Local Conflicts and the NO-TAP Protest

Descrizione

Local conflicts

This paper is about the local conflict which emerged in Apulia, and more exactly in the province of Lecce, as a form of opposition to the major project known as TAP (Trans-Adriatic Pipeline), aimed at transporting Azeri natural gas to Italy and Northern Europe. Reflecting on the question of TAP requires first of all a theoretical background against which we may set our empirical observation. In this paper, we will try and trace images and narratives so as to identify the history and features of a movement that, although young, may be intended as a litmus test useful to understand the new and sometimes invisible cleavages that affect today's society. By choosing the TAP case as a model of a new kind of movement, not reducible to the characteristics of the "Nimby" phenomenon, we will try and study the somewhat invisible political and economic relations, which legitimize some processes of territorial control, as well as the practices by which the state or private bodies can implement it. Although the TAP protest is just a case-study, it is quite complex. This implies that, by narrating its history and describing its characteristics, one may better understand, on the micro level, the processes that convert collective heterogeneity into an active homogeneity, and, at the macro level, the national and international strategies (both political and economic) behind this major project. This may eventually contribute to a less generic definition of local conflicts (sometimes known as territorial conflict).

In modern scientific literature on territorial movements, one interesting reference is Luigi Bobbio **[1]**. With Bobbio, it can be said that territorial conflicts have by now outnumbered both in qualitative and quantitative terms other types of social conflicts. Moreover, Bobbio considers as a characteristic of these kind of conflicts the fact that they are no longer the output of a two-dimensional clash between the dominant and the dominated class, but are the expression of the multiple segregations that contemporary society has produced. The plurality of exclusion has paradoxically produced a flattening of society in which fear and risk tend to drive the dynamics of social action. At a first and careless analysis, Bobbio would seem to promote a

depoliticized vision of society, in which class conflicts disappear to be replaced by the new tendencies of late modernity. The political scientist underlines the main characteristic of these conflicts, namely:

"The common feature of these protests is the fact that they are promoted and run by ad-hoc citizens' committees, which propose themselves as non-partisan and authentic representatives of their community. Participants often receive the support of environmental associations or political groups, but try to claim and maintain their autonomy as an expression of the territory and of those who live there."**[2]**

The emphasis placed by Bobbio on the aspect of self-representativeness allows us to overcome the "idealtipical" image of territorial protest as a "shapeless mass", in which individual interests converge without any aggregate logic, as if mere action was sufficient to structure solid social networks. The fact that the participants receive support from associations and groups of autonomous individuals underlines that a foundational element of the action of local movements is a strong awareness of collective interests. This awareness is relevant in the process by which a specific territorial group defines its objectives and structures its identity. The social networks which issue from local conflict are therefore expressions of the values through and against which the movement defines its own autonomy. Multiple networked social relations are essential to any territorial conflict and represent the product of a collective choice of distinction (or of taking a position) which legitimises a collectively shared *habitus*. The collectively shared *habitus* is the key to understand the social mechanisms of action and distinction (both external and internal) that allow a group to structure its collective heterogeneity as an active homogeneity. Moreover, the single movement is never isolated, as it is the autonomous component of a network of local movements, which makes territorial vindications the integral part of a much wider conflict.

Local conflicts are such that identity and praxis merge so as to foster the achievement of a common goal. By quoting Bobbio, it is possible to present the Italian case as a clear example of this:

"There is no demonstration in Italy where no-TAV flags do not show up. And there is no critical stance to the system that is not resolutely opposed to major projects. The welding is now complete." **[3]**

As Bobbio writes, it is surprising how, between 2007 and 2009, numerous territorial movements have made a "[s]olidarity and mutual aid pact" **[4]**. Surprising is the fact that this pact appears as an expression of the will of the single territorial movements to consolidate their own individual identity, which is anyway consistent with a de-localized project of collective change. This logic is the expression of a more generalized conflict, which originates from local movements, finally converging in a more extended collective identity, which social relations have consolidated on a macro level. Thus, local conflicts and local identities are part of a wider network, the expression of a kind of conflict which is not only local, but is connected to national (or supranational) socio-political and economic relationships. Which allow us to consider again, at a macroscopic level, the logics of a "two-dimensional conflict" that appear to have vanished in the risk society. The willingness of the territorial movements to carry out such a general project, at least in the Italian case, is clearly expressed in the programmatic declaration of the "solidarity and mutual aid pact". e.g.:

"*[a]n useful instrument for those in our country who fight for the defence of their territory, against useless major projects and against the destruction of environmental and economic resources.*" **[5]**

Territorial movements, and in particular the "Italian case", may represent an effective example for the understanding of both individual and collective behaviours that characterize late modernity. This paper will be centred on the TAP (Trans-Adriatic Pipeline) case, but, in order to allow some generalization from our case, it is necessary to start from a more general analysis of territorial movements as such. Luigi Bobbio, **[6]** allows us to draw on a series of narratives which summarize general characteristics of territorial movements. Once the general characteristics have been

defined, we may identify the features of the no-TAP movement, its specific alliances (based on political, social and economic relations), and finally its aggregative logic within wider macro-territorial conflicts.

The first narrative that, as Bobbio states: “is certainly the most widespread in the media and among political commentators”**[7]**, allows us to understand the aggregative logic structuring social networks starting from a local conflict. The origin of this model is, as previously stated, “the growing fragmentation of society”. Although this narrative is used by public opinion as a form of criticism against territorial opposition, it allows us to keep our attention focused on a two-dimensional kind of conflict. In this narrative, the conflicting parties define their arguments through the logic that Lolive, cited by Bobbio, defines as “increasing generalization”. The proponents of a project, as in the TAP case, will tend to hyper-generalize, singling out the reasons for a territorial conflict in the growing segregation of society and the general weakening of political parties, which are now unable to channel particular interests and set the political conditions for collective well-being. According to this interpretation, the object of the dispute:

“ *[…] consists in the definition of the nature (general or particular) of the interests at stake, with the assumption that the general interests should prevail over the particular ones, according to a utilitarian logic.*“**[8]**

The conflict is dualistic because the opponents may use the same kind of dialectic as the proponents in order to defend the movement from the accusation of provincialism and selfish closure, for example by stressing the fact that the proponents present as general interest a project which will benefit only a few. The opponents will probably argue that, although their struggle is local, as it is bounded by specific geographical boundaries, the victory is collective and general since the movement opposes useless expenditures aimed at the specific interests of the proponents and their allies (for example: cement industries, organized crime, other states, supra-national bodies). The logic adopted by both parties in this narrative is that of creating solid national and international alliances that allow the specific interests of one of the two parties to be promoted as general and therefore fair. As Bobbio writes:

"*[…] this strategy has to face two problems: on the one hand, opponents try to do the same by appealing to those who may be willing to support the (general) interests they are trying to assert (e.g. environmentalists in infrastructure conflicts or xenophobic parties in conflicts against foreigners). On the other hand, the opponents have the advantage of being concentrated on a small territory and of having a very intense interest in the topic, whereas the potential beneficiaries are difficult to mobilize because they are dispersed and have weaker interests.*" **[9]**

In the no-TAP case, the movement managed to structure a series of relationships (such as with Val di Susa and the Florentine area) that set up the protest as being able to expand from the local dimension to a more general dimension (a conflict against the decisions imposed from above). The same can not be said for the proponents of the work, about whom the public opinion knows little and whose national and international political and economic alliances are even less clear.

The second narrative considers the territorial protest as manipulated by occult interests of a political or economic kind that hide behind the idealism of the movement. This type of narration, similar to the first, tends to de-legitimize the territorial opposition. It is a "conspiracy narrative", which, as Bobbio says:

"*has always some elements of truth. In any conflict, there are different and contrasting interests and points of view, ideal incentives and contingent reasons, content objectives and process objectives. But it is – almost always – a self-comforting and self-deceptive path for those who run it.* " **[10]**

The third narration tries to maintain a "neutrality between the parties" by adopting an economic approach. According to this narrative, the conflict would find fertile ground in the iniquity of the relationship between costs and benefits that a project, such as TAP, would imply for the involved territory. Costs would in fact affect a territorially circumscribed community, while the benefits would affect the national community. By being economically oriented, this narrative identifies a solution that considers the parties in conflict as two social actors driven by purely economic interests. The

solutions proposed to the conflict by this narrative are two, the first involves a modification of the project in order to limit the costs for the local community; the second solution provides economic benefits (for example public investments) to compensate the costs incurred by the local community. This logic, however, would only work if the opposition were considered as a simple economic actor, who tends to gain with the minimum effort.

The fourth narration starts from the idea of risk proposed by Ulrich Beck, according to which science and technology, by mitigating the risks linked to existence (diseases, old age, etc.), have produced new risks, linked to the development of modernity (e.g. pollution, nuclear risk, unemployment, etc.). The conflict therefore arises from the different conceptions of risk typical of common people, whose assessment is expressed in existential and material terms, and of the technocrats, whose assessment is statistically and probabilistically defined. Although less economically oriented than the third narrative, the solution proposed here is always based on a negotiation. In order to overcome territorial disputes, the proponents of a project can, according to this narration, either agree on acceptable levels of risk with the local actors or define economic compensations with the population in case the risk takes place. The first solution appears to be difficult to implement because there is a substantial difference between the concrete risks perceived by the population (for instance, the reduction in renting costs) and the more abstract ones of the technocrats. The second solution will imply that the technical guarantees and the economic compensations that the proponents of a project are willing to give in the event of an accident, are directly proportional to the actual risk of a project, and are therefore a clear evidence of its danger.

The fifth narrative is linked to the processes of globalization and describes the protest as a local reaction to decisions taken on the supra-national level, hence an evidence of the processes of disintegration of society and of the traditional systems of representation. The protesters claim their right to decide for the places where they live, considering themselves the repositories of the identity of the territories. A highly discrediting project, such as a coal-fired power plant or a waste treatment plant, is perceived as an attack on the identity of the inhabitants. This logic is typical of the Nimby movements which do not contest the plant as such, but only its territorial localization. This narration also allows us to underline how the decision-making processes concerning major projects are often limited to the national and supra-national sphere and therefore exclude the level of local institutions, movements and citizenship, thus interfering with the correct decision-making and democratic process.

The sixth narrative is linked to one of the topics which recurs in the claims of territorial movements. In fact, this last narrative defines territorial movements as “anti-modern struggles” or even as “anti-scientific conflicts”. Within this framework, territorial movements appear as collective actors driven by the same vision of conflict and change. The fight is against a model of unfair and inhomogeneous development, in which the different territorial movements are not isolated cases but are the expression of a more general phenomenon of protest against the prevailing economic and political model. As Bobbio states, “[i]n Italy the flag under which the proponents of this narration have been gathered is the battle against major projects.”**[11]**

For our analysis, what makes the last explanation interesting is its link with the first one. In fact, Bobbio does not neglect to integrate within the first narrative the dense network of socio-political relations that emerge starting from a territorial conflict. These relations, as previously mentioned, allow the merging of autonomous political praxis and autonomous identities so as to define a set of shared values against which the movement structures its conception of change and its active strategy. Although “the logic of increasing generalization” is not mentioned in the sixth narrative, it is evident that the political relations that are structured starting from the protest are a factor of fundamental importance in order to strengthen the generality of the movement and therefore in order to ascribe the protest to a more extended (not only local) conflict.

According to Bobbio, one of the weaknesses of this narrative is the fact that “movements against human settlements” are not taken into consideration, although it is not possible to make a clear-cut demarcation between protests against major projects and protests against migratory processes. Bobbio underlines that in some interviews to members of territorial movements it may emerge that the theme of the defence of local identities often involves a strong closure towards foreigners. Bobbio’s interpretation is however a bit of a stretch, since the identity of a movement is made up of a set of shared values, through which it initially structures its own internal morphology and then selects its possible allies, among those who are closer to the values of the movement. If we consider that, according to this narrative, the theme that binds various local conflicts within a wider conflict is that of an alternative idea of development, it is hard to imagine that anti-democratic and unfair values, on which the identity of xenophobic movements is based, may fit into such a project.

TAP and energy security policies

Thanks to the analysis of the six narratives proposed by Bobbio, it has been possible to define a framework useful to understand the general characteristics of territorial movements and some of the causes that have made them the model of conflict prevalent in modern society. In this section we will try to identify the political and economic context in which the TAP case is inserted, by making reference to the transformation of energy security policies. The reconstruction of the political, economic and international dynamics that made TAP a strategic project for the Italian government, allows to shed light upon the processes that have progressively changed the role of the state in energy policies. In order to understand how the relationship between state power and economic power has changed over time, it is possible to consider the three explanatory models presented by Andrea Prontera **[12]** in a paper on this topic. Prontera's essay gives the clues to understand the economic, political, and international reasons that led the Italian government to support the TAP project.

In the years following the Second World War, the Italian government implemented a series of economic policies aimed at triggering processes that were meant to align the country's political strategies with a season of international change and development. Italy, like many other Western countries, decided to target its state investments to the creation of institutions and infrastructure that would allow the country to strengthen its international position. Energy security and the related burdens and benefits became the main factor of economic competitiveness for the states. It also represented a crucial crux through which to settle relationships, which could even be inconsistent with the country's consolidated international coalitions. An example of this logic is the diplomatic function that ENI (National Hydrocarbon Agency) assumed in these decades. Due to this function, ENI was able to directly manage political relations with non-allied powers, such as the Soviet Union. Between 1950 and 1960, ENI became an instrument in the hands of the Italian Government which, through legal and administrative facilitations, allowed the institution to become the main monopolist power of the country. Under the leadership of Enrico Mattei, the National Hydrocarbons Authority soon became, as previously anticipated, a special delegate of the Italian State:

"*ENI was able to develop close relationships with many countries where the major oil companies were not able to penetrate, such as the Soviet Union, Algeria and Libya. These relationships were later used to establish important agreements in the gas sector.*"**[13]**

The interventionist strategy of the Italian Government proved to be problematic as ENI became a political subject that, due to an increasingly monopolistic economic power, was evolving into a rational (economic) actor, with growing international relevance and ambitions of its own. This process, however, did not have immediate repercussions on the relationship between ENI and the Italian Government since, as long as the state power was able to contain the economic power of the monopolist entity, interest in economic growth represented the lowest common multiple that welded the ambitions of these two institutional actors. In fact, as Pontera writes:

"*Cooperation with the Soviet Union would not have been possible without the support of the Italian government, which sustained ENI's projects and defended them against the pressure from the United States with its foreign policy strategy of 'Neo-Atlanticism'.*"**[14]**

The ENI case shows how, thanks to the support of an interventionist state, a public body convert itself into an economic entity, whose international and domestic weight becomes ever more relevant and, paradoxically, autonomous from the Italian Government, which is one of the contradictions in the long process of transformation of energy policies of the country and the final liberalization of the sector. Andrea Prontera summarizes these complex economic/political dynamics within the *partner-state model.* In this model, the State is intended as a political entity able to create internal energy demand and voluntarily financing those projects capable of increasing its political relevance on the international level. The relations between the state and

its *champion* (the ENI for the Italian case) are based on mutual advantages. Confidence related to this type of relationship implies that the state can create a triangular model of diplomacy, by which it uses its "champion" to establish not only economic but also political relations**[15]**.

After the Cold War, international relations underwent a deep transformation and, as a consequence, also the political and economic relations had to adapt to the new balances. As proof of the profound political changes that occurred in this historical phase, a new actor emerged in the scene of international political relations, the EU. Unlike the two political and ideological blocs that dominated the political scene and conceived the economy as an instrument of political and power competition, the EU presents itself chiefly as an entity whose policy appears as a means to facilitate the independence of the economic sphere. Although the Soviet Union and the United States had adopted the strategy of creating a single market among their allies, it was evident that this logic was aimed at translating the ideological conflict within the economic dimension. And in fact, it was not a question of mere economic competition, because the conflict was built in relation to contrasting world-views. American liberalism and American alliances with former imperialist powers, for example, represented for a long time a factor that limited or compromised the international economic relations of the United States. On the contrary, the European Union built its network of political relations through a selection of economic factors that became the main requirements for the access to the Union. Although humanitarianism, as well as the spread of civil and political rights are fundamental aims of the European Union, these are often conceived as simple "aesthetic" requirement aimed at legitimizing the priority of the economic processes.

This new economic (neo-liberal) model has had wide consequences also in the energy production sector causing, as Andrea Prontera**[16]** points out a shift from the *partner-state* to the *provider-state*. Within this new frame, a *laissez-faire* logic becomes pivotal in the relations between the state and multi-national companies. The relationship between the state and energy companies becomes neutral. Politics is no longer a means by which to set international alliances because, paradoxically enough, by defining *ex-ante* the principles on which they should rest, economic interests becomes the main factor determining international strategies. In this new international context, diplomacy assumes a legitimizing function of economic and military choices. At this stage of the development of energy policies, the state, by defining a juridical background, can define the legal context in which energy agencies can operate so that the economic development, as required by the system of alliances, may respect

the starting conditions of the national states. The internal demand of energy that the political system fostered within its national borders is now transferred to supranational structures, such as the European Union. Moreover, as it often happens in a pure economic system, the strongest appears as a model to be followed, able to set standards and needs. The *provider-state model* **[17]**, is the output of a highly unstable historical moment in which the political logics that had determined the international dynamics are now replaced by chiefly economic reasons. It is a historical phase in which economic growth becomes the main aggregating factor among world's powers.

The last phase is that which Prontera defines as the *catalytic state***[18]**. The state has now only a catalytic function of needs that have manifested in particular in the economic system. Whereas in the phase of the *provider-state,* the state organization still had an important function of legal regulation, now also the juridical power seems subordinate to the economic power. In the model of the *catalytic state*, economics affects the functioning of the political system, so to adapt it to the requirements of the economic systems or its entities, e.g. energy companies. If in the *partner–state* political power had full control over the internal energy demand and therefore in the selection of its *champion*, now this logic appears to have been subverted. By somewhat forcing Prontera's arguments, one could say that now companies are choosing their own *champion* among the most competitive states. Legal power, together with the ability to manage coercive force, become the main factors of competitiveness, provided that they guarantee the economic interests of the companies concerned. Within the *catalytic state*, the relationship between state and energy companies is one of "indirect support". For example, the state, through the legal control of the territory and through the repression of protest movements, fosters the economic interests of the companies operating within its borders, thus helping to strengthen the project of economic growth and stability imposed by its alliances and super-national structures such as the EU.

The TAP and the regulation of local conflicts

Compared to the *partner–state,* able as it was to take autonomous decisions regarding energy security policies, the *catalytic state* shares the energy choices with more decisional levels: the international (the EU in our case), the national, the regional and finally the local ones. We will analyze this *multi-level decision process,* by referring to

the specific case of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline project**[19]**. The model of the *catalytic state* is the one in which the choice to foster the TAP as a strategic project for the distribution of Azeri gas in Europe was taken. As a matter of fact, both Prontera**[20]** and Sartori**[21]** point out that many projects were competing with TAP for the distribution in Europe of Azeri gas. One of these projects, the *Nabucco West*, had at first been preferred by the European Union. Sartori underlines, with a certain amount of irony, that in this case political support represented a disadvantage rather than an advantage**[22]**. Sartori's analysis accidentally seems to give credence to those who argue, in the no-Tap Movement, that the logic of the project is chiefly economic and that it has little to do with the needs for gas supply, whose consumption is declining both in Italy and in Europe. By analysing the TAP case, it is moreover possible to understand how, within a *multi-level decision process,* law becomes an instrument able to legitimize the hegemony of the economic power over the political power and the capacity of a supra-national structure (such as the European Union) to impose its veto and to suspend normal democratic processes**[23]**.

Aggregative forms of opposition to the TAP project developed starting from February 16, 2012, on the occasion of the presentation of the project during an event that the proponents organized in the city of Melendugno, in the province of Lecce (Apulia). All the mayors of the cities whose territory would be affected by the project declared themselves against the TAP project. The shared opposition to the TAP project was the basis for the constitution of the no-TAP Committee, in which representatives of local institutions, members of association and experts converged. The Committee carried out various institutional initiatives aimed at blocking the mega-gas pipeline, on the base of scientific arguments and legal action **[24]**. The no-TAP Committee carried out chiefly legal action as a form of conflict**[25]**. According to Punzi, it is typical of modern democracy that the administrative procedures aimed at including the popular will as an integral part of the political decisions-making process are increasingly becoming a mere strategy of legitimation. By considering the processes of apparent democratization of the decision-making process as an integral part of the functional logic of the *catalytic state,* it is possible to say that: "[t]hese attempts, […] are often the beginning of a progressive proceduralization of conflicts, rather than the starting moment of the involvement of the territories."**[26]**

The case of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) is emblematic of this process, so that, as far as the TAP project is concerned, the impact assessment was one of the first procedural steps towards the actualization of the pipeline. The approval of the EIA is part of a set of procedures aimed at creating a process of participatory democracy

that legitimises major projects. Often, as in the TAP case, the assessment is an instrument to legitimize choices imposed from above, rather than evaluate the actual will of the citizens. In the specific case of the territory of Melendugno and San Basilio (the stretch of Adrian coast where the pipeline should land), the processes of participated democracy were resolved in a series of meetings in which technocrats, through the presentation of statistical data, explained to the population the reasons that made TAP a strategic project for the territory and the nation. The rhetoric with which these meetings were conducted aimed at respecting procedural norms imposed by the European Union, without taking into account the effective will of the involved population. The assessment of the will of the involved citizens as proposed by the TAP project, was aimed at getting the consent of a small part of the citizenship, consisting mostly of entrepreneurs, neglecting the strong popular dissent, which was dealt with as a dangerous refuse. As Punzi states: “the administrative bodies are left with full interpretative and implementing freedom, which in the case of TAP was translated into a formal but not substantial respect for the European requirements.”**[27]**.

The processes of participatory democracy represent a means by which protest is transformed into socially accepted forms, so taming conflicts by adopting predominantly juridical and procedural strategies. This process deprives the conflicts of their dramatic component and therefore participatory democracy tends to limit a relevant aspects of conflicts and social movements: the self-reflexive capacity of society to think itself as different. The conflict thus becomes socially acceptable, since it is legitimized in forms which are admissible for the public opinion and the law. In the case of the no-TAP Committee, conflict took the form of a peaceful resistance, based as it was on the recourse to the law in order to counteract the decisions of the political power, without taking into account the fact that the legal system is often politically controlled. Thus, social conflict becomes part of an integrated processes aimed at making the consolidated forms of domination permanent. Here is what Punzi writes: “[t]he expedient of the democratization of power would consist, therefore, in levelling the power in order to recognize the “subordinates” a formal (although fictitious) power and to deprive them of their uncontrolled potential (yet substantial) power.”**[28]**

The TAP case demonstrates the strong contradictions that may affect social conflicts when recurring to the law becomes a strategical choice. This logic, in fact, results in an apparent levelling of the conflicting positions. By accepting the relevance of law and by complying with a peaceful expression of its dissent, the no-TAP protest (in particular the most institutionalized part of it, e.g. no-TAP Committee) has tamed an antisocial kind of conflict, transforming itself into a component of a vicious circle that

reproduces, through the implementation of law, the power against which the conflict should struggle.

In 2014, when the so-called “Sblocca Italia” decree was passed, TAP became a strategic project for the Italian government, in compliance with the politics of energetic security of the *catalytic state*. Business law prevails over the numerous attempts of the no-TAP Committee to denounce administrative anomalies, thus revealing the deceptive nature of the legal dimension. In fact, as long as the protest did not challenge the existing system of domination, this was an advantage for the political power, since it could fully exercise its control, without any evidence of coercive force, as it was mediated by bureaucratic procedures. Having no longer the possibility to legitimize its struggle by recurring to a legal system that actually tended to protect decisions imposed from above, the no-TAP movement had to set up new forms of opposition to the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline.

In March 2017 the empirical consequences of the mechanism of domestication of social conflict became evident. The legal power, to which the no-TAP Committee had initially addressed itself, proved to be “a deaf addressee”**[29]**. The legal system, being strongly related to political power (which in the *catalytic state* is increasingly subordinated to the economic power), proved to be more sensitive to the economic interests than to popular dissent. These contradictions produced a split within the protest, creating two components: the first, the more institutional Committee, and the second, the no-TAP Movement whose most active component gathered at the no-TAP garrison “La Peppina”. The radicalization of the movement becomes evident when the TAP consortium begins to transplant ancient olive trees, removing them from the piece of land through which the conduit should pass. Once the removing of the olive trees began, the opposition to the mega-gas pipeline became increasingly more active, engaging in a battle against the operation of transplanting which made the repressive face of law evident.

The repression of the conflict took two directions: the first concerned preventive control over people, even with the use of expulsion orders and other control measures generally used against mafiosi**[30]**. The second measure, complementary to the first, concerned the creation of a red zone forbidden to demonstrators through a militarization of the land. The territory and its protection, but also the exclusion of citizens from the decision-making process that concerns them, became the chief elements that made the battle burst out.

The wall

The relation between territory and power is a historical one. Controlling the territory means controlling the resources and the population. The route of the TAP pipeline, as well as the decision to fix its landing on a prestigious tourist area, such as San Basilio near San Foca in Salento, shows how the control of the territory coincides with a form of power (as we have seen, especially economic), which is contrasted by local populations and movements.

The relationship between territorial control, conflict and power has been analysed by Eyal Weizman, in a context which is very different from the one we are considering here, which is to say the occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israeli settlers. It is evident that in this case the struggle for the territory has much stronger implications, since it is part of an overall strategy by which Israeli settlers usurp territories rightfully belonging to the Palestinians. In any case, Weizman highlights the relationship between architecture, territorial control and political and cultural identities that, in a smaller scale, can also be made reference to in the TAP conflict. Let's summarize Weizman's reasoning. A border is not a natural component of a territory, but rather the result of power relations. In the case of the Palestinian territories, the border is always mobile, never certain, and this uncertainty makes the territory a permanent battlefield, since different interests clash, as well as different traditions and political and cultural identities**[31]**. As Weizman writes in relation to the occupied territories, they are characterized by an elastic geography, in which the organization of space: "should be seen as a kind of 'political plastic', or as a map of the relation between all the forces that shaped it."**[32]**. The architecture of the occupation, says Weizman, is not neutral but is part of a policy that tends to exclude by constantly redrawing the boundaries.

The author identifies different forms of occupation that use architecture in Israel: one of these, which puts the politics of separation in practice, is the wall. The wall, which separates the Israeli and Palestinian territories along the entire West Bank, and whose construction started in 2002, 8 meters high, is an imposing work**[33]**. What Weizman emphasizes is that the wall, which arises as an instrument to reduce conflicts and separate populations, actually is a powerful tool through which conflict can be emphasized: in Israel, its presence allows everyone to view the ethnic, cultural and

power differences between Israelis and Palestinians, and this has produced a strengthening of the conflict. The wall makes the mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion clear and makes, therefore, the different interests of the parties involved more evident.

Weizman's book is a historical reconstruction of the relationship between architecture and power in a very conflictual land such as Israel. It can, however, provide insights on more general issues, where the territory is used as the space where the conflicting forces becomes evident, also through architectural works that serve to maintain differences, to determine who has access and who has not, who is included and who is excluded. TAP also has its forms of land control and its walls. In 2017 a large area of olive grove was fenced off, in order to permit the removal of 10,000 olive trees, so as to allow the pipeline to land. The area, of great environmental value, characterized by areas fenced with the typical dry-stone walls and by eighteenth-century farms, has been subjected to not only a legal, but also an architectural seizure: the area of olive trees to be transplanted has been completely fenced, with a white concrete structure running along its entire perimeter, surmounted by iron grates with barbed wire. From an aesthetic point of view, the fence looks incoherent as compared to the rural context: extensive, massive, whitish in a territory of Mediterranean scrub, dry-stone walls and olive trees. The numerous photos released by the press show the pruned olive trees, the few branches left wrapped in sheets, which increases the contrast with the green of the surrounding countryside. In its smaller dimension, this form of architecture in a zone of territorial conflict reproduces the function of the wall as identified by Weizman: the expropriation of the territory made the conflict more radical, also because the invasion of the common space became immediately visible.

Around the wall, for a good part of the first quarter of 2017, there was a strong protest of the various members of the no-TAP protest, which finally led to a further form of control of the territory, with police patrols who prevented anyone to access the controlled spaces. With a ordinance of 12 November 2017, the Prefect of Lecce established a 30-days red zone around the construction site. In the ordinance we read: "The areas adjacent to the site […] are assigned in the availability of the police in relation to the needs functional to the protection of the construction site and to the prevention of serious disturbances of public order". The ordinance further confirms how the law and administrative procedures favour the interests of the TAP consortium, through a meticulous control of the territory preventing the protest. It is interesting to underline two aspects confirming what we stated above: 1) The first aspect regards the fact that within the Red Zone there was also the no-TAP garrison, a place of

aggregation for the movement, which objectively prevented the organization of the protest; 2.) The Red Zone was much more extensive than the construction site, which allowed the TAP consortium, for the operations under way, to use land not “legitimately” expropriated. The Red Zone, although legally instituted, has become a place of negation of the law itself, both because it prevented protest, and because it was a non-transparent place where the TAP consortium could act in a self-referential manner.

The presence of the wall and the protest that it provoked may be intended as the confirmation of the fact that the no-TAP is a localistic movement. As a matter of fact, the defence of the territory is not motivated by NIMBY arguments. Here is what one may read in the official website of the movement: “Against the Southern corridor of gas, for the preservation and protection of the territories. For the self-determination of the populations who believe in a model of sustainable development, different from the one imposed, who are against financial speculation at the expense of the communities”. And further on: “NO TAP NIETHER HERE NOR ELSEWHERE”[34].

Conclusions

Narrating the history of a social movement is a difficult task and neither an analysis of the political-economic motives that have contributed to its development nor a description of the social environment in which it has developed may be sufficient. The history of a movement is the summing up of the stories of the individual part-takers. In order to describe the individual stories, it would be necessary to probe into a difficult field of analysis for sociology, e.g. the field of human motivations and individual emotions. In this paper, we have dealt instead with the macro causes that have induced the individuals to gather in a relatively homogeneous protest structure. By entering into the political and economic logic “through which and against which” the no-TAP protest emerged, it was possible to highlight the role that this conflict played in the energy security policies. A field which, in the history of contemporary society, represented one of the main arenas in which the clash between state power, economic power and social power has taken place. The opposition to the TAP project has developed within the state model that Prontera defines *catalytic state,* in which economic power has hegemonized state power. It is for this reason that it would be wrong to ascribe the no-TAP conflict only to the fifth narrative proposed by Bobbio,

e.g. the NIMBY movements. By trying to define the no-TAP movement through an integrated model, it is possible to associate three of the six narratives presented by Luigi Bobbio. The first narrative allows us to understand how the weakening of the state power has produced a two-dimensional conflict in which social power acts directly against economic power, since politics is no longer able to mediate conflicts, as it is subordinated to economy. The fifth narrative is useful to understand the local characteristics of the no-TAP conflict which, although they are not decisive for the identity of the movement, are used to fuel the protest, as it is evident in the conflict that took place by the wall and the red zone. The sixth narration is perhaps the most appropriate, because it allows us to understand how the refusal of a single project is inserted within a general critique of the current models of development.

As Wright[35] states in an essay which deals with the relationship between political, economic and social power, current society, subordinated as it is to the economy, has neglected the values of equity, democracy and sustainability. Wright's approach tries to recover these moral values, thus allowing the social sciences to propose themselves not only as a description of reality, but also as an instrument of emancipation. This idea about the function of social sciences is of importance in the essay of the American sociologist because it reflects the opinion that the extension of economic power, has not only generated strong social and environmental disruptions, it has also distorted the integrity of cultural values. In Wright's analysis the relevance of the value of sustainability is stressed, which is defined not only in environmental terms but also as a principle of justice for the future generations. The values of democracy, equality and sustainability are alternative to those of individualism and consumerism, typical of capitalism and of current liberalism. As Wright points out, the clash is also cultural, and this dimension is often present in the territorial movements including the no-TAP movement.

The *catalytic state* favours the evolution of a society in which decisions which may have an impact on collectivities are not taken collectively. The dissent, also cultural, against the TAP project is one of the many attempts to oppose this logic, through the rejection of macro processes that make economic values the unique model of reproduction of society. The construction of networks, including international ones, among territorial movements (as the network of relations of the no-TAP movement seems to confirm) could eventually converge in a macro conflict opposing the prevailing logic of economic growth and the vicious relationship between economic and state power.

Footnotes

[1] L., Bobbio (2011) «Conflitti territoriali: sei interpretazioni». In *TeMA. Trimestrale del Laboratorio Territorio Mobilità e Ambiente – TeMA Lab,* 4 (4): 79-88.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 79.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 86.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] *Ibidem*.

[6] *Ibidem*.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 80.

[8] *Ibidem*.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 81

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 82

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 85

[12] A., Prontera (2015) «Italian energy security, the Southern Gas Corridor and the new pipeline politics in Western Europe: from the partner state to the catalytic state». In *Journal of International Relations and Development,* 2 (21): 464-494.

[13]*Ibidem*, p. 373

[14] *Ibidem*, p. 375

[15] *Ibidem*, p. 371

[16] *Ibidem*, p 387-390

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 389

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 387-390

[19] C., Punzi, (2018) «Ecologia della protesta. Come il diritto osserva la disobbedienza». In *Nómadas. Revista Crítica de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas*, 4:1-15.

[20] A., Prontera, *op.cit*.

[21] N., Sartori, (2013) «Energy and Politics: Behind the Scenes of the Nabucco-Tap competition». In *IAI Working Papers,* 13 (27): 1-7.

[22] *Ibidem.*

[23] A., Prontera, *op.cit*., p. 388-390.

[24] Bagnoli, L. (2017) «No Tap, la lunga storia dell'opposizione al gasdotto pugliese». In *Lettera 43* (online: https://www.lettera43.it/it/articoli/politica/2017/04/23/no-tap-la-lunga-storia-dellopposizione-al-gasdotto-pugliese/209811/).

[25] C., Punzi, *op.cit.*

[26] *Idibem,* p. 4

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

[28] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 8.

[30] *Ibidem.*

[31] E., Weizman. (2007) *Hollow Land*. *Israleli's Architecture of Occupation*. London-New York: Verso. p. 5-6.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 162-163.

[34] No Tap – Official site of the no-TAP movement (on-line: https://www.notap.it/).

[35] E. O., Wright. (2012) «Transforming Capitalism through Real Utopias». In *American Sociological Review,* 10 (20): 1-25.

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