

Abstracts

Political Violence and Action Strategies: An Empirical Study on the extreme right organizations in Italy and Spain

by Rossella Borri and Manuela Caiani

Despite growing scientific interest in the subject, the empirical investigation regarding the strategic action choices related to the mobilization of right-wing organizations is still scarce, with most attention given to violence and few attempts to consider (and integrate for explanation) the context of both external (structural) and internal (organizational) factors that might affect them. In this article, focusing on different types of extreme-right organizations (political parties and non-party groups) in Italy and Spain, the emergence of violence by these groups as well as the use of other action strategies will be investigated. With a special emphasis on the actors' perceptions of reality, macro-level reasons (the organizations' attitudes towards the political and institutional environment, the closure/openness of the context, the availability of allies, etc.), as well as meso-level factors (the characteristics and dynamics of individual groups) will be tested. This will be achieved by combining qualitative and quantitative data from 20 semi-structured interviews with extreme-right leaders, with a protest event analysis of the most recent mobilization of extreme-right groups in the two countries (2005-09). The main differences and similarities between organizations and countries concerning right-wing mobilization specificities and the factors which influence them will be demonstrated.

Key words: Extreme Right Organizations, Social movements, Spain and Italy, Semi-Structured Interviews, Protest Event Analysis.

Crisis and Political violence: The Political Kidnapping in the rhetoric and action of the BR and GP

by Matteo Albanese

What I would like to show in this article is how the practice of the kidnapping moves from a movements practice to a strategy adopted by political groups. At the

same time, it seems interesting to focus on how this change has been a sign of the change of political perspective of the political groups facing a new scenario within the economical and political fields, in 1968-1974. Through some cases of political kidnapping by Gauche Proletarienne operated in France and by the Red Brigades in Italy, the contribute shows how a repertoire of action of the labor movement has been revived by the two groups mentioned, and which changes it has undergone. This transformation follows and accompanies a long process of "crisis", understood as a profound change that was occurring in Western societies (Braun and Macdonald 1982). As all the processes of transformation also this one was better understandable in some places such as big plants. It is, at this point, no coincidence that in those situations, especially in industries such as automakers Renault and Fiat, the two organizations that we deal with were moving their first steps. The paper is based on documentation from the Italian and French archives: leaflets of organizations, court papers, archives of unions and parties.

Key words: Political Violence; Political Kidnapping, Red Brigades; Gauche Proletarienne; Italy and Spain; Social Movements

Action Research and Liberation Research in Contexts of Environmental Conflicts around Health and Common Goods

by *Laura Corradi*

The essay offers a theoretical discussion around the terms ‘environmental conflict’ and ‘action research’. Neuman question – if research action may contribute in determining systemic types of change – is taken into account. The author analyses different environmental conflicts from a *located knowledge* perspective looking at *solutions* in terms of community participation and empowerment. As she states “Be the source of inequality class or status, race or culture, gender or sexual orientation, age or different ability, always the *social context* represents the environment generating both the conflict and the solutions”. Cases of research action on environmental conflicts around health and common goods such as water, land, oil and metal are analyzed through the activity of the *Centro Documentazione Conflitti Ambientali* in Rome, and through the *Research Foundation for Science and Technology* directed by Vandana Shiva in Dehradun (Uttaranchal, India) operating to preserve seeds and bio-integrity. A stronger commitment of social sciences is seen as necessary to oppose what has been defined as “the degradation of social existence in the globalizing world”(Buroway, 2008). A new paradigm of *liberation research* (Bullard 2004) may help in reframing an idea of science especially useful to vulnerable communities. Today a knowledge oriented toward liberation is an important step in the transition toward societies based on a healthy relationship between human beings, their time and environment.

Key words: environment; conflict; liberation research; action research; health

Deliberation and Conflict: Evidence from a Comparative Analysis

by Gianfranco Pomatto and Stefania Ravazzi

The article aims at analyzing the impact of deliberation on the dynamics of the conflicts in the policy making processes. We shall argue whether and how deliberation succeeds in stopping the typical escalation of the conflicts, lowering protests, generating more open-minded institutional decisions, reducing stereotypes and developing a new constructive approach in decision making. The analysis is based on the comparison of three recent cases of deliberative processes dealing with conflictual issues: a deliberative process on the hypothesis to write a bill regulating the use and power of the living will; a public debate on a new highway stretch in the city of Genova; a citizens' jury on the building of a small plant to dispose of industrial waste in the small tuscan town of Castelfranco.

Key words: deliberation, conflict management, citizens jury, debat publique

Story of an Organic Farmer's Market in Palermo: Between Grassroots Environmentalism and Clientelism

by Giovanni Orlando

Narrating the story of an organic farmers' market, this article explores ideals and practices of sustainable urban food through an example of consumer activism in Palermo. It reflects critically on the understandings of 'sustainability' held by the actors involved, showing the difficulties of operationalising the concept for socio-cultural research. It also highlights the potential of grass-roots activism among consumers and farmers. This potential runs counter to an enduring image of southern Italy as a place where civil society initiatives are wanting. By analysing the market's history until its demise due to difficulties with the centre-right-wing municipality, the article shows how it is the political element, rather than the cultural one, that often constrains grass-roots activism in Sicily. These problems of power and political representation question whether consumer mobilization can become a tool for environmental transformation in locales where institutions are not already favourably disposed to the values of such mobilisation.

Key words: Organic Agriculture; Sustainability; Social Movements; Clientelism; Palermo

The “Rediscovery” of the morality in the Collective Action: A Review psychosocial Literature

by Davide Mazzoni and Elvira Cicognani

In recent years a growing number of contributions investigated the role that *moral convictions* play in facilitating the processes of collective action. Through this article we present and discuss three main conceptualizations of morality which guided the empirical research on collective action in the field of psychology and social sciences, in terms of selective incentives, ideology, and inviolable principles. Each approach origins within a specific theoretical and conceptual framework. Research findings show that moral convictions are useful in explaining various forms of participation, including those in favor of out-groups and for the protection of human rights. In the final part, the implications for future lines of research are discussed.

Key words: Moral Convintions; Social Movements; Social Psychology; Ideology; Forms of Participation