura ha determinato, soprattutto, la svalutazione dell'apporto femminile al benessere della società e al funzionamento dell'economia. Essa ha anche consolidato un modello di integrazione sociale basato sull'implicazione limitante presupposta dall'asimmetrica divisione sessuale del lavoro. In termini economici – spiega Maria Mies – il lavoro produttivo femminile è meno apprezzato economicamente e socialmente di quello degli uomini (a parità di mansioni), poiché la logica di *casalinghizzazione* è ancora considerata un ampliamento dei "doveri" domestici delle donne e, quindi, semplicemente un reddito complementare rispetto al reddito del maschio procacciatore. Il lavoro di cura non è mai stato conteggiato nella misurazione del Pil e non è mai stato annoverato tra gli indicatori macroeconomici dei modelli di benessere e di sviluppo, esso non ha mai realmente indirizzato la decisione politica, la gestione degli affari pubblici, non ha mai permeato il modello di governo democratico delle nostre società. Similmente nella sfera politica la partecipazione delle donne è subordinata ad un adattamento a spazi, forme, tempi e logiche maschili, in gran parte sgravati da responsabilità di cura nella vita quotidiana.

Non deve sorprendere, dunque, che la svalorizzazione e la mercificazione del lavoro di cura corrispondano ad una realtà sociale immiserita. Cosa accadrebbe se fossimo maggiormente impegnati a trasferire nella visione politica ed economica che ci giuda, oltre che nella nostra sensibilità, l'intero campo di esperienze psicologiche, relazionali, affettive e intellettuali di cura, strettamente collegate alla nostra interdipendenza, alla nostra vulnerabilità, al riconoscimento e all'accoglienza di bisogni, desideri e aspirazioni? Ovvero tutto quel sottile e complesso tessuto di ascolto e attenzioni col quale si imbastisce e si annoda quotidianamente la trama della vita,

dalla nascita alla morte? Come ha notato Joan C. Tronto «essere un cittadino in una democrazia è prendersi cura dei cittadini e prendersi cura della democrazia stessa» (Tronto 2013: X [trad. mia]).

La sfida è rappresentata dal passaggio dalla cura come un destino delle donne o dei precari alla cura come virtù che qualifichi il nostro essere cittadini. Tale sfida interpella anche gli attivisti e le attiviste dei movimenti ecologisti ed eco-femministi, orientati all'obiettivo della decrescita, dell'economia solidale. Reinventare la partecipazione democratica significa immaginare cittadini/e che si impegnino a ricomporre, a partire dalla propria esistenza quotidiana, lo spazio e il tempo della cura dei bambini, degli anziani, dei malati, delle persone in generale, fino alle comunità e agli ecosistemi con i diversi esseri viventi che li abitano. Un impegno traducibile nella compartecipazione egualitaria alla cura e alla rigenerazione delle forme di vita e relazioni. La diversa percezione del trovarsi nel mondo in una fitta rete di relazioni sociali ed ecologiche deve integrarsi con la complessità dell'oggi.

Di fronte la crisi climatica, economica e sociale, l'ambiente, la salute, il lavoro diventano aspetti intimamente connessi. Aver cura del mondo attorno a noi, prendersi cura degli altri e di noi stessi è parte di un lavoro politico e comunitario. Come ha scritto Giorgia Serughetti (2020) «Ciò che è in crisi, da ben prima dell'arrivo del Coronavirus è la capacità dei singoli e delle comunità di generare e crescere figli, di curare le persone disabili e anziane, di proteggere la salute propria e dei propri cari, di alimentare i legami personali e sociali, di partecipare alla vita della propria comunità».

Occorre, dunque, ripoliticizzare la cura in direzione di una sua autentica democratizzazione. A lungo la democrazia è stata concepita – soprattutto da un punto di vista maschile – come coinvolgimento nella partecipazione democratica, attraverso procedure decisionali e meccanismi di distribuzione e controllo del potere. Negli ultimi anni, invece, diverse pensatrici femministe ci invitano a ragionare sulla democrazia in termini di ampliamento della partecipazione democratica, attraverso il coinvolgimento e la distribuzione delle responsabilità e delle pratiche di cura (Tronto 2015: 13) Democrazia, potere e cura non sono aspetti separati. Anche nell'ambito della cura c'è una questione di asimmetrie e di potere. Accostarli permette di coglierne le reciproche implicazioni in un'ottica più complessa e non riduttiva.

Le politiche sanitarie e di prevenzione attuate durante la pandemia da Covid 19, infatti, hanno messo in luce profonde diseguaglianze nelle possibilità reali di protezione dal rischio, dall'esposizione e dall'impatto. Donatella di Cesare, opportunamente, ha paventato il pericolo di una democrazia immunitaria: «La condizione d'immunità riservata agli uni, i protetti, i preservati, i garantiti, viene negata agli altri, agli esposti, i reietti, gli abbandonati» (Di Cesare 2020: 34). Certamente, durante l'emergenza garanzie e sacrifici non sono stati equamente distribuiti. La pretesa di protezione e immunizzazione per una parte della popolazione implicava che altri continuassero a lavorare e a correre dei rischi, proprio per assicurare la tranquillità dei primi. Pur nei momenti di lockdown e di quarantena più rigida, una serie di categorie di lavoratori – medici, personale infermieristico e sanitario, giornalisti, postini, riders, dipendenti dei supermercati e botteghe alimentari, braccianti agricoli, tecnici delle comunicazioni ecc. – hanno dovuto continuare a lavorare e a rimanere maggiormente esposti al rischio per minimizzare l'esposizione di altri. Senza parlare dei rifugiati, degli homeless, degli sfrattati, di tutti coloro che non avevano assicurato nemmeno un rifugio dove isolarsi. Le diseguaglianze non hanno sono costituito l'indicatore di cattive politiche o di errori di previsione. Hanno rivelato un deficit di conoscenza delle pratiche democratiche di cura.

La questione della cura e la questione democratica mostrano una mutua e reciproca implicazione, l'una non è pensabile al di fuori dell'altra. E 'necessario, pertanto, rimuovere la cura dalla dimensione privatistica o familistica e posizionarla nella dimensione politica della responsabilità pubblica e comunitaria. La costruzione di forme più cooperative di riproduzione, come affermato da Silvia Federici (2018: 13) è «la condizione non solo di una "vita degna di essere vissuta" – rivendicazione attuale da parte di vari movimenti femministi e non – ma anche della resistenza all'avanzare di rapporti alienati dal capitalismo e della creazione di una società non subordinata alla logica del profitto e del mercato». Ripensare la democrazia come un'istituzione di senso che si occupa di promuovere la distribuzione democratica delle cure e al tempo stesso la partecipazione di tutti al lavoro di cura dovrà trovare forma ed espressione.

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I Promessi Sposi di Alessandro Manzoni: un libro bellissimo e attualissimo

Umberto Melotti

Abstract. The 150th anniversary of Alessandro Manzoni's death was celebrated beyond all expectations. The President of the Republic himself wished to commemorate it with a statement emphasising the beauty and relevance of *The Betrothed*, a novel that should be read in adulthood, when one can most appreciate its great richness. There is, however, one difficulty: his writing suffers the effects of time. More than 200 years have passed since it was first written, a little less since its first published version and more than 180 since its definitive version, and language, like any living thing, evolves, all the more so in a period marked by so many important transformations. This is why I have participated in the Manzoni celebrations by publishing the full transcription in modern Italian. But, as a sociologist, in this work, which lasted more than five years, I first of all grasped the validity of that novel also in its sociological aspects.

Keywords: Alessandro Manzoni, The Betrothed, modern Italian language, transcription, socio-cultural and political aspects.

1. I PROMESSI SPOSI A CENTOCINQUANT'ANNI DALLA MORTE DEL MANZONI

Lo scorso anno è stato il centocinquantenario della morte di Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873). Le celebrazioni sono andate di là di ogni aspettativa. Basti dire che i suoi *Promessi Sposi* sono stati letti integralmente nel Duomo di Milano, un capitolo al giorno, e che il Presidente della Repubblica italiana, Sergio Mattarella, si è recato appositamente a Milano (luogo di nascita e di morte del Manzoni) ad ascoltare nel Duomo la *Messa di Requiem* composta per lui da Giuseppe Verdi, ha visitato il suo sepolcro al famedio del Cimitero Monumentale (dove il Manzoni era stato il primo a essere traslato, a dieci anni dalla morte) e, nella sua casa di via Morone, adiacente alla via che del Manzoni porta il nome, ha rilasciato una bella dichiarazione che ne ricorda i molti meriti, sottolineando, in particolare, «la finezza, l'arguzia e la profondità» dei *Promessi Sposi* e la loro persistente attualità[1].

[1] Si veda *Il Presidente della Repubblica on. Sergio Mattarella nella casa di Alessandro Manzoni*, Centro Nazionale Studi Manzoniani, Milano, 2023. L'intervento di Mattarella è disponibile anche nel sito della Presidenza della Repubblica: https://www.quirinale.it/elementi/89668.

Figura 1. Francesco Hayez (1841), *Alessandro Manzoni*, Pinacoteca di Brera.

Figura 2. Frontespizio dell'edizione definitiva dei *Promessi Sposi*, incisione di Francesco Gonin.

Anch'io ho partecipato alla celebrazione di quell'anniversario, pubblicando una trascrizione integrale in lingua italiana moderna di quel romanzo, conosciuto da quasi tutti in Italia, almeno a grandi linee, anche perché è stato a lungo letto ampiamente in tutte le scuole e ancora lo è, sia pur meno. Ma è un romanzo che merita di essere letto e riletto in età adulta, quando più se ne può apprezzare la straordinaria ricchezza. Un ostacolo crescente è costituito però dalla sua scrittura, inevitabilmente datata. La lingua, come ogni cosa viva, si evolve nel tempo e dalla sua prima stesura – nota come il *Fermo e Lucia* (1821-1823), dal nome dato ai due protagonisti in quel testo da lui non pubblicato – sono trascorsi più di duecento anni e pochi di meno sono passati dalla sua prima versione a stampa (1825-1827), la Ventisettana, e più di centottanta da quella definitiva (1840-1842), la Quarantana. Due secoli in cui sono accadute tantissime cose, che hanno profondamente mutato la società, modificando anche la lingua, che è e resta, innanzi tutto, un fatto sociale.

Per di più, nella prima metà dell'Ottocento, quando il Manzoni scrisse e riscrisse quel romanzo, l'Italia era ancora divisa in tante entità politiche distinte, molte delle quali sotto il dominio o l'influenza straniera, e la lingua italiana non si era ancora stabilizzata. Quel che prevaleva dappertutto, specialmente nel parlato, erano i dialetti locali. Lo stesso Manzoni in casa parlava per lo più in milanese e con molti amici comunicava in francese, la lingua allora dominante in Europa, che aveva praticato e perfezionato a Parigi. Così decise di scrivere la versione definitiva del romanzo in una lingua «viva e vera» che privilegiasse il fiorentino (colto o popolare, secondo i casi), diversa da quella, da lui stesso giudicata troppo libresca, della Ventisettana, in cui pure aveva già cercato di evitare il toscano letterario, infarcito di latinismi, lombardismi e francesismi, del *Fermo e Lucia*. A tal fine, com'è ben noto, subito dopo la pubblicazione di quell'edizione, volle andare a «sciacquare i panni in Arno» (A. Manzoni 1986, vol. 1: 438) e, com'è meno noto, anche dopo quel soggiorno a Firenze (1827), utilissimo ma troppo breve, continuò nel suo «eterno lavoro» di revisione, come lo definì più volte, chiedendo e ottenendo l'aiuto di fiorentini di vari strati sociali diversi[2]. Era convinto

[2] Fra quelli più colti vanno ricordati Gaetano Cioni, Giovanni Battista Nicolini e la marchesa Marianna Rinuccini. Ma non va dimentica-

infatti che Firenze fosse, e dovesse continuare a essere, il centro della lingua italiana, così come Roma lo era stato della lingua latina e Parigi lo era di quella francese (Manzoni 1850: 10). Un parallelo peraltro un po' forzato, perché, come anche il Manzoni sapeva, nell'Italia moderna – «paese delle cento città», per dirla con un altro milanese, Carlo Cattaneo, che sottolineava questa sua particolarità (Cattaneo 2021 [1858]) – non ce n'era mai stata una in grado d'imporre il suo idioma alle altre[3].

In ogni caso la lingua italiana si è poi andata evolvendo in una direzione assai diversa da quella da lui propugnata, anche politicamente (specialmente quando fu presidente della Commissione per l'unificazione della lingua, istituita dal ministro della Pubblica istruzione Emilio Broglio nel 1868, nel breve periodo in cui Firenze era stata la capitale del Regno d'Italia[4]). Ciò si deve all'effetto combinato di molti fattori (demografici, politici, economici, sociali, culturali, etc.), allora persino difficili da immaginare. Basti qui ricordare il forte rimescolamento delle popolazioni della penisola avvenuto dopo l'Unità, anche per le grandi migrazioni interne, stimolate a più riprese dai processi di industrializzazione e di urbanizzazione, concentrati in alcune parti del paese, e la crescente importanza acquisita da Roma, subentrata ben presto a Firenze come capitale, ma anche centro della cattolicità, e da Milano, «la città più città d'Italia» (come la definì il siciliano Giovanni Verga, in occasione dell'Esposizione nazionale del 1881), capoluogo della regione più popolosa e centro principale dello sviluppo economico, nonché il più importante vertice del triangolo industriale, protagonista del "miracolo economico" del secondo dopoguerra. Si aggiunga l'omologazione linguistica dovuta all'alfabetizzazione e alla scolarizzazione di massa (pur avviate in ritardo e non senza difficoltà, per la situazione di partenza e le condizioni economico-sociali[5]), la formazione di un apparato burocratico esteso su tutto il territorio nazionale, con personale in larga misura proveniente dal sud, e gli effetti, diretti e indiretti, delle due guerre mondiali, cui presero parte, a fianco a fianco, soldati e ufficiali provenienti da tutto il paese. Né si può tacere la sempre più pervasiva influenza dei mezzi di comunicazione di massa (radio, cinema e televisione), con basi principali prima a Torino e poi a Milano e a Roma[6]. Ciò ha fatto sì che il fiorentino finisse per ridursi sempre di più a una delle tante varianti locali, radicate nei dialetti regionali e nei particolarismi delle diverse città. Infatti, come anche il Manzoni sapeva, pur non avendo voluto trarne tutte le conseguenze, «le lingue camminano: bene o male che sia»[7].

La mia trascrizione dei *Promessi Sposi* in lingua italiana moderna (che mi ha impegnato per più di un quinquennio) è stata un'operazione per molti aspetti simile alla traduzione del testo in altre lingue. Ricordo, in proposito, che, dopo tante traduzioni in moltissime lingue, recentemente ne è stata pubblicata una nuova negli Stati

ta Emilia Luti, una fiorentina di ceto sociale modesto, che il Manzoni aveva conosciuto a Firenze e ricontattato a Milano (1839-1842), dove si era trasferita con la madre (1838), chiamata da Massimo d'Azeglio per assistere la figlia che aveva avuto della sua prima moglie (la primogenita di Alessandro Manzoni), morta nel 1834. Qui, dopo che nella casa del d'Azeglio, lavorò in quella dello stesso Manzoni (1841), che già l'aveva ospitata con la bambina nella sua casa di campagna a Brusuglio. Nella sua collaborazione linguistica, la Luti si fece aiutare dalla madre, ancora più vicina al linguaggio del popolo. Per ringraziarla, il Manzoni le regalò una delle prime copie della Quarantana con una dedica speciale: «Gradisca questi cenci da lei risciacquati in Arno». Secondo una recente ricerca (basata su testimonianze di allora), la lingua fiorentina migliore sarebbe stata quella delle popolane, in una scala che vedeva all'ultimo posto quella dei letterati non toscani, che parlavano la lingua artefatta delle scritture, e al primo posto quella delle fantesche di Firenze, che parlavano la lingua meno inficiata da esterne influenze (si veda Sanson 2011). Sulla Luti e sul suo ruolo nella revisione dei *Promessi Sposi* si possono vedere Emilio Sioli Legnani (1936: 481-506) e Giovanni Giuseppe Amoretti (1992: 5-21). Su di lei è stato pubblicato recentemente anche un romanzo di Emanuela Fontana (2023).

[3] Si veda la relazione del Manzoni, citata nella nota seguente.

[4] Quella commissione comprendeva due sottocommissioni, una milanese e una fiorentina. La relazione del Manzoni al ministro, intitolata *Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla* [1868], si può ora vedere negli *Scritti linguistici editi*, pp. 53-80, assieme a quella della sottocommissione di Firenze (pp. 94-108), paradossalmente assai meno favorevole all'uso del fiorentino, tanto da indurre il Manzoni a dimettersi da presidente della commissione. Critici delle sue posizioni furono anche non pochi italianisti del tempo, fra cui Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (si veda in particolare il suo *Proemio all'Archivio Glottologico italiano* [1872], ripubblicato nei suoi *Scritti sulla questione della lingua* [1975]). «Quel dibattito», come scrisse il Croce già quasi un secolo fa, «venne superato e dimenticato nell'attualità della lingua che si parlava e scriveva, e che faceva e rifaceva sé stessa, come aveva sempre fatto, nonostante le pretese contrarie dei grammatici e dei lessicografi» (Croce 1926: 334-343; Croce 1951: 363).

[5] Secondo il censimento del 1861, l'anno della proclamazione del Regno d'Italia, gli analfabeti erano il 78% degli italiani di più di sei anni (il 72% dei maschi e l'84% delle femmine) e degli stessi alfabetizzati ben pochi (valutati tra il 2,5% e il 9,5%) potevano essere considerati davvero italofoni.

[6] Come ha notato recentemente il critico televisivo del maggior quotidiano italiano, il romanesco è diventato «la lingua unitaria» delle *fictions* (Grasso 2024: 47), anche se con alcune recenti eccezioni per il siciliano e il napoletano.

[7] Si veda il suo *"Sentir Messa". Libro della lingua d'Italia contemporaneo dei Promessi Sposi* [1835-36], pubblicato postumo (1923) con quel titolo e ora ripubblicato in *Scritti linguistici inediti I*, in Edizione nazionale, vol. 17 (2000). Quel titolo si deve al fatto che il Manzoni aveva aperto il suo scritto – una difesa della lingua impiegata da Tommaso Grossi nel *Marco Visconti* (1834) – sostenendo che «sentir messa» era un'espressione più comune di «udir messa» (p. 181) ed era quindi da preferire. Il Grossi gli aveva dedicato quel romanzo con «la riverenza di un discepolo e l'amore di un fratello»: un sentimento da tempo ricambiato, dato che nei *Promessi Sposi*, citando un verso di un suo precedente lavoro, *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (Grossi 1826), il Manzoni aveva scritto che lui e il Grossi erano «come fratelli». Questi era anche andato ad abitare a casa sua per un lungo periodo (1822-1837), pur essendo controllato dalla polizia austriaca, e in quegli anni i loro incontri erano stati pressoché quotidiani.

Uniti (*The Bethroted*, Modern Library, 2022) e che questa traduzione, che sta promovendo notevolmente la loro conoscenza in quel paese, è stata naturalmente effettuata nella lingua anglo-americana moderna e non in quella della prima metà dell'Ottocento[8]. Del resto, l'utilizzazione della lingua corrente è la norma in tutte le traduzioni, comprese quelle in lingua italiana di tanti classici di altri paesi, solitamente lette senza far caso a questo fatto.

Sulla mia trascrizione non voglio, però, intrattenermi oltre, rimandando gli interessati alla sua lettura. Aggiungo solo che non sono un linguista, ma un cultore della buona lingua italiana, che ho affinato nel corso del tempo, non solo scrivendo e riscrivendo tanti libri, ma correggendo, anche linguisticamente, molte centinaia di tesi di laurea e quasi tutti gli articoli della rivista che ho diretto per quasi un trentennio. Fondamentalmente, però, resto un sociologo e un antropologo, che ama anche la storia, la filosofia e la psicologia. Le mie riletture degli scritti del Manzoni sono pertanto avvenute in una particolare prospettiva, che mi ha permesso di coglierne alcuni aspetti ignorati o sottovalutati. Ed è su questi che voglio qui soffermarmi brevemente.

2. I PROMESSI SPOSI: UN ROMANZO ANTROPOLOGICO, PSICOLOGICO E SOCIOLOGICO

La prima cosa che ho notato è che *I Promessi Sposi* sono non solo un "romanzo storico", come in genere si dice e lo stesso Manzoni affermava, ma anche un romanzo antropologico, psicologico e sociologico, ovviamente *ante litteram*[9].

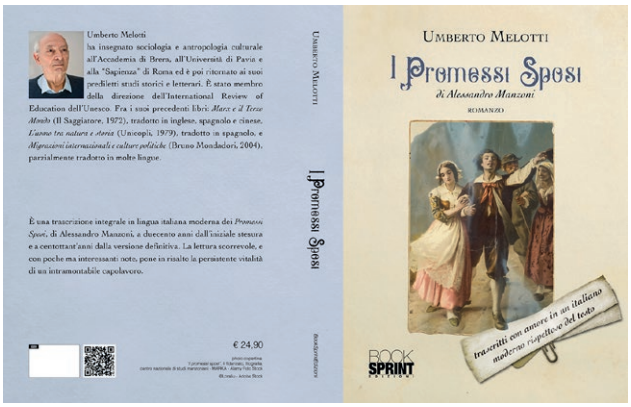

Figura 3. Copertina della mia trascrizione in lingua italiana moderna dei *Promessi Sposi* (2023).

Ho avuto inoltre l'impressione che del Manzoni prevalga tuttora una visione fondamentalmente sbagliata, dovuta anche ai giudizi e ai pregiudizi di certi autori tuttora assai influenti, anche per ragioni politiche: quella di un conservatore cattolico, moderato e benpensante, incapace di cogliere i fermenti più vivi della società del suo tempo (per citare, pressoché testualmente, Antonio Gramsci, fra i fondatori del Partito comunista italiano, ma anche uno dei "padri nobili" della cultura italiana, che definì non «nazional-popolare» ma «aristocratico» il suo cattolicesimo)[10].

Il Manzoni era però un erede della grande tradizione dell'illuminismo lombardo, da lui respirato anche in famiglia. La sua amatissima madre, Giulia Beccaria (1762-1841), cui si ricongiunse quando aveva vent'anni, dopo una lunga e sofferta separazione, ma poi non più lasciata, era la primogenita del grande Cesare, l'autore del trattato *Dei delitti e delle pene* (1764), e aveva frequentato i fratelli Verri: Pietro, forse il suo vero padre, che con il fratello Alessandro aveva fondato il *Caffè* (1764-1766), e più ancora il loro fratello minore Giovanni, probabile padre naturale del Manzoni. Giulia, in gioventù di costumi molto liberi e per quel tempo addirittura spregiudicati, durante la sua lunga *liaison* con quell'affascinante libertino, sposò, soprattutto per ragioni economiche (Cesare Beccaria era aristocratico sì, ma di pochi mezzi), il ricco e anziano conte Pietro Manzoni, che, vedovo, l'aveva presa volentieri per moglie, nonostante la sua scarsa dote, anche per la mediazione di Pie-

[8] Michael F. Moore, l'autore di quella traduzione, in un'intervista a Iuri Moscardi (2022: 37) («La mia battaglia per Manzoni. Così l'ho tradotto negli Stati Uniti») ha affermato di aver lavorato per anni per rendere il suo inglese idoneo a quel libro, evitando le parole auliche e arcaiche e scegliendo con cura quelle «adatte all'Ottocento, ma anche all'oggi». Per scrivere il testo in «un buon inglese-americano medio, letterario ma non artificiale», ha anche dovuto spezzare molti paragrafi e modificare la punteggiatura, in modo da rendere le frasi più brevi. Anche per non aver rispettato a sufficienza queste esigenze, le precedenti traduzioni in inglese dei *Promessi Sposi* (compresa quella, assai diffusa, di Bruce Penman del 1972) sarebbero state, a suo avviso, insoddisfacenti. Quella di Archibald Colquhoun (1952) era già stata criticata anche da Emilio Cecchi per le sue troppe licenze e i suoi cambiamenti di tono. Senza una traduzione «buona, vivace e intelligente», ha concluso Moore, un libro così impegnativo rischierebbe di passare per «il solito polveroso romanzo storico», mentre è invece «un romanzo travolgente, un vero terremoto».

[9] Com'è ben noto, il termine "sociologia" apparve per la prima volta nel quarto volume del *Cours de philosophie* di Auguste Comte (1839), pubblicato un anno prima dell'edizione definitiva dei *Promessi Sposi*. Elaborazioni e spunti sociologici però erano già presenti, specialmente in Francia, in diversi autori, come Montesquieu, Condorcet, Fourier, Saint-Simon e Tocqueville. Si veda Pennati (1961: 13-15).

[10] Si veda Antonio Gramsci (1971 [1929-1932]: 98-104). In implicito contrasto con lui, espressamente nominato poco dopo, il presidente Mattarella, nel suo intervento sopra citato, ha asserito che il Manzoni aveva saputo collegarsi «alle forze più vive e dinamiche della cultura italiana ed europea» e a volte anzi le aveva anticipate e ispirate. Da parte mia peraltro sottolineo che il Gramsci aveva in comune col Manzoni molto più di quanto pensasse.

tro Verri, che non vedeva di buon occhio la sua relazione con il fratello, tanto più da nubile[11]. Dopo la rottura con quell'impenitente farfallone e la separazione dal poco brillante marito (1792), era andata a vivere con il nobile, colto e ricco Carlo Imbonati, prima a Milano, poi a Londra, per un breve periodo, e infine a Parigi, la più aperta capitale europea, dove, diversamente che a Milano, la loro convivenza non dava fastidio a nessuno. Lì il figlio, chiamato da lei, allarmata dalle notizie sulla vita che conduceva a Milano, la raggiunse, dopo quattordici anni privi di ogni contatto. Alessandro, partito non subito, arrivò trovandola affranta per la recente scomparsa del suo compagno e, a sua consolazione, scrisse e le dedicò il carme *In morte di Carlo Imbonati* (1805), scevro di ogni preoccupazione di carattere religioso, come tutti gli altri suoi scritti giovanili, a partire dal poemetto *Del trionfo della libertà* (1801), composto quando aveva solo quindici anni. L'Imbonati aveva lasciato alla convivente tutto il suo cospicuo patrimonio (che comprendeva anche la villa e la tenuta di Brusuglio, poi diventate tanto care al Manzoni) e ciò gli permise di restare a Parigi con lei sino al 1810, salvo due brevi puntata in Italia: nel 1807 per la morte del padre (che l'aveva nominato erede di tutti i suoi beni) e nel 1808 per il matrimonio, favorito dalla madre, con la sedicenne Enrichetta Blondel (1791-1833), nata in Lombardia, ma di famiglia ginevrina, borghese e calvinista. Lieto che non fosse né nobile né cattolica[12], la sposò rapidamente a Milano, con rito civile e rito evangelico, anche se dopo la conversione di lei al cattolicesimo, che accelerò il suo stesso ritorno alla fede (1808), quando già era nata la loro prima figlia, la volle sposare anche con rito cattolico, a Parigi, previa la dispensa papale, richiesta dichiarandosi pentito del "fallo" (1810).

Se per sua moglie fu una vera e propria conversione, avvenuta di sua «pura e semplice volontà», come scrisse ai genitori, che non l'avevano affatto gradita (Manzoni Blondel 2006: 25-26), con tanto di abiura solenne del calvinismo (presenti, fra i testimoni, il marito e la suocera), per il Manzoni non si trattò di una conversione, come spesso impropriamente si dice, bensì di un ritrovamento della religione cui era stato educato nei collegi cattolici in cui era stato inserito dai 6 ai 16 anni (prima quelli dei padri somaschi a Merate e a Lugano, poi quello dei padri barnabiti a Milano), di cui peraltro serbò sempre un pessimo ricordo, se non per alcune amicizie contratte con altri allievi del barnabita "collegio dei nobili". Ma, anche dopo quella fondamentale svolta di vita e di pensiero (attribuita da alcuni a un miracolo[13]), non cessò mai di apprezzare «le cose utili, vere e nuove» dell'illuminismo[14], alle quali però cominciò a guardare nella ritrovata prospettiva cristiana, venata di un certo giansenismo morale, per influenza prima delle letture di Sant'Agostino (ispiratore del Giansenio) e del Pascal e del Bossuet (ispirati dal Giansenio) e poi dei due sacerdoti (Eustachio Degola e Luigi Tosi) che ne accompa-

[11] La società milanese concedeva allora una certa libertà sessuale alle nobili sposate, ma non a quelle nubili. Le prime potevano intrattenere delle relazioni con un "cavalier servente". Come scrisse proprio Pietro Verri, «nelle case nobili non c'era nessuna cordialità fra i coniugi. La moglie aveva per lo più un amante, che simulava amicizia per il marito. Questi, che per lo più aveva un'amante anche lui, simulava credulità e bonomia. Quindi un ipocrita commercio di falsità reciproca era il decente legame fra marito e moglie» (si vedano le sue *Memorie*, probabilmente scritte nel 1781, e, per il passo citato, Sillano e Inzaghi 2023: 13).

[12] Si veda la sua lettera a Claude Fauriel, inizio novembre 1807, in Edizione Nazionale, vol. 27, 2000: 56.

[13] Secondo la versione miracolistica, il ritrovamento della fede da parte del Manzoni sarebbe avvenuto a Parigi il 2 aprile 1810, nella chiesa di Saint-Roch (San Rocco), nella centralissima rue Saint-Honoré. Stava partecipando, con la moglie, ai festeggiamenti pubblici per il matrimonio di Napoleone Bonaparte con Maria Luisa d'Austria, quando lo scoppio di alcuni mortaretti causò il panico fra la gente accalcata in strada e alcune persone furono travolte. Alessandro si trovò smarrito nella folla e diviso dalla moglie. Mentre la cercava disperatamente, fu sospinto sui gradini di quella chiesa, vi entrò e s'inginocchiò a pregare di ritrovarla e quando ne uscì l'incontrò subito. Sarebbe stato questo fatto a determinarne la "conversione" (si veda *Il miracolo di San Rocco: così convertì Alessandro Manzoni al cattolicesimo*, https://www.lalucedimaria.it/miracolo-san-rocco-manzoni/). Manzoni non confermò né smentì mai simili affermazioni. Sul suo ritorno alla fede fu sempre molto riservato, per non dire sfuggente, così come su tanti altri aspetti della sua vita privata. Il figlio della sua seconda moglie, Teresa Borri vedova Stampa (1799-1861), a lui molto legato, riferisce che, quando una volta gli chiese di parlargliene, gli rispose solo che era stato «per grazia di Dio» (Stampa 1885: 31). Per quel che se ne sa, però, il suo ricupero della fede non fu certamente dovuto a una folgorazione sulla via di Damasco, ma fu l'esito di un travagliato processo, non lunghissimo ma neanche breve (così come per tanti altri spiriti critici delusi sia della rivoluzione sia della controrivoluzione bonapartista). Ne costituisce un indizio il fatto che già il 23 agosto 1809 aveva voluto far battezzare cattolicamente la prima figlia (registrata solo civilmente alla nascita), in un ambiente prevalentemente laico, in cui non doveva esservi stato indotto da semplice rispetto umano, tanto più in quanto sposato con una protestante. In quel riavvicinamento alla religione, inframmezzato da dubbi e non senza una breve crisi (1817), fu seguito dall'abate Eustachio Degola, allora a Parigi, già intervenuto nella conversione della moglie, diventata cattolica il 22 maggio 1810. Peraltro, la "leggenda di San Rocco" (ricordata da una piccola lapide in quella chiesa) infiora la prima manifestazione nota della sua demofobia (la paura della folla), che, con altri disturbi nervosi, lo avrebbe afflitto per tutta la vita. Ritornato in Italia nella seconda metà di quello stesso anno (1810), sistemati alcuni problemi pratici, iniziò a scrivere gli *Inni sacri* (1812). Nel frattempo, a insistente richiesta del canonico Luigi Tosi, che su indicazione del Degola aveva scelto come direttore spirituale della sua famiglia (compresa la madre, che lo aveva seguito nel ritorno alla fede), scrisse anche le *Osservazioni sulla morale cattolica. Prima parte* (1819), in cui già traspare il retroterra religioso e morale del romanzo, cui cominciò a metter mano due anni dopo.

[14] Come scrisse nella seconda parte delle *Osservazioni sulla morale cattolica*, scritta nel 1819-1820, subito dopo la prima, ma lasciata incompiuta e pubblicata solo postuma (Manzoni 1887). Entrambe le parti delle *Osservazioni* stanno per essere pubblicate, in tutte le loro versioni, nell'Edizione nazionale delle opere, vol. 7 e 8.

gnarono il riavvicinamento alla fede, cui si aggiunse più tardi il Rosmini, conosciuto nel 1826 e frequentato assiduamente dopo il 1840, nei suoi soggiorni sulla sponda piemontese del Lago Maggiore. Quel difficile ma riuscito connubio tra fede e ragione emerge già negli *Inni Sacri*, che iniziò a comporre nel 1812, dopo di essere ritornato a Milano[15].

Tanto meno fu un conservatore in politica. Anzi, da giovane, nel fervore per i primi moti indipendentisti, scrisse la vibrante ode patriottica *Marzo 1821*, che però, dopo il loro miserando fallimento, si tenne in petto sino alle Cinque giornate di Milano (1848), cui diede un forte sostegno anche economico, concedendo alla Commissione per la causa nazionale tutti i proventi del vendutissimo opuscolo che la comprendeva assieme ad altri suoi scritti inediti, fra cui il non meno patriottico *Proclama di Rimini* (1815). Ma, pur avendo anche firmato l'appello dei milanesi a Carlo Alberto ed essersi affacciato al balcone della sua abitazione per esternare il suo appoggio ai manifestanti, preferì mantenere, in complesso, un profilo basso, anche perché il suo figlio minore Filippo, che si era arruolato nella Guardia civica, era stato fatto prigioniero e si trovava nelle mani degli austriaci.

Quel che più importa, però, è che nel *Marzo 1821* appariva chiaramente la sua concezione della nazione, che superava sia quella etico-politica di tipo francese, d'ispirazione illuminista e universalista, culminata poi in Ernest Renan (1882), sia quella etnico-culturale di tipo tedesco, d'ispirazione romantica e particolarista, già presente in Johann Fichte (1808). Invocava infatti un'Italia «libera tutta tra l'Alpe ed il mare / … una d'arme, di lingua, d'altare, / di memorie, di sangue e di cor» (vv. 29-32)[16], riprendendo i tradizionali elementi geografici e linguistici già richiamati da Dante e Petrarca[17] e aggiungendovene altri, di carattere soggettivo, poi utilizzati da altri, fra cui Pasquale Stanislao Mancini. Le trascendeva infatti entrambe, inserendo la propria in una visione supernazionale cristiana, che enfatizzava la fratellanza umana e denunciava gli orrori di tutte le guerre: «i fratelli hanno ucciso i fratelli / quest'orrenda novella vi do» (*Il Conte di Carmagnola*, 1820, atto II, coro, vv. 87-88).

Attesta il suo impegno politico e sociale anche la terza tragedia, lo *Spartaco*, che aveva iniziato a scrivere nel 1821, ma aveva presto abbandonato, assorbito dal lavoro per il romanzo, cui aveva cominciato a dedicarsi il 24 aprile di quello stesso anno. I lavori preparatori e i frammenti che ne restano mostrano un forte spirito libertario, con un'attenzione rivolta non solo al passato ma anche al presente (il dibattito sulla schiavitù allora molto vivo in Inghilterra e, soprattutto, la persistente eco in Francia della rivolta di Saint-Domingue, poi Haiti, la sua colonia liberatasi dalla schiavitù e dalla dominazione straniera grazie alle lotte di Toussaint Louverture, lo "Spartaco nero", alle cui vicende fa espresso riferimento nel suo ultimo inno, *La Pentecoste*)[18]. A lungo dimenticata o ignorata, la figura di Spartaco era ritornata in auge durante l'Illuminismo e il primo Romanticismo, come straordinario simbolo della lotta per la libertà, per la sua battaglia contro Roma alla testa di un esercito di schiavi in rivolta e di altri *desperati homines* e per la sorprendente somiglianza della sua morte con quella di Cristo, crocefisso come lui dai romani. Qualche decennio più tardi, nel 1861, di Spartaco avrebbe parlato anche Marx, che riconosceva in lui «la figura più splendida [*der famoseste Kerl*] di tutta la storia antica […] un

[15] Quegli inni, di cui gli era venuta l'idea l'anno stesso del suo ritorno alla fede (1810), sarebbero dovuti essere sedici (come scrisse al Fauriel il 25 marzo 1816): uno per ogni ricorrenza dell'anno liturgico. Ne concluse però solo cinque: quattro tra il 1812 e il 1814 (*La Resurrezione*, *Il nome di Maria*, *Il Natale* e *La Passione*) e uno tra il 1817 e il 1822 (*La Pentecoste*, faticosamente fatta e rifatta). Più tardi, nel 1830, iniziò a stenderne un altro (l'*Ognissanti*), che lasciò incompiuto. I primi quattro, pubblicati in un volumetto nel 1815, passarono allora quasi inosservati. Ma, parlandone nel 1872, quando il suo autore era ormai diventato da molto tempo una "gloria patria", il primo grande storico della letteratura italiana, Francesco De Sanctis, colse bene «il sentimento sostanzialmente democratico» che li animava, giungendo ad affermare che «la famosa triade libertà, uguaglianza e fraternità» vi ritornava in una prospettiva evangelica, che considerava tutti gli uomini, ricchi e poveri, nobili e plebei, come «fratelli in Cristo». Secondo quel critico laicissimo, il Manzoni coniugava in tal modo i princìpi rivoluzionari del diciottesimo secolo con quelli di una religione cristiana rivisitata anche alla loro luce (De Sanctis 1958, vol. 1: 9, 118-119). Non deve pertanto stupire che, nello stesso periodo degli *Inni sacri* (1812-1822), scrisse anche le sue due tragedie (*Il Conte di Carmagnola* e l'*Adelchi*) e ne abbozzò una terza (lo *Spartaco*), pervase tutte d'impegno sociale, e le sue grandi odi civili e politiche (il *Marzo 182*1 e *Il Cinque Maggio*). Il Manzoni aveva infatti preso la religione, pur risorta allora anche come reazione alle degenerazioni della grande rivoluzione, «non in opposizione al patriottismo, ma come suo suggello e consacrazione» (ivi, vol. 2: 6).

[16] Per contestualizzare l'importanza di tale definizione, gioverà ricordare che, dalla Restaurazione al Quarantotto, l'Italia era considerata da molti, per dirla con le parole attribuite al Metternich, una mera «espressione geografica». Del resto, persino dopo l'Unità (1861), anche alcuni patrioti pensarono a lungo che bisognasse ancora «fare gli italiani» (come scrisse Massimo d'Azeglio, che nel 1831 aveva sposato la figlia primogenita del Manzoni e poi gli era sempre restato amico). Si veda Melotti (2000, 2012: 319-344)

[17] Dante aveva definito l'Italia come il «bel Paese ove il sì suona» (*Inferno*, 33, v. 80) e il Petrarca come «il bel paese / ch'Appennin parte e 'l mar circonda e l'Alpe» (*Canzoniere*, 146, vv. 13-14).

[18] Si veda *Spartaco*, in Edizione nazionale, vol. 4, 2015, pp. 529-582. Anche più tardi mantenne una ferma condanna per la schiavitù. Margherita Provana di Collegno (1926) riferisce che il Manzoni (frequentatore assiduo del suo salotto a Baveno) aveva detto che, «benché l'America avesse il governo più libero e il Regno di Napoli il più tirannico», avrebbe preferito nascere napoletano, «perché non esiste nulla di peggio della mostruosa schiavitù». La frase è stata ricordata da Mattarella nel suo citato intervento).

nobile personaggio, vero esponente del proletariato antico» (Marx ed Engels 1973: 75)[19].

Il minimo che si deve dire è che il Manzoni fu un liberale di ampie vedute, anche se reso prudente dalla drammatica deriva della Rivoluzione francese, rapidamente degenerata in violenze distruttive, scontri intestini, massacri, tirannia, terrore, dispotismo, «oppressione sotto nome di libertà» e guerre rovinose che disastrarono il continente per oltre un ventennio. A quella rivoluzione, «il più clamoroso evento della storia moderna» (come lo definì nel romanzo, in cui vi fa più di un implicito ma chiaro riferimento), dedicò sempre grande attenzione, attestata anche da uno specifico saggio incompiuto (scritto fra il 1863 e 1867 e pubblicato postumo nel 1889, in occasione del suo centenario)[20]. La prima lezione che ne trasse era stata la necessità di evitare ogni estremismo teorico e pratico, di cui erano stati esempi eclatanti l'assurda divinizzazione della Ragione, che ne aveva portato alla negazione cruenta, e le aspre contrapposizioni, che avevano portato via via all'eliminazione fisica di tutti i suoi dirigenti. Ciò, però, non ne ha mai fatto un ottuso difensore dello *statu quo*. Lo dimostra il fatto che fu sempre un deciso fautore dell'unità d'Italia (che era stata per lui «il sospiro di tutta la vita»[21]) e che, anche per questo, si pronunciò sempre apertamente contro il potere temporale della Chiesa (a differenza di altri cattolici pur patrioti, fra cui il suo amico Rosmini, che, come il Gioberti, ma meno enfaticamente, auspicava una federazione di stati indipendenti sotto la presidenza del Papa). In ogni caso, dopo di essere diventato senatore, su proposta del Cavour, prima del Regno di Sardegna (1860), di cui era entrata a far parte anche la Lombardia, e poi del Regno d'Italia (1861), votò per lo spostamento della capitale da Torino a Firenze (1864), prodromo del suo trasferimento a Roma non appena fosse diventato possibile, e poi, senza incertezze, per l'annessione al Regno di quella città (1871), subito dopo la sua conquista e il consueto plebiscito, sfidando la scomunica minacciata da Pio IX e le aspre reazioni di una parte non piccola del mondo cattolico (ripetutesi poi quando, l'anno seguente, accettò la cittadinanza onoraria di Roma). Nel 1862, poco dopo l'impresa dei Mille, era venuto a trovarlo a Milano anche Giuseppe Garibaldi, un rivoluzionario repubblicano non tenero con i conservatori. Credente l'uno e non credente l'altro, si abbracciarono calorosamente, accomunati dall'amore per l'Italia e da quel profondo afflato romantico che aveva fatto del primo il più grande scrittore italiano e del secondo il più grande eroe non solo europeo.

Nei *Promessi Sposi* emerge in modo lampante la sua concezione del mondo: non solo eminentemente cristiana, ma «eminentemente patriottica, eminentemente democratica ed eminentemente religiosa» (De Sanctis

[19] Marx aprì un nuovo filone d'interessi per quella figura. Vanno ricordati, in campo letterario, il romanzo di Raffaello Giovagnoli del 1873, dal sottotitolo di tipo manzoniano (*Spartaco: racconto storico del secolo VII dell'era romana*), oggi quasi dimenticato, ma a lungo il più tradotto romanzo italiano; in campo politico, la Lega spartachista, fondata nel 1918 da Rosa Luxemburg e Karl Liebknecht, poi assassinati; e, in campo cinematografico, dopo tanti film anche italiani, muti o sonori, ma tutti in bianco e nero, lo straordinario *Spartacus* di Stanley Kubrick (1960), a colori e per grande schermo, co-prodotto e magistralmente interpretato da Kirk Douglas, con sceneggiatura di Dalton Trumbo (una delle vittime del maccartismo), ispirata all'omonimo romanzo di Howard Fast (1951). In Italia Giovagnoli era stato preceduto da Ippolito Nievo, che, prima di partecipare alla spedizione dei Mille, in cui avrebbe perso la vita, aveva dedicato a *Spartaco* (1857) una tragedia intrisa di patriottismo, restata inedita sino al 1919 e mai rappresentata, pur essendo «forse l'opera più shakespeariana della nostra letteratura» (Storchi Marino 2011: 71). Anche Giuseppe Cesare Abba, un altro garibaldino, influenzato anche dal Mazzini, fra il 1868 e il 1869 aveva iniziato a scrivere una tragedia su Spartaco (a dichiarata imitazione di quelle manzoniane), ma se la tenne a «ruggire nel petto sino alla morte». Sui recenti sviluppi dell'attenzione per quella figura anche in campi diversi, rimando a Marxiano Melotti (2019: 94-103), «Spartaco, maschera della ribellione».

[20] Si veda *La Rivoluzione francese del 1789 e la Rivoluzione italiana del 1859. Saggio comparativo*, Rechiedei, Milano, 1889; ora in Edizione nazionale (2000, vol. 15: 3-201). La parte sulla rivoluzione italiana (cioè il Risorgimento) non fu mai stesa, ma il Manzoni, che aveva raccolto un cospicuo materiale preparatorio, affrontò l'argomento fra il 1872 e il 1873, nel suo ultimo scritto: un testo occasionale (restato anch'esso incompiuto e pubblicato postumo nel 1924), intitolato *Dell'Indipendenza dell'Italia*, che gli era stato richiesto dalla municipalità di Torino per una raccolta di «autografi di uomini illustri che avevano cooperato all'indipendenza nazionale». La parte sulla rivoluzione francese, che, dopo la sua pubblicazione suscitò a lungo scandalo e riprovazione, ne fa – più che un epigono dei primi critici ideologici e politici di quella rivoluzione (fra cui Edmund Burke, che ne scrisse già nel 1790, e M.me de Staël, che le dedicò un'opera assai ponderosa, pubblicata postuma nel 1818) – un precursore della saggistica storica odierna (a torto definita "revisionista"), di cui è espressione saliente il più noto libro di François Furet (1978). Sull'orientamento critico del Manzoni hanno influito molti fattori, fra cui le sue riflessioni sulle persecuzioni inflitte alla Chiesa e ai credenti da quella rivoluzione e, prima ancora, gli incontri avuti in Francia, grazie a un'amica di sua madre, Sophie Grouchy, vedova del celebre e infelice Nicolas de Condorcet (uno degli ultimi filosofi illuministi e dei primi sociologi), che, dopo aver partecipato con entusiasmo alle fasi iniziali della rivoluzione, per aver difeso i diritti dell'uomo proclamati ai suoi inizi e aver criticato l'esecuzione di Luigi XVI e l'incipiente dittatura dei giacobini, si era suicidato in prigione per evitare la ghigliottina. A Parigi, durante il suo primo soggiorno (1805-1810), aveva conosciuto numerosi studiosi di problemi sociali e politici, fra cui gli *idéologues*, che, dalle precedenti posizioni illuministe, erano approdati, anche per tristi esperienze personali, a una visione assai meno ottimistica della storia. Fra questi, il loro caposcuola Destutt de Tracy, incarcerato durante il Terrore (della cui figlia si era innamorato), Pierre Cabanis (con cui aveva lungamente conversato, passeggiando per Auteuil) e Claude Fauriel, prima compagno della Staël e poi della Condorcet (con il quale strinse una profonda e duratura amicizia). Nel suo secondo soggiorno (1819-1820), frequentò anche lo storico Augustin Thierry e il filosofo Victor Cousin.

[21] Così nella lettera del 7 ottobre 1848 a Giorgio Briano, in cui comunicava a quel giornalista, che ne aveva sostenuto la candidatura alla Camera subalpina, la decisione di rinunciare all'elezione, avvenuta nella circoscrizione di Arona (A. Manzoni 1986, vol. 2: 463).

Figura 4. Sebastiano de Albertis (1863), *L'incontro fra Manzoni e Garibaldi*, Palazzo Morando, Milano.

1958: 253). Vi è, innanzi tutto, una forte denuncia del malgoverno e delle vessazioni degli occupanti stranieri (il riferimento diretto era agli spagnoli, che nel '600 governavano l'ex ducato di Milano, ma trasparente ne era la possibile applicazione agli austriaci, allora al potere in larga parte dell'Italia settentrionale, il cui dominio aveva già denunciato nel *Marzo 1821*)[22]. Ma vi è anche un'apertura, non frequente nella letteratura del tempo, alla realtà popolare, anche con spunti di radicalità sociale e senza ombre di quel paternalismo imputatogli poi a torto dal Gramsci. In realtà, al di là o, meglio, al di qua della storia politica, il Manzoni guarda sempre alla sottesa storia sociale. Un'anticipazione letteraria della posizione delle *Annales*, la più innovatrice corrente storiografica del Novecento. Né manca una condanna ferma e decisa della brama della ricchezza, che abbruttisce e rende infelici gli altri e sé stessi[23].

3. I PERSONAGGI DEL ROMANZO

Per la prima volta, protagonisti di un romanzo sono due modesti lavoratori di un paesino di campagna, Renzo e Lucia, contadini e setaioli, analfabeti o semianalfabeti, come lo erano al loro tempo quasi tutti gli «umili» e i «poveri», termini che ricorrono spesso nei *Promessi Sposi* a indicare quello che altrove aveva definito «il volgo disperso che nome non ha» (Manzoni 1822) e, tanto meno, ha un'autonoma storia, come aveva scritto nel *Discorso su alcuni punti della storia longobardica in Italia*, pubblicato insieme all'*Adelchi*, e reiterato nel romanzo. La "storia" era quella dei ricchi e dei potenti: i governanti che depredavano il territorio e ne affamavano gli abitanti con imposte insostenibili e misure economiche insensate e controproducenti, cui si aggiungevano le truppe, che nelle guerre scatenate da loro saccheggiavano i paesi per cui transitavano, ne violentavano le donne e massacravano quanti cercassero di opporsi loro, disseminando morte, peste e distruzione.

Attorno ai due protagonisti si muove tutto un mondo di popolani (contadini, artigiani, garzoni, pescatori, barcaioli, barrocciai etc.), per lo più partecipi delle loro vicende e solidali con loro, e vittime anch'essi di ingiustizie e prevaricazioni e dei diffusi flagelli in parte causati dal cattivo governo (carestie, devastazioni, guerre, epidemie etc.).

I loro antagonisti, per contro, appartengono tutti al mondo dei ricchi e dei potenti. Don Rodrigo, il loro diretto avversario, è il superbo signorotto del luogo, che, voglioso di soddisfare un «capriccio un po' ignobile» per una contadina di «modesta bellezza», prima la molesta per la strada, mentre ritorna dal lavoro, scommette con il cugino di riuscire a sedurla e manda i suoi bravi a intimare al curato del paese di non celebrarne l'imminente matrimonio; poi, per prenderla contro la sua volontà, ordisce trame e violenze, mobilitando complici e amici. Fra questi vi sono il suo scanzonato compagno di avventure e di soprusi, il cugino Attilio, non meno nobile e ignobile di lui, che lo istiga a perseverare nel suo intento, trasformando quell'occasionale capriccio in un irrinunciabile punto d'onore, e il loro tronfio e borioso Conte Zio, membro del Consiglio Segreto di Milano, che, interessato soprattutto ad affermare il proprio prestigio e il proprio potere, pur sapendo di che pasta fossero quei suoi nipoti, ne protegge l'operato, contro la più elementare giustizia. A loro si aggiunge l'Innominato, il «selvaggio signore», autore d'innumeri scelleratezze, trasfigurazione di un personaggio storico reale, Francesco Bernardino Visconti, il «conte del sagrato» (chiamato così per l'atroce delitto compiuto davanti a una chiesa), che proprio con quel soprannome compare nel *Fermo e Lucia*[24]. Con un ruolo particolare

[22] Si può notare, fra l'altro, che quel che all'inizio del romanzo è detto ironicamente con riferimento agli spagnoli (e più specificamente alla loro guarnigione di Lecco) riprende il concetto espresso sdegnosamente in quell'ode con esplicito riferimento agli austriaci: «Quel che è Padre di tutte le genti / […] non disse al Germano giammai: / va, raccogli ove arato non hai» (*Marzo 1821*: vv. 69-71). Si capisce perché al Metternich i *Promessi Sposi* dovessero apparire una «lettera indirizzata alla Spagna, ma destinata all'Austria» (Marpicati 1934: 197).

[23] Si veda com'è rappresentata nel romanzo la figura del principe-padre, che, per non disperdere i beni della famiglia, prevede la monacazione forzata di tutti i figli cadetti, fra cui Gertrude, destinata a diventare, sin da quando era ancora nel ventre materno, la monaca di Monza.

[24] Il Manzoni stesso ha confermato di essersi ispirato a quella figura, anche se – per l'*aequa potestas quidlibet audendi* (l'oraziana libertà di osare nell'arte tutto ciò che sembri opportuno), da lui espressamente

interviene anche l'infelice Gertrude, la monaca di Monza, prima vittima della prepotenza del principe-padre e, poi, dopo la sua monacazione forzata, Signora del suo monastero e figura di spicco in quel borgo, perché era «della costola d'Adamo e i suoi del tempo antico erano gente grande, venuta dalla Spagna, dove sono quelli che comandano», e suo padre era il «primo» di Monza, pur vivendo a Milano. Vanno ricordati anche tutti gli individui che operavano al loro servizio o li assecondavano per viltà o per interesse: i bravi di don Rodrigo; il pavido don Abbondio, più timoroso di loro che delle prediche del cardinale, che usa il latino e le nozioni imparate al seminario per ingannare quelli che dovrebbe tutelare e proteggere; l'iniquo e opportunista Azzeccagarbugli, un "dottore" capace di maneggiare furbescamente le gride per salvare i colpevoli legati ai potenti e colpire gli innocenti loro sgraditi; il querulo e petulante podestà di Lecco, estasiato ammiratore del conte-duca e buon servitore degli spagnoli presenti nella sua piccola parte di mondo; il console del paese, l'autorità locale, che, invece di compiere il proprio dovere, soppesa ciò dovrebbe e ciò che gli conviene fare e si sottomette senza fiatare ai bravi che vogliono indurlo al silenzio; il capitano di giustizia, il bargello, il notaio criminale e gli sbirri, più desiderosi d'impartire "lezioni" alla gente che di fare giustizia; e anche certi ecclesiastici di «consumata abilità», come il padre provinciale dei cappuccini, che, pur non convinto, cede per quieto vivere alla richiesta del Conte Zio e trasferisce da Lecco a Rimini fra Cristoforo, il primo protettore dei due promessi, facendogli fare «una bella passeggiata».

Certamente fra le figure positive non mancano i religiosi. Fra questi, l'appena citato fra Cristoforo, figlio di un mercante arricchito, che l'aveva fatto educare perché potesse cercare d'inserirsi fra i nobili, ma che, dopo un evento traumatico (l'uccisione involontaria di un prepotente), aveva deciso di dedicarsi a difendere, come profeta disarmato, le vittime delle ingiustizie; padre Felice Casati e i suoi cappuccini, che assistono gli appestati nel lazzaretto, a rischio della vita; e, soprattutto, il cardinale Federigo Borromeo, che, intervenendo nella conversione dell'Innominato (una *mutatio dexterae Excelsi*, a detta del suo cappellano), opera da *deus ex machina* nella lunga e intricata vicenda dei due promessi. Il cardinale del romanzo non è però quello della storia, ma una figura idealizzata, costruita con manifesti fini edificanti. Come ho rilevato nella più lunga delle note del mio libro (ve ne sono un centinaio, per lo più brevi e tutte collocate alla fine del testo, per non interferire con la lettura del romanzo), è questo il caso in cui il Manzoni più si discosta dalla storia, troppo indulgendo alle sue fonti agiografiche: il frate laico Francesco Rivola, l'oblato Biagio Guenzati e soprattutto il canonico Giuseppe Ripamonti, che di quel cardinale era stato uno dei principali beneficiati. Da ciò anche lo stile oratorio dei passi che lo concernono, un po' «rozzo e affettato insieme», per applicargli le parole utilizzate dal Manzoni per definire quello del suo fittizio anonimo seicentesco. Dopo averlo esaltato per un intero capitolo (che anche a lui dovette sembrare un po' noioso e prolisso, tanto da invitare a saltarlo a piè pari coloro cui non piacesse, come scrisse nella prima stesura del romanzo), il Manzoni, «per non lasciare l'impressione di avergli voluto dedicare un elogio funebre», cita fuggevolmente certe sue credenze «strane e infondate», che però evita di specificare, per non incrinare l'esemplarità del suo personaggio (il Manzoni è un maestro di preterizione, come mostra anche, nell'edizione definitiva, la sua narrazione della vicenda della monaca di Monza, troncata dal celebre «la sventurata rispose»). Ma quel che tace qui è davvero un po' troppo. In realtà, fra quelle credenze vi era – oltre a quella nell'astrologia, che non perdona invece al bizzarro ma innocuo don Ferrante – la convinzione che la peste fosse un'«arma dell'ira divina» (*irae divinae telum*), come si legge in un suo scritto ancora inedito al tempo del Manzoni, ma ben noto a lui, che l'aveva rintracciato nella Biblioteca Ambrosiana[25]. Federigo riteneva anche che le unzioni venefiche, dettate dal demonio, cui allora molti attribuivano la peste, fossero almeno in parte reali[26]: una credenza nefasta, che il Manzoni denuncia aspramente nella *Storia della colonna infame*, scritta come parte integrante della prima stesura del romanzo e pubblicata in appendice alla sua edizione definitiva. Il Manzoni non dice una sola parola anche sulle gravissime responsabilità di quel cardinale nei roghi delle ultime "streghe" di Milano: una persecuzione assurda e crudele, che finì due anni dopo la sua morte[27]. Una mancanza tanto più grave

richiamata – ne aveva spostato il castello in Valsassina. Si veda il suo biglietto a Cesare Cantù del settembre 1832 (A. Manzoni 1986, vol. 3: 443). Nel caso della monaca di Monza, ispirata anch'essa a una figura storica reale, Marianna de Leyva y Marino (1575-1650), aveva invece spostato la vicenda nel tempo, posponendola di circa un trentennio.

[25] *De pestilentia quae Mediolani anno 1630 magnam stragem edidit*, cap. 2. Si veda *De pestilentia. La peste di Milano del 1630* (testo latino con tr. it. a fronte) (Borromeo 1964: 20). Da questo scritto il Manzoni ha ripreso, per lo più senza riferimenti, parecchi episodi narrati nel romanzo, fra cui quello della madre di Cecilia, da lui riscritto liricamente.

[26] Si veda Borromeo (1964: 35-39)

[27] Durante l'episcopato di Federico almeno nove donne e un uomo furono torturati, seviziati, uccisi e bruciati in piazza per stregoneria, per ordine del Tribunale dell'Inquisizione della diocesi di Milano, in sette casi a espressa richiesta di quel cardinale. Ma il numero delle vittime di quella caccia alle streghe fu probabilmente superiore, anche se è ignoto, perché gli atti dei processi dell'Inquisizione furono distrutti nel "rogo della memoria" (1788), decretato, durante la dominazione austriaca, dall'imperatore Giuseppe II, esponente di quel "dispotismo

perché il Manzoni aveva asserito che un romanzo storico doveva rispettare la verità storica e che, quando vi si introducono dei personaggi reali, «bisogna rappresentarli nella maniera più strettamente storica»[28].

Ciò non infirma peraltro la validità dei *Promessi Sposi* anche nelle sue parti più direttamente storiche. Alcune delle sue pagine più belle sono anzi proprio quelle dedicate alle vicende storiche, accuratamente ricostruite anche con riferimenti testuali (del tutto inusuali in un romanzo) alle fonti disponibili: la carestia, la fame, l'assalto ai forni, la peste, la guerra per i ducati di Mantova e del Monferrato. Mirabili sono le scene collettive, anche nei loro risvolti psicologici e sociologici, in cui, con l'intuizione propria dei grandi artisti, precorre Le Bon e Freud[29] (cui si potrebbero aggiungere l'Ortega y Gasset della *Ribellione delle masse* e la recente letteratura sui movimenti collettivi). Attualissime sono le descrizioni della peste e delle reazioni a quel contagio dalle cause allora sconosciute, che non possono non ricordare al lettore di oggi quel che è accaduto nei primi tempi della pandemia ancora in corso. Né meno attuali, mentre persistono i devastanti scontri fra Russia e Ucraina e fra Gaza e Israele, sono le pagine dedicate alle invasioni belliche e alle guerre in generale. La narrazione è inoltre inframmezzata da molte considerazioni di carattere morale, psicologico e sociologico, ispirate a un fondamentale buon senso di cui c'è ancora un grande bisogno. Di queste alcune, espresse in modo icastico e spesso sottilmente ironico, sono diventate addirittura proverbiali.

Sullo sfondo c'è naturalmente la fiducia nella Provvidenza, un elemento imprescindibile in ogni visione cristiana della storia. Alle vicende di tutto il romanzo sottende infatti, imperscrutabilmente, «il Dio che atterra e suscita, che affanna e che consola», di cui il Manzoni parla nel *5 Maggio*, scritto «in tre giorni di convulsione» nel luglio 1821 (quando gli giunse la notizia della morte di Napoleone), poco dopo che aveva iniziato a scrivere il *Fermo e Lucia* (24 aprile 1821).

Ciò che più attribuisce al romanzo il suo fascino è però la sua struttura, simile a quella di una favola[30]. I due promessi, prima di arrivare al "lieto fine", devono affrontare un'incredibile serie di peripezie: il tristissimo abbandono del paese natìo (che ispira il lirico «Addio monti»); la lunga e sofferta separazione; la consegna di Lucia ai bravi dell'Innominato da parte della monaca di Monza, che avrebbe dovuto proteggerla e tutelarla; il suo voto di castità, nell'angosciosa notte nel tetro e isolato castello in cui era prigioniera, proferito a rafforzamento della sua preghiera alla Madonna: un impedimento al matrimonio da lei ritenuto insormontabile, ma che il padre Cristoforo (casualmente reincontrato quando già era vicino alla morte) aveva poi potuto sciogliere per gli eccezionali poteri conferiti ai religiosi del lazzaretto; i suoi incontri con l'Innominato, cui tocca il cuore, precipitandone la conversione, apparsa miracolosa non solo alla gente del popolo, ma anche a lei, che ne aveva sempre sentito parlare come dell'«orco delle favole»; l'arrivo di Renzo a Milano, il suo coinvolgimento nel tumulto per il pane e il suo proditorio arresto, col rischio di finire impiccato assieme ai veri o presunti responsabili della rivolta; la sua fuga verso la Repubblica veneta, fra paure e incubi diurni e notturni; il passaggio per il loro paese delle bande dei lanzichenecchi, che distruggo-

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illuminato" che, con Maria Teresa, aveva abolito la tortura. Va ricordato che Carlo e Federico Borromeo avevano fatto di Milano uno dei centri principali della controriforma cattolica, avviata dal Concilio di Trento (1545-1563), nella cui ultima parte aveva svolto un ruolo importante Carlo Borromeo, "cardinal nepote" di Pio IV, il papa che nel 1560 aveva ordinato la ripresa dei suoi lavori. Fra le decisioni principali di quel Concilio, convocato per dare una risposta alla Riforma protestante, vi era stato il rilancio della lotta contro gli eretici, gli apostati, i maghi e le streghe, oltre che contro i diavoli e i loro presunti ossessi, cioè, per lo più, dei poveri malati di mente. Il Manzoni tace sempre, non solo nel romanzo ma anche nella *Storia della colonna infame*, la parte avuta in tali persecuzioni dall'Inquisizione. Aggiungo che Carlo Borromeo, suo fanatico fautore, fu proclamato santo nel 1610, previo il pagamento a Roma di 10.000 ducati d'oro da parte del suo casato, assai arricchitosi durante il suo episcopato.

[28] Si veda la sua lettera a Claude Fauriel del 3 novembre 1821, in *Carteggio Manzoni-Fauriel* (A. Manzoni 2000, vol. 27: 310). Similmente, nella lettera a Cesare Taparelli d'Azeglio del 22 settembre 1823 (pubblicata nel 1846 senza il consenso dell'autore, che però la ripubblicò rivista nel 1870), scrisse che «la letteratura deve proporsi l'utile per scopo, il vero per soggetto e l'interessante per mezzo» (A. Manzoni 1986, vol. 1: 338). Più tardi, però, in uno scritto che suona come parzialmente autocritico, affermò l'impossibilità di conciliare «l'assentimento storico» con «l'assentimento poetico» (*Del romanzo storico*, 1845 [ma l'abbozzo risale al 1829]; in A. Manzoni 2000, vol. 14: 1-85).

[29] Si veda Gustave Le Bon (1970 [1895]). Un libro pionieristico, di là dei suoi limiti, apprezzato anche da Sigmund Freud, che gli ha dedicato la parte iniziale («La descrizione dell'anima delle masse in Le Bon») di del suo libro sulla psicologia delle masse (2013 [1921]). Qualche anno prima di Le Bon, di psicologia delle folle si erano occupati Gabriel Tarde e Scipio Sighele, ma in prospettiva soprattutto criminologica. Nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra vanno ricordati i contributi alla sociologia dei comportamenti collettivi di Francesco Alberoni, libero docente di psicologia prima di passare alla sociologia. Aggiungo, in argomento, che quando parla delle folle, il Manzoni utilizza spesso il termine "moltitudine" (di ascendenza ciceroniana, ma assai utilizzato in Francia, nel triennio giacobino), riportato recentemente in auge da Toni Negri (si veda Hardt e Negri 2002, 2004), che lo aveva probabilmente ripreso da Spinoza, cui aveva dedicato un libro (1980) e altri studi, recentemente raccolti in volume (Negri 2023). Ma in Negri il termine assume una valenza sostanzialmente positiva, mentre nel Manzoni rivestiva una valenza per lo più negativa (sia nel romanzo, sia, ancor più, nel suo saggio sulla Rivoluzione francese), forse non solo per il suo ben diverso orientamento politico, ma anche per la sua già accennata demofobia.

[30] Si veda Vladimir Jakovlevič Propp (1966 [1928]) con un intervento di Claude Lévi-Strauss e una replica dell'autore. Propp non distingue fiabe e favole, come hanno fatto poi altri, secondo cui proprio l'esistenza di una "morale" sarebbe uno dei principali elementi che caratterizzano le favole.

no quel che restava dei loro poveri averi; la peste, che li colpisce entrambi, lui a Bergamo e lei a Milano; il loro ritrovamento quasi miracoloso nell'orrore del lazzaretto, dove Renzo era andato a cercarla al culmine di un viaggio in una Milano stravolta dalla peste e ricoperta di cadaveri: quasi una dantesca traversata del regno dei morti o, meglio, una discesa agli inferi, che ricorda quella di Orfeo alla ricerca della sua Euridice[31]. Poi, superate tutte queste "prove", possono finalmente riunirsi, coronare il loro sogno d'amore e, dopo qualche ultimo screzio (probabilmente inserito per rendere più credibile la «cantafavola»[32]), vivere per sempre felici e contenti, diventando anche ricchi grazie all'acquisto di un setificio (una concessione ai valori borghesi, forse per una traccia di quel calvinismo che il Manzoni aveva apprezzato in Enrichetta Blondel, figlia di un ricco produttore di seta). Nell'ultima pagina c'è anche la "morale" della favola («il sugo della storia»). Una morale «trovata da povera gente», che l'autore finge di riportare testualmente, con bonaria ironia.

È, insomma, un libro da leggere e rileggere, come dicevo all'inizio. La mia trascrizione, integrale e rispettosa al cento per cento del testo, ne rende la lettura più scorrevole e più comprensibile (come avrebbe gradito lo stesso Manzoni[33]). Per questo, pur non essendo una "semplificazione", potrebbe risultare molto utile a tanti. Fra questi, i giovani (che la crisi della scuola, la diffusione dei mezzi di comunicazione di massa e la pratica dei *social* hanno reso sempre meno capaci d'intendere testi anche non particolarmente difficili[34]) e i "nuovi italiani" (gli immigrati da paesi più o meno lontani e di cultura diversa), che potrebbero cogliere l'occasione per accostarsi al più grande romanzo italiano anche come un passo significativo della loro integrazione socioculturale[35].

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[31] Il Manzoni conosceva bene quel mito, di cui aveva parlato ampiamente Ovidio (*Metamorfosi*, libro X, vv. 1-82 e libro XI, vv. 453-527). Ma, prima, ne aveva parlato anche Virgilio, il poeta più amato dal Manzoni, nell'*Eneide* (sesto libro), della quale c'è più di qualche eco nel romanzo, e nelle *Georgiche* (quarto libro, vv. 453-527), tanto care al "fattore di Brusuglio", come il Manzoni è stato chiamato per la sua grande passione per l'agricoltura (si veda Maurizio e Letizia Corgnati, *Alessandro Manzoni, "fattore di Brusuglio"*, Mursia, Milano, 1984). Nel monumento eretogli a dieci anni dalla morte in piazza San Fedele a Milano il Manzoni è raffigurato con in mano proprio quel libro. Né va dimenticato che la figura di Orfeo, disceso agli Inferi e poi ritornato sulla terra, non aveva mancato d'interessare la patristica cristiana, in tempi di manifesti sincretismi. Dante poi aveva posto Orfeo nel limbo, insieme con gli "spiriti magni" e i grandi poeti morti senza battesimo (*Inferno*, 4, vv. 106-151). In tempi più vicini, Poliziano aveva scritto la *Fabula di Orfeo* (1470), su commissione del cardinale Francesco Gonzaga. Quel mito, che canta l'amore di due sposi che persiste oltre la morte, aveva poi ispirato l'*Orfeo* (1607) di Claudio Monteverdi e l'*Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) di Christoph Gluck (con libretto in italiano di Ranieri de' Calzabigi), rappresentato per la prima volta a Vienna nel 1762 (con un lieto fine non filologico, per assecondare la festosa celebrazione dell'onomastico dell'imperatore, che aveva motivato la sua messa in scena). In Italia la sua prima rappresentazione avvenne nel 1769 a Parma e in Francia nel 1774 a Parigi (dove l'opera fu poi spesso riproposta), in una versione ampiamente rivista (con libretto in francese di Pierre-Louis Moline). Sulle successive ricorrenze di quel mito, «grande icona della civiltà occidentale», si veda il lavoro di Guidorizzi e Melotti (2005).

[32] Lo stesso Manzoni ebbe a definire così il suo romanzo in alcune lettere scritte durante il lungo e faticoso rifacimento del *Fermo e Lucia* e anche più tardi (fra cui il suo ultimo scritto linguistico, la lettera ad Alfonso della Valle di Casanova del 31 marzo 1871, pubblicata nel 1874; ora negli *Scritti linguistici editi* in Edizione nazionale [2000, vol. 19: 314]). L'uso di quella parola (già utilizzata in carteggi privati da alcuni scrittori toscani) rientra però anche nella sua usuale tendenza a riferirsi al romanzo con ammiccante modestia (come quando, anche dopo il grande successo della Ventisettana, parla ancora dei suoi «venticinque lettori» e, nella conclusione del romanzo, invita coloro cui non fosse dispiaciuto a volerne bene all'autore del fittizio manoscritto e un po' anche lui, che avrebbe solo «rimessa in sesto» la storia). Ma alla "favola" il Manzoni ha fatto riferimento, diretto e indiretto, in alcuni passi del romanzo: dove fra Cristoforo pensa a Lucia come a «una povera innocente che scappa dagli artigli del lupo» (cap. 8), evocando implicitamente la favola di Cappuccetto Rosso; o dove Lucia, quando le dicono il nome di colui che l'aveva tenuta prigioniera nel suo castello, rabbrividisce, ricordando di averne sempre sentito parlare come dell'«orco delle favole» (cap. 24); o dove, commentando i diversi racconti circolanti a Milano sulla fantastica comparsa in piazza del Duomo, durante la peste, di un gran signore dagli occhi fiammeggianti su un cocchio trainato da sei cavalli, scrive che la varietà delle versioni non è un privilegio delle favole (cap. 32).

[33] Si veda la sua lettera al Casanova, sopra citata, in cui caldeggiava una prosa dall'«andamento naturale e scorrevole».

[34] Mirella Serri (2023), aprendo un articolo su «L'impoverimento culturale degli italiani» – apparso su *La Stampa* e su altri quotidiani dello stesso gruppo editoriale il 1° agosto 2023, in occasione della pubblicazione del libro di due sociologi su *La povertà educativa in Italia* – ha asserito che alla maggioranza degli italiani oggi sembrerebbe astruso anche lo stranoto incipit dei *Promessi Sposi*: «Quel ramo del lago di Como» (si veda https://www.lastampa.it > cultura > 2023/08/01). L'affermazione è forse esagerata, ma significativa. In ogni caso, anche a prescindere dall'analfabetismo funzionale e dall'analfabetismo di ritorno (che, secondo alcune recenti ricerche, interesserebbe quasi il 30% degli italiani fra i 25 e i 65 anni), la decrescita culturale – la «deintellettualizzazione», com'è stata eufemisticamente chiamata (Melotti 2013: 135) – colpisce non soltanto i giovani. Ne cito tre casi eclatanti, relativi proprio al Manzoni. Il 23 maggio 2023, all'indomani del suo centocinquantenario, la conduttrice di un programma televisivo di Rai 1 ha voluto far sfoggio delle sue conoscenze citando «Quel ramo del lago di Garda». Il 21 agosto 2023 il giornalista che leggeva la stampa a Radio 3 Rai (il «canale pubblico di cultura e di approfondimento») ha nominato «i capponi di Renzo della *Divina Commedia*». Il 2 novembre 2023 un altro giornalista, leggendo sulla medesima rete due articoli sul Manzoni, lo ha chiamato Giacomo e non Alessandro.

[35] Il libro (602 pagine, 24,90 euro; ebook 4,99 euro»), stampato in *print on demand*, può essere richiesto alla casa editrice, direttamente (www.booksprintedizioni.it > libreria) o tramite la libreria di fiducia, possibilmente indicandone l'isbn: 9788824988995.

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Nota critica

Vittorio Cotesta, *The Heavens and the Earth: Graeco-Roman, Ancient Chinese, and Mediaeval Islamic Images of the World*, Brill, Boston, 2021.

Enrico Campo

I.

I cieli e la terra: il titolo riassume al meglio l'ambizione di questo libro, che mira a ricostruire le origini delle immagini del mondo di tre grandi civiltà: greco-romana, cinese e islamica. È chiaro che un'impresa del genere rischia di dare le vertigini al lettore contemporaneo – troppo abituato a indagini di corto raggio, incline a coltivare angusti steccati disciplinari, refrattario a obiettivi di così vasta portata. Eppure, non possiamo di certo nascondere il fascino che queste imprese intellettuali esercitano sui lettori più curiosi. I libri come quelli di Cotesta hanno infatti il grande merito di mettere in discussione alcuni dei limiti di cui soffre tipicamente la riflessione sociologica contemporanea ed è forse per questo motivo che suscitano una certa resistenza: essi mettono a nudo la miopia storica che ci spinge a vedere nell'ultima novità il segno di una rivoluzione radicale degli assetti societari, aiutano a comprendere meglio il ruolo della tecnologia come fattore di cambiamento dei processi storici e ci impongono di abbandonare le prospettive eurocentriche ed etnocentriche. Nel complesso, questi tre limiti ci portano a interpretare le società del presente come il risultato di un evento (spesso un nuovo ritrovato tecnologico) che genera un processo di cambiamento che ha origine in un centro geograficamente localizzato e da lì si irradia irresistibilmente nel resto del mondo. Allo stesso, anche se il libro di Cotesta analizza civiltà antiche, la posta in gioco è proprio la comprensione del presente, come è evidente sin dalle prime battute del testo: «this book is based on the assumption that global society is the result of "longue durée" historical processes […] Our hypothesis is that trans-local worlds and forms of globalization exist from antiquity» (Cotesta 2021: 1). L'ipotesi forte del libro è che per comprendere pienamente i processi di globalizzazione sia necessario tornare all'antichità poiché «well before our time, scholars were aware of the unitary character of the world. Many philosophers' or historians' investigations, adopted, let us say, a global perspective»[1] (Ivi: 8). Le immagini del mondo

[1] È forse bene ricordare che il libro qui discusso è il risultato di un percorso di ricerca iniziato appunto negli anni Novanta, quando l'attenzione per il tema delle società globali era in forte ascesa. Testimoniano di tale percorso i volumi *Sociologia dei conflitti etnici* (1999), *Sociologia del*

delle tre civiltà sono pertanto ricostruite attraverso una disamina del pensiero degli autori più rappresentativi – ovvero quelli che, nell'interpretazione di Cotesta, hanno esercitato una maggiore influenza all'interno del loro contesto culturale – del periodo di interesse, che va dall'ottavo al terzo secolo a.C. per le civiltà greco-romana e cinese e dal settimo al tredicesimo secolo d. C. per quella islamica[2].

II.

Di un lavoro così ambizioso – per obiettivi di ricerca e per arco temporale analizzato – è possibile percorrere diversi itinerari di lettura e analisi[3]. Nella presente nota critica si è scelto di mettere in primo piano i nuclei tematici che possono rappresentare – almeno a mio giudizio – i cardini dell'asse attorno a cui ruota il libro. I due nuclei, che discuteremo in relazione a tre casi esemplari relativi alle tre civiltà oggetto di indagine, riguardano l'origine del pensiero universalista e l'idea secondo cui la soggettività non è più considerata un dato di fatto ma il risultato di uno specifico percorso, di un progetto da realizzare. Entrambi gli elementi sono ovviamente strettamente correlati e rimandano alla necessaria presenza dell'alterità come dimensione costitutiva del sé. Prima di entrare nel dettaglio di questi temi è però necessario fare un'importante premessa epistemologica e metodologica: Cotesta riprende dalla filosofia della storia di Karl Jaspers il concetto che fa da architrave all'intero lavoro, ovvero quello di "età assiale". Con questa espressione, usata dal filosofo tedesco per la prima volta a Ginevra nel 1946 nella relazione "Lo spirito europeo" e poi approfondita e sviluppata nell'opera del 1949 *Origine e senso della storia*, egli si riferisce a un preciso periodo storico, tra l'800 e il 200 a.C., in cui cambiò radicalmente l'interpretazione degli esseri umani e della loro storia: è come se a partire da questo momento si aprisse una faglia nella storia mondiale che strappa la storia stessa alla ripetizione mitica. Secondo Jaspers, in tale intervallo temporale, che ha il suo apice introno al 500 a.C., iniziò quasi contemporaneamente sia in Asia che in Europa «la lotta contro il mito da parte della razionalità e dell'esperienza razionalmente chiarificata (*logos* contro *mythos*)» (Jaspers 2014: 21). Confucio, Buddha, Zarathustra, Elia, Isaia, Omero, Parmenide e Platone sono tutte figure che testimoniano di una nuova e completamente rivoluzionaria interpretazione del mondo, della storia e delle relazioni umane per cui

> *l'uomo prende coscienza dell'essere nella sua interezza, di se stesso e dei suoi limiti. Egli viene a conoscere la terribilità del mondo e la propria impotenza. […] Incontra l'assolutezza nella profondità dell'essere-se-stesso e nella chiarezza della trascendenza. Ciò si svolse nella riflessione. La coscienza divenne ancora una volta consapevole di se stessa, il pensiero prese il pensiero ad oggetto […] In ogni senso fu compiuto il passo nell'universale* (Jaspers 2014: 22–23).

Jaspers non si interessa però del mondo islamico, mentre, come abbiamo detto, Cotesta estende l'analisi anche a questo. L'obiettivo di *The Heavens and the Earth* è, come abbiamo già visto, di ricostruire le immagini del mondo delle tre grandi civiltà che però vengono intese nei termini di un generale progetto di "umanizzazione": «each of the three civilizations tried to build a human project of its own, its own idea of what society was, what it should be and the things men and women were expected to do to achieve happiness» (Cotesta 2021: XIII). Questo obiettivo viene realizzato attraverso un'indagine che ripercorre il pensiero di autori che fungono da punto di accesso privilegiato delle rappresentazioni più rilevanti della cultura cui appartengono: «to some extent – and without attributing an overly technical meaning to the term – each author considered, great or small, acted as a "type", a meaningful expression of his times» (*Ibidem*). Ovviamente, gli autori analizzati non si limitano a fornire un'immagine statica e puramente descrittiva del mondo, ma sono animati da un forte anelito riformatore: «They build the image of what societies have been, are and will be, while, at the same time, they provide an ideal image of what they believe societies ought to be. Great authors present an idea of what societies are (existence) and should be (essence) in relation to time and space» (Ivi: 553).

III.

La prima parte del volume è dedicata alla civiltà greca e a quella romana. Anche se trattate separatamente, però, per Cotesta le due civiltà in realtà sono «members of the same "family" and are, ultimately, a *sole* civilization» (Cotesta 2021: 145). In questo senso, uno dei capitoli più rappresentativi di questo inscindibile rapporto

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mondo globale (2004), *Società globale e diritti umani* (2008), *Prosternarsi. Piccola indagine sulla regalità divina nelle civiltà euroasiatiche* (2012), e il più recente *Max Weber on China* (2018).

[2] Il libro si compone di 41 capitoli ed è diviso in tre grandi parti; la prima dedicata agli autori greci e romani, la seconda affronta quelli cinesi a cui segue un intermezzo in cui vengono discusse le convergenze e le divergenze tra il pensiero greco e cinese. Infine, la terza e più corposa parte ricostruisce l'immagine del "Global World from the Islamic point of view".

[3] L'utile conclusione del libro ha proprio la funzione di presentare al lettore una panoramica dei diversi temi affrontati e quindi discussi in relazione a ogni civiltà.

è certamente quello dedicato alle vicende narrate dallo storico greco Polibio (200-118 a.C.), che rappresentano un momento cruciale nella storia dell'ascesa di Roma e quindi dello spostamento del centro del potere nel mediterraneo da est a ovest. Polibio, che arrivò a Roma in qualità di ostaggio a seguito della sconfitta dei macedoni, è stato il primo, nell'interpretazione di Cotesta, a proporre una ricostruzione storica che puntasse a comprendere quali fossero le ragioni dell'ascesa di Roma all'interno di un approccio storico di lunga durata: è con il suo lavoro cioè che si pongono le basi per una storia realmente universale. Il periodo di interesse è quello che va dalla Seconda guerra punica alla terza guerra macedonica (220-168 a.C.), considerato come fase cruciale nella trasformazione di Roma in potenza globale. La novità dell'approccio di Polibio consiste proprio nel guardare ai diversi eventi storici attraverso uno schema analitico unitario, attraverso un unico principio ordinatore, necessario proprio perché gli eventi singoli non sono più episodi tra loro indipendenti ma rappresentano momenti di un'unica storia universale: «there was – this is the premise – a revolution in history at the time. From the middle of the third century BCE events began to be connected to each other. The whole history of the world became interdependent […] Polybius claimed that the events of the world, in their interconnection, tended in one direction: that of affirming the new role of Rome» (Ivi: 100). Questa rivoluzione epistemologica ha quindi anche un sostrato essenzialmente politico: è alla luce dell'espansione e dell'egemonia di Roma in tutto il mondo allora conosciuto che le storie singole entrano nella storia universale nei termini di una relazione tra il particolare e il generale[4]. I criteri di rilevanza dello storico sono quindi guidati da questo stesso principio: «he collocated events in their geographical context, adhered to the criterion of the selection of events (whether or not they belonged to global history), while also considering customs, ethos and religion (especially that of the Romans)» (Ivi: 103). Secondo Cotesta, Polibio seguì dunque un approccio originale sia rispetto a Tucidide sia rispetto ad Erodoto, ma si avvicinò maggiormente a quest'ultimo proprio in ragione dell'importanza attribuita agli aspetti culturali. La società oggetto di analisi è vista come un tutto organico ed è per questo che vanno indagati anche elementi che, sebbene sembrino marginali, contribuiscono allo sviluppo della storia universale (un esempio in tal senso è rappresentato dall'analisi del ruolo svolto dai funerali rituali delle persone illustri e dalla religione per legittimare il potere e per mantenere la coesione sociale).

Ovviamente, adottare una prospettiva universalista non significata attribuire automaticamente la stessa dignità a tutti gli esseri umani, quanto piuttosto asserire che tutti gli esseri umani possono, in linea di principio, procedere sulla strada di una piena soggettivazione. Pertanto, come abbiamo in parte anticipato, gli autori discussi nel libro non sono solo filosofi, storici, geografi, ma sempre *anche* degli educatori e in particolare educatori delle classi dominanti. Questo inscindibile legame tra filosofia e pedagogia universalista è molto evidente, ad esempio, in Confucio (551-479 a.C), il maggiore rappresentante dell'origine della rivoluzione assiale cinese. Il problema principale di Confucio, e in seguito dei suoi allievi, era appunto pedagogico – nelle parole di Cotesta (Ivi: 210): «how to *educate* the prince» – nella convinzione che un regno ben governato induca i governati a compiere azioni virtuose. Anche nel confucianesimo, dunque, è forte la convinzione della fondamentale unità del genere umano; unità che però si sostanzia, ancora una volta, nella possibilità di percorrere un tragitto comune. La Via è pertanto sia il percorso che il punto di arrivo e, proprio per questo, non può essere materia di mero possesso: «*Humanity* (ren) was not the attribute of all persons, as was the traditional belief, but the result of that educational process each one might undertake. The result was not guaranteed but everyone might try to become virtuous and, "human", so to speak» (Ivi: 212). Di conseguenza, nonostante le indicazioni di Confucio e dei suoi allievi siano indirizzate principalmente ai governanti, esse valgono ugualmente per tutti gli esseri umani che vogliono seguire la Via e quindi compiere azioni virtuose. Ma in cosa consiste la virtù che governanti e governati dovrebbero allo stesso modo seguire? L'insegnamento di fondo del confucianesimo raccomanda di rispettare gli altri e promuovere la pietà filiale. Quest'ultima è, come noto, un aspetto importante della cultura cinese che diventa, nell'insegnamento di Cofucio, un principio di regolazione dei rapporti familiari che serve da modello per l'organizzazione dei rapporti sociali più generali, fondati su rapporti di obbedienza all'interno di un chiaro ordine gerarchico-verticistico. Ovviamente, tale enfasi posta sui legami familiari potrebbe condurre alla promozione del particolarismo, piuttosto che dell'universalismo. Cotesta riprende il dibattito che ha impegnato soprattutto gli allievi di Confucio – Mencio (370-289 a.C.) su tutti – per mostrare come entrambe le tendenze siano effettivamente presenti in questa tradizione di pensiero. Chiaramente, il concreto esito finale dipende dal modo in cui vengono interpretati i legami sociali

[4] Ovviamente, negli anni successivi, l'espansione di Roma rafforzerà ulteriormente questa vocazione universalista. È proprio sulla base di questa vocazione comune sia al pensiero imperiale sia al cristianesimo che si spiega, secondo Cotesta, il conflitto tra i due, a cui l'autore dedica un interessante capitolo.

che devono essere ispirati alla pietà filiale e, a tal proposito, Cotesta mostra come in diversi passaggi degli *Analecta* «was not natural bonds but correct human action which established brotherhood» (Ivi: 214). In tal modo, resa la pietà filiale indipendente dai legami di sangue, essa si apre anche a un'interpretazione universalista.

Questa stessa dinamica, fonte di tensione costante, tra legami familiari (e tribali) e relazioni sociali più generali si esprime in maniera evidente anche nel pensiero islamico, soprattutto in ragione della sua peculiare storia di espansione e sviluppo. Per rapidità e ampiezza del territorio interessato, la diffusione dell'Islam può infatti essere paragonata all'espansione dell'Impero Romano. A differenza di quest'ultimo, però, all'interno del califfato la saldatura tra messaggio religioso e potere politico è totale. L'universalismo e la fratellanza globale si configurano in questo caso nei termini di una comunità (*umma*) di credenti impegnati in una comune ricerca della salvezza. L'Islam, che come noto si sviluppò in un ambiente fortemente differenziato dal punto di vista culturale e religioso, pose infatti a fondamento della sua azione politica e spirituale l'universalità del messaggio del profeta Maometto: «in Judaism, God spoke only to the Jewish people. Through the Prophet of Islam, however, Allah spoke to the whole of humanity» (Ivi: 302). Era la stessa espansione politico-religiosa dell'Islam che richiedeva una revisione del mito fondativo originario, secondo cui Allah si era rivolto prevalentemente agli arabi. Chiaramente, il mondo islamico non fu mai politicamente e culturalmente unitario, anzi è proprio questa tensione costante tra una ricercata unità politico-religiosa e la continua riproposizione di specificità locali che ha sempre animato il suo sviluppo: «it is necessary to keep in mind two of its main tendencies: its strong drive towards unity and simultaneous affirmation of the characteristics of local societies. Islam stems from these two opposite, plural, often conflicting tendencies» (Ivi: 306). Tale tensione può quindi condurre a esiti molto diversi e, eventualmente, opposti, come negli esempi di Avicenna (980-1037) e Al-Biruni (973-1048). Il primo arriva a considerare come inferiori, sia dal punto di vista giuridico che umano, coloro che si rifiutano di accettare la verità dell'Islam, e dunque «placed on a par with those considered servants by nature» (Ivi: 380). Il grande lavoro di indagine della cultura indiana del secondo si basa invece su un approccio completamente diverso. Sebbene la sua analisi non sia ovviamente scevra da stereotipi e pregiudizi, la scelta di condurre uno studio compativo implicava già di per sé la necessità di interrogare sia la cultura altra che la propria. Questo atteggiamento è evidente in almeno due occasioni. In primo luogo, quando l'autore commenta la tendenza degli indiani a discutere di questioni teologiche senza ricorrere alla violenza, è possibile leggere in controluce, come fa Cotesta, «a severe criticism of Muslims who, when dealing with matter of faith, brought their souls, bodies and property into play» (Ivi: 397). In secondo luogo, nel momento in cui Al-Biruni lamenta della forte ostilità e chiusura degli indiani nei confronti degli stranieri, egli riconosce allo stesso tempo che la stessa diffidenza è comune anche tra i musulmani, e non solo tra loro; quasi a riconoscere una tendenza etnocentrica comune a tutte le culture.

IV.

In conclusione, è bene chiarire il contesto all'interno del quale si colloca *The Heavens and the Earth*, soprattutto rispetto alla ripresa del concetto di età assiale. Quest'ultimo ha avuto alterne fortune ed è stato per lungo tempo considerato come un contributo minore e poco rilevante nella produzione del filosofo tedesco. A partire dagli anni Ottanta, però, un piccolo gruppo di autorevoli sociologi e filosofi, tra i quali spiccano Shmuel Eisenstadt in Europa e Robert Bellah negli Stati Uniti, ha rivalutato tale concetto e aperto progressivamente un dibattito sulla sua utilità euristica[5]. Il dibattito ha però sempre messo in evidenza sia i rischi che le potenzialità dell'idea di età assiale, entrambi correlati a quanto abbiamo già detto in principio: è sul presente che si misura la capacità della ricostruzione storico-filosofica proposta. Tutto il dibattito riguarda chiaramente la questione delle origini «as the beginning of something held to be characteristic of the present» e in particolare, come ha scritto Jan Assman (2012: 366), la teoria dell'età assiale avrebbe dovuto rispondere «to the question for the roots of modernity». Tanto nel contesto in cui è stata in principio proposta l'idea di "età assiale", quanto nel più recente dibattito, la posta in gioco riguardava la possibilità di formulare una filosofia della storia veramente universalista, che quindi non fosse la semplice estensione della storia occidentale e cristiana a tutto il mondo. Tale intento – certamente nobile, ieri come oggi – si salda poi con la «tesi, materia di fede, secondo cui l'umanità – scrive Jaspers (2014: 16) – avrebbe un'unica origine e un'unica meta», anche se entrambe ci sono sconosciu-

[5] I due momenti cruciali di questo dibattito sono rappresentati dalla pubblicazione di *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (Eisenstadt 1986) e del più recente *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* (Bellah e Joas 2012); quest'ultimo testo – che è il risultato della conferenza "The Axial Age and Its Consequences for Subsequent History and the Present", tenuta nell'Università di Erfurt nel luglio del 2008 – ha ulteriormente rilanciato il dibatto di cui si è avuto un'eco anche in Italia. Si veda ad esempio il numero speciale dalla rivista *Studi jaspersiani*, dedicato a "Storia e età assiale" (2015).

te. È a questo livello che la teoria dell'età assiale passa – secondo alcuni pericolosamente – dal piano descrittivo a quello prescrittivo: postulare l'origine comune servirebbe a indicare una meta comune che porta alla necessità di promuovere una solidarietà futura (Smith 2015). Da questo punto di vista, si comprende meglio la proposta di Cotesta di estendere il concetto di età assiale oltre il solo periodo indicato da Jaspers fino a includere un più generale processo di cambiamento radicale delle premesse culturali e degli assunti cognitivi di una civiltà: in questo modo – ed è questo uno dei principali contributi del volume al dibattito contemporaneo – è stato possibile includere anche la storia della civiltà islamica. Il libro in tal senso risponde indirettamente a quegli approcci che hanno visto la cultura islamica come un'anti-età assiale. Queste prospettive – tanto superficiali quanto ideologicamente orientate – sembrano quasi volerci involontariamente ricordare che la proposta jaspersiana può essere, come avevano ammonito autorevoli commentatori, carica sia di promesse che di contraddizioni, tanto un peso come una risorsa (Alexander 2013, Bellah 2012).

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SOCIETÀMUTAMENTOPOLITICA
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CONTINUITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN FORMS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION
(a cura di Lorenzo Bosi e Stefan Malthaner)

PASSIM

NOTA CRITICA