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Defending Middle-sea

The geopolitical scope of environmental
conflicts

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Ogni volta che qualcuno cerca di convincerci che Il Signore degli Anelli è un romanzo che parla di grandi re, di nobili guerrieri e potentissimi stregoni, dovremmo ricordarci questo: parla anche di re, guerrieri e stregoni, ma soprattutto racconta la storia di un gruppo di Hobbit che si trova ad avere a che fare con queste figure. C'è una certa differenza. La stessa differenza che passa tra le "politiche mondiali" dei grandi saggi, degli uomini potenti, e le "buone azioni" spesso sottovalutate dei piccoli, degli esseri apparentemente deboli e minuti.

Wu Ming 4

Ehy turista so che tu resti in questo posto italico. Attento! Tu passi il valico ma questa terra ti manda al manicomio.

Mare adriatico e Jonio, vuoi respirare lo iodio ma qui nel golfo c'è puzza di zolfo, che sta arrivando il demonio.

Abbronzatura da paura con la diossina dell'ILVA. Qua ti vengono pois più rossi di Milva e dopo assomigli alla Pimpa.

Nella zona spacciano la moria più buona. C'è chi ha fumato i veleni dell'ENI, chi ha lavorato ed è andato in coma. Fuma persino il Gargano, con tutte quelle foreste accese.

Turista tu balli e tu canti, io conto i defunti di questo paese. Dove quei furbi che fanno le imprese, no non badano a spese, pensano che il protocollo di Kyoto sia un film erotico giapponese.

Caparezza

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Introduction

The title of this work is a reference to the recent book of the Italian writer Wu Ming 4, *“Difendere la Terra di Mezzo”* (2013). In that text, an essay about the figure of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien and its masterpieces, the author stresses quite insistently the importance of the Hobbits, one of the races of the fictional universe of Arda. One the reasons of this choice is that, both in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lord of the Rings*, the characters which belongs to this race, while being very small people (“halflings”), lacking strength and any kind of special ability, still manage to play a decisive role during the struggle of the Good against the Evil, which takes place in the lands of the Middle-earth.

Wu Ming 4 argues, in summary, that the Hobbits work very well as a metaphor of the contemporary people of our world, which are incredibly small compared to the size of hazards and powers which collide over and around us, but can still make a difference and result determining thanks to the value of their free choices and their humbleness.

The Hobbits are definitely no heroes, but they can take the courage they need from the love they feel for their companions and, in particular, their land, the Shire, to which they will return at the end of their adventure. The strong bond with their land is highlighted by the fact that many Hobbits live in underground holes, which are surrounded by well-kept gardens.

Gardening is, indeed, one of the most typical activities for the small people of the Shire, and Tolkien couldn't have made more clear the striking contrast between them and the people of Mordor, the Orcs commanded by the Dark Lord Sauron, which seem to be completely unable to enjoy the beauty of the nature's fruits.

Tolkien described the military campaigns led by Sauron as attempts of destroying every beautiful and valuable thing (in the author's vision) the world has to offer, burning the forests and polluting the land, moving wars to all the free peoples of the Middle-earth, in order to rule them all.

The reason I decided to use such a title is that, in my opinion, this kind of metaphor may be quite appropriate to the subject of this work.

My intention, here, is to explore the geopolitical scope and value of the local social conflicts which are triggered by issues related to the environment and its management, using the key study of an Italian environmental conflict.

In the first place, I will spend a section of this text focusing on different theories regarding environmental conflicts, with the intention of explaining their nature and main features, in order to distinguish them from other types of conflicts, arriving at a proper definition of this particular social phenomenon.

Secondly, there will be the description of the key study, which will be carried out using categories and models taken from the previously exposed theories. For this part of the work, I decided to study the case of a very recent environmental conflict, which is currently taking place in Salento, a territory of the Italian region Apulia.

This particular conflict is about the construction of a pipeline, the TAP (Trans Adriatic Pipeline) which should transport gas from Albania to Italy. The gas would be extracted in Azerbaijan, while its final destination, which are some countries of Western Europe, would be reached through a long system of pipelines, in which the TAP would be only a small section, spanning through Turkey and Greece too.

TAP is also the name of the multinational firm which should build the structure; its shareholders are the Norwegian Statoil, the British Petroleum, the Azerbaijani SOCAR, the Belgian Fluxys, the French Total, the Swiss Axpo Holding and, finally, the German Eon-Ruhrgas.

Both the Italian and the other governments involved in the project are obviously favoring the construction of this infrastructure, but some of the local Italian authorities, like the Apulia Region and different Municipalities of Salento are showing a more critical attitude. The same can be said for the local population, which seem to consider the TAP as a potential hazard for the sea and generally for health of the local environment, which is also the main source of their economy, since it is mostly related with tourism and fishing. Against the TAP, in fact, both members of these critical local authorities and citizens have formed an association with the self-explanatory name of No TAP, which is organizing the protest against the construction of the pipeline.

After the description and the analysis of the case study in the light of environmental conflicts theories, a third part follows, in which I will try to understand and assess the value and meaning of this kind of social conflicts with a global perspective, using a geopolitical approach: since the Trans Adriatic Pipeline would become part of an infrastructure thought to be extended on the territories of different countries, its construction follows the logic of a globalized economy, and is also highly (in a decisive way, as will be showed) influenced by the rules of international relations.

Considering this fact, it should be clear that also the protest against such an infrastructure addresses issues and problems which are far from being related only to a small territory and its few municipalities: the claims which are emerging at a local level, like those of the No Tap association, coincide with some very important global interests (considered as distinct from those of states, multinational firms and international organizations), related to the health of the Mediterranean sea and, in general, to the protection of the environment.

The No TAP association possesses a simple flag, which contains a very explicative symbol, consisting in metallic structure, a reference of the pipeline, which is bent and torqued to form the words: "NO TAP". The symbol shows also that the one who bended the structure is a small elf or gnome with a quite cunning appearance: the demonstration that the protesters of Salento portray themselves as members of some kind of "small people", engaged in a difficult struggle with much bigger forces, getting their strength and motivation from the bond with their land.

Section I

Understanding environmental conflicts

1. Definition

In this first section of this work, I try to transpose the empirical variety of environmental conflicts into a model. In order to be really valid, this model needs to be comprehensive enough to describe instances of social conflicts triggered by ecological issues which can be highly diverse between them.

In my viewpoint, environmental conflicts aren't strongly characterized by the actors that may be involved in them, or by the way they occur and develop, since the whole set of actors which can participate in this type of struggle is extremely broad, and the same can be said for the modality in which these conflicts can be conducted.

For this reason, I will refer here to two definitions of environmental conflicts, which can be associated to each other as both locate the fundamental characteristic of this particular social conflict exactly within the environment itself and, doing so, in the very cause which triggers the conflict, instead of searching for other different features, which would limit too much the area in which the definition would remain effective.

The first of these definitions has been proposed by Stephan Libiszewski (1995):

Environmental Conflicts manifest themselves as political, social, economic, ethnic, religious or territorial conflicts, or conflicts over resources or national interests, or any other type of conflict. They are traditional conflicts *induced by an environmental degradation*¹.

In this way, every type of conflict may be identified as environmental, if the cause lies within environmental degradation.

In the same article, the author lists three different types of "environmental degradation" which are more likely to induce a conflict. They are:

¹ Stephan Libiszewski, *What is an Environmental Conflict?*, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich/Swiss Peace Foundation, Zurich/Berne 1995, p. 14.

- overuse of renewable resources;
- overstrain of environment's sink capacity (pollution);
- impoverishment of the space of living.²

This is an useful attempt of individualizing the most common direct causes for environmental conflicts. The second definition I will refer too, proposed by Joan Martinez-Alier (2002), rather remains abstract enough to not only include every possible empirical occurrence of this type of conflicts, but also to define the field of study of political ecology:

Political ecology studies ecological distribution conflicts. By ecological distribution is meant the social, spatial and inter-temporal patterns of access to the benefits obtainable from natural resources and from the environment as a life support system, including its 'cleaning up' properties. The determinants of ecological distribution are in some respects natural (climate, topography, rainfall patterns, minerals, soil quality and so on). They are clearly, in other respects, social, cultural, economic, political and technological.³

In this work, I will use the expression "environmental conflict" basically as a synonym of "ecological distribution conflicts", always considering that they can manifest themselves as "any type of conflict", like correctly pointed out by Libiszewski.

In the following chapters, I will proceed addressing separately different matters regarding environmental conflicts, trying to answer to five different questions:

- what does "environment" mean?
- which are the typical actors and stakeholders in an environmental conflict?
- which are the different orders of magnitude in which an environmental conflict can manifest itself?
- what types of conflicts may arise from ecological issues?
- finally, which are the root causes of environmental conflicts? How is environmental degradation linked with other economic and political factors?

² Ibidem.

³ Joan Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poors*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2002, p. 73

In order to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon, different references to already studied environmental conflicts will be made during the analysis.

2. Environment as an object of contention

After having defined the environmental conflicts there is the need to address the question of what we refer to when naming the “environment”.

With this term, I don't refer to some sort of “wild” or “natural world”, as opposed to urbanized areas. Instead, in this work, the environment is considered as system of relations, an area in which physical and chemical forces are related with social, political and economic dynamics.⁴

In this sense, environment is clearly not divided by the place and context in which the human beings live, but consists instead in the very conditions of their existence. It is “the place you work, the place you live, the place you play”.⁵

With the use of this definitions comes the necessity to interpret environmentalism in a certain way. It is defined here as the movement for environmental justice, which can be related with the protection of endangered species and biodiversity in general, but it is definitely different and separated by the “cult of wilderness” and wildlife.

This is, using the words of Juan Martinez-Alier, *an environmentalism of the poor*:

The unavoidable clash between economy and environment (which is studied by ecological economics) gives rise to the ‘environmentalism of the poor’ (which is studied by political ecology)⁶.

I do not argue that poor people are always and everywhere environmentalists, since this is patent nonsense. I argue that, in ecological distribution conflicts, the poor are often on the side of

⁴ Y. Veyret, *Environnement*, in Dictionnaire de l'Environnement, edited by Yvette Veyret, Armand Colin, Paris, 2007, p. 133

⁵ G. Di Chiro, *Nature as a Community*, The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice, 1961, p.4

⁶ Joan Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poors*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2002, preface.

resource conservation and a clean environment, even when they themselves do not claim to be environmentalists.⁷

This interpretation means fundamentally two things: the first is that environmentalism, by definition, is strictly related to a conflictual dimension; secondly, that the social agents who act as “environmentalists” are the ones which gain their resources, their means of production, their work and their space of living from what is considered as environment. In this sense, in an environmental conflict, the environment may be simply interpreted as the set of resources for which the different factions are fighting for.

3. The typical stakeholders

3.1 Environmental justice and injustice

In order to address the matter of what are the most important and usual actors of environmental conflicts, a good way to start may be a preliminary division, which separates these actors in two categories:

1. the first is composed by the group of social actors which are characterized by quest towards environmental justice, made through different types of protest;
2. the second category is, instead, composed by the actors –institutional and economic – which create or inflict the situation of environmental injustice.

In this work, I refer to the following definition of environmental justice and injustice, contained in a study of the Ceu Center for Environmental Policy and Law:

Definition of Environmental Justice:

A condition of environmental justice exists when environmental risks, hazards, investments and benefits are equally distributed without direct or indirect discrimination at all jurisdictional levels and when access to environmental investments, benefits, and natural resources are equally

⁷ Ibidem.

distributed; and when access to information, participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environment-related matters are enjoyed by all.

Definition of environmental Injustice:

An environmental injustice exists when members of disadvantaged, ethnic, minority or other groups suffer disproportionately at the local, regional (sub-national), or national levels from environmental risks or hazards, and/or suffer disproportionately from violations of fundamental human rights as a result of environmental factors, and/or denied access to environmental investments, benefits, and/or natural resources, and/or are denied access to information; and/or participation in decision-making; and/or access to justice in environment-related matters.⁸

It is evident that these definitions perfectly match the one proposed for environmental conflicts as ecological distribution conflicts. The reference to both the material causes for social conflicts and to the political participation result very important in the next pages.

Following the proposed categorization, I'll now proceed in listing the actors and analyzing their usual roles and interests.

The first category includes: ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and organized groups of residents of a certain area or territory. Only States and firms will belong to the second category. It is worth stressing the fact that no completely exhaustive list of actors may really be made, since every social group could potentially engage in an environmental conflicts. This first presentation is only made for introducing some crucial concept and to address, in particular, some studies and models of insurgent citizenry related to ecological issues, which is the main theme of the key study chosen here. For this reason, to the study of protests made by residents there will be a dedicated chapter.

3.2 Ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and environmental racism

Indigenous peoples are the descendants of those who were there before others who now constitute the mainstream and dominant society. They are defined partly by descent, partly by

⁸ Ceu Center for Environmental Policy and Law; The Health and Environment Alliance; The Coalition for Environmental Justice, *Making the case for environmental justice in Central and Eastern Europe*, March 2007, p. 10

the particular features that indicate their distinctiveness from those who arrived later, such as their language and ways of life, and partly by their own view of themselves.

No categorizations of indigenous peoples are absolute, except perhaps when it comes to the issue of control. For the most part, the term 'indigenous peoples' is used today to describe a group which has had ultimate control of their lands taken by later arrivals; they are subject to the domination of others. Used in this sense, descent is less important than political perception.⁹

The subjection of a group identified by race to another has very often significant consequences in terms of environmental justice, as it is often related to ethnic justice. Both if we refer exactly to indigenous people, like the Natives in the United States, or in general to ethnic minorities, like the black people in that same country, it is possible to verify the existence of a phenomenon called "environmental racism".

That is "a form of institutionalized discrimination. Institutional discrimination is defined as "actions or practices carried out by members of dominant (racial or ethnic) groups that have differential and negative impact on members of subordinate (racial and ethnic) groups."¹⁰

This is a direct consequence of the fact that members of minorities within a society are very often relegated in dedicated areas, peripheries if not reserves. Since different social and racial groups live in different places within the territory of a State, they differently both access to the benefits and suffer from the hazards related to the separated environments – rural or urban – they inhabit. The areas in which members of minorities lives are more often invaded by landfills, dumps, incinerators or other polluting implantation, while the lands inhabited for centuries, if not millennia, by indigenous and tribal peoples are continuously menaced by possible expropriations.

In other words, the groups that already suffer from poverty and/or cannot access to decision procedures, are much more likely to suffer from environment's degradation

⁹Definition used by the O.N.G. Survival International.
<http://www.survivalinternational.org/info/terminology>

¹⁰ Robert D. Bullard, *Poverty, Pollution and Environmental Racism: strategie for building healty and sustainable community*, Clark Atlanta University, 2010

because their lack of economic and political power directly produce a situation of unjust ecological distribution.

3.3 The role of the State

For States, the occurrence of an environmental conflicts, caused by protests of minorities or, in general, from residents of a certain area, is a problem of public order. It can escalate to different levels of intensity, even arriving to a point in which the established authority is menaced.

The relationship between political institutions and protesting movements will be further analyzed in a following chapter. What matters here is to understand that from environmental issues are likely to arise conflicts over resources management, that is a clearly a form of political power over a territory.

Conflicts over resources are definitely not new; the novelty consists in the fact that environmental conflicts over resources can be triggered by a situation of environmental stress:

Violence usually arises indirectly from the economic and institutional dislocation caused by resource stress.

We argue that these conflicts are interesting because they represent early indications of worse to come. We do not claim that the types of conflict themselves are new: insurgency, ethnic clashes, and rebellion are ancient forms of violence. We do, however, claim that because environmental stress is worsening, we can expect an increase in the frequency of conflicts with an environmental component.¹¹

In this sense, the State usually faces environmental conflicts as a menace to its authority. This is a direct consequence of two factors: the first, is that the State is the – very special – social actor which defines environmental policies, therefore deciding which are the social groups and classes which would gain benefits from a favoring ecological

¹¹ Thomas Homer-Dixon, Marc A. Levy, *Correspondence. Environment and Security*, International Security, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 189–198.

distribution and which, instead, would suffer losses in this sense; the second reason is that, since these conflicts are usually localized in very definite areas, their emergence may easily arrive at questioning the legitimation of the State to exercise its power over that territory, *de facto* criticizing the legitimacy of the centralized government of space, which is indeed the very base of the political power as currently interpreted.

3.4 The firms and the environment

The relationship between firms and environment is definitely too vast to be analyzed in depth here. I'll only address a few points of this theme, which I think are the more related with the case study.

In the first place, we must consider that, even if environmental policies are decided by the governments and controlled by offices, the firms play a role in the degradation and pollution of the environment. The examples of activities conducted by multinational firms producing environmental disasters are very numerous and can be found all over the world. For this reason, besides the political institutions, citizens, or civil society associations often recognize the firm which operates in the territory they live in as their first "enemy". An almost ideal typical example may be found in the international mobilization organized against the Italian corporation Enel¹², because of different aspects of its activity, from the use of charcoal as a fuel in its power stations¹³ to the attempt of implementing hydroelectric projects which would cause both environmental, health and socioeconomic impacts to the local populations¹⁴.

The example just made is useful to address the second point: commonly, the firms which operate in a territory, do it having the State as an ally, as it guarantees their property rights and support them against the protesters, both with words and intervening in the

¹² *Stop Enel: per un nuovo modello energetico*
<http://stopenel.org/>

¹³ SpeziaViaDalCarbone Committee
<http://www.viadalcarbone.org/>

¹⁴ El Quimbo Hydroelectric Project, Colombia
<http://ejatlas.org/conflict/el-quimbo-hydroelectric-project-colombia>

conflict, using their police or even military forces. This is true also for countries of Western Europe, like Italy, even if in this case it would be more precise to refer of the government as a firms' ally, since other powers of the State, like the judiciary, may in certain circumstances play an important role in the safeguard of the environment.

4. Understanding protests of residents

4.1 NIMBY: a derogative term

After having addressed some of the different theories regarding environmental conflicts, and after having seen how numerous and different the stakeholders can be, there may be the need, in order to better comprehend the key study of this work, to resume the specific characteristics of protests made by residents against authorities and firms. I'll start analyzing the usually used expression "NIMBY" and some of the concepts which are related with it.

This term (acronym of the expression "Not In My Backyard") has certainly a pejorative meaning. The word is used to describe the protest, on the local level, against new infrastructures or against already existing ones, due to the nuisance, problems or hazards they do or may cause¹⁵.

One of the first times this term was used, if not the very first, was in an article of Emilie Travel Livezey, which was a staff correspondent The Christian Science Monitor¹⁶. The article was written with the intention of rising awareness about the hazards and dangers related with waste disposal, and refers to citizen's behavior in this way:

People are now thoroughly alert to the dangers of hazardous chemical wastes. The very thought of having even a secure landfill anywhere near them is anathema to most Americans today. It's an attitude referred to in the trade as NIMBY -- "not in my backyard."¹⁷

¹⁵ Magali Reghezza-Zitt, *Nimby (effet)*, in *Dictionnaire de l'Environnement*, edited by Yvette Veyret, Armand Colin, Paris, 2007, p. 241

¹⁶ Emilie Travel Livezey, *Hazardous waste*, Christian Science Monitor, November 6, 1980
<http://www.csmonitor.com/1980/1106/110653.html>

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 6

This quote resumes quite well the meaning that the word NIMBY had in the first place: as an attitude, it is described as related to attention towards the risks coming from pollution, but this state of alertness derives neither from pollution itself, nor from the economic activities which may cause it in the first place but, instead, from the mere proximity to the landfills.

For this reason, this word (like the many other words or expression which derive from it, like “NYIMBism” and “NIMBY syndrome”) bear a derogative signification, being related with an egoistic attitude rather than with a critical and educated approach. In addition to this, it is worth noticing that the first protesters that were named as NIMBYs were *White Anglo-Saxon Protestants* (WASP), living in rich zones of their cities:

The NIMBY corresponds to the mobilization of privileged people, made to relegate hazardous infrastructure towards disadvantaged areas. And this is what it products. Governments and companies have long built unwanted and / or risky projects in poor neighborhoods without take into account the opinion of the population.¹⁸

Consequently, for residents of a certain place, to be “affected” by “NYMBism” means that the critics and the protest moved against the construction of potentially dangerous and polluting landfills o infrastructures, for example, are only aimed to contest the site where the building would be located, and not the very utility of such building. So that, the obvious accusation which can be moved against them is to protect their personal interests, refusing to suffer minor nuisances in the name of the common good.

In other words, the term may also very well be referred to the inability to overcome a local and limited point of view, in order to address environmental problems with a wider and more global perspective¹⁹.

It must also be noted that, from the NIMBY, may develop a different “syndrome”, the so called “BANANA”, acronym for “Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything (or

¹⁸ “Le NIMBY correspond alors aux mobilisations des catégories privilégiées pour reléguer les infrastructures impactantes ailleurs, c’est-à-dire vers des espaces défavorisés. Et c’est ce qui s’est produit. Les gouvernements et les entreprises ont longtemps construit des projets non désirés et/ou risqués dans des quartiers pauvres sans prendre en compte l’avis de la population”.

Léa Sébastien, *LE NIMBY EST MORT. VIVE LA RÉSISTANCE ÉCLAIRÉE : LE CAS DE L’OPPOSITION À UN PROJET DE DÉCHARGE, ESSONNE, FRANCE*, Presses de Sciences Po | Sociologies pratiques, 2012-2013, n. 27, p. 147

¹⁹ Magali Reghezza-Zitt, work quoted.

Anyone)²⁰, which express the extreme and irrational reluctance to any possible new form of development or growth for a territory.

4.2 Seeking legitimacy

After this brief description of the meaning of the word “NIMBY”, it should appear quite clear that is definitely not worth defending the attitude described by this term.

On the other hand, in order to both really start understanding the phenomenon of the social protests in defense of environment and the contest in which this derogative word is used, it must be noted that the act of describing residents as affected by a sort of “NIMBY syndrome” can perfectly be a form of rhetorical weapon, deliberately used with the intention of disqualifying political enemies and ideas which differ from those of public authorities, in order to contrast the raise of different claims and demands²¹.

Consequently, associations of residents and ecological movements face the necessity of affirming their own legitimacy. This is done fundamentally in two different ways: the first is to create a different linguistic register, thought to be alternative to that of mainstream media and politics but also to that of their usual ally, the firm (or firms) which would edify the contested construction of infrastructure, which is obviously interested in influencing the public perception of the problem and of the protest.

Secondly, the protesters who want their activity to be recognized as sensible and correct, not merely egoist or triggered by irrational fears, needs to build an own and alternative vision and narration of what the general interest is.

Even if ecological protests are normally strongly bounded to single particular territories, places or landscapes, activists must usually engage in struggle towards “cultural hegemony”, with the intention of being included in the social and institutional processes which define of the political and economic agenda.

²⁰ Léa Sébastien, cited work, p.149.

²¹ Romain Pasquier et al., *NIMBY*, in Romain Pasquier et al., *Dictionnaire des politiques territoriales*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2011, p. 347, Article available on line at the address: <http://www.cairn.info/dictionnaire-des-politiques-territoriales---page-346.htm>

In order to do so, they have to propose reasons which can effectively compete with those of their opponents: so that, during environmental conflicts, at least after the very first period of protest, the protesters couple the slogans and arguments more strictly related with the wealth and safety of their own land with others, which are more loosely linked to the single, particular struggle, while being, instead, connected to much wider issues, like the defense of biodiversity and the sustainable development.

Of course, the political battle for recognition is far from being verbal only. Movements and associations which are protesting against a public policy might – and very often do – show the ability to legitimize themselves through the development of real institutionalizing processes, autonomous from the official and legal ones. In other words, the protesters may be able to challenge the State and its branches through the construction of alternative spaces of political participation²².

This is achieved by the militant activities and practices of frequent assemblies, public meetings and collective actions, all made with the principle of grassroots democracy. To conduct the conflict in this way, for the group of protesters or for their association, means that they can legitimately appear as representatives of the local citizenship. When they manage to do so, it becomes very difficult for the public institution to simply ignore their claims, eventually depicting them as isolated.

It is also very important to note that, when the civil society autonomously build a proper debating forum, where democratic principles are respected, the “burden of the recognition” no longer lays on the shoulders of the protesting residents, but on those of the State itself, which may start to appear bossy and authoritarian.

4.3 A different interpretation

As we have seen, to describe protesting residents as NIMBY means to assign them a very bad-looking label.

On the other hand, in clear opposition to this description, which involves the attribution of ignorance, irrationality and individualistic mentality, it is possible to portray the

²² Ibidem, p. 350

protesters involved in ecologically motivated socio-political struggles in a much more gratifying way, which does justice to the inherent complexity of environmental conflicts.

As has been quickly mentioned referring to the effort protesters make while seeking legitimization, this kind of social conflict may succeed in posing important questions and challenges to political institutions and, even, to mainstream world-view.

For example, they directly defy the State's deficiencies in the fields of decisions making and participation, while also questioning the very meaning of terms like progress and development²³. This consideration allows us to see protesting residents no more as NIMBYs, which would be an oversimplifying characterization, but as perfectly legitimate political actors, which are contributing to the formation of a different vision of what the general interest is. They are able to achieve this result following a pattern of growth which, following the reasoning developed by Léa Sébastien in the article "*Les Nimby est mort*", consists in four steps, which corresponds to four accumulation of different types of capital:

1- Social capital: "Social capital, according to the work of Robert Putnam, is defined by the copiousness of networks that connect the members of a society between them and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise (Putnam 2000). These production is the result of relationships established in within a social structure, and the result of social organizations that make possible the realization of goals difficult to reach outside them."²⁴

Protesters may build their social capital through the formation of different types of networks; in the first place, the simple foundation of the association which will conduct the battle against the project decided by central authorities significantly contributes to the formation of a *local network*, which may bring together different people, belonging to different social groups or classes, nonetheless connected in a common struggle. The very

²³ Léa Sébastien, cited work, p. 148

²⁴"Le capital social, selon les travaux de Robert Putnam, est défini par les richesses des réseaux qui connectent entre eux les membres d'une société et les normes de réciprocité et de confiance qui en découlent (Putnam, 2000). Sa production est le fruit de relations qui se nouent au sein d'une structure sociale, et découle d'organisations sociales qui rendent possible la réalisation d'objectifs difficilement atteignables en dehors."
Ibidem, p. 151

existence of the association allows several, atomized individuals to connect each other and to speak with a single, therefore much stronger, voice.

Secondly, once the association has been formed, one of its first purposes is to make contact experts of different fields of study, in order to better comprehend the different kind of problems they have to face: architects and engineers may prove very useful for the residents to autonomously understand the impacts on the nature and the hazards to people that an infrastructure or landfill may cause; the same apply to doctors, while lawyers may help them to better budget within the legal issues related with the project. So that, the second step of the protest process is usually the formation of a *scientific network*.

Finally, protesting residents may often become part of an *associational network*, composed by different association, bounded up by the common struggle of the defense of the environment in one particular national territory or, sometimes, by the fact that they are trying to achieve the similar goals, albeit in different states.

2- Cultural capital (*capital savant*): “The cultural capital can be defined as the corpus of knowledge acquired (scientific, vernacular and institutional) in the process of resistance. When uneducated people acquire an important cultural capital, they are able to scientifically question the data about impact analysis provided to them, the methodologies and the technical aspects of the project. The citizens’ initiatives may also generate counter-information, a situation called “scientific duels” (Busenberg, 1999).²⁵

Residents which feel menaced by the construction of big infrastructures of other types of highly intrusive and impacting implantation, usually give a lot of importance to the uncertainties related to the project: they are used to doubt of the reassuring promises made by the authorities and to claim the application of the precautionary principle, showing strong consciousness about the fact that only in rare, few circumstances it is

²⁵ “Le capital savant peut être défini comme l’ensemble des connaissances acquises (scientifiques, vernaculaires ou institutionnelles) au cours du processus de résistance. Quand les profanes acquièrent un capital savant important, ils sont en mesure de questionner les études fournies lors de l’étude d’impact en critiquant de manière scientifique les données, méthodologies et aspects techniques du projet. Les initiatives citoyennes peuvent également générer des contre-expertises, situations appelées « duels scientifiques » (Busenberg, 1999).”

Ibidem, p. 153

possible to be absolutely sure about the absence of hazards for soil and public health, in matters related with the pollution of the environment.

The more they accumulate knowledge, the more they are able to understand and address the deficiencies of the projects and the dangers which may be related to its completion.

It is worth noticing the fact that, besides the technical and scientific consciousness, protesters usually invest a lot of effort in acquiring the needed know-how to efficiently interface themselves with institutions. In other words, they learn which are the offices, tribunals, agencies, authorities, to turn to or to appeal.

In addition to this comprehension of legal procedures and decisional processes, the members of an association of protesters very often acquire a very precise knowledge about the politicians and other relevant personalities which are involved in the administration of the project against which they are protesting.

At the end of this long learning process, the group of residents have gained a sufficient understanding of both scientific and political matters to confront on equal terms the authorities, the firm and their experts.

3- Heritage capital (*capital patrimonial*): “we call heritage capital all things related to territory due to space (nature) and due to time (the tradition). If the mobilization started on behalf of a local connection, it creates more attachments to progressively make the resistance move forward”²⁶.

Looking at social protests strongly bounded with one particular territory, it is interesting to note that the very act of protesting and resisting against higher political authorities is what makes the local tradition exist again, in a certain sense.

The reason is that the protest is often carried forward through numerous cultural events, like concerts, parties, festivals, debates, all activities which may even realize a real cultural renaissance of the involved community. In this way, the struggle in defense of the territory contributes to its the cultural and artistic revaluation.

²⁶“ Nous appelons capital patrimonial l’ensemble des attachements au territoire dans l’espace (la nature) et dans le temps (la tradition). Si la mobilisation démarre au nom d’un attachement local, elle crée davantage d’attachements au fur et à mesure que la résistance avance.”
Ibidem, p.155

Besides this, another important thing to consider is that the introduction of an extraneous element within a small and close reality like a community of residents may lead to the rekindling of latent local tensions and conflicts between groups or individuals. This, in turn, can cause moments of public reflection about the future of the territory, which symbolize the desire to keep living together.

So that, in the end, it is not only the sense of belonging to a place to give birth to acts of resistance in its defense, but it is also the act of resisting which strengthens the boundaries of the community.

4- Political capital (*capital politique*): “We define political capital as the ability of an actor to position himself in the political scene, based on its credibility (contributions to valid knowledge), relevance (response to the needs in the decision-making spheres) and legitimacy (representativeness of the actor in the territory).”²⁷

The social capital does have potentialities for transforming in political power, but to do so it needs the fundamental contribution of cultural and heritage capital.

Since political power is strongly related to representativeness, it is worth noticing that, starting from local issues and claims, it is possible to proceed to regional and national ones, which strongly contributes to the process of legitimation undertaken by the association of protesters, as it has been noted above.

It happens when the protesting association starts expressing its ideas, principles and demands through public statements and documents, in which other organized groups may recognize themselves. In this way, the different battles become only one, increasing its chances of success.

Concluding, it appears appropriate to say that a rich political capital may arise from a very small and local dispute. Through the learning and growing process described, the protesters come to a point in which they stop just opposing a project of an infrastructure or of a different implantation, because they have started proposing much more.

²⁷ “Nous définissons le capital politique comme la capacité d’un acteur à se positionner sur la scène politique, basée sur sa crédibilité (apports de connaissances valides), sa pertinence (réponse à des besoins dans les sphères décisionnelles) et sa légitimité (représentativité de l’acteur sur le territoire).”
ibidem, p. 157

In this way, it is no longer possible to describe them as NIMBY. It is through the expression of different local demands which is possible to comprehend the common interest.

5. Different levels of analysis

5.1 Local-national dialectic

Environmental public policies are characterized by the fact that they are decided by a central, national authority, while they applied locally, often consisting in interventions (like building infrastructures, instituting national parks, making reclamation on certain lands, and so on) destined to particular areas.

This means that, in cases in which a public policy generates environmental hazards and degradation, these problems will burden only on some citizens living in a certain place, which would suffer disproportionately from environmental risks, that is suffering from a situation of environmental injustice. It usually worth remembering that, also in the developed countries of the West, these hazards may perfectly produce losses in terms of human lives.

When policymakers have to decide about these issues, the relations they have with particular political sides, social or ethnic groups would of course matter significantly. When politicians and governments are systematically expression of only one part of the society, the conditions of environmental injustice may become systematic as well. There have been identified different cases in which this situation has occurred, for which has also been created the expression of “internal colonialism”²⁸.

These words are meant to express a situation in which a colonial type of political domination and economic exploitation is reserved to the people of a territory that actually lays within the county’s borders. Populations of these territories²⁹, being excluded by political participation and suffering from an authoritarian political control are

²⁸ Firstly used in Leo Marquard, *South Africa’s Colonial Policy*, 1957.

²⁹ A detailed study of internal colonialism in Nigeria can be found in Daniel Omoweh, *Shell. The Petroleum Development Company, the State and Underdevelopment of Nigeria's Niger Delta - A Study in Environmental Degradation*, Africa Research & Publications, 2006

prone to suffer from the real devastation of their environment, to which is destined all the waste and pollution coming from the principal economic activities of the country.

Even not arriving at these extreme forms of (institutionalized) injustice, in general the norm for waste disposal consists in relegating polluting materials to the periphery of the polity, so that in the places whose inhabitants have less political and economic power.

5.2 The international level

Ecological issues in general, but also environmental conflicts in particular, have chances of involving actors also from the international arena. In this work, I try to make a distinction between an international and a global scale, which will be one of the subjects of the third section of this writing.

I consider the international arena the field of relations between actors like states, international organizations and multinational firms. In this field, these actors interact both in violent and pacific or cooperative ways; issues related to ecological resources can both cause processes of cooperation between these different realities and trigger armed conflicts between sovereign states, as will be shown.

At the scale I'm talking about, environmental conflicts are important from a geopolitical point of view: they are a factor which must be considered in international relations, especially because they can come to menacing international security.

This fact has been widely recognized, so that the environment itself has also to be considered as owning an own strategic value. On the other hand, despite the (literally) vital importance that the health of the environment and the conservation of its resources have, this awareness have needed some time to raise, causing the creation of international agreements and treaties only from the second half of the twentieth century³⁰.

³⁰ Matelly Sylvie, « Introduction », *Revue internationale et stratégique*, 2005/4 N°60, p. 69-74. DOI : 10.3917/ris.060.0069, p.3

<http://www.cairn.info/revue-internationale-et-strategie-2005-4-page-69.htm>

As will be clear analyzing the key study of the pipeline, States address environmental matters facing the problem of power, which is indeed the main issue of international relations. What is a place of living for a community or a mean of production for a population can perfectly be interpreted as just a source of power, as well as danger, from a State, which is, as an organization, used to consider natural resources for the strategic value they have and for the amount of wealth they can produce.

The striking contrast between these different points of view will be particularly important in the following chapters, and further analyzed in the third section.

6. Different types of conflicts

6.1 Juridical conflicts

a. Local or national jurisdiction

When environmental conflicts arise, one of the most usual situations is, as we have seen, a confrontation between a national authority and a population of residents of certain area. In this contest, it is to be expected the local institutions, like municipalities, which are more directly accountable towards the people which lives in their territory, show more solidarity and commonality of interests with the protesting movement.

In this case, jurisdictional disputes between local and national authorities may occur, concerning the legal legitimacy to impose certain policies related to administration of space and environment on a particular territory.

Normally, constitutions provide States with specialized courts or tribunals, designated to settle this kind of quarrels. These organs may result quite relevant in the development of environmental conflicts, or even determinant.

One significant example may be found in an Italian, still ongoing environmental conflict, which takes place in the city of Vicenza (in the Veneto Region), concerning the construction of a military base near the territory of the city and its wooded area, against which a considerable part of the citizenry has started a protest, organized by the movement No Dal Molin (named after the zone which is housing the military base).

During 2008, Vicenza's mayor Achille Variati decided to subject the project to the judgment of the citizens, instituting a municipal referendum. Against this choice, former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi had a recourse to the Italian Council of State, arguing that it wasn't up to the municipality to decide about the construction of the base, which was already established by an agreement between the governments of Italy and U.S.A..

The Council admitted the claim, preventing the mayor from further intervening during the construction of the base³¹, definitely proving the importance of the juridical context for determining relation of powers within a territory.

b. International trials

There are also different situations in which tribunals may prove crucial for resolving an environmental conflict to the advantage of one part of another. Besides the jurisdictional disputes between authorities of different level, courts can of course receive also appeals and denunciations against the firms – private or public, national or multinational – which can be involved in the struggle, both because they are charged with the construction of the building or infrastructure which caused the conflict and because they can directly pollute the environment with their activity.

It is important to notice that not all countries have efficient law defending people and nature against the environmental hazards which can be produced by the productive process. In particular, different multinational firms have shown little concerns in taking advantage of the relative weakness of different States, usually ex colonies, in which the public authority is too frail or corrupt to oppose great economic powers, or in which there simply aren't sufficient legal guarantees regarding human rights and protection of the environment.

In these cases, there is the possibility of intervention of activists from civil society to move against the firm in its home country, in which tribunals may be more efficient.

³¹ No dal Molin's Blog, History of the Movement
http://www.nodalmolin.it/Storia-del-movimento-vicentino#.Uzqfuvl_s3I

Besides this, there are different international tribunals which may treat this type of violations, helping groups or peoples which are suffering environmental injustice. One, relatively recent example may be found in an environmental conflict which is currently taking place in Ecuador, in which the Inter-American Court for Human Rights played an important role:

In 2002 the company CGC Argentina (Compañía General de Combustibles), accompanied by the Ecuadorian army illegally entered the territory of Sarayaku and buried 1500 Kg of pentolite, explosives used in seismic exploration for oil.

The case was brought before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, creating a historical precedent in the defense of indigenous rights. The Constitution and the ILO Convention 169 determined to have prior, free and informed consent of indigenous peoples before starting exploitation. The people from Sarayaku won the case.³²

Of course, the Sarayaku tribe is still facing hazards for health and their economy coming from the pollution of their environment. Nonetheless, the importance, both historical and political, of this type of sentences is not to be neglected.

6.2 Class struggle

Different authors have interpreted environmental conflicts or, in general, social conflicts related with environmental issues as class conflicts, to be comprehended and studied referring to the Marxist theory of dialectic materialism. Analysis conducted in this way are, of course, very efficient in finding the material, ultimate cause, and also in addressing the economic issues which can bring different social groups up to confront on ecological matters.

One significant example may be found in an author like David Harvey, a Britannic geographer. In its last book³³, he followed part of the reasoning proposed by Henry Lefebvre in its *pamphlet*, *Le Droit à la ville* (published during 1968), integrating it with the theories exposed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in the last piece of their trilogy, *Commonwealth*, arriving at a vision in which the urban space, the build environment, is

³² Ejolt project's Blog, November 20th, 2012

<http://www.ejolt.org/2012/11/watch-an-ejolt-movie-on-the-sarayaku-v-ecuador/>

See also the documentary about this matter, made by Arturo Hortas :

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rj4dNxwQ_4

³³ David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, Paperback, 2012.

considered as the battlefield for the class struggle between a dominant class, composed by proprietors and speculators, that extract their profits essentially from rent, and an exploited class of city workers, which effectively build the city and make it functioning. These workers, like the proletarians described by Marx, are characterized by the material interest in expropriating the owners, gaining real access to the benefits produced by the urban space and to participate to the political decisions regarding its form and development, realizing the *right to city*.

Another important author which successfully managed to address the class-rooted causes of environmental conflicts is James O'Connor, which created an original, new current in the Marxist tradition, creating the term "Ecomarxism". In its books and articles, he both formulate a new theory of the crisis within the capitalist mode of production, based on its relationship with the nature (one of the *production's conditions*, upon which are based the economic activities), and identifies the new social actors of the class struggle of the twentieth century ("new struggles", essentially described as environmental conflicts), the new social movements:

The specific form of the contradiction between capitalist production relations (and forces) and production conditions is also between the production and realization of value and surplus value. The agency of social transformation is "new social movements" or new social struggles including struggles within production over workplace health and safety, toxic waste production and disposal, and so on. The social relationships of reproduction of the conditions of production (e.g., state and family as structures of social relations and also the relations of production themselves in so far as "new struggles" occur within capitalist production) constitute the immediate object of social transformation. The immediate site of transformation is the material process of reproduction of production conditions (e.g., division of labor within the family, land use patterns, education, etc.) and the production process itself, again in so far as new struggles occur within the capitalist workplace.

In traditional Marxist theory, the contradiction between production and realization of value and economic crisis takes the form of a "realization crisis," or over-production of capital. In ecological Marxist theory, economic crisis assumes the form of a "liquidity crisis," or under-production of capital. In traditional theory, economic crisis is the cauldron in which capital restructures productive forces and production relations in ways which make both more transparently social in form and content, e.g., indicative planning, nationalization, profit-sharing, etc. In ecological Marxism, economic crisis is the cauldron in which capital restructures the conditions of production also in ways which make them more transparently social in form and content, e.g., permanent yield forests, land reclamation, regional land use and/or resource planning, population policy, health policy, labor market regulation, toxic waste disposal planning, etc.³⁴

³⁴ James O' Connor, *Capitalism, nature, socialism a theoretical introduction*, Capitalism Nature Socialism, 1988, Published online in 2009:

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10455758809358356#.UzwxMfl_s3I

As we can see, the way environmental conflicts occur, develop and manifest themselves legitimates in-depths interpretations, based on a philosophy which isn't usually particularly related with ecology and political ecology. It is beyond doubt, anyway, that the social extraction of the different actors involved in environmental conflicts, and therefore their "class identity", plays an important role in structuring the struggle and the opposing interests of the confronting sides. The reason of this simple fact lays behind what has been implied in the presentation of the concept of environmental justice, that is to say that distributive inequalities are very likely to arise from the management of the territory.

6.3 Armed conflict

As we as seen in the analysis of the role of the State within an environmental conflict, this type of political struggle can escalate at a point in which it stops being a problem of public order, becoming a matter of security.

The degradation of the environment has a direct consequence in the reduction of the available resources, renewable or not, like water, fertile land, fisheries and so forth. This may lead to, or enhance, classic "simple-scarcity" conflicts over resources, which may easily become violent, especially in the case of poor or developing countries, in which usually situations of ethnic conflictuality and severe social inequality are present. Of course, when referring to scarcity, the absolute amount of the available resources is not as important as the resource's supply relatively to the demand of said resource and its social distribution, which are the two elements that compose the experience of scarcity by people.³⁵ For this reason, also population's growth and and property rights must be taken into account³⁶.

A particularly interesting – and dangerous – situation, may be the one in which a resource is not only exploited by two different ethnic groups, but also by two different populations belonging to different countries. This is, for example, the case of the Senegal River, which has been historically a fundamental source of sustenance and support for the peoples living on its northern and southern shores, respectively, today, in Mauritania and Senegal:

Normally, the broad floodplains fringing the Senegal River support productive farming, herding, and fishing based on the river's annual floods. During the 1970s, however, the prospect of chronic food shortages and a serious drought encouraged the region's governments to seek international financing for the Manantali Dam on the Bafing River tributary in Mali, and the Diama salt-

³⁵Schwartz, Daniel; Deligiannis, Tom; and Homer-Dixon, Thomas, "[The Environment and Violent Conflict: A Response to Gleditsch's Critique and Suggestions for Future Research](#)," *Environmental Change & Security Project Report 6* (Summer 2000): 77-93, p. 79.

³⁶ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, "[Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases](#)," *International Security* 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994): 5 – 40.

intrusion barrage near the mouth of the Senegal River between Senegal and Mauritania. These dams were designed to regulate the river's flow to produce hydropower, expand irrigated agriculture, and provide river transport from the Atlantic Ocean to landlocked Mali, which lies to the east of Senegal and Mauritania.

But the plan had unfortunate and unforeseen consequences. Anticipation of the new dams sharply increased land values along the river in areas where high-intensity agriculture would become feasible. The elite in Mauritania, which consists mainly of white Moors, then rewrote legislation governing land ownership, effectively abrogating the rights of black Africans to continue farming, herding, and fishing along the Mauritanian riverbank.

There has been a long history of racism by white Moors in Mauritania towards their non-Arab, black compatriots. In the spring of 1989, the killing of Senegalese farmers by Mauritians in the river basin triggered explosions of ethnic violence in the two countries. In Senegal, almost all of the 17,000 shops owned by Moors were destroyed, and their owners were deported to Mauritania. In both countries several hundred people were killed and the two nations nearly came to war.³⁷

Clearly, environmental degradation and scarcity must definitely be inserted in the boiling cauldron containing social inequality, racism and disrupted institutions, from which usually arise conflicts in poor countries, and the same cause is enhancing social conflicts also in the developed and rich countries of the North: in the second section, it will be showed an example of these occurrences.

³⁷ Ibidem, see also in Maurizio Vernassa, Francesco Tamburini, I paesi del grande Maghreb. Storia, istituzioni e geopolitica di una identità regionale, Plus, 2011, the dedicated chapter about Mauritania.

Section II

Opposing the Trans Adriatic Pipeline

7. Presentation of the project

7.1 The whole route

As a premise of the description of the ongoing environmental conflict which is taken place in Salento, it is necessary to provide a description of the infrastructure's project against which the population of that territory mobilized.

This is how the Trans Adriatic Pipeline's company describes the project:

TAP will transport natural gas from the giant Shah Deniz II field in Azerbaijan to Europe.³⁸

The Trans Adriatic Pipeline will start near Kipoi on the border of Turkey and Greece, where it will seamlessly connect with the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP). From there TAP will continue onshore crossing the entire territory of Greece and Albania from east to west all the way to the Adriatic Sea coast. The offshore part of the pipeline begins near the Albanian city of Fier and crosses the Adriatic Sea to tie into Italy's gas transportation grid operated by SNAM ReteGas. The TAP route will be approximately 870 kilometres in length (Approx.: Greece 550 km; Albania 210 km; offshore Adriatic Sea 105km; Italy 5 km). TAP's highest elevation point will be 1800 meters in Albania's mountains, while its lowest part offshore will be at 810 meters of depth.³⁹

While this is the composition of the multinational's shareholders:

TAP's shareholding is comprised of BP (20%), SOCAR (20%), Statoil (20%), Fluxys (16%), Total (10%), E.ON (9%) and Apxo (5%).⁴⁰

³⁸ About the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, Company's website
<https://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/it/news/news/dettaglio/article/422/>

³⁹ TAP Project, Route, Company's website
<https://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/en/tap-project/route/>

⁴⁰ About the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, Company's website

The amount of gas that the pipeline would transport consists in 10 bcm (billion cubic meters) per year, but the infrastructure is designed to expand its capacity up to 20 bcm, depending on the levels of supply and demand.⁴¹

Elshad Nasirov, Vice President of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan, has declared that the gas won't arrive in Europe until 2019⁴².

This is the map of the pipeline's route, from Turkey to Italy:

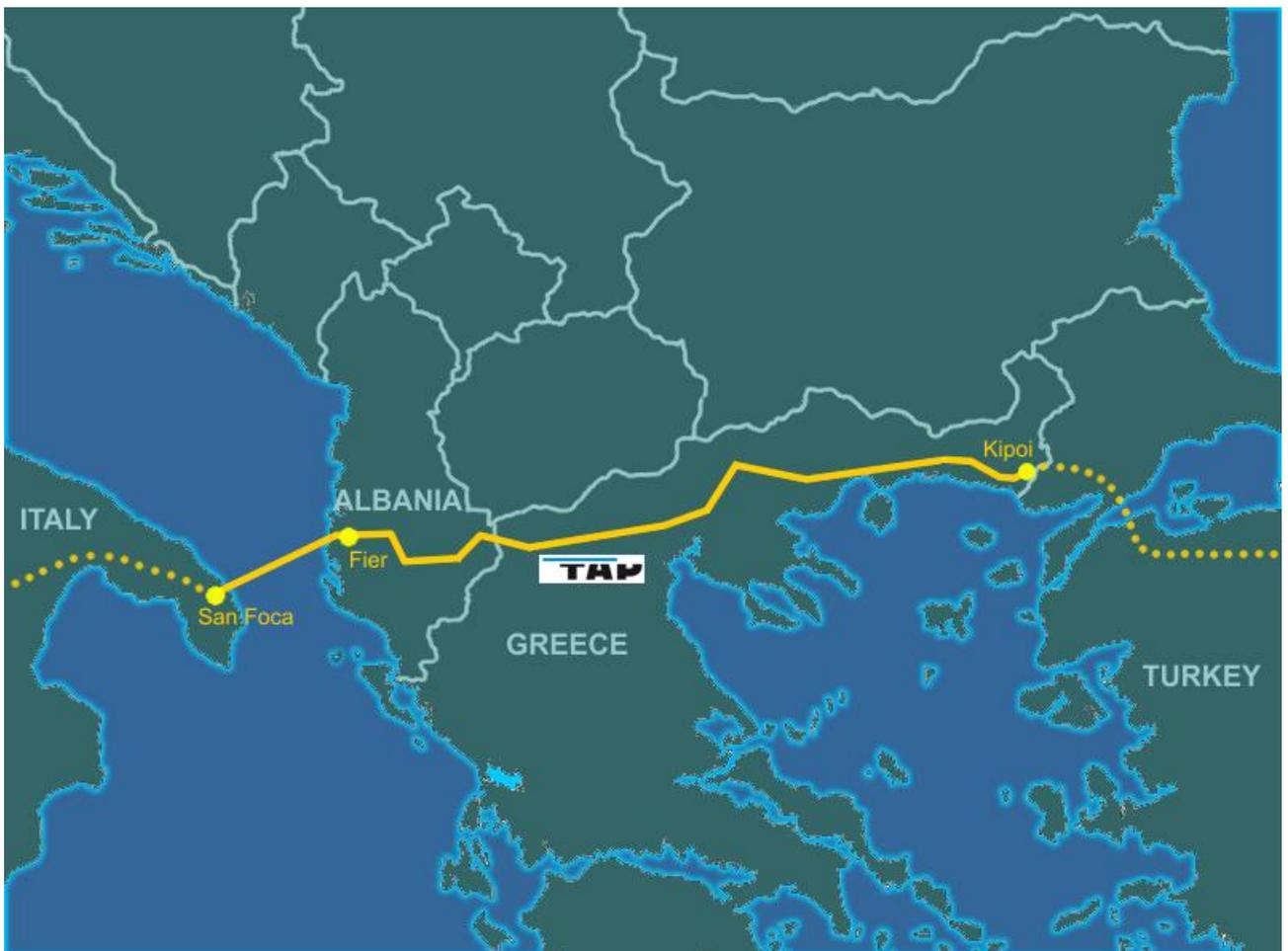


Figure 1: TAP's route

⁴¹ TAP Project, Company's website
<https://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/en/progetto-tap/concept/>

⁴² A Sud Editorial Staff, Gasdotto Trans Adriatic Pipeline: Italia, Grecia e Albania firmano - See more at:
<http://asud.net/gasdotto-trans-adriatic-pipeline-italia-grecia-e-albania-firmano-laccordo-intergovernativo/#sthash.FpsiezMu.dpuf>

7.2 The pipeline's route in Apulia

The pipeline would arrive in Italy after having traveled 105 km offshore, under the Adriatic Sea.⁴³ San Foca, whose territory would harbor the Italian landing place of the infrastructure, is a small town which lays on the coast of Salento, the southern part of the Apulia Region. It is a fraction of Melendugno, municipality of Lecce's province.

The locality of San Foca is basically a fishing village, which experience a considerable population's growth during summer, since the territory is involved in touristic activities related with bathing. Very near to this place, it is present a natural site which is part of "Nature 2000", an European web of protected areas which has been instituted by a European Directive in 1992.

Besides the landing of the pipeline, the area should also host a big de-pressurization station, which would occupy twelve hectares of land⁴⁴ and lay at a distance of 400 meters from the Acquarica's eco-museum and at 700 meters from the residents' houses⁴⁵.

Once landed, the pipeline should connect to the Italian Gas Network SNAM, which has its nearest point of attachment is 70 km far, at North of Melendugno, in proximity of the municipality of Mesagne.

8. The involved actors at the different scales

8.1 The European Union

The project of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline is obviously located on a transnational level, involving numerous countries and several foreign firms from two different continents. This immediately locate the relative environmental conflict on a scale as much wide. Even if I wouldn't have the space to specifically address them, there are other social protests

⁴³ TAP Project, Route, Company's website
<https://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/en/tap-project/route/>

⁴⁴ Sulmonambiente Blog
<http://sulmonambiente.wordpress.com/tag/tap/>

⁴⁵ Corte Grande Online, local newspaper
<http://www.cortegrandeonline.it/2012/09/%E2%80%9Cvia%E2%80%9D-il-gasdotto-dal-salento/>

rising in the other states affected by the pipeline, demonstrating that not only the construction, but also the problematic issues related with it go beyond the local or national dimension.

Also the conclusion of the international agreement about the construction of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline hasn't involved only states, but a broader polity too, the European Union, which is actually one of the more relevant protagonists of this business, being one of its principal supporters: the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso declared that the project is an "authentic milestone", which will bring benefits for both consumers and firms, while the for European Commissar of the Energy Günther Oettinger the pipeline "can serve as a base for even more ambitious projects", as the corridor could come to guarantee up to 20% of the European requirements of natural gas⁴⁶.

Of course the European Union doesn't support the project with words only, but financing it too. Firstly, the European Parliament and Council have recognized the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline as a "Project of Common Interest", under the guidelines of the European Union's Trans European Energy Network (TEN-E)⁴⁷. So that: "under these provisions, TAP has already received two grants from the EU since the start of the project: for Feasibility Study (December 2005) and Basic Engineering Study (December 2006)"⁴⁸.

Finally, during February 2009, EU Commission confirmed the status of TAP as EU interconnector under one unified regulatory system between Greece - Albania - Italy⁴⁹. Clearly, this pipeline's project is deeply embedded in the economic and political strategies of one of the most important political entities of the world, and this, as will be showed, makes the situation of the protesters particularly problematic.

⁴⁶ Sissi Bellomo, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 18/12/2013, *Al via gli investimenti per portare in Europa il gas di Shah Deniz* <http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/notizie/2013-12-18/al-via-investimenti-portare-europa-gas-shah-deniz-064917.shtml?uuid=ABTKyjk>

⁴⁷ List of projects submitted to be considered as potential Projects of Common Interest in energy infrastructure – Gas http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/consultations/doc/pci_list_gas.pdf

⁴⁸ Tap Project, EU Status, Comany's website <http://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/en/progetto-tap/status-ue-del-tap/>

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

8.2 The Italian government

The territory of the Italian State is obviously crucial for the project, as it is the connecting point which would bring the gas coming from Azerbaijan to the European Northern countries. The Italian government hasn't raised any objections to the realization of the pipeline, being actually another of its strong supporters.

Former Italian Foreign Minister, Emma Bonino, has in fact declared, in the Azerbaijan's capital Baku, that the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline would prove particularly useful for the purpose of diversifying Italian's sources of natural gas, but also for making the country itself an important energetic hub in the contest of the Southern Europe and Mediterranean Sea⁵⁰.

There is one particular fact that must be taken into account: the choice of connecting the immense Azerbaijani's gas deposit of Shah Deniz with Italy has been considered a political and strategic victory for this country, since there were different pipeline's project competing between them in order to grab the corridor. The competing project, Nabucco, would have traveled through the territory of the states of Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria. Technical issues made this project particularly hard to realize, so that in the end both Europeans and Azerbaijanis parts have decided to choose the Italian option.

Former Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta, showed deep gratitude towards the Azerbaijani State for having selected Italy, even deciding to travel to Baku in order to personally thank President Ilham Aliyev (in charge from 2003).

The new Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi haven't showed until now any will of changing the Italian policy about this matter. On the opposite, one of the ministers of its recently formed government, Federica Guidi (Minister of the economic development) has recently expressed both her concerns regarding the attitude of the Apulian citizens towards TAP and her firm belief in the necessity of removing the obstacles for the

⁵⁰ Sissi Bellomo, cited article.

realization of the infrastructure which she consider having a high strategic relevance, considering also it's potentialities for the development of Southern Italy.⁵¹

Anyway, it must be considered that the position of Italy within the gas' paths between Europe and Asia isn't really limpid: before the agreement with Azerbaijan became a reality, Italy was involved in the project for the realization of the South Stream, a gas corridor which would have been realized by the Italian ENI and the Russian Gazprom⁵². Influences from other European countries, which felt an excessive dependence from Russian gas, have likely played a role in connecting Italy with the Caucasian State instead that with Russia.

Finally, regarding the role the Italian State within the environmental conflict in Salento, it may be particularly interesting to note that this kind of social protests are taken extremely seriously by the Italian law enforcement agencies. Examples may be found in different others environmental conflicts which are taking place in Italian territory, but also in this particular case: the last annual Relation on Information Policies for Security to the Italian Parliament⁵³, presented by the Italian security agencies (Aisi), cite the protest against the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, which is considered as one of the mobilizations that could assume a greater importance in the near future.

The fact that these social protests are considered important not because they raise awareness about real environmental issues, but because of the problems they may cause in terms of public order and security, contributes to showing the big difference of points of view between states and associations of protesting citizens.

⁵¹ Italiaoggi.it, Guidi, Rimuovere ostacoli a realizzazione TAP, 07/03/2014
http://www.italiaoggi.it/news/dettaglio_news.asp?id=201403271508061179&chkAgenzie=PMFNW&sez=news&testo=&titolo=Gas:%20Guidi,%20rimuovere%20ostacoli%20a%20realizzazione%20Tap

⁵² ENI's official communication in 2007
http://www.eni.com/it_IT/media/comunicati-stampa/2007/06/Eni_e_Gazprom_firmano_intesa_p_23.06.2007_1192442373264.shtml?menu2=archivio-media&menu3=comunicati-stampa

⁵³ Relazione sulla Politica dell'Informazione per la Sicurezza – 2013
<http://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it/sisr.nsf/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/relazione-2013.pdf>

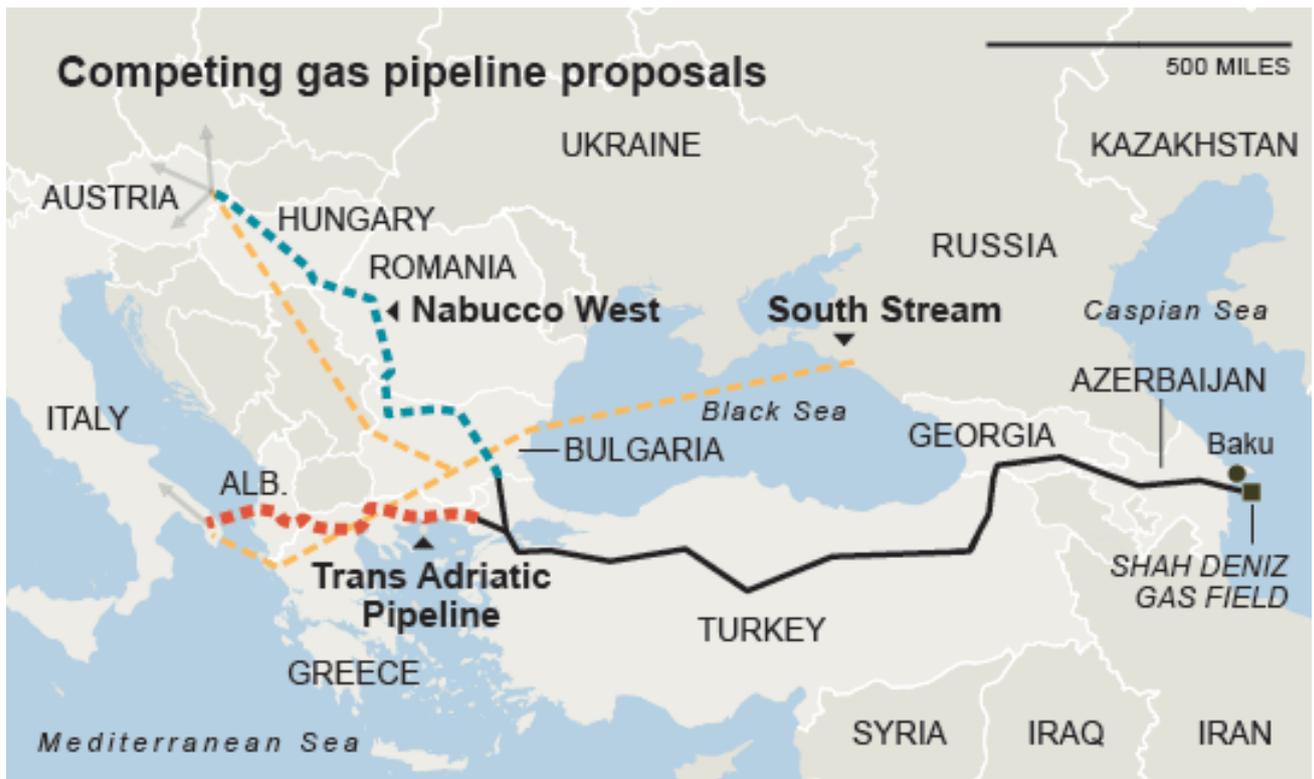


Figure 2: Competing pipelines

8.3 Other States and related issues

This work have to focus more on the Italian situation than on matters related with the other countries involved in the project, but for completeness there are some issues which should be addressed.

As it's possible to from the map in the figure 2, there is another State, besides Italy, which has gained significant advantages from the choice of building the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline instead of Nabucco: Albania. This country has never been one of the major powers of the area, especially in the field of energy. If it manages to develop adequate technologies (i.e. other pipelines), Albania definitely has the opportunity of becoming a regional gas hub⁵⁴.

On the other hand, it is worth noticing that protests against the realization of the pipeline aren't growing in Italy only: in Greece, for example, on February 8, 2014 has taken place a

⁵⁴ Willi Pfaff, *Albania as a Counterweight to Gazprom*, Kosovo news, November 12, 2013 <http://www.kosovo-news.com/2013/11/albania-as-a-counterweight-to-gazprom/>

protest which has seen the participation of around a thousand people, consisting mostly in farmers, but also in representatives of local institutions, trade unions, associations and of the Regional Archaeological Museum of Salonico, Kavala, Drama e Serres⁵⁵. The reason of the protest lay behind the fact that the pipeline would travel through fertile lands, while the de-compression station would be located near the densely populated municipality of Serres.

These two examples should further demonstrate the radical difference between the points of view, principles and interests showed by governments and civil societies in addressing public policies with important consequences for the environment.

8.4 The multinational firm

On 13th March 2007, TAP AG officially registered as a company. It consisted in a joint venture between the Norwegian Statoil and EGL (Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft Laufenburg), now called Axpo Italia SpA, a Swiss company active in the field of energy trading. Engineering studies and prospects about the feasibility of the project were already concluded between 2003 and 2007, conducted by Axpo EGL.

Shah Deniz Consortium selected TAP as a corridor for Italy during February 2012, while on 28th of June 2013 it selected the same company as the preferred transportation route for Caspian gas to Europe too. The construction should start in early 2015⁵⁶.

Here is a brief summary of the shareholders:

-**SOCAR** (20%): The State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) is involved in exploring oil and gas fields, producing, and transporting oil, and gas, marketing petroleum

⁵⁵ "Contro la TAP protesta anche la Grecia", TR News.it
<http://www.trnews.it/2014/02/10/contro-tap-protesta-anche-la-grecia/12375952/>

⁵⁶ TAP Project, Project Schedule, Company's website
<http://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/en/progetto-tap/project-plan/>

and petrochemical products in domestic and international markets. It is mostly active in the Balkan and Caucasian regions, with offices in Western Europe too.⁵⁷

-Statoil (20%): Statoil, a Norwegian society with 35 years of activity on its country, it is also active in extraction and transportation of oil and gas in 34 other countries. It is the first operator in the field of deepwater fields and the third largest net seller of crude oil⁵⁸.

-BP (20%): BP is one of the world's leading international oil and gas companies. It provides customers with fuel for transportation, energy for heat and light, lubricants and other petrochemical products. Active in 80 countries, with a cash flow of 20,5 billions of dollars.⁵⁹

-Fluxys (16%): Based in Belgium, the society is natural gas infrastructure group operating on the European market. It owns different terminals, pipelines and connectors in Western Europe (Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland).⁶⁰

-Total (10%): The company is a leading energy player on the international stage. It has different located in various regions of the world, as its shareholders.⁶¹

-E. ON (9%): It is the energy trading business of E.ON, one of the world's largest investor-owned power and gas companies. It creates value by managing the commodity price risks faced by E.ON and its customers. It has facilities across Europe, Russia, and North America, our more than 72,000 employees generated approx. EUR132 billion in sales in 2012.⁶²

⁵⁷ SOCAR, official website
<http://new.socar.az/socar/az/home/>

⁵⁸ Statoil, official website
<http://www.statoil.com/en/about/pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁹ BP, official website
<http://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/about-bp/bp-at-a-glance.html>

⁶⁰ Fluxys, official website
<http://www.fluxys.com/>

⁶¹ Total, official website
<http://total.com/en/Total-INSIDE>

⁶² E. ON official website
<http://www.eon.com/en/about-us/structure/company-finder/e-dot-on-global-commodities.html>

-**Axpo** (5%): Axpo is a Swiss energy company. It is completely owned by the cantons of Northeastern Switzerland. Axpo is active in the production, distribution and sale of electricity, as well as international energy trading.⁶³

8.5 Local institutions and opposing parties

Local authorities are playing an important role in the struggle against the pipeline, expressing both with words and actions their opposition to the project and their solidarity towards the protesting citizens.

The most involved municipality is of course Melendugno, whose Municipal Council, in February 29, 2012, after an extraordinary session, formally declared to oppose the realization of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline in its territory, refusing to concede any kind of authorizations, permissions, advices and urban modification within the limits of the municipality's jurisdiction.⁶⁴

The reasons of this determined political choice lied on considerations about the important touristic vocation of Melendugno's territory, widely known for its historical, artistic and archaeological heritage, but especially for its uncontaminated coastline, which permitted to the municipality to gain several praises and rewards, like the European Blue Flag. The Municipality recognized the fact that the economic, but also social and cultural development of the resident community is strictly related to the preservation of those listed elements, pointing also out that it would be impossible for merely economic compensations to repair the damages that such an infrastructure would cause.

The same cited document expresses serious concerns also about the possibility of building the pipeline in the territory of the neighboring Municipality of Otranto,

⁶³ Axpo official website
<http://www.axpo.com/axpo/global/en/home.html>

⁶⁴ Verbale di Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale, 29/02/2012
<http://www.acquarica.net/notap/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/deliberamelendugno.pdf>

inseparable from that of Melendugno, showing both solidarity and awareness to the environmental issues of the whole area which be affected by the presence of the pipeline.

Analogous observations have been expressed by the municipalities of Castrì di Lecce⁶⁵ and Vernole⁶⁶, both in the Lecce's province, like Melendugno, since both their territories would host parts of the infrastructure. In their official declarations, both those municipalities explain their opposition also with the "symbiotic" relationship which bound them to the other towns of Salento in general and Melendugno in particular. After these three, also the Municipality of Caprarica has joined the protesting front, followed by several other cities and towns of the Region.

Similar, albeit definitely not as much convinced, considerations have been expressed by Nicola Vendola, President of the Apulia Region and leader of the party Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà, currently at the opposition in Italian Parliament. Since the project of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline became official, Vendola declared the will of involving the citizens in the political decisional process, instead of imposing to them its results. Lately, once the Italian Government signed one of the fundamental agreements with Greece and Albania, he also said that he considered the selection of San Foca as a landing for the pipeline a mistake, expressing solidarity to the protesting citizens trust in their chances of victory⁶⁷.

Finally, another opposing party, Movimento 5 Stelle, has expressed its opposition to the TAP project and solidarity to the No Tap association, raising particular awareness to the lobbying activity that the TAP manager Gianpaolo Russo is employing on Italian institutions and parties⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ COPIA DI DELIBERAZIONE DEL CONSIGLIO COMUNALE N° 2 DEL 21/04/2012
<http://www.acquarica.net/notap/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/deliberacastri.pdf>

⁶⁶ DELIBERAZIONE DEL CONSIGLIO COMUNALE, 18/05/2012
<http://www.acquarica.net/notap/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/deliberavernole.pdf>

⁶⁷ LecceSette, 10/12/2013
http://www.leccesette.it/dettaglio.asp?id_dett=16797&id_rub=130

⁶⁸ Tagpress.it, Il manager della Tap Giampaolo Russo nel palazzo del Parlamento, 14/03/2014
<http://www.tagpress.it/ambiente-territorio/il-manager-della-tap-giampaolo-russo-nel-palazzo-del-parlamento/#sthash.u31UOyYd.dpuf>

8.5 No Tap association

Some of the principal motivations of the members of the No Tap association (which, as I said, is also composed by representatives of the local institutions) are the same as those expressed by the municipalities of the Lecce's province. The activities of the protesters and, it can be said, their cultural growth and their maturation in terms of political awareness will be the object of a following chapter. What matters in this paragraph is only to present the story of the association and its composition.

The association (*Comitato No TAP*), was born in the end of 2011, showing the strong willingness of the Salento's population to oppose the construction of the pipeline and the power station related with the project. The Committee expresses the interests and concerns of a very diverse and heterogeneous group of actors of the civil society, varying from touristic operators, farmers and associations of merchant and shopkeepers, to Non Governative organizations like WWF and Legambiente. This last environmentalist organization has already praised the Municipality of Melendugno in 2012, exactly because of the beauty and pureness of its coastline, also involved in activities thought to recover its qualities, after the damages provoked by construction industries during the second half of twentieth century⁶⁹.

9. Health and wealth, hazards and resources

9.1 Risks for health

The Apulian Region is since a long time affected by an excessive exposition to pollution, due to past, problematic choices regarding industrial development. As a consequence, as demonstrated by the epidemiological investigation realized in 2010 by ARPA (the regional agency for environmental protection), population of Apulia and of Salento in particular is characterized by a particularly high mortality caused by lung cancer. For this reason, a document published in 2010 by the same agency states that the territory of Salento, and

⁶⁹Legambiente, official website

<http://www.legambiente.it/contenuti/comunicati/ecco-le-localita-balneari-5-vele-di-guida-blu-2012-di-legambiente-e-touring-clu>

its population, is in a situation of exceptional vulnerability to additional environmental pressures.⁷⁰

Actually, the risk for the Apulian population is not to be underestimated, since the region is ranked in the first place in between Italian regions for emissions of carbon dioxide, benzene, nitrogen and sulfur oxides and other polluting agents.⁷¹

Considering this factors, but also the importance, both from a political and merely communicative point of view of an issue like the Taranto's iron and steel industry (which caused an authentic environmental disaster), it is actually surprising that the Italian government have decided to locate such a concerning infrastructure in Apulia, since a consequent reaction of the citizenship was really to be expected.

9.2 Environmental issues and hazards

The problems that the pipeline in Salento would cause in terms of health and sustainability wouldn't be only related to the worrying levels of pollution by which the territory is already affected, but also to other environmental issues which may harm the natural elements of the landscape as well as the safeness of the resident population.

With regard to naturalistic considerations first, both the citizens and the local authorities have expressed their concerns regarding the fact that the presence of a big infrastructure like an international pipeline would severely menace the beauty and pureness of the coastline, which are actually one the source of wealth for the residents. Besides this, moving further to the inland, it is possible to notice that damages have already been done to the arboreal heritage of the zone: the foundation *Terra d'Otranto* (Otranto is another Apulian municipality), for example, have denounced the fact that, in order to prepare the

⁷⁰ Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro i Tumori (Italian League Against Cancer), *Gasdotto Trans Adriatic Pipeline*, 21/09/2013
<http://www.tuttocasarano.it/blog-sezione/3-newsflash/5780-lilt-gasdotto-trans-adriatic-pipeline>

⁷¹ Ibidem

construction of the pipeline, forested areas have been targeted and destroyed, cutting down centuries-old olives, pines and mulberry trees.⁷²

Similarly, it must be noted that the territory of Melendugno is very near to some protected areas (due to the presence of the typical Mediterranean scrub), which would be penetrated by some part of the infrastructure, specifically by underground small tunnels.

In general, the residents point out that the area is definitely not adapt to host the landing of a pipeline, not having the set of necessary industrial infrastructures to make it useful for the territory itself, while having, on the other hand completely different economic activities which would be menaced by the construction.

Also, the previously cited documents published by local municipalities, pointed out another factor which is worth considering: infrastructures like these are far from being completely safe from accidents and harmless to humans, since it exists an ample record of explosions or other types of incidents with pipelines all around the world⁷³.

So that, in summary, the set of resources which the protesting citizens are fighting resides both in the very means of production for their economic activities, which are strictly related to the health of their environment, and in their personal safety, both from air or land pollution and from other types of hazards. From this, the protest is building a social and political awareness which involves even more ample themes, which will be addressed in the following chapter.

⁷² Terra d'Otranto's website, Marcello Gaballo, *Multinazionali del gas nel Salento*, 08/02/2013
<http://www.fondazioneterradotranto.it/2013/02/08/multinazionali-del-gas-nel-salento/>

⁷³ Michael Pereira, *Pipeline map: Have there been any incidents near you? From small to large-scale spills to fires, explosions and worker deaths*, CBC News, October 22, 2013
<http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/pipeline-incidents/>

10. Different aspects of the conflict

10.1 Legal issues

a) V.I.A.

V.I.A. is an acronym for *Valutazione di Impatto Ambientale* (Environmental Impact Assessment), which consists in an administrative procedure which aims to express an advisory opinion regarding the environmental consequences that the realization of a project would have. Its function is supporting political authorities in taking their decisions regarding the application of certain environmental policies.

Until now, these assessments have been quite appreciated by the faction which is opposing the pipeline's project, proving different of their arguments to be right: in November 2013, a Regional Committee of experts presented to the citizenship of Melendugno its Environmental Impact Assessment, in a report which made clear and evident numerous issues and problems presents within the documents presented by TAP.⁷⁴

In particular, the document expressed concerns related with the fact that the project presented by TAP's company tends to minimize impacts and hazards which, instead, may be particularly severe. This deficiency was probably caused, argue the experts, by the superficial knowledge the firm has about the territory of Salento, which is indeed particularly fragile, both, as has been noted, from the point of view of the people's health and from that of the preservation of protected areas and their naturalistic and economic value.

After the Apulian Region officially received the negative report presented by the cited Committee, accepting and sending it to the Minister of the Environment, during March 2014, the same Ministry, having evaluated the project and the related critiques, sent to TAP's company 48 provisions of correction to apply their plan. In particular, the Ministry's

⁷⁴ Pianeta Lecce, Archivio News, November 11, 2013
<http://magazine.pianetalecce.it/archives/tap-gli-esperti-demoliscono-lopera-in-un-contro-rapporto-presentato-alla-cittadinanza>

commission criticized the project because of the several incongruities presents within the project, and for its incompleteness and vagueness.⁷⁵

TAP has of course the possibility to correct its project and still has the permission to complete it, nonetheless, the No Tap association considered these assessments a victory and a recognition of the validity of their position towards the project.

b) Denounces and intervention from municipalities

In March 2014, Melendugno's mayor Marco Potì has sent a request for envisioning all the official acts which allows the TAP's company to make their investigations and researches on some areas of its municipality which are particularly valuable from an archaeological point of view. This is the second time he did this kind of acts, as the first was in February of the same year, he asked for the documents that authorized TAP to do the same physical and chemical investigations on the sea floor in front of the town.

This type of operations is necessary for the construction of the pipeline, but can in some cases prove dangerous for the residents' economic activities, fishery especially, and this explains the particular awareness showed by the mayor and, of course, by the fishermen, some of which have denounced TAP's company accusing it to have committed numerous irregularities during their activities in sea between 2012 and 2013⁷⁶.

10.2 Activities of the No Tap association

The No Tap Committee has of course participated to this monitoring activities, reporting online (on their Facebook page) all the relevant facts regarding both the TAP's activities and the political issues and events related with this matter. Actually, rising awareness and diffusing their opinions and data through the internet is one important activity of them, which contributes to give national relevance to a political struggle which, otherwise,

⁷⁵ TagPress.it, *Anche il Ministero bocchia il progetto*, April 1, 2014
<http://www.tagpress.it/ambiente-territorio/tap-anche-il-ministero-dellambiente-bocchia-il-progetto/>

⁷⁶ Il Tacco d'Italia, *La Prvincia gioca nascondino*, July 7, 2013
<http://www.iltaccoditalia.info/sito/index-a.asp?id=19689>

would be felt as primarily local, while being instead related with important economic and geopolitical matters, besides with the clear environmental ones.

On the territory, the activity of the association, consists primarily in organizing the protest and mobilizing the population against the project, especially during events promoted by the company they're fighting against.⁷⁷

The fact that the local authorities are actively participating to the struggle is not only particularly important for their chances of success, but has also the particular role of making the autonomous protest made by the citizenship less determinant: since it is true that, as I previously wrote, local authorities usually show more solidarity to protesting environmental movements compared to the national ones, this is definitely not the norm, since we have several examples of the opposite happening, especially in Italy. One interesting case in which civil society and municipalities are struggling together against the construction of an infrastructure is the environmental conflict in Val di Susa (near Turin), which is characterized by the particularly high level of the mobilization and by the national relevance it gained.

Nonetheless, it is worth referring to at least one interesting project realized by the No Tap Committee, which consisted in the organization of an initiative called *Artisti contro la Tap* (artists against Tap): the organization of public, musical or generally cultural events is a typical activity for protesting social movements, as they are useful for making the protest more widely known and comprehended. With this initiative, the protesters obtained demonstrations of solidarity by several artists which are very well known in the whole Italy⁷⁸, especially because Salento is particularly rich in valuable and famous musicians, managing to give a larger-scale effort to their protest.

11. Pro Tap arguments and principles

From the point of view of the shareholders of the multinational firm, the motivations are of course merely economic. Nonetheless, they have a public image which has to be

⁷⁷ Ibidem

⁷⁸ No Tap Committee's website

<http://www.acquarica.net/notap/2012/08/19/artisti-contro-la-tap/>

respectable, especially in this case, being involved in an environmental conflict. For this reason they must, at least to a certain extent, struggle to demonstrate the convenience of the infrastructure they are building for the Italian State, on one hand, and the absence of hazards for the resident population, on the other.

So that, their arguments for “convincing” the Italian public opinion are basically based on the convenience of diversifying the energy sources amongst different countries, since to depend heavily on Russia may be problematic on the long term:

More than two thirds of the world’s proven gas reserves lay in Russia, as well as in the Middle East and the Caspian Sea regions. They are enough to cover European demand for many decades to come. Europe currently relies mostly on Russian gas supplies through several existing pipelines, and it has not yet linked its pipeline systems to the Caspian and Middle East gas reserves. However, Europe realizes the strategic need to diversify its gas supply.

Tapping into new proven gas reserves requires construction of alternative infrastructure projects that will eventually make new gas available to Europe.⁷⁹

Also, of course TAP stresses also the importance of the infrastructure also in terms of employment’s levels, which would benefit from both the mere construction of the pipeline and from its value for other economic activities. On the other hand, TAP minimize the economic losses that workers in Salento may suffer.

The company has shown the inability to understand that the elements of Salento’s environment aren’t directly transformed into money: they have a cultural and social value which matters independently from economic consideration. The contrast between the mentalities of the firm and that of the population has been demonstrated when the company offered 5 millions euros to Melendugno’s Municipality, depicting the offer as a conciliatory act aimed to the citizenship. The offer was presented when, in March 2014, the Port Authority of Melendugno emitted an ordinance to forbid bathing in the waters of the municipality, because of the dangers caused by the erosion of parts of the coastline.

⁷⁹ Why TAP? Website of the Company
<https://www.trans-adriatic-pipeline.com/en/perche-tap/riserve-di-gas/>

TAP argued that the five millions would have helped the citizenship in fighting the harms produced by erosion. The citizens, and the mayor with them, refuted the offer and accused the company of trying to profiteer from a difficult, albeit completely natural situation, which the residents are already used to by generations⁸⁰.

The involved states of Western Europe, and Italy in particular, more or less adduct the same economic motivations, in terms of advantages for employment levels and gas's prices, which would result reduced by the access to other sources from different countries.

In my opinion, it is worth noticing that, actually, 10 or even 20 billion cubic meters of gas provision don't really make a high difference for a developed, industrial country like Italy (which in 2008, for exemple, consumed 84,883 billion cubic meters of gas⁸¹), not to talk about the whole European Union. The issue seems to be more related with political communication: these western nations are sending a message to Russia, trying to show that they have chances of becoming independent from its gas. Currently, of course, the situation is now further complicated by the recent events in Ukraine.

In short, it is possible to have the impression that strategic considerations, that are political considerations related with the distribution of power between states have actually at least as much, if not more importance than motivations related with economic development and citizen's wealth.

12. No Tap arguments and principles

The local, environmental issues which worry citizens and institutions in Salento have been widely described in the last pages, as they clearly are the most important factors to consider. On the other hand, it must be noted that, in the debate surrounding the Trans-

⁸⁰ TagPress.it, *La Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) offre 5 mln per combattere l'erosione delle coste melendugnesi*, March 12, 2014

<http://www.tagpress.it/ambiente-territorio/la-trans-adriatic-pipeline-tap-offre-5-mln-per-combattere-lerosione-delle-coste-melendugnesi/>

⁸¹ Data from the Italian Minister of Economic Development, Energy department

<http://dgerm.sviluppoeconomico.gov.it/dgerm/consumigasannuali.asp>

Adriatic Pipeline, several other matters and issues have been addressed by the protesting movement. It seems to me that the expression to other types of objection to the pipeline's project corresponds to a process of political and cultural growth experienced by the No Tap people. This development can be resumed within three points, which can be separated to enhance clarity:

-Raising political awareness: the protesters have showed, during the environmental conflict, to have gained a better political awareness both about their right to participate to the policies which affect the territory that they inhabit and about their political power, consisting in participating to a national debate and influence, if not really direct, the positions assumed by local authorities. The stress on the importance of the citizen's participation to decision-making processes is constant within the culture of protesting movements, and the No Tap culture show to have assimilated such principles too⁸².

-Raising national awareness: in order to effectively participate to national-scale debate, a protesting movement must necessarily address issues which have a national scope. Since the arguments in TAP's favor are mostly based to the necessity of more gas from different sources, protesters have pointed out, diffusing articles and analysis⁸³, which presents arguments against the claimed necessity of a new pipeline. The No Tap Committee, for example, has pointed out the current level of gas demand in Italy is significantly lower from that reached in 2008, when the country faced serious risks of lacking needed gas provisions, being completely at the Gazprom's mercy. The economic crisis made our necessity of energy significantly lower, and there is nothing suggesting that it may significantly grow in the near future. Therefore, the high costs sustained for the building of the pipeline wouldn't be a valid investment, and could be used differently and with more efficiency.

⁸² No Tap Committee's website

<http://www.acquarica.net/notap/2012/08/19/artisti-contro-la-tap/>

⁸³ Like these, related to the fact that the current (and likely future) level of gas demand in Italy doesn't justify the construction of a new infrastructure like the TAP:

<http://www.lastampa.it/2014/04/02/economia/crollano-i-consumi-del-gas-e-stavolta-la-crisi-non-centra-TFGEpj4Tr3b221tFFhb1gO/pagina.html>

<http://www.pagina99.it/news/home/4912/Crisi-ucraina--dati-alla-mano.html>

-Raising international awareness: very interesting observations have been made by No Tap protesters regarding strategic and international matters too. In the first place, it has been correctly observed that Azerbaijan is currently a Russian ally, so that, if one of the intention of building the pipeline is to gain more autonomy from Russian government, this objective may be only partially accomplished extracting gas from Caucasus⁸⁴, which is a region highly influenced by Russian authority.

Besides this, protesters have also addressed another matter: to conclude agreements with Baku and to make businesses with its national oil agency means, *de facto*, to strengthen the position of Azerbaijani president, Ilham Aliyev. The No Tap protesters have pointed out that it may be not the case to favor, with Italian international policies, such an authoritarian regime⁸⁵.

This consideration is actually beyond the ones relative to national economy and geopolitics, since they address the very way in which international relations work, being based more on realist strategies than on this type of ethical concerns. This argument is perfect to introduce the third section of this work, in which I will try to address the issue about which can be the meaning, and value, of a local struggle like that in Salento if considered in a global scale.

⁸⁴ Gianni Petrosillo, *Geopolitica dei gasdotti*, Conflitti e Strategie, 09/07/2010
<http://www.conflittiestrategie.it/geopolitica-dei-gasdotti-la-fine-miserevole-del-nabucco>

⁸⁵ No Tap website, February 20, 2014
<http://notransadriaticpipeline.blogspot.fr/2014/02/non-vogliamo-le-compagnie-petrolifere.html>

Section III

Further observations: global value of a local struggle

13. A global issue

13.1 “The World is everything that is the case”

“The World is everything that is the case” is a quote from the famous essay wrote by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, but it is taken from a recent work of Michel Lussault, a French geographer, which used it in the beginning of its book:

The World is everything that is the case. The set of events that fall upon us, everything that happens.⁸⁶

The author points out that there is a difference between his and Wittgenstein’s sentence, which consists in capital initial letter given to the word “World”, which express the principal object of analysis of the book. The World is defined as

The sphere of activation and realization of the interactive spatiality of individuals and groups, spatiality which result from them as much as they build them, within a permanent movement of the instituting and the instituted.⁸⁷

While spatiality is defined as “the permanent activity that results from the existence of separations and distances”⁸⁸.

Clearly, this approach focus on space and on how human beings interact with it, interpreting social phenomena through the lens of “spatiality” instead of politics or economy. In this sense, a man is a *spatial* actor, before being political or economic.

⁸⁶“ *Le Monde est tout ce qui arrive. L’ensemble des faits qui nous tombent dessus, tout ce qui advient.*”
Michel Lussault, *L’Avènement du Monde, Essai sur l’habitation humaine de la Terre*, Seuil, 2013, p.9

⁸⁷ “La sphere d’activation et de réalisation des spatialités interactives des individus et des groupes, spatialités qui en résultent tout autant qu’elles l’édifient, en un mouvement permanent de l’instituant et de l’institué”

Ibidem, p. 51

⁸⁸ “L’activité permanente qui résulte de l’existence de la séparation et des distances”
Ibidem, p.49

This gives us the opportunity to interpret social movements and, in general, different types of political actors and struggles in a somewhat unusual but efficient way: operating a *spatial turn* within the field of social sciences, it is possible to comprehend the formation of interests, coalitions and social groups starting from their spatial collocation, in lieu of the collocation within the political hierarchy or social division of labor (albeit, of course, these factors are related since, as has been said previously, within a collocation in space comes also the one in social status, different levels of political participation and power).

To consider every individual and social actor as spatial, that is “made of spatiality”, means to study social phenomena conferring equal dignity and importance to every single actor involved, especially if the phenomenon is an environmental conflict, which is basically a contention on political power over a territory and access to its resources. Of course, obvious differences of power must be considered, since clearly an actor like the State is much more powerful than (most) other groups and organizations. The point is simply to locate the interpretation of this power within the conception of spatiality, that is trying to understand how and how much the legal, military, economic and symbolic power of the State or other organizations is related with space, can be exercised on space or is limited by it, as well as by the other actors which inhabit a certain territory.

So that, as a consequence, every actor, at every scale, results being *geopolitical*, as it is possible to consider geopolitics as a highly comprehensive field of analysis, not limited to the relations between states or other types of political powers, comprehending instead the interactions between every spatial agent⁸⁹.

This reasoning develops itself to the point in which, within the World, every agent is connected with all the others because it occupies the same field of interactions, the space of the Earth as a whole, which is after all the place that every human being has to share with their conspecific and the other creatures.

One important point to specify is that a World whose parts are so highly interconnected by continuous and fast fluxes of money, resources and ideas, is definitely a highly vulnerable one: the interruption of these fluxes, which may happen in every moment and

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p.52.

place because of different types of accidents, can severely damage the activities of places and countries which are very far from the place in which the interruption happened. This leads to a *general vulnerability of World*.⁹⁰

The conclusion, in short, is that our world is particularly fragile, as very localized incidents can easily generate quite big and generalized consequences, due to a sort of “butterfly effect”, which may start from the interruption of one, particularly crucial flux.

The consequence is that every single act or policy which takes place in every possible part of the world will somewhat influence everything else. Having the previously described environmental conflict in mind, this consideration leads to two possible, opposite conclusions: the first is that the protesting citizens of Salento are acting egoistically, without considering that their local protest can put to a stop a project which could prove crucial for a high number of countries and their respective populations.

The second conclusion is that the No Tap Committee, struggling to defend a very small portion of earth and sea, is actually defending interests that are effectively global, promoting the health of the Mediterranean Sea, the defense of its and its coasts landscape and biodiversity, the development of an economic model which wouldn't be in contradiction with the conservation of the nature and the resources it directly procures to the people. In both cases, the fact that local environmental conflicts have a global scope and value results undeniable.

13.2 Economic globalization and the environment

Lussault is very careful in pointing out that “*mondialisation*” is something different from the simple economic globalization, as the latter is only a part of the former, one of its aspects, albeit very important. Nonetheless, it would be more pertinent to this work to just focus on economic matters, leaving other social and cultural issues momentarily behind.

The development of a world-wide economic system due to the process of globalization seems to confirm at least partially the proposed ecomarxist theory of James O'Connor,

⁹⁰ Ibidem, p. 228

who argued that, within capitalism, there is a contradiction between the exploitation and the preservation of the production conditions, one of them being the environment. Indeed, the high growth of the world economy has come together with a degradation of the environment, which has its most clear examples in the processes of deforestation, desertification, pollution of air and waters, biodiversity loss and global warming.⁹¹

Globalization has been supported by a strongly market-oriented ideology, which doesn't seem to be adequate to understand, and therefore oppose, environmental consequences and hazards produced by the economic activity.

This consideration can be confirmed by the fact that international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (as much as its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), don't really show to take into serious consideration any ecological matter and issue, not having dedicated to environment anyone of their agreements and discussions.⁹²

Of course, an economic theory which support non-intervention by the State or any political authority can't really prescribe environmental policies which would contrast the freedom of the market and their actors, which in fact have been left free to exploit nearly every resource from any place.

A very troublesome phenomenon is, for example, the confusion and the mixture between economic and environmental policies. It doesn't mean that there is something bad in organizing economy taking environment into account, of course; to be troublesome is the fact that states, in order to lure economic fluxes and investments, try to appeal firms showing little to no concerns for their environment, employing very moderate measures in its defense, since investors usually consider them a threat for their activity (showing, actually, to have literally interiorized in their behavior the contradiction described by ecomarxism).

⁹¹ Bontems Philippe et Calmette Marie-Françoise, « Mondialisation, commerce international et environnement » Un avant-propos*,

Revue économique, 2010/1 Vol. 61, p. 1-8. DOI : 10.3917/reco.611.0001, p.2

⁹² Ibidem.

Concluding, it is simply true that the economic development and globalization is severely threatening the health of the environment, and the previously presented case study further demonstrates it, since the construction of an international pipeline may be very well interpreted as a consequence of the development of an economy which operates on a global scale.

14. A global conflict

14.1 Thousands of conflicts

Considering that the phenomenon which is ultimately causing harms to Salento's environment is global, being related with the economic globalization, it is possible to argue that the opposition to the direct causes of those harms are ultimately an opposition to the global phenomenon itself, or to the ways it affects a particular territory. To assume this point of view means to give to the local struggle not only much more dignity, but also a higher heuristic value, as it can be considered a local symptom of an issue which, having a global scope, may actually affect everyone and everywhere.

The point here, in other words, is to understand if and how the single environmental conflicts can be considered as parts of one, single, global conflict.

In my opinion, the facts that in basically every single country of the world, in completely different social, ethnic, religious and political contexts it is possible to find social struggles with nearly identical features and characteristics can be considered an evidence in this sense. Indeed, the fact that the Ogoni people in Nigeria, the Natives in the United States and the residents of Melendugno and San Foca may suffer environmental hazards from so similar causes, provoked by the very same alliance between firms and central authorities, and then formulate so much comparable claims about environmental management and demands about political participation and inclusion cannot be ignored.

So that, even admitting that single environmental conflicts can be interpreted as expressions of very local issues, having a very limited scope and value (but it has been showed that most likely this is far from being true, as they usually address also much wider geopolitical and even ideological matters), the simple fact that the whole world is

affected by thousands of environmental conflicts is immediately recognizable as an absolutely global phenomenon.

So that, it is in my opinion possible to conclude that, considering social conflictuality as a whole, including every country in our vision, it can be seen a generalized shift towards environmental conflicts: what seems to emerge is a logic and temporal succession in which, beyond an historical period dominated by the class conflict within the industries, and after the violent, international struggle for the decolonization, a different and original type of conflict is starting to take over the scene, the environmental one, which express the global contradictions which are present within the global exploitation of the planet's resources.

14.2 A new “international class”?

It has been argued that the fact that the economic activities are so much likely to provoke high environmental degradation may have grassroots cause within the contemporary economic theories:

For the economists of the environment, *the ecological crisis is the direct consequence of an economic formalism separated from ecologic reality, of an economy considered as a close system, independent from the natural substratum of human life and activities.*⁹³

This consideration is correct, as it addresses a real problem which affects both the activity of the economic actors and the production of public policies by states, since both these groups of agents usually don't consider, or just refuse to accept, that economy is embedded in a system of ecological relations which involves, at the widest scale, the whole humanity.

⁹³ “Pour les économistes de l'environnement, la crise écologique est donc la conséquence directe d'un formalisme économique tronqué des réalités écologiques, d'une économie pensée comme système clos et indépendant du substrat naturel de la vie et des activités humaines.”

Gendron Corinne, « Fondements d'une sociologie économique de l'environnement »,

Ecologie & politique, 2003/1 N°27, p. 59-78. DOI : 10.3917/ecopo.027.0059, p. 61

Article available online at this address:

<http://www.cairn.info/revue-ecologie-et-politique-2003-1-page-59.htm>

On the other hand, it is also possible to make the opposite consideration: as much as it is true that economic activities are always embedded within definite environments, it must also be considered that the environment too is actually embedded in a system of economic relations which determine the access to its resources and their distribution amongst people. That is, the environment is managed and regulated on the basis of the property rights and the labor relations which constitute the class social structure.

At this point, it is possible to hypothesize the existence of a sort of “ecological class”⁹⁴, which of course is as much characterized by internationality as the elderly described proletariat, as it comprehends all the social (spatial) agents involved in the different environmental conflicts which take place all around the world, such as groups of residents, environmentalist associations, ethnic minorities, indigenous people and so forth.

So that, in the end, the conclusion is not that between economy and ecology there is a hierarchical relation, since what actually exists is a deep and continuous dialectic between the two. Clearly, as much as economy and, in general, economic reasons pervade the other social and political spheres, this is also true for ecology, as every human activity is embedded within its space and environment.

In this sense, it must be recognized that the environmental issues somewhat “overflow”⁹⁵ from its proper field, invading other social spheres and constituting the material element, the objective cause, of the previously described different types of conflict, such as the juridical, the ethnic and the military ones.

14.3 Contending space in the city

Environmental conflicts are a global matter also for another important reason, that is their relation with urbanization, which is clearly one of the most important global phenomenon of our times.

⁹⁴ *ibidem*, p. 76

⁹⁵ As it is the norm for matters related with nature and life, as argued by Karl Kerényi in its essay on Dyoninus. A similar argument regarding “overflow” has been made by the philosopher Slavoj Žižek in its *In Defense of Lost Causes*, referring not to ecology but to class struggle in Marxism and sexuality in Freudian psychoanalysis.

Urbanization is connected with environmental conflicts for two reasons: the first, the more obvious and immediate, is the fact that with its growth, the city invades and absorbs rural areas that may be inhabited by farmers or peasants, which would lose their means of production, being expropriated and displaced from their lands.

Second reason is more complex, but even more relevant: urbanization of course doesn't only affect the area which surrounds the city and is invaded by it, but also the city itself and the relation between its parts. It is a process of physical and social transformation, which strongly modifies the lifestyle of the citizens, the shape of the different districts and quarters, as it strongly influences the distribution of the economic activities, the price of land and houses, finance flows and so on. So that, urbanization can be interpreted as dynamic movement of appropriation and expropriation, which results in a dialectic between the included citizens and the excluded, which are relegated into the peripheries and the suburbs or, if they are less lucky, into slums and *favelas*.

Considering the city as a *build environment* and things like access to public services, infrastructures, decent schools and hospitals as "ecological resources", it would be perfectly fine to interpret the current urban conflicts towards occupation of spaces as urban environmental conflicts.

The previously exposed considerations (made by Lefebvre and Harvey) regarding class conflict as a struggle towards the recognition of the *right to the city* on one hand, and those made by Lussault about the general applicability of geopolitical concepts on the other, may help in strengthen this interpretation: the conflictuality which affects contemporary cities all across the world is largely composed by *spatial struggles*, which are conflicts over the build environment and its resources.

It is not difficult to see that the case study I referred to, the environmental conflict in Salento around the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, is itself a fine case of spatial conflict triggered by a process of urbanization: it involves processes of appropriation and expropriation of material and localized resources, as well as the political control over a defined space.

This shows that the social actor of spatial conflict towards inclusion can vary a lot depending on the particular place and situation: in that case, we had a small population

of residents which reacted to the threat of being separated, excluded, by their means of production and source of wealth, which are the coastline, its health and its beauty; in numerous western cities we can find “millions of workers, whether self-employed, temporary or freelancer workers, skilled or mobile workers, ‘precarious’ workers or simply working poor [...], knowledge workers, chain workers, communication or health care workers, mini-job workers, or contract workers in the arts and culture sector”⁹⁶, as well as migrants, which struggle for being included into social citizenship; finally, in poor or developing countries, which are even more affected by processes of urbanization, we can see the presence of hundreds of millions of people which are relegated into slums and *bidonvilles*, gaining their low incomes from informal economy, being literally unrecognized as citizens⁹⁷. Even if the involved actors and their activities are very different, the struggle towards inclusion, related to the distribution of ecological resources, is definitely what makes them on the same level.

14.4 Meaning of a local resistance

What I just tried to express can be resumed in the consideration for which, considering that the different environments which compose the world are increasingly urbanized, and that the city can be interpreted as a build environment, the spatial conflict which affect the contemporary cities (towards inclusion, in the name of the right to the city and so on) can be at least partially interpreted referring to the theory of environmental conflicts, as they can show the features of ecological distribution conflicts, and they can be triggered by the degradation of the inhabited environment.

The form assumed by spatial conflicts within cities is usually (especially, but not only, in western countries) the occupation of public places, and a general trend towards the “*spatialization*” of both economic and political conflicts is testified by the great relevance of the protests which have taken place, in the last years, in Plaza del Sol, Zuccotti Park, Taksim and Tahrir squares.

⁹⁶ G. Allegri, R. Ciccarelli, *What is the Fifth Estate*, February 27, 2014, Opendemocracy.net <http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/giuseppe-allegri-roberto-ciccarelli/what-is-fifth-estate>

⁹⁷ M. Lussault, work cited, p. 100.

These protests are particularly interesting due to the fact that while they are so highly and specifically localized within one defined place, they manage to have a strong national, or even international resonance. Between these two aspects of the matter there is no contradiction but causation: the long-lasting occupation of a space is what makes a protest works, as it gives a physical body to slogans and demands. The spatial environment, in other words, works as an aesthetic medium for the mise-en-scene of a claim⁹⁸.

The claims reflect the interests of the actors, which can differ a lot even if they participate to same protest, as we could have seen in the Occupy Movement, which brought together pacifists, ecologists, anarchists and a lot of other different groups. The same can be seen, to a certain extent, in Salento too, as of course the interests of farmers, land-owners, fishermen, restaurateur, workers of the touristic sector may vary a lot. The fact that all these different individuals and groups belong to, or are brought together in a single place or territory, play an important role in transforming them into one, single unity, so that in the end is not just the claim to be represented by the protest's place, but the very existence of this collective actor too. The protest have been localized (*résidentialisation de la contestation*), and cohabitation has become action (*la cohabitation est devenue l'action*)⁹⁹.

The just described collective unity forms itself through the protest, which is based on claims or principles which must be wide and comprehensive enough to make several groups identify into them. So that, to unify ecologists, feminists, laic nationalists, communists and even organized hooligans in Taksim square was the protest against the president Erdogan and its policies, and to unify all the residents in Salento was the protest against the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline.

The formation of a new political unity, with its own principles, rules and ideology, through a protesting process resembles very much the definition that the French philosopher Alain Badiou uses for defining the act of *subtraction*, that is "the affirmative part of

⁹⁸⁹⁸ M. Lussault, cited work, p.276.

⁹⁹ Ibidem, p.278.

negation”, which “exists apart from the purely negative part of negation”, “apart from destruction”¹⁰⁰.

As we have seen, the phenomena which are mostly causing ecological crisis and environmental degradation are urbanization and, in general, the economic globalization, which is just happening with any afterthought about the harms it leaves behind its path. So that, the system from which environmental/spatial conflicts are trying to operate a subtraction is the very global capitalism, with all its set of rules and values. In this sense, since it is the almost the whole world to live within the process of urbanization and globalization, it is possible for this type of resistance, to “present itself as an exodus, as a departure outside the world”¹⁰¹, which aims to institute a “point of autonomy”¹⁰².

In my opinion, the very meaning of the local struggles described in this work is the expression of both the desire and the necessity to put current global processes to a stop, in order to collectively redefine their path. This position can be very well resumed in a metaphor present in a book of the philosopher Slavoj Žižek, in *Defense of Lost Causes*:

In the early seventeenth century, after the establishment of the Shogun regime, Japan made a unique collective decision to isolate itself from foreign culture and to pursue its own path of a contained life of balanced reproduction, focused on cultural refinement, avoiding any tendencies towards wild expansion. Was the ensuing period which lasted till the middle of nineteenth century really just an isolationist dream from which Japan was cruelly awakened by Commodore Perry and the American warship? What if the dream is that we can go indefinitely with our expansionism? What if we all need to repeat, *mutatis mutandis*, the Japanese decision, and collectively decide to intervene in our pseudo-natural development, to change its direction?¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Alain Badiou, *Destruction, Negation, Subtraction – on Pier Paolo Pasolini*, Graduate Seminar - Art Center College of Design in Pasadena - February 6 2007.

¹⁰¹ Antonio Negri, *Goodbye Mr. Socialism*, Paris: Edition the Seuil 2006, p.125.

¹⁰² Alain Badiou, quoted in Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, Verso, 2008, p. 407.

¹⁰³ Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, Verso, 2008, p. 458.

Conclusions

This work started with questions regarding the very nature of environmental conflicts and their meaning under a global perspective.

Answers have been found in the definition, proposed by Juan Martinez Alier, of ecological distribution conflicts as well as in that proposed by Stephan Libiszweski, of any type of conflict caused by environmental degradation. The most common actors of environmental conflicts have been divided into two categories, defined by the infliction or the subjection to environmental injustice. The environment itself, interpreted as an object of contention, has been primarily described as a set of resources and means of production, as well as a place of living.

Both referring to the theory and to the case study, the development and maturation of a local protest has been followed, and its strong relation with important political and international issue has been verified. Using a wide vision, that is trying to comprehend a local phenomenon as embedded in a world-wide system, the event of an unjust distribution of ecological resources or of a degradation of a particular environment has been interpreted as a result of the involvement of a territory within the global processes of urbanization and economic globalization. Instead of merely promoting local interests, as has been seen, the protesters are moved by principles and reasons which are themselves global too, as obviously the preservation of the Earth can't be separated by the protection of single, fragile territories.

The initial metaphor I used to confront environmentalist protesters with the Hobbits of Middle-earth works very well also referring to the interpretation of spatial conflicts as attempt of building points of autonomy, subtracted to the current rules of this world: as I wrote, one of the Hobbits' features is to act freely, even when this means to rebel against the orders they received. Tolkien puts two of its Hobbit characters, Meriadoc Brandibuck and Peregrin Took, in a situation in which their feelings and sense of justice is in striking contrast with the behavior they should assume, due to rules and hierarchy they should respect and due to the contest they are in. The subtraction from these laws, that is the deliberate disobedience to the men they admire and to which they swore allegiance, is what allows both the characters to be truly determinant for the story, as the affirmation

of their autonomy results in the saving of people's lives and in the defeat of dangerous enemies.

Bearing in mind this literary memento, I guess I can conclude that the creation of a subtracted point of autonomy in Salento can have a role to play in the defense of Middle-sea.

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