The Self and the Group

Identity-making among political activists in northeast Italy

Emanuele Bergquist
SANK02 Spring 2021
Supervisor: Isabelle Johansson
Department of Sociology, Social Anthropology, Lund's University

Abstract

This thesis focuses on representation modes among Italian political activists, engaged in multiple fights against globalization and neo-capitalism, by illustrating how participants in the Italian no-global movement build their identity. Through a number of interviews and participant observation, which build the empirical ground of this study, the activist and the group are juxtaposed, their role in the urban setting clarified and their political activism illustrated. The individual identity is reshaped by the collective one, and the latter in turn becomes a reaction against the kind of representation the activists face from outside the group. The aim of this research is to go beyond stereotypical representations and general assumptions that are brought forward both by the social centers and by non-activists, in order to reveal all sides of each point of view.

Keywords: Social anthropology, social centers, radical left, political activism, no-global movement, Italy

Acknowledgments

I would first and foremost like to thank my informants, the people I know from CSA Bocciodromo and those I got to know from the CSA Rivolta, who accepted me with an open mind and whose insights have been most valuable. I would also like to extend my thanks to my sister Eleonora without whom this research would not have been possible.

1. Introduction

1.1. Entering the field – A presentation of the social centers

My gatekeeper and I arrived around 10 a.m. to Marghera, just outside Venice, and parked the car in a huge parking lot crossed by a single set of rails, which allows the occasional train to pass by. We were surrounded by concrete, which gave the visitor who stepped into the neighborhood a very vivid experience of what can be called an "urban jungle". A twenty-meters long wall, which delimited an inner yard, broke the monochrome setting with a colorful mural of some armed face-covered militants on a red-and-blue background; a black writing blazing above their heads read "Non dobbiamo chiedere il permesso per essere liberi" ("We do not have to ask permission to be free"). We stepped through the gates and into a huge inner yard, where some thirty people were chattering, drinking, eating or smoking around some long tables and benches. Like all social centers the place is self-managed which means that municipal funding is often non-existent and that most of the cultural initiatives they promote (concerts and festivals first of all) becomes their major source of income. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the place was getting creative to find new ways to keep a financial flow, which explained the lunch they were preparing in the small restaurant on the inside of one of the main buildings. They were all approximately between the age of 18 and 26. All around the yard there were hangars, warehouses and smaller buildings, and the majority of the facades were covered in writings, graffiti and murals.

*

The so-called "Centri Sociali Occupati Autogestiti" (CSOAs), which translates to "Squatted Self-managed Social Centers", is a nationally widespread phenomenon in Italy. They are a major component of the radical left, doing extra-parliamentary politics, and represent the counterfigure of conservative groups, far-right extremist, right wing parties and their supporters. As will become clear throughout this research a lack of political representation and their way of politicize by taking matter into their own hands, receive different kind of critiques and leads to stigmas and labels. CSOAs are spaces where social and political issues are debated, manifestations are organized and a variety of cultural events are hosted, and while the term "social centers" allude to specific buildings, it is often used to designate the people who frequent them and the ideas they promote. Most of these centers were originally ramshackle buildings, ex-factories, abandoned houses, or various commercial premises that eventually went out of

business, which were squatted with a very specific purpose. It was either to fix the building up and use it in some way, or because the place had some symbolic significance for a message that the political activists want to send. In recent years, most of the squatted centers have obtained a lease, which put the emphasis on self-management and changed the name to "Centri Sociali Autogestiti" (CSAs), or "Self-Managed Social Centers". According to a statement released by the Home Secretary in February 2019 there were 165 of them in total around the country; of those, 87 have obtained a lease while 78 remain illegally squatted (Franchini, 2019). It is however hard to keep track of them because eventually many will not obtain a lease and cease to be squatted. The local self-managed centers in northeast Italy have come together in a network which is generally called "Northeast Social Centers". They operate as a group when collective action on a regional or national scale is mobilized, and individually when local issues are addressed on a daily basis. The network is made up of seven main buildings, most of them widespread across the region Veneto, as well as a variety of smaller (and temporarily) squatted places or various activities they are involved with; "we operate as the Northeast", as one informant put it. The seven centers are, besides the Bocciodromo in Vicenza and the Rivolta in Marghera where I conducted my fieldwork, the Arcadia in Schio, the Django in Treviso, the Bruno in Trento (in the adjacent region Trentino Alto-Adige), the Pedro in Padua, and the Morión in Venice. Among these only the last two remain squatted today, while the rest of them have obtained a lease.

Fig. 2. The seven mains social centers' approximate location in the Northeast (CSA Bocciodromo and CSA Rivolta are marked in blue) – they are in turn involved in a variety of initiatives, connected to youth organizations, cultural associations and student unions; the network is therefore difficoult to define spatially, although the seven buildings have a most central role in jointly promoted initiatives [Retrieved from https://www.thinglink.com/scene/788681301514256384 - edited with an Image Editing Software]

1.2 Purpose, research questions and problem definition

The purpose of this study is to explore the representation of the Italian radical left by looking specifically at two of the social centers in northeast Italy. I am going to illustrate the modes of self-representation among political activists, how they identify themselves and the driving forces that push them towards activism, as well as what they perceive as communal, regional, national and global problems that they as a group feel like they need to deal with. In order to exemplify their representational modes, I am going to take a closer look at how they concretely approach these problems through various initiatives. This will explain why the stigma arise and if it can be somehow refuted (or at the very least explained through a number of examples). In short, I will discuss what it means for the individual and the group to make politics bottom-up, in their own way, by the means they have outside the conventional political dimension (meaning a relative lack of resources, influence or, at times, even credibility). My focus here is on the two identities and it will become clear if the two can be approached parallelly or if the collective reshape the individual beyond recognition. As a supplementary tool, I decided to take into account some opinions from outsiders and how they see the social centers' political activism. The set of questions I seek to answer through my thesis is therefore as follows:

- What kind of image do political activists of the social centers provide of themselves and the motives that pushed them towards activism and participation in social centers' propaganda?
- What kind of initiatives are the social centers involved with? What kind of image of the group do these initiatives contribute to?
- What kind of representation does the group face from outsiders?

The issue that I set out to investigate is an attempt to find a middle ground between different kinds of definitions, opinions and representations concerning social centers, their politico-cultural propaganda and the young people who frequent them. As someone who is not actively involved in their political activism, however close to some of the people who are, and who has not always fully understood the issues they address or the motives that pushes them to get involved, I wish to position myself between outside representation and emic image. Even before

I became acquainted firsthand with this environment, the kind of critique they received from the public opinion was quite clear to me. Often, these outer representations of the group are in fact preconceptions, bias and labels such as "they complain too much", "they're nothing but vandals and troublemakers", "they're anarchists", "they find dirt everywhere", "they need to get a real job" or "they smoke too much pot". Other kinds of critique the social centers receive concerns their way of doing politics bottoms-up, by means they themselves deem to be appropriate, and their rejection of authority figures both inside the group and, more generally, in other contexts outside the group. Definitions such as these are also nourished by speeches given by politicians.

1.3   Disposition

After an introduction where I lay out the theoretical framework I chose to use in answering my research questions (chapter two), and explain how I approached the field and my informants methodologically (chapter three), I am going to introduce the social centers' evolution. The first part of chapter four will thus take into account the group's roots on a national level, describing the Workerist Movement during the 1970s, which can be considered a predecessor of the social centers. The second part of the chapter illustrates the spark for anti-globalization movements, which took place in the 1990s on the other side of the Atlantic. This historical background is in my opinion most meaningful to understand their present-day image. In chapter five, "Juxtaposing the individual and the collective identity-making process", I will look closer at my empirical material, the answers provided by my informants during our interviews. The statements will illustrate an emic representation of the group, expose their motivations and ambitions, as well as the initiatives they promote and the obstacles they encounter as a collective. Finally, in chapter six, I take into consideration some of the statements I have collected from outsiders – people who are not involved in the activism *per se* but have visited the CSA Bocciodromo on multiple occasions. I also look at the image of the group provided by a prominent (far-)right-wing party in Italy, which can be seen as one of the social centers' main counterfigures. In these last two sections, I compare the individual and the group, how the goals of the former are assimilated by the latter's fights with a major focus on the initiatives the social centers are involved with. I also describe how the image of the group explains (and is a reaction against) the counter-representation they get from the public.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Previous studies

A large number of researchers have focused on social movements and on how to approach them theoretically, from those who first attempted to reinterpret Marxism in post-modern society, like Alain Touraine (1971), to Bert Klandermans' extensive socio-psychological contribution, such as the "Social Psychology of Protest" from 1997. Anthropology's contribution to the study of social movements has more recently represented a shift in the subject's traditional focus on specific spatially and temporarily located groups of people (with a major focus on local cultures) to a more diachronic and spatially unbounded study of social phenomena, and even their political influence. In light of this shift it becomes quite clear how the discipline would contribute through interviews and participant observation: the emic perspective, and a major focus on new social movements' politico-cultural impact, become central to represent the radical leftist groups in a new light. David Graeber's (2009) "Direct Action – An Ethnography" is an illustrative case in point. It explains how collective action is a consequence of collective decision-making among political activists, but it is not about it, because the decision-making process is hidden (from journalists or authorities) while the results are shown. What they then advocate and the methods they use become their collective identity, their façade, as Graeber explains. Graeber shows how the anthropologist can shed light on what is generally omitted and offer a different representation of social movements.

Social movements studies have undergone a shift in their theoretical approach during the last fifty years as they started taking a larger number of factors into consideration, such as cultural premises, psychological models, or policy-making (Rochon & Mazmanian, 1993). This shift was foreseeable in a modern globalized world, in which the ever-growing complexity and its inhabitants' intersectionality have been giving social scientists a hard time in their attempt to describe collective action and social movements with reductionist paradigms, such as class struggle, economic inequalities or labour exploitation (Toledano, 1940). Different approaches have been developed to analyze specific forms of collective behavior, according to the group's motives, its political and cultural influence, organizational form, as well as the cultural environment where such behavior develops. By the beginning of the 1980s it also became clear that, additionally to class-based and economic models to approach social movement studies, neither "macro-structural models of collective action [nor] those based on individuals' motivations are satisfactory" (Melucci, 1983: 30). A mediation was needed between these two in order to explain a mutual influence. The strongest critique to classical Marxism as a

theoretical approach to social movements came from the European "New Social Movement Theory" (NSMT), a wider and quite eclectic set of explanations for "logics of action (based in politics, ideology, and culture) and other sources of identity (such as ethnicity, gender and sexuality) as the sources of collective action" (Buechler, 2000: 46). What has become obsolete, according to NSMT, is describing social movements solely in terms of class struggle or deprivation (of rights or resources), although it acknowledges that modern capitalism has received much critique from New Social Movements' political propaganda. Their cultural propaganda is, on the other hand, starting to be taken into account as a complementary tool and, unlike the political activism, is much more contingent to the specific context (ibid. 48f.). The need for a new theoretical approach to social movements was strong because the movements themselves had changed; a radical "New Left" started to grow and form the ideological ground for collective action, replacing the "Old Left", and this is a central aspect in studying the network of Italian social centers. NSMT is to be understood as an eclectical set of theories rather than a single theoretical model, which is mainly due to the large number of issues the "movements' movement" addresses and react against, as well as on what front the research can be conducted, whether it is an historical reconstruction, psychological mapping or a cultural explanation.

Social centers are, despite their common war against instrumental power and capitalism in all its forms, very much contingent to the local manifestation of these issues, as my interviews have repeatedly shown. The study of local social centers, and their role within a specific provincial context, has been approached by a relatively limited number of articles and PhD theses in the last 20 years; Neapolitan (Dines, 1999; Cavaliere, 2013), Turinese (Berzano & Gallini, 2000) and Milanese (Membretti, 2007) social centers have been subjects for enquiries. The network of the "Northeast social centers" has not however caught much attention among social researchers; when it has, it has either been an illustrative example among others for Italian and European squatting groups and urban space management (Mudu, 2012; Angeli, 2012), or as a group denouncing acts of violence committed by neo-Nazis and pro-Fascists (Fasanella & Zornetta, 2013). The closest I got to my own research topic when going over previous publications was when I read Nicola Montagna's (2007) analysis of the political activists, inter alia, those active in the CSA Rivolta where I have conducted part of my research. The picture the author provides of the place is however a product of a structural analysis of the movement, and the main theme is how the group deals with issues related to representation – as in 'speaking or acting on behalf of someone' not, as in my case, 'defining oneself and being defined by others'.

2.2   Theoretical framework

In my analysis, I rely on symbolic interactionism, which sees the person's identity as a byproduct of "internalized set of meanings attached to a role played in a network of social relationships" (Stryker et al. 2000: 6). The theory was developed as an alternative model to classic structural-functionalism, and both are explanatory for the individuals' behavior in a social setting. The first was more concerned with how the individual gives meaning to his or her surroundings through interaction with others on a day-to-day basis, whereas the latter relied heavily on how the outside institutionalized social structure shapes the actor and its function in society. Herbert Blumer (1969: 2), one of the theory's most prominent scholars, lay out three premises of symbolic interactionism: a) our relationship with our surroundings is dictated by the meaning we give to it; b) the meaning we ascribe to our surroundings is constructed through interaction with other people; c) the meaning we ascribe to our surroundings is not permanent. We can reformulate these premises when applying symbolic interactionism to social movements studies by looking at the motives that push the soon-to-be activist to seek out the group. He or she identifies, at an early stage, some critical issues that they feel the need to address. When the neophyte becomes an active participant in the initiatives promoted by the group, he or she realizes that there are, in fact, other arguably more pressing issues to deal with. What happens here is that, the meaning (or priority) given by the individual changes when interacting with the group.

As will become clear throughout this thesis whenever the activist is presented with a new problem, the previous ones are not replaced: it is rather a cumulative process, meaning that the group reinterpret their surroundings in line with their ideology. The new argument they propose is a case in point to support their previous arguments. An example of this is the Covid-19 pandemic which, as an informant of mine explained, they see as a consequence of the climate crisis, which in turn can be explained as an effect of late capitalism. Speaking about the motivations that push the individual to participate in collective action, Buechler (2000: 189) tells us how "individual identities are brought to the movement by each of its participants and then transformed to varying degrees as a result of participation in the movement". Here the author explains three central concepts in social movement studies laid out by Laraña et al. (1994): individual, collective and public identities. Individual identity is shaped by the motives that push the individual to seek out the group, the collective one by "ongoing, negotiated processes" while public identity is how the group participants think about themselves according

to the representation they get from the outside. What Laraña et al. (1994: 19) suggest is that the "[c]oncrete interaction between members of a movement and non-members" ought to be analyzed empirically in order to shed light on the group's public identity. Bert Klandermans and Marga de Weerd (2000: 75) hold, on their part, a more extreme position by distinguishing between the "formation of collective beliefs" and the "idiosyncratic remakes of those beliefs at the individual level". This idiosyncrasy makes it impossible, according to the authors, to understand the group's collective identity through a study of individual beliefs, and the individual level of group identification through a focus on the group's rituals and symbols. And "yet [individual and collective identity] are tightly intertwined; in fact, they are two sides of the same coin" (ibid. 76).

I make use of symbolic interactionism and Blumers (1969) three premises described above to show how the initial goals my informants recounted, the reasons why they became involved in the social centers' political activism, eventually evolved once they came in contact with the collective. I am also going to make use of Buechler's definition of individual, collective and public identity, mainly to illustrate how the group respond to the representation it receives from the outside. Finally, the paradox that Klandermans and de Weerd (2000) propose on the (in-)compatibility of individual and collective identity is concerned, will become clear throughout my analysis, although I would argue that their idiosyncrasy can at times be hard to identify and is very much contingent to situations, people and environment.

3   Method

3.1   Interviews

During the one month I stayed in Vicenza, I conducted my research mainly through semi-structured interviews. My sister "Ele" (a nickname by which she was called almost by everyone, me included), has been active within the CSA Bocciodromo for a few years now, and was most forthcoming when I told her about my project; she was the one who introduced me to the environment and the people therein. All in all, I interviewed eight individuals who are actively involved in one of the two social centers in Northeast Italy, asked for opinions from four "outsiders" who were familiar with the network but not active within it, and lastly from a couple of people who were active or familiar with social centers (or the local equivalent) in Barcelona and Vienna; each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and the duration of all of them amounted altogether approximately to 5.5 hours. In a few cases, I let my semi-structured

interviews turn into informal conversations and non-structured interviews, letting my informants tell me something they thought would be pertinent to our conversation.

When Ele introduced me to my informants the first thing I did was to take out a list I had printed and translated beforehand with what I took to be the standard research ethical guidelines[1] that, as a researcher, I had to enumerate. None of my informants showed much interest in the guidelines, although the sheet passed around and was looked at out of curiosity. I opened each conversation by asking my informants about their age and the duration of their involvement in the social centers' activities. I then proceeded by asking them about the motives behind their involvement, if there was something in particular they wished to accomplish and, if so, had they managed to accomplish it? This last two questions I asked my interviewees to answer both on a personal level and as a group. From these initial questions I let the conversations evolve dialectically, meaning that I asked my informants, after each statement, to elaborate in detail. I talked to my first interviewee for about half an hour before people started joining us at the table, and many did so because they were curious, although few spoke directly to me, if not spoken to. Notably, a couple of people started with the premise that they were the last person I should ask those kinds of things: in the end I got out a lot of valuable information from those people. During my first and only visit at the Rivolta, I spoke all in all to four people (Edoardo, Pietro, Andrea and Michele) all between the age of 20 and 25; after a couple of hours I had obtained more information than anticipated, so I thought it was best to terminate the interviews. One of the activists I had talked to took me then for a tour around the premise, which took us about twenty minutes, during which I took several pictures. A few days later I sat down in a pub in Vicenza and interviewed a couple more, (19-year-old Anna and 18-year-old Leo) since the Bocciodromo was officially closed, and even if a small amount of people occasionally attended it was on more formal occasions. Finally, I talked to the last two of my informants on separate occasions, and both interviews were conducted in my apartment. First, I spoke to Paolo, a 21-year-old activist, and Luca, one of my acquaintances who was not involved in the political activism, with whom I later conducted a separate interview. My last informant, Mario (22) stopped by one evening with a handful of friends, including Elisa, 21, a girl who lived in Vienna and was aware of the issues the local social centers addressed; I spoke to her separately later that night. I thought it was best not to insist on interviewing Mario alone since he would probably have felt less comfortable; besides, his fellows were also familiar with the environment of the CSA Bocciodromo. Ele was present during all but the last one of the

---

[1] Sw. HSFR – Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning

interviews that I conducted, although her interventions were minimal because I had asked her to let her acquaintances dominate the conversations.

Once I left Italy, I set out to collect some "outside opinions" and interviewed therefore four people (3 men and a woman, including Luca, all in their twenties) I knew were not involved in the Social Centers' political activism. When I returned to Sweden my brother, aware of my research, introduced me to Maria, a 30-year-old Spanish woman living in Barcelona, who have had a first-hand experience with the squatter movement in the city. I carried out these last interviews through videocalls. All my informants gave me permission to record the interviews, although on one occasion they asked me to turn it off due to the sensible content of the topic; I later transcribed the recordings and translated them to English. Once I had written down all the conversations, I started to analyze them thematically and highlight all the central threads that I could find. My informants' motives for seeking out the group were obviously the central thread, followed by the initiatives promoted by the social centers and the movement's historical background. When I later went through the interviews that I had conducted with those people not involved in the social centers' activism I focused instead on those aspects which shaped the group's public identity, mostly outside critique to which the activists react in one way or another. Finally, I looked for similarities with the Italian social centers when I read the answers I got from Maria and Elisa.

3.2 Approach to the field

Although I did not conduct a thorough participant observation, I visited two of the seven Social Centers that form the network of the Northeast Social Centers: the CSA Bocciodromo located in Vicenza, and the CSA Rivolta in Marghera, outside Venice. Prior to my fieldwork I had visited the former on a number of occasions, when they hosted a jazz club or a disco night or just to have a drink at their bar, while to the latter I had been only once before, during "Altavoz", an electronic music festival and one of the biggest events organized by the social center, which, "went on for 10 years, and […] has introduced this place to thousands of people" according to one of my informants. The reason why I limited my research to these two places was purely practical: my gatekeeper was closely involved with the CSA Bocciodromo in Vicenza, where she had a relatively central role. Moreover, Vicenza is where I grew up, so I had prior knowledge about the movement and some of the issues the local activists address. My gatekeeper also knew a large number of people from Marghera who were active within the CSA Rivolta, and had herself participated in some of their manifestations in the Venice area. Finally,

my possibilities to move around were limited by a curfew that was issued due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the whole region, according to which you had to return to your municipality of residence by 2 pm.

3.3 Ethical considerations, moments of awkwardness and methodological considerations

I chose to use aliases for my informants mainly for two reasons: on the one hand I regarded the people I interviewed as "voices" or positions within the group and valued their statement, through which I then attempted to draw a number of conclusions, more than their identity outside of it, which admittedly is explicative of the former but giving it too much value would have blurred the central theme of my research. On the other hand, in the environment I set out to investigate political activists conduct their business in gray zones, legally speaking, among other things through acts of civil disobedience, squatting or rioting. I therefore thought it best to keep my informants anonymous. Also, none of them specifically asked for being referred to by their real name, a request I would have taken into account if they had presented it. My informants were mostly open with me and willing to collaborate, and I would not have expected any less from them, considering that as a group they generally put a lot of effort in spreading awareness about their motives, actions and ideology. I nevertheless experienced some tension on a few occasions. Firstly, when I stepped into the inner yard of the CSA Rivolta, it was the first time that I did so with an inquisitorial eye and, as I saw my gatekeeper move around the crowd that welcomed us, hugging and smiling at most of the people who were there, I could not but feel out of place, seeing a remarkable level of intimacy. But that did not last long for Ele was keen on introducing me to the milieu, and not ten minutes later I was sitting down on one of the benches with Edoardo who was willing to answer some questions. The thought of not being the most qualified person to carry out the research I was undertaking followed me however throughout my interviews. This uncertainty was due to the constant, though never explicitly expressed, reminder that the people I sat down and talked with were all about "action", which is the very ground on which such a movement is built on, and its interpretation must be conducted. The fact that I was there to observe "passively" felt like some kind of stigma. My sense of being the passive Other became even clearer when I stumbled upon the following excerpt from Jerry Rubin's "Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution" (1970):

> We fall off chairs roaring with laughter when we hear our professors, teachers, experts – the people we're supposed to learn from – discussing us, our culture, grass. We feel like those primitive African tribes must have felt when Margaret Mead came popping in with her pencil and paper. Hearing someone who has not smoked grass talk about it is like hearing a nun talk about sex. The only expert is the person who *does it*. (Rubin, 1970: 98)

I did not get such a reaction to my presence from any of my informants, on the contrary they showed a most welcoming attitude towards me: it was rather a feeling I couldn't shake off, being aware of my role as a social researcher. In the end, however, this did not stop me from carrying out my research, for the same reason I set out to do this fieldwork in the first place. It is, in my opinion, a matter of emic self-image and etic counter-representation, of approaching the subject from a different angle. A dispassionate analysis from the outside offers a holistic view of all facets of the matter: Rubin's expert *does it* for his or her own reasons and will give you his or her side of the story; the grass-smoking student will tell you the benefits of the herb while the non-smoking professor will offer a critical view; in writing about sex an anthropologist can ask the asexual person as well as the nymphomaniac, and each of the statements will present a one-sided view on the topic. One should not be too hasty to refute a counter argument for the own opinion. Ele's opinion about my role.

Yet another complication that I had to take into account concerned my own approach to the people I interviewed, since I was not entirely sure about how I would have structured the paper's main questions later on. I wanted to reach for a definition of what it meant for the people I interviewed to be a political activist, and how that created a group identity. Some of the questions I had prepared beforehand sounded therefore odd for my informants, either because I had formulated it in an odd way (as one of them pointed out when I asked them to give me a personal definition of a social center) or because it implied much deeper considerations which they pointed out on a few occasions; at times I could simply tell that my lack of prior knowledge represented a barrier, another reason why some questions must have felt strange for a number of informants. Looking back on my methodological approach to the field and the people I interviewed, I can see a number of disadvantages. For starters, the population could have been more balanced between men and women, which could have offered one more variable to take into account and eventually shown slightly different results. Also, during my fieldwork I did not spend a larger amount of time with my informants outside our interviews, which surely would have given me valuable insights that a formal interview could not. Additionally, at times

I got the impression that I was relying too much on my gatekeeper. As for the questions I had prepared for my interviews I am convinced that they have been most useful in illustrating the general outlines of the movement and the people involved.

3.4 Central concepts, terminology and selection of sources

When we speak of "no-global" or "anti-globalization" movements it implies some considerations on the very use of the word "movement", which in this case is to be understood as a network of ideas, ideologies, collective actors and collective actions. The post-modern rejection of globalization has been called, in the many shapes it has taken in different parts of the world, in different ways: "altermondialism" (Massiah & Massiah: 2011), "alterglobal" or even "the movements' movement" (Rebughini & Farro: 2008). This latter neologism describes the complexity of "no-global" movements, and its involvement in a vast number of fights, the root of which they identify in late capitalism, the neo-liberal market and post-industrialism whose branches take, as I will show, very different shapes. I will also employ here the term "identity-making process", both on an individual level, which explains how my informants' identity as activists is constructed through an account of their motives and goals, and on a collective level – by looking at the movement's historical background on a national and global scale as well as their initiatives and role in their respective urban setting. This process leads to the second pivotal concept of my study which is "representation", the image we consequently get of the movement and the activists which I will finally set up against the counter-representation I was provided with from people outside the group. Also, as will become clear throughout the text, the term "capitalism", as it is employed by my informants, has a much wider connotation than how it is commonly perceived. The best term to use would probably be "power relations" or "exploitation" or simply "neo-capitalism" (thought the latter, being a neologism, can leave room for misinterpretation), the term used by my informants was simply "capitalism" which is why I have decided to make use of it instead.

As a final methodological consideration, the main body of literature that I have relied on includes Graeber (2009), who provides some considerations on no-global movements uprising in the United States and their spreading. In addition, I have used Steven Buechler's "Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism" (2000), "Self, Identity, and Social Movements" (Stryker et al. 2000), "New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity" (Laraña et al. 1994) and "Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method" (Blumer, 1969) all of which illustrate how New Social Movements can be approached theoretically. Lastly, I have found a number of

articles in Italian digital newspapers and various websites that have proven to be valuable to corroborate my informants' statements and in understanding how social centers are represented by media and the political conservative right. All the quotes I make use of from Italian websites and digital sources are my own translations.

4 Evolution of the social centers: from the aftermath of the Italian Workerism to a manifestation of a trans-national anti-globalization movement

4.1 The uprising of a radical left in Italy

If we were to look for the social centers' cradle, or rather their ancestor, we would have to look back at the movement known as Autonomia Operaia, the Italian workers' Autonomist movement, and its origins in the 1950's as a collective actor rising against "both management and unions controlled by the Communists" (Katsiaficas, 2006: 24). Although having older foundations the autonomist movement of the extra-parliamentary leftism promoted by the Autonomia was officially recognized in 1973, when it took over its predecessor "Workers' Power" (Potere Operaio), as a group promoting anarcho-communism instead of "classic" communism. As we have seen, the theoretical approach in social movement studies drifted away from obsolete explanatory models, such as class struggles or alienation of the factory worker, which was due to a worldwide proliferation of new social movements (or "New Left movements") during the latter part of the last century, in defense of natural resources, animals' rights, ethnic groups' exploitation, women's rights, world-peace, LGBT, and many other issues. The protests of 1968 were a turning point for radical leftist manifestations which, as Katsiaficas points out, "although understood as national movements, they existed as much in relation *to each other* as to their native context" (ibid. 1). These insurrections were particularly strong in Italy where on the one hand workers' unions were seen as oligarchies acting in their own interests, and taking over the factories – not the means of production but the aggregation space – represented for the working class a mean of self-empowerment. On the other hand, the students' dissatisfaction grew increasingly due to an elitist environment in the schools and a lack of proper representation. As a result, factories, schools and universities became spaces for political debates and collective action. Simultaneously, feminist circles grew bigger and numerous manifestations denouncing a highly patriarchal society were recorded during the 1970s. Political activism was, in the decennium following the protests of 1968, carried out on two fronts: the students found an ally in the working class while feminist insurrections were

supported by a "countercultural youth" (ibid. 17). Concerning the students' insurrection, what the group lamented was, among other things, an absence of facilities where students could conduct their affairs and activities, a lack of influence in decision-making processes and the teachers' approach to the students themselves, as well as a general criminalization of political activism. An issue which permeated all insurgences carried out by workers, women and students, was the group's representation in a union, which 1) acted in its own interests, unable to meet the requirements of the working class and improve the working conditions, 2) was considered to be a mirror-image of the Italian patriarchy according to the feminists and 3) acted only in the interests of upper class students and enforced hierarchies within the universities. A central issue among political activists, the very reason why they still today consider being outside conventional political representation their strength, has always been the group's representation by a smaller collective or a single person. The group's constant pursue of direct democracy is as strong as its suspiciousness towards representative democracy (a system where they see high chances of a single individual or smaller group acting in their own interests), the distinction of the two being the group's prerogative. A second counterpart of the radical left in Italy was the Communist Party which had more of a reformist approach and, being a political party, was representative of its participants. The squatting of universities and factories as a mean of sending a message became thus widely employed among students and workers, and is still a central element in how the Social Centers operate today.

The initial squatters' movements, besides being more rooted in larger cities, has changed drastically these last 50 years. As Edoardo put it, when I asked him about the people who had reached their fifties, sixties or seventies who could sporadically be spotted in the social centers, "the form (and the people) has changed, the people of a certain age, those who in the '70s led the Autonomia Operaia, who then founded the CSOAs between the '80s and the '90s […] passed on the ideals to the next generation". His mother had frequented a Social Center in Mestre, an adjacent borough, in the 1980s. These spaces started in their early stage to have a central cultural function, a need to organize events and give the young ones a chance to get together was strongly felt. The CSA Rivolta, which was first squatted in 1995 when the comrades – a term used by my informants to refer to each other – took over this place and had to deal with a clearance attempt, was step by step assigned to the group who can rightfully conduct their business there since 2001, when first the main hangar was given to them, as a cultural association, by the municipality.

19

4.2 The international scenario during the 1990's

According to Pietro, the social centers identify themselves as "the sequel" of the Autonomia and the European autonomous movements of the 1970s, although other events have played a central role in shaping the modern image of these places, in expanding their focus from a national to a global setting. First of all, on my gatekeeper's advice, I looked into the Mexican Zapatista movement's background. Their 1994 insurrection against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a commercial network between Canada, the US and Mexico, became an emblematic episode for the fight against a global neoliberal market and multinational corporations, in defence of local economic network and native communities. Graeber (2009: xiiif.) explains how the Zapatista movements later had two meetings bearing the slogan "For Humanity Against Neoliberalism", and started laying the foundations for the so-called "anti-globalization movement". During the second meeting the international organization "Peoples' Global Action" was created, a network which included, beside the Zapatistas, "the Brazilian Landless Farmers' Movement (MST), the Indian Karnataka State Farmers' Association […], anarchist or anarchist-inspired groups including Ya Basta! in Italy and Reclaim the Streets in the UK" (ibid.). The newborn anti-globalization movement's first major insurrection took place in 1999 at a WTO conference in Seattle, during which non-violent protesters, as well as militant pseudo-anarchist groups, filled the streets. After Seattle the first European insurrection took place in Prague a year later against a meeting attended by the IMF and World Bank, during which the Italian group "White Overalls" ("Tute Bianche", a group of activists dressed up in white working overalls) made their first appearance outside Italy as a sub-group of Ya Basta!

Finally, one of the latest major events that has contributed in the formation of Italian Social Centers as a political actor, and anti-globalization movement, are the manifestations which took place during the G8 summit in Genoa in July 2001. During the two-years period 2000-2001 almost 1.200 associations, organizations, networks, parties, syndicates, as well as single individuals and smaller groups (including several Social Centers) from all over the world adhered to the so-called Genoa Social Forum (URL 1). This was a coalition with a "double profile, global and national: on the one hand a manifest of acronyms who adhere from all over the world to the anti-G8 initiative; on the other, the network [of Italian movements]" (Fruci, 2003: 170, my own translation). The squatting of "Casa Diaz" during the summit, a school which had been one of the Social Forum's headquarters, became an emblematic episode in the representation of power abuse within the Italian law enforcement: the police raid that followed led to the hospitalization of about 60 protesters. This has later been described by Amnesty

International as "the most serious suspension of democratic rights in a Western country since the Second World War" (Kington, 2012), a crime that has been brought on several occasions to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg during the next ten years and is, to this day, still debated. The issue came up during my conversation with Anna, who vehemently pointed out "proofs are hidden, judges are bribed, some of those [policemen] from Casa Diaz have been promoted… and Casa Diaz has been an emblematic case for the Italian State's repressive force".

4.3 "All the fights are interconnected" – Capitalism revised in a post-modern, globalized world

These last two paragraphs help us understand the premises behind the political activism advocated by the social centers today and many of the topics that I have accounted for above are still very much debated today while present-day issues are being taken into account as the movement evolves. In this section I will illustrate how the Social Centers interpret their surroundings and what role they have created for themselves in their local urban environment, how the wide and variegated range of issues they address on a regional, national and global scale can be explained in terms of power relations, (neo-)capitalism, and exploitation. Metaphors and symbols are intertwined with their worldview, and can often be seen as links between their political and cultural propaganda. My gatekeeper explained it to me thoroughly during the very last (and very loosely structured) interview I carried out with her only; "all the fights are interconnected" she told me, meaning that Friday for Future, in which the social centers in Italy play a most central part, gender-based-violence and homophobia, "banally even meat-eating" are all issues related to power abuse, and are approached as such. I had on a number of occasions stumbled upon one of the slogans used by the activists at CSA Bocciodromo, mainly through flyers, images or videos published on social medias which read "There's no climatic justice without social justice", and when I asked Ele to explain the meaning of it she put it this way: when it comes to the mass production of meat

> we kill thousands of animals in the big industries. And it's linked to animal exploitation first of all, the human's oppression of a living being which is not human […] this is the anti-speciesism, according to which we are all species and man should not have a superior status to animals and nature […] You cannot speak of territorial exploitation if you don't speak of the exploitation of the people [within] and exploitation can be understood as violence, how humans approach their surroundings.

Power abuse was a recurring theme in some of my interviews, not only when Ele spoke of the group's approach to environmental issues, but also concerning the authorities' attitude towards immigrants, homelessness (a topic which came up during my conversation with Anna, as I will illustrate further on), the BLM-movement in the U.S. – and the subsequent petitions to defund the police force – and gentrification.

When it comes to this last issue, Maria described to me the essential role of social centers in Barcelona's urban setting. A gentrification-process among tenements and ghettos and a high rate of evictions is, according to my informant, a manifestation of neo-capitalism and the main reason behind house-squatting in Barcelona. "People who squat houses without political agenda create a network to support each other" she told me "not only people against the police trying to evict, but poor people trying not to get evicted. It is a reality". Maria came in contact with the social centers when she was 14 and had lived herself for 10 years in a squatted space, from which she had moved only a year ago. When I explained to Ele, how the very nature of Spanish social centers was contingent to this gentrification-process, she pointed out that living in a state of squatting, or showing solidarity towards evicted tenants through squatting, was something the comrades of the CSA Bocciodromo, together with activists from Venice and Padua, were involved in a few years back. Maria's case illustrates how Klandermans' and de Weerd's "remakes of collective beliefs at the individual level" can sometimes be not so idiosyncratic, depending both on what kind of rituals and symbols the group performs and waves, and on what sort of beliefs pushes the individual to join the cause. This becomes evident if the local role of social centers is analyzed. It is however true that it is only one specific aspect of neo-capitalism that the group addresses, and the individual involvement – in this spatially and temporarily bound manifestation of the Spanish social centers' activism – can thus be described as idiosyncratic if compared to other issues, such as environment, migration or exploitation, and even if compared to the issues that the same group addressed in the past. The social centers have "evolved" in the Spanish city as much as their Italian counterpart, meaning that their attention had shifted when a more pressing matter needed to be dealt with. When Maria was 18, she told me how "it was a student thing, it was a student movement against the Bologna Process… it was a huge movement, ended with the wish for free universities, create a place where we could learn in a different way". According to Laraña et al. one of the main obstacles that keep us from a clear definition of collective identity through an analysis of empirical data is that movements are a "moving target", meaning that they ought to be approached in their present configuration, since they take different shapes "at different points in their career" (1994: 16).

It became clear, during my conversation with Pietro, that also the Italian social centers had radically changed their façade in the early 2000's, transformed by an urgency to deal with the environmental crisis, by the 2008 economic crisis and the riots in Genoa. These factors opened "a crisis for later movements and unions" he said, which reshaped the social centers' interpretation of social issues and capitalism started to be held accountable for the vast majority of them. Natural resources replaced labour as a source of capital accumulation. My informant was keen on telling me this so I could understand the transformation they have undergone as a group, which is "reshaping the realities among ourselves and our relations with others" he explains "this is a huge project, taking this issue in analysis and combine it with other societal problems, like feminism, colonialism and migration waves". Even the Covid-19 pandemic, he tells me, they interpret "as a consequence of the climatic crisis: it won't be […] the last pandemic". In light of my informants' statements the interpretation of their social surroundings as corrupted by neo-capitalism and exploitation becomes clear and this is a central (if not the main) aspect of their identity as a group not only on a national level but, as we have seen in the previous paragraph, also internationally. The creation of the collective actor's identity goes hand in hand with "social contestation around the reinterpretation of norms, the creation of new meaning" (Cohen, 1985: 694). Since new meanings are given to social phenomena which others would interpret in a different way, the activists promote not only awareness but their own role as fighters.

5   Juxtaposing the individual and collective identity-making process

5.1   From student to activist

Fig. 3. A group of activists preparing a banner with the words "Se ci negano l'istruzione – occupiamo spazi facciamo lezione" ("If they deny us education – we squat spaces and have lessons"): this particular initiative was promoted in Vicenza by both the social centers and the local students' union [credit: Martino Campesato, 2020]

When it came to my informants' motives, the reasons and circumstances behind their involvement in political activism I received on the one hand a number of different explanations such as the personal background, their situation at home or a calling of sorts, all factors which pushed them towards this milieu. On the other hand, I started detecting a pattern soon enough, when my interlocutors began to explain how they became drawn to activism during their high-school years. A considerable number of my informants were, before they became active within the social centers, engaged in the political propaganda advocated by "Rete degli Studenti Medi", the most extensive network of students' unions on a national level, which represents mainly high school students. Attending an Italian high school – and I now speak from my firsthand experience, recollecting the last years I lived in Vicenza before my graduation – the union is a constant element outside the academic environment, for the most part disassociated from institutionally promoted initiatives, as a counterpart of the faculty and teacher staff rather than a collaborator. The union is a space where direct democracy is enforced as opposed to the classrooms where power relations and hierarchies are strongly felt and addressed, and where

students do not feel adequately represented. The Rete advocates similar ideals as the ones brought forward by the social centers, involved in anti-fascism, anti-racism, anti-mafia and environmental initiatives with the difference, according to Pietro, of having a more revisionist approach to these issues: "I grew tired of the dynamics and methods they had […] I sought out the social centers because they were another thing, completer and more radical". The union also differs from the social centers for the more obvious reason of being mostly rooted in the academic environment and therefore promoting initiatives or advancing complaints concerning the school system or a specific school. Andrea, who had been active in the CSA Rivolta for about 6 years, told me that he started as a high-school student, and had therefore the initial goal to improve the school and the issues he experienced therein. The same critique of the environment was raised by Anna and Mario. Even Paolo stepped foot for the first time in the CSA Bocciodromo, almost three years before, after they gave him a flyer for a student meeting organized by the Rete, which he found out no-one had attended. After chatting for a while with someone who was there that day he was told to go to Borgo Berga, a city block near the center where a manifestation against new building complexes that were reportedly financed by shady deals and sketchy interests, was taking place. After that first episode he wanted to organize a student collective together with Mario, and found that the place gave him the space and the push "to do something that I already had in my head".

Michele, a 25-year-old musician, was one of the people who came in contact with the CSA Rivolta through music, which is no small amount considering that concerts in social centers have always been a central element. But music was not the main reason for Michele to join the group, although the place gave him the means to express himself. "The place helped me develop [critical] thinking. In my town we have a very high degree of ignorance […] I found myself among people who talked concretely". Anna had, in turn, a different first-hand encounter with an initiative of CSA Bocciodromo during an 8th of March parade, a solidarity march during the International Women's Day, which was organized by the social center's activists. A few months later she participated in an assembly of the students' union in the social center, which was its headquarter. When I asked her about the reasons behind the involvement, she told me about wanting to "leave a place in better shape than we found it […] obviously the bigger ambition was the Revolution, fixing this world's problems, beautiful words but…". She later clarified that her own reasons for being actively involved became clearer once she got to know the place, and the people within. She found a family she felt like not having at home, which is something I heard from almost every one of my informants.

Although the students' union addresses a narrower range of problems and has a different approach to the issues that the social centers deal with in their own way, it can more often than not be seen as complementary actor. This collaboration becomes evident if we for example look at one of the initiatives they jointly started about a year ago as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of all commercial activities and schools. A profound discontent quickly spread among young unionist and political activists who seized the opportunity to lament the shortcomings of how teaching is traditionally carried out. They addressed issues that go well beyond the ones caused by the pandemic such as the evaluation system, access to resources (books and laptops) and a lack of attention towards more important problems (sex education, environmental education or citizenship education) which they wish to introduce (URL 2). The two groups decided to squat empty and neglected spaces where they organized self-managed classes in a manner that they deemed ideal. The reasons behind Mario's choice to seek out the group were rooted in a personal necessity of change: "I needed a change in my life, to do stuff… simply doing, action, building political skills with other people" which illustrates, in line with the majority of the statements I got from the rest of my informants, the ambition of laying down the ground for collective action through interaction. Mario continued:

> Then I accepted everything that was born out of it […] even if it wasn't in line with my own expectations. [My] expectation was to build something that would change the city, make it better, change the schools, change the way teaching was carried out, changing even the whole system […] school, work, housing rights […] I speak of a radical change, which on the other hand I've certainly never seen as something I could pursue in a parliament, but as something I had to do from the beginning, from below.

Laraña et al. define the individual's motives as opposed to the group's as "idiosyncratic biographies [where] individual identities are brought to movement participation and changed in the process" (1994: 12). The collective identity ought to be understood as both the antithesis to the individual motives and, simultaneously, the synthesis of the two. Lastly, during my interview with Leo I received yet a different explanation for becoming actively involved in the CSA Bocciodromo: after his first visit to the place during a night out with friends on occasion of Friday for Future's first strike, he started frequenting all the assemblies that took place: "I had nothing better to do during the days and they talked about perfectly right things it seemed to me" he told me and when I later asked him if the place had changed him somehow he

explained how his involvement in the group had showed him some more pressing issues than "clothes, a new phone or cars" and pushed him to help people in a difficult situation.

Towards the end of my field-study I realized how a couple of my informants had overtly stated how they saw their own role within the movement as fleeting, how they as a group (or as a generation, whose motives and goals are different from those of a previews or a later one) still had a long way to go. Pietro, for instance, started our conversation with the premise "between what I wish [this place] to be and what it actually is there is a gap", although he was, like the rest of my informants at the CSA Rivolta, fully aware that without the social center the city would have been in far worse conditions. When I asked him if there was something he still had not obtained, personal and collective goals which still were not accomplished he pointed out "we still haven't had the Revolution", and he was not the only one to speak of the Revolution in such terms: it was an ideal that initially also pushed Paolo to the social centers. When I asked him about his first experience and his motives, he emphasized the cultural influence that books and music had had on him, which forged and strengthened the image he had. He was looking for a space in this environment, for "people who wanted to make the Revolution in Vicenza […] and from abstract, amorphous, ambition it became an ever-present reality and collective planning". Paolo later described to me something that he personally felt was missing from the "doing politics" and being a group of activists in Vicenza – and he only spoke for his experience in the CSA Bocciodromo, since this is a peculiarity to this place – which I would like to account for here since I consider it to be relevant to my research question. The "common destiny", a term he used to denote the sense of responsibility and civic duty which pushes the activists to collective action, a calling of sorts, was ever present and generally felt; what was missing was "a shared everyday life" and Ele, who was present, clarified "we are a political collective but not a collective on a deeper level". I will recollect what Luca, who was sitting next to us, answered to this in the sixth chapter of this thesis, a topic we discussed during our later interview.

From all these reasons my informants recounted, Blumer's three premises can be identified and explained as a necessary change in the activist's preconceptions and initial goals which then become something bigger, the collective identity. Mario accepted "everything that was born out of it" while Paolo was invited during his very first visit to the social center to a manifestation that had nothing to do with issues related to the academic environment; in Leo's case coming in contact with the CSA Bocciodromo implied a change of lifestyle. Similarly, if we consider the self-managed classes organized by the students' union and the social centers we can see how a modern-day issue such as the interruption of schooling during the Covid-19

pandemic is reinterpreted by the group, and addressed as a problem related to the way teaching is traditionally carried out in high-schools. The new paradigm is used to support a general discontent which was already strongly felt and the initiative can thus be seen as an illustrative example for becoming part of the social centers as a collective and reshaping the own identity from student to activist. It thus becomes clear how the group reshape the individual reasons, in this case by presenting more urgent issues than those a high-school student otherwise would deal with. This chapter also illustrates how the group addressing many different problems can be seen as a cumulative process. The neophyte is introduced to the bigger picture, to the "interconnected fights" against the capitalist, the exploiter and the abuser, and to the role that the group has taken on as promoter of those fights.

5.2 Collectiveness and identity: the role of the group in the urban setting

Fig. 4. A parade in Vicenza: here the signs and banners are illustrative of the kind of discourse that the activists divulge, flaunting slogans such as "we're missing our lessons so we can teach you one" or "Choose eco not ego" or, as the one in the foreground read, "School, health, environment, climate justice"; the huge speakers in the front row are an ever-present element [credit: Martino Campesato, 2020]

In an attempt to obtain a definition, as encompassing and clear as possible, of what a Social Center actually is, I opened my first interviews by asking my informants to explain it to me in their own words. The double function of the place, the political and the cultural one, was a

constant premise in all the answers I got. When I approached Pietro, who had an 8-years' experience at the CSA Rivolta, he vehemently points out that he was born on the same day the activists began the squatting of the place. As he put it, "it is a self-managed space where there are political and cultural initiatives, through aggregation and solidarity", a definition which was the first of many very similar ones: as I started detecting a pattern, I decided it would have been more fruitful to break down the question during my future interviews. It is "a space of aggregation, that is what you have to offer to the public, to the city, offer a chance to create a context for sociability, for sharing" said Edoardo, who had frequented the place for 4 years, referring to the place's role as a cultural center, "not necessarily limited to concerts, also book-presentations, sports and whatnot; for example, we have gym here". As for the social center as a political space, Edoardo points out, it reunites "people who shares more or less common ideals […] who organize themselves, who create a movement, who highlight social contradictions, fundamentally highlight what we deem noteworthy". Addressing the social center as a space for cultural expression Anna explained that "when it comes to assigning spaces to new and upcoming artists, Vicenza's municipal executive board sucks; while at Bocciodromo there's a chance to make a name for oneself". The social centers have a central role in their respective urban environment as hosts of different cultural events such as jazz clubs, hip-hop concerts and freestyle battles, folk dances and festivals; these initiatives were something that all the "outsiders" with whom I spoke supported fully, and sure enough are the strongest element for entanglement between the group and the outside public.

Once a year the northeast social centers, supported by a number of collectives, associations and student unions throw a 30-day festival in Padua, which is one of the biggest sources of income for them. The Sherwood Festival is named after Sherwood Radio, one of the first free radio stations which started promoting a counterculture in the mid 1970s, when broadcasting ceased to be monopoly of the State and private broadcaster started spreading counter-information and a different type of music (URL 3; URL 4). The festival, where a variety of cultural performances takes place, is permeated by the values proclaimed by the social centers themselves because "Sherwood is politicizing" and, as Michele told me, "we've created a plastic free festival which hosted five, six, seven thousand people a day". Additionally, in collaboration with the "Europe Melting Pot Project" the festival promotes social integration by enrolling people with foreign background, mostly immigrants who only recently arrived in Italy, as a means of introducing them in the local setting (URL 5). The gym is another central element in both of the social centers that I visited which defines their identity as a group: here they all offer a variety of self-defense classes and MMA training courses, such as boxing,

kickboxing, Muay Thai and, as I learned through the website of the "Multi-Sport Club Indipendiente" (URL 6) which runs the gym in Bocciodromo, also Tai Chi and Qi Gong. The choice to teach martial arts in these spaces is not a random one, it is a symbol which stands for the fight against inequalities: as Ele put it during my conversation with Anna and Leo, "boxing, kickboxing and Muay Thai are sports which you can do in almost every social center… it's also about teaching self-defense, because the slogan is 'Let's Fight the Discriminations'". Anna, who had participated in Bocciodromo's activities for some two years added "there is also an ethical code in the gym, it's not just about hitting each other", to which Ele replied "we also wanted to lay down a document [according to which] if you aren't anti-racism, anti-fascism and anti-sexism you cannot enter the gym".

Towards the end of the conversation I had with my first informants in Marghera I asked them if there was an emblematic episode that came to their mind which could describe their activism in the social center. Pietro told me how the CSA Rivolta is almost always open either before or after a manifestation, usually between Saturday night and Sunday morning. One day they threw one of the recurrent manifestations together with the "No Big Ship Committee" (Comitato No Grandi Navi), a group of Venetian residents who wish to stop cruise ships from entering the lagoon – and the city's main canal, Canal Grande, in particular. This committee was put together, according to the group's website (URL 7), in order to limit the ships' emissions and pollution, their hydrodynamic effects (dislocating thousands of tons of water that collide with the city's foundation) and the risk of the ships colliding with the city's infrastructures; the Committee's popularity is also a result of an increasing dissatisfaction towards tourism. After closing the social center, Pietro and other activists had a meeting with the Committee at 8 am.

> The following day's No Big Ship manifestation must have a floating stage, a stage must be mounted on a barge on which the bands will later play in front of the Fondamenta delle Zattere… where the big ships pass by, and we mount [the stage]… when we're done mounting it starts pouring rain, all day and we still have the concerts, the interventions and the rest on this barge, with a floating stage and a covering mounted above.

Afterwards Michele recounted another emblematic episode of collective action which took place two years before during a Camp for Climate action, an international initiative that started in Scotland in 2006 a year after the 31st G8 Summit (Van der Zee, 2011) in which the CSA

Rivolta had a central role on the Italian front. As a result of the Climate Camp that took place 2019, the first one organized in Italy, an initiative was taken which saw 300 activists – the majority dressed in white overalls – parading at the Red Carpet of the Venice Film Festival (URL 8). Michele told me about the efforts they put in organizing the camping site itself:

> We had just finished the 30-day long [Sherwood] festival […] we finish dismantling and start the preparation of this place […] all together the activists that were participating in meetings, and actions joined us days before to help us with the preparations of the camp. When it all started there were so many people that we had to take over another area, and all together with knives and hedge trimmers we kept on preparing for three days.

The reason I want to recollect these anecdotes is that they say much about the social centers' role in the urban setting and collective identity – as well as the individual participation – and are representative for the group's public identity, as I will clarify in the last chapter of this thesis.

5.3 Illustrative initiatives for the group's identity – Issues related to refugees, migration and homelessness

CSA Rivolta, like all the social centers in Italy, has taken matters in its own hands each time it deemed it fit. In the outskirt of Venice, and not only there, the young activists have for example been closely involved for many years with migration-related issues, indeed a delicate topic in the country not least due to the anti-migration policy advocated by Matteo Salvini, secretary for the (far-)right-wing party "Lega Nord". As I was conducting an interview with an activist at the CSA Rivolta, a 25-years-old African man sat next to us, but wouldn't take part in the interview as he was feeling too embarrassed. Pietro told me that he was one of the people who had gotten to know the place thanks to the immigrant-welcoming initiative they have had kept going for two years, whose aim was to introduce incoming immigrants to the job market while they wait for a green card. This initiative is part of the CAS, the Extraordinary Welcoming Center ("Centro di Accoglienza Straordinario"), a housing network which provides lodging to people in need when primary reception centers cannot. "We are obviously talking about people who are here, in need of education, when it comes to the language and profession. Then they can be integrated in society. In our case they all worked in the greenhouses, agriculture, in

Chioggia", Pietro told me. A central issue was the gradual financial cut to the state subsidized reception centers, which led to a reduction in the amount of money refugees and immigrant were entitled to while looking for jobs and applying for a green card. Pietro explains that "when they decided to make the change regarding their money, it meant stripping them of the means to education, making it impossible for them to buy the season ticket for public transports". During my conversation with Anna she told me about her 5-day-experience in a refugee camp in Lesbos where the CSA Bocciodromo, alongside Friday For Future and the no-profit organization Open Your Borders in Padua, organizes solidarity initiatives to help the thousands of refugees on the island. "I remember speaking to this Afghan refugee, the only thing he asked me was a USB stick with some movies […] to see something different from all the shit around him" she told me and explained how the experience made her change her mind about her future studies: she said she wanted to start with multimedia art instead of sociology. She continued by telling me about the first encounter that refugees arriving to Italy from the Balkan route (Slovenia) have with the Italian authorities: "the police take away their shoes […] they have to walk barefoot and arrive with their feet destroyed. They also unleash the dogs after them".

Furthermore, and this is a common trait in the two social centers I visited, initiatives have been carried out to help homeless people in the respective city. Pietro told me how the CSA Rivolta had opened up for homeless people in Marghera: "we did an Assistance Service for the homeless during wintertime, a Welcoming Initiative. So, basically, the municipality covered the costs of a dormitory which hosted 40 beds for homeless people in winter". The activists from the CSA Bocciodromo in Vicenza face a stronger opposition from the city's authorities according to Anna. In February this year a highly controversial issue concerning the communal approach to homelessness was brought up and published on social media by the volunteers for Solidarity Walk – an initiative promoted by the CSA Bocciodromo which involves people from both within the social center and without. These volunteers, starting from the social center in Vicenza, collect among other things food, blankets, and clothes from donors, load them in cars and take a trip around the city every Sunday to distribute it to people in need. A homeless man left a statement (URL 9) on camera recounting an episode that occurred in September 2020 during which he, and 20 other people sleeping on the streets, were awaken by a street cleaning vehicle showering the pavement where they slept, while a communal police patrol was present. Although Francesco Rucco, the city's major, released a statement where he reassures that the episode never occurred, it is not the only controversy which clouds the truth about these episodes of power abuse, nor the only time the interviewed man himself had witnessed this firsthand. As Anna pointed out, the evidences that prove cases such as the one discussed above

is irrefutable: "we know that they are awaken by kicks but because we've seen it, we see the bruises, they are not the ones telling us". When I suggested that these could be anomalous behavior of some individuals within the police force, she brought up the example of Nicolò Naclerio an alderman who Rucco appointed proxy holder, which gave him the administrative influence and authority to take decisions within the local police force; Naclerio's affiliation with Fratelli d'Italia, one of Italy's (far-)right wing parties is a notorious fact. Additionally, according to my informant, he has never denied the allegations which see him as a central figure in the regional neo-fascist group "Veneto Fronte Skinhead".

In these last two sections we can see how the initiatives promoted by the group build up their collective identity and how the interconnectedness of their fights becomes evident. The statements I got from Anna show how the group has made international issues their own fights after it has ascertained that what they perceive as problematic on a regional level, e.g. episodes of police brutality and xenophobia, exists to even a greater degree on a global scale. This awareness of the bigger picture marks the point when the individual activists' identities converge in the collective one.

6 Counter representation and etic discourse

The anecdotes that Pietro and Michele recounted about the manifestation against cruise ship traffic in the canals and the Climate Camp they organized 2019, are significative in understanding a central point in the group's public identity. This is to be understood as how both the individual and the group are affected in their identity-making process by "definitions imposed on movements by state agencies, counter-movements, and […] media" (Laraña et al. 1994: 18). The first of the two activists concluded by explaining how "here there is this saying, 'social centers get a job': I'd make them do this". This is a recurrent element in the stereotypical representation that social centers' political activists get from the public opinion, and is first of all due to the fact that they are disproportionately young – the majority of the participant are high school students, although in the cases of university towns such as Padua and Venice the age threshold is higher. Scrolling down the majority of local as well as national newspapers' websites one will inevitably find at least one scoop about political activists parading the streets and in almost every case the demonstrators are part of the local social center or student union; mass media and social media become thus central actors in the shaping of the group's public identity. In August 2020 a dispute arose in Empoli (Tuscany) where Matteo Salvini, showing

his support to a candidate who was running for regional presidency, held a press conference. Only a few hundred meters away a group of activists from the local CSA Intifada were expressing their opinions about the secretary and a huge banner reading "Salvini, Empoli abjure you!" was waved in the front row. Right in front of the group dozens of police officers stood as a wall between the young demonstrators and the crowd attending the conference. Later, a video (URL 10) was released on the Internet where the politician, referring to his supporters, exclaims "This is Empoli, not those four daddy's boys" followed by "in a normal city citizens who reunite to discuss work, pensions, healthcare and future should not be contained by the police", and "they're scoundrels who do not know what democracy is"; as a final comment he added "andate in cantiere" (which roughly translates to "go to a working site", meaning "get a job"). Every statement was followed by loud cheers and applause. I would like to make clear that while the politician is not a representative example for the general critique that the social centers face from the public opinion, I nevertheless see him as a major rival of the group considering that he represents a party which is known for right-wing populism, anti-migration, and is all in all conservative. Additionally, I chose to bring the political actor up because he was taken by Pietro as an example for the main opposition to the initiatives they promote to help immigrants. There are constant struggles from the activists' side to prove these kinds of outside clichés wrong not only, as the examples provided above illustrate, through a specific kind of discourse but first and foremost through action. Beside the gym, the immigrant-welcoming initiatives (among which they also offered Italian classes) and the homeless shelter, Pietro explains how they have also started after-school online services for middle- and high-school students, managing to assist around 50 kids since the Covid-19 pandemic started; "thanks to this we've managed to get an insignificant European-level tender from the European Solidarity Corps […] here, an association was born, with the high schools, now even with universities, for internships, trying to make these activities valid as internships".

A second factor that nurtures this opinion of political activists who need to get a "real" job lies in their collective identity which was explained to me by Elisa, the only person among my informants who had been active for a while within the CSA Bocciodromo before distancing herself from it. She had moved to Vienna two years before and was aware of, although did not have a firsthand encounter with, the political activism's main goal in the Austrian capital which, not unlike the experience Maria recounted of squatted buildings in Barcelona, was mainly about housing-rights and standing up against gentrification. She explained to me how one of the reasons why she moved away from the political activism advocated by the social center in Vicenza, which she also identified as the source of the group's strength, was that:

> They're so strong because they take politics as a job […] I mean, many people identify themselves with, and have their identity rooted in that place, which is a beautiful thing but it becomes their whole identity, it becomes a family, that is, the social center becomes some kind of clan of the Northeast.

Such a strong collective identity can be seen as a polarized self-defense mechanism against stereotypical counter-representations, but can also at times turn out to be counterproductive. As I mentioned earlier during my interview with Paolo both Ele and Luca were present, and when my informant expressed his concerns about being united under their political activism but not so much on a deeper level, Luca commented:

> In the social centers [the feeling of] being lifelong comrades is strongly felt, but one's not friend with the other, or doesn't have to be, which can turn out to be a shortcoming sometimes, like 'I am someone's comrade but we did not necessarily meet because we liked one another'.

Luca's statement illustrates the definition that Laraña et al. (1994: 16) give of collective identity as "something that stands above and beyond the individual social actors and takes on a life of its own". This is certainly an extreme case of the group identity taking over the subjectivity of its participant, which both Paolo and Ele were aware of and resented.

Another aspect of the activists' approach to the issues they address which was brought up both by Luca and other two among the people I interviewed who were not involved in the political activism, Laura and Max, is the social centers' tendency to generalize, to draw a very distinctive line between right and wrong. This becomes clear if we consider how Ele described their fights as interconnected, which can sometimes be seen as "total antagonism towards central power" as Laura put it. This also has some implications on the kind of discourse the group employs to spread awareness on the problems they fight, which is very much charged with metaphors and symbolism whenever power relations between the exploiter and the exploited can be identified as the root of the problem at hand. This is what Ele refers to when speaking about speciesism, gender-based violence, environmentalism and territorial exploitation. Generalizing is also labeling according to Luca, and labeling is inevitable when one is involved in political activism but "sociability has nothing to do with labeling and social centers are the first ones to label 'the rich', 'the master' and 'the bad guy'" he says. A more

concrete example was brought up by Max when he told me about one of the social centers' most fierce fights against ENI, a multinational company most active in the sector of fossil fuels (oil and gas). The company has found itself several times at the center of controversies, accused of mass pollution in Niger (URL 11) and of refusing to meet workers' requirements in their subsidiary in Kazakhstan (URL 12). According to Max their critique "ENI is evil" is too reductive, and he explains how his uncle has worked in the company for 50 years and now occupy a central position in it. "He has always felt bad for what the company he represented was doing and always tried to push in the opposite direction" he tells me "you can always say 'this is awful, I'm not going to work for them' but you obviously change more things from the inside than from the outside".

One final topic that is worth mentioning concerns the group's anti-authoritarian stance, the antagonism against central power, a characteristic which leads to a most common critique which sees them as anarchists or good-for-nothing troublemakers lacking structure and organization. As we've seen in the movement's historical background there was a high degree of suspiciousness towards unions 50 years ago which is today more directed towards political parties, businessmen and entrepreneurs, but still about disclosing personal interests on the part of people with political influence, economic resources and generally those who are in a position of power. The social centers see a lack of representation as their strength, not only within the conventional political scene but inside the group itself as well, meaning that they don't identify a single leader but rather a number of central actors whose authority and decision-making power is constantly questioned. During my conversation with Leo this controversial topic was brought up when he told me how, within the CSA Bocciodromo, there is no need of "power controlling power", meaning a well-defined hierarchy based on delegation of decisional power, to which Ele replied "we have a leader though". She was referring to an acquaintance of her whom I never met but whose name I had heard in different contexts and had a central role in the decision-making process, as she had explained to me once. "And a leader is different from a boss" Anna adds. Leo was not convinced: "I do not have a leader nor a boss" Leo says "nobody commands me". The authority within the social centers is thus constantly shifting, it belongs to everyone and no-one. This lateral hierarchy, or "transverse growth of the group" as Michele put it, is defined by Alberoni (1984: 196) as decentralized power, as a leadership which resides in the hand of the group not of the individual; "the leader is not even thought of as a leader, but simply a member like all others […] the enormous power which is concentrated in the leader's hands is neither seen nor acknowledged".

7   Conclusions

A clear and encompassing definition of "Identity" is, in today's globalized world, hard to elucidate. Countless stimuli in our surroundings reshape us constantly through interaction with others which in turn is facilitated by mass media, social media and modern-day communication systems. When Bronislaw Malinowski set out for his journey to the Trobriand islands or when Margaret Mead conducted her fieldwork on Papua New Guinea the distinction between "us" and "them" was clear, identities were something the anthropologist had to go and look for in a far off land almost as if they were some yet undiscovered exotic species. The communities the anthropologists came in contact with about a century ago, often isolated and cut off from the rest of the world, had their own group identity and the individual was a piece of the puzzle; even the western explorer had back then his or her own perception of the self as a bannerman for a higher culture which had to be introduced to the "primitives". The own identity and the one of the group were more or less monolithical. Since then the world has become a melting pot, its inhabitants citizens of the world and, with the colliding of different groups, identities have become more and more entangled. As a result of this, speaking in absolutes often does more harm than good, although it does not stop the creation of new groups and new collective identities, new "us" and new "them". As we've seen throughout this thesis, when studying Italian social centers one will inevitably stumble upon two central generalizations from both within and without the movement. On the one side, the interconnectedness of the group's fights means that neo-capitalism and instrumental power is perceived as the root of many different problems. On the other side, the social centers face judgement from those who see them as nothing more than a gang of troublemakers, who will not make a difference because they are disproportionately young and politicize in an unconventional way, the way they deem fit.

If we look closer at the motivations that my informants provided for their involvement in the social centers' political propaganda, a number of conclusions can be drawn and their self-image explained. The frustration of not being able to do something here and now as well as the search for likeminded people, the need of a space for cultural and political expression, of a channel through which they are able to spread their message have been common arguments for joining the group. Some of them reconsidered their own lifestyle and priorities after visiting one of the social centers, others found themselves attending a manifestation organized by CSA Bocciodromo which they thought was important without knowing what the place actually was. Still others already had an idealized vision of solving certain problems they came in contact with on a daily basis and needed the tools to succeed. Once the individual starts associating

with the activists of the social center, he or she will inevitably become aware about the bigger picture through constant confrontation, reinterpretation of social phenomena and by assigning new meanings so that they can address different topic accordingly. If we look at Mario's story for instance, we notice how he started as a student aware of a number of problems within the school environment and then, once he started frequenting the CSA Bocciodromo, accepted everything that was born out of it, which shows that "while motivation is rooted in individual psychological traits, it is constructed and developed through interaction" (Melucci, 1983: 31). In this specific context, as can be elucidated from some of my informants' statements, it is easy to see how the motivations of the individual become the fights of the group through a "cumulative process", meaning that new problems (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) are reinterpret in line with their own worldview and are used as arguments to support what they have lamented since the beginning. This evolution from young unionist to political activist and the cumulative process of identifying new problems illustrates how symbolic interactionism is a fitting theoretical framework for the purpose of this study. Blumer (1969) reminds us that we reinterpret and give new meanings to our surroundings through interaction with others.

Considering the kind of initiatives that the social centers promotes and are involved with, the role they play in their respective urban setting and the group's collective identity becomes clear. If and when the primary reception centers lack the resources to help immigrants, they open up their doors; once they realize the city board is not taking measures to help homeless people, they take it upon themselves to distribute primary goods. The same argument can be used to explain what squatting is for the group today: whenever a space is neglected by the city, the social centers reclaim it and fix it up. When Pietro told me how there was a gap between what the CSA Rivolta is and what he wishes it to be, or when Anna finished illustrating her motives by saying "the bigger ambition was fixing the world's problems, beautiful words, but…", I realized that fulfilling all its goals is a somewhat distant and abstract scenario for the group. Granted that the social centers have actually brought concrete change and has fulfilled many goals they set out to complete, the bigger picture the collective actor pursue – which is a society where issues such as self-interest, capital accumulation, competition on a neoliberal market and power relations are rooted out – has countless ramifications, and is hard to approach concretely. The collective identity is therefore something that is bound to transcend the individual self sooner rather than later and it cannot be otherwise, because it assimilates a multitude of heterogeneous, at times even conflicting, positions united only by the abstractness of common interests, or the bigger picture, which is often far too wide for the single participant to grasp. The collective identity will eventually dissolve when the issues it set out to address

are overcome which as I have shown appears to be, more times than not, a distant and quasi-utopian scenario: it is, in other words, the group's own *raison d'etre*. Additionally, Pietro told me how the social centers have changed their façade about twenty years ago because more pressing problems needed to be dealt with, and Maria recounted how squatting in Barcelona was a student thing when she was younger. This explains what Klandermans and de Weerd (2000: 75) mean by "idiosyncratic remakes of collective beliefs at the individual level". The authors explain the difficulty to understand individual identification with the movement by looking at the group's rituals: this because the underlying ideology is so much bigger and the rituals, no matter how much they strive to fix as many problems as possible, are inevitably bound to a local scenario, to the group's configuration at a certain point in time, and to the issues at hand. Lastly, the public identity of the group, its reaction against outside criticism and discourse helps us understand the collective identity even better. The counter-representation that social centers face, which sees them as a poorly organized group of disobedient citizens who reject any form of authority and who cannot hope to achieve concrete change because they are too young and do politics without being represented in the Parliament, is all in all acknowledged by the group and sometimes even considered its strength by its participants. Furthermore, we have seen how the activists' antagonism towards armed forces for instance, or their refusal of doing politics the "conventional way", can be explained through a number of examples about police brutality or nepotism; these definitions coming from outsiders can thus in the majority of cases be refuted (or at least clarified).

This study is a contribution to the vast amount of research that has focused on social movements, especially anti-globalization movements, and the topic is fairly complex first of all because there is a tendency to generalize both from the activists themselves and from the public opinion. Secondly, the vast amount of issues the activists address, the structure of the group and the promoted initiatives deserve much closer attention and deeper considerations. While I am fully aware that this study cannot but introduce the activist and the social center to a foreign reader who is not acquainted with this phenomenon, I consider this research to be only the beginning of something I wish to approach on a deeper level in the future. Among the themes that I have brought up here some central ones are the political activists' pursue of direct democracy as opposed to a representative one, the lack of a well-defined captainship inside the group and the group's anti-authoritarian character. These are topics that in my opinion deserve more extensive studies and from the results shown by such a research, it would be of interest to look for similarities and differences with other no-global movements around the world. I am

nevertheless convinced that I have managed to shed some light on what the social centers are and how my informants' statements are illustrative to explain how collective identity is built.

8   Bibliography and digital sources

Alberoni, F. [1977] (1984). *Movement and Institution*. New York: Columbia University Press

Angeli, F. (2012). Il movimento delle occupazioni di squat e centri sociali in Europa: una introduzione [Squatting occupations' movement and social centers in Europe: an introduction]. *Partecipazione e conflitto* 1(1), pp. 5-18

Berzano, L. & Gallini, R. (2000). Centri Sociali Autogestiti a Torino [Self-managed social centers in Turin]. *Quaderni di Sociologia* 22(22), pp. 50–79

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. California: University of California Press

Buechler, S. M. (2000). *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism: The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism*. New York: Oxford University Press

Cavaliere, R. (2013). I centri sociali come spazio pubblico. Un caso di studio a Napoli [Social centers as public space. A case study in Naples]. *Rivista Geografica Italiana* 120 (1), pp. 31-54

Cohen, J. L. (1985). Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements. *Social Research 52*(4), pp. 663-716

Dines, N. (1999). Centri sociali: occupazioni autogestite a Napoli negli anni novanta [Social centers : self-managed occupations in Naples in the '90s]. *Quaderni di Sociologia* 21(21), pp. 90-111

Farro, A. L. & Rebughini, P. (2008). *Europa Alterglobal: Componenti e Culture del movimento dei movimenti in Europa* [Alterglobal Europe: components and culture of the movements' movement in Europe]. Milano: FrancoAngeli

Fasanella, G., & Zornetta, M. [2008] (2013). *Terrore a nordest* [Terror in Northeast]. Milano: Bur

Franchini, F. (2019, Feb. 24), Illegali, Abusivi e Violenti: Tutti i Segreti dei Centri Sociali [Illegal, abusive and violent: all the secrets of the social centers]. Available at: https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/mappa-dei-centri-sociali-met-sono-abusivi-e-illegali-1649562.html (retrieved May 4[h], 2021)

Fruci, G. L. (2003). La nuova agorà. I social forum fra spazio pubblico e dinamiche organizzative [The new agora. Social forums between public space and organizational dynamics]. In Ceri, P. (Ed.), *La Democrazia dei Movimenti – Come Decidono I No-Global* (pp. 169-199). Catanzaro: Rubettino Editore

Graeber, D. (2009). *Direct Action – An Ethnography*. Oakland: AK Press

Katsiaficas, G. [1997] (2006). *The Subversion of Politics – European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonialization of Everyday Life*. Oakland: AK Press

Kington, T. (2012, Jul. 6), Court Upholds Convictions of Italian G8 Police. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jul/06/italy-g8-police-appeal#comments (retrieved April 12th, 2021)

Klandermans, B. (1997). *The social psychology of protest*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Klandermans, B. & de Weerd, M. (2000). Group Identification and Political Protest. In Stryker, S., Owens, T. J. & White, R. W. (Ed.), *Self, Identity and Social Movements* (pp. 68 – 90). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Laraña, E. Johnston, H. & Gusfield, J. R. (1994). *New social movements: From ideology to identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Massiah, G., & Massiah, E. (2011). *Une stratégie altermondialiste*. Paris: La Découverte

Melucci, A. (1989). *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Membretti, A. (2007). Centro Sociale Leoncavallo: Building Citizenship as an Innovative Service. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 14(3), pp. 252–263

Montagna, N. (2007). Rappresentanza e autorganizzazione: il" welfare dal basso" dei CSA del Nord-Est [Representation and self-organization: the northeast social centers' "welfare from below"]. In Vitale, F. (Ed.), *In Nome di Chi? Partecipazione e Rappresentanza nelle Mobilitazioni Locali* (pp. 209-229). FrancoAngeli: Milano

Mudu, P. (2012). I Centri Sociali Italiani: verso tre decadi di occupazioni e spazi autogestiti [Italian social centers: towards three decades of occupation and self-managed spaces]. *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 1(1), pp. 69-92

Rochon, T. R., & Mazmanian, D. A. (1993). Social Movements and the Policy Process. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *528*(1), 75–87.

Rubin, J. (1970). *DO IT! Scenarios of the Revolution*. New York: Simon and Schuster

Stryker, S., Owens, T. J. & White, R. W. (2000). Introduction. In Stryker, S., Owens, T. J. & White, R. W. (Ed.) *Self, Identity and Social Movements* (pp. 1-17). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Toledano, V. L. (1940). The labor movement. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *208*(1), 48-54.

Touraine, A. (1971). *The post-industrial society: tomorrow's social history: classes, conflicts and culture in the programmed society*. New York: Random House.

Van der Zee, B. (2011, Mar. 2), Climate Camp Disbanded. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/mar/02/climate-camp-disbanded#comments (retrieved April 26th, 2021)

Vetenskapsrådet (2002). *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning*. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet.

Websites

URL (1): https://web.archive.org/web/20011021054121/http://www.genoa-g8.org/adesioni1.htm (retrieved April 12th, 2021)

URL (2): https://www.globalproject.info/it/in_movimento/didattica-e-formazione-dal-covid-19-verso-una-nuova-normalita/22691 (retrieved May 19th, 2021)

URL (3): https://www.sherwood.it/articolo/95/semplicemente-sherwood (retrieved April 19th, 2021)

URL (4): http://www.broadcastitalia.it/storia%20delle%20radio.htm (retrieved April 19th, 2021)

URL (5): https://www.meltingpot.org/Sherwood-Festival-un-parcheggio-di-un-altro-mondo.html#.YJPTRGYzY6g (retrieved April 19th, 2021)

URL (6): http://polindependiente.blogspot.com/ (retrieved April 6th, 2021)

URL (7): http://www.nograndinavi.it/cosa-chiediamo-2/ (retrieved April 26th, 2021)

URL (8): https://www.globalproject.info/it/in_movimento/occupato-il-red-carpet-della-mostra-del-cinema-il-claim-chiediamo-giustizia-climatica/22229 (retrieved April 27 th, 2021)

URL (9): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZfvDX-CcY0&ab_channel=LaPi%C3%B9Tv (retrieved April 16th, 2021)

URL (10): https://video.corriere.it/politica/salvini-risponde-contestatori-andate-cantiere-invece-rompere-scatole/70b21ca6-d95e-11ea-89ec-853d2bb5ced9 (retrieved April 27th, 2021)

URL (11): https://www.amnesty.it/nigeria-scoperte-gravi-negligenze-parte-shell-ed-eni/ (retrieved May 19th, 2021)

URL (12): https://www.corriere.it/esteri/11_dicembre_17/kazakistan-rivolta-citta-petrolifera_fcdafa88-28ad-11e1-b2e0-62df0bde9a01.shtml (retrieved May 19th, 2021)