EDITORIAL

YOUTH AND THE REINVENTION OF POLITICS
New Forms of Participation in the Age of Individualization and Presentification

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ABSTRACT: According to mainstream theory, citizens and among them young people in particular are disenchanted and increasingly skeptical of representative democracy and traditional political organization. Indeed, the decline in conventional participation is accompanied by a process of the reinvention of politics, characterized by the spread of unconventional participation and innovative approaches and repertoires of action. New practices configure themselves as informal, non-institutionalized, horizontal, increasingly divorced from traditional collective social cleavages, but personally meaningful and individually oriented. Finally, politics also divorced from long terms projects, as the future folds back into the present, it is absorbed within it and it is consumed before it can really be conceived. The present appears as the only dimension available for the definition of choices, a fully-fledged existential horizon which includes and substitutes the future and the past. The acceleration of social life and its various times renders these two dimensions ever more evanescent as reference points for political action. Yet despite all of this, individualization and presentification do not equate with depoliticization. In a con-text shaped by the privatization of social and political experience and by a presentification of life-projects, the new forms of mobilization pro-

tagonized by youth can be analyzed as the search for a collective project by means of articulating and integrating diversity – as well as a way to express a deep form of indignation. In this monographic issue of *Partecipazione e Conflitto* we have recollected contribution which analyze the reinvention of participation – in direction of an alter-activism - in the age of individualization and presentification,

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1. Introduction

According to mainstream theory, citizens and among them young people in particular are disenchanted and increasingly skeptical of representative democracy and traditional political organization. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, this diagnosis stimulated a wide "crisis debate" about the End of Democracy, the End of Politics and the End of Sovereignty. Indeed, the decline in conventional participation is accompanied by a process of the reinvention of politics, characterized by the spread of unconventional participation and innovative approaches and repertoires of action. New practices configure themselves as informal, non-institutionalized, horizontal, increasingly divorced from traditional collective social cleavages, but personally meaningful and individually oriented. Finally, politics also divorced from long terms projects, as the future folds back into the present, it is absorbed within it and it is consumed before it can really be conceived. The present appears as the only dimension available for the definition of choices, a fully-fledged existential horizon which includes and substitutes the future and the past. The acceleration of social life and its various times renders these two dimensions ever more evanescent as reference points for political action.

Yet despite all of this, individualization and presentification does not equate with depoliticization.

Collectivistic collective action is replaced by individual collective action (McFarland and Micheletti 2003). The spread of networked individualism is accompanied by the shift from general organizations to single-issue movements, and finally to single-event mobilization. Political identities and mobilizations are less directed by social ties in the family, neighborhood, school or workplace over time, and increasingly guided instead "by the manner in which people participate and interact through the social networks which they themselves have had a significant part in constructing" (Loader et al. 2014).

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[1] The contribution originates from a shared reflection.
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Indignados and Occupy movements have been analyzed as the expression of "networked participation". They are example of "organizing without organization" practices (Rainie and Welmann 2012), rooted in the expression of discontent and indignation and mobilized through "connective action" (Bennett and Segerberg 2012). Participants combine individual and collective dimensions, post-materialist values and materialist claims (defense of the welfare state, social justice, employment) in an innovative way. In a context shaped by the privatization of social and political experience and by a pre-sentification of life-projects, these forms of mobilization can be analyzed as the search for a collective project by means of articulating and integrating diversity. As Melucci wrote in Challenging codes, "heterogeneity of condition and non-homogeneity of action shatter the unitary nature of young people's mobilizations but give greater specificity to their individual identities. Mobilization is not based on totalizing principles or values, which today cannot provide a sustainable youth identity; it is instead framed by the conjunction of global concerns and the ever narrower horizons close to individual everyday experience". Melucci's approach is more relevant today than ever, as it shifts the focus from "how" to "why" people participate.

This *Partecipazione e Conflitto* issue specifically examines the new forms of identification and explores the participative experimentation in which young people play a main role. We have invited scholars from different theoretical perspectives and fields of study to critically analyze the reinvention of participation in the age of individualization and presentification, to reflect on the rationales, goals and outcomes of participation with a particular, albeit not exclusive, reference to youth.

Key elements are the reconfiguration of the relation between the individual and collective dimensions, the reconnection of contingent individual needs and concerns in long-term general projects, and the collective and individual outcomes of mobilization.

The special issue of *Partecipazione e Conflitto* "Youth and the Reinvention of Politics. New Forms of Participation in the Age of Individualization and Presentification" tries to make a contribution in answering the following questions:

How do new forms of participation connect individual needs to collective identities? What is the effective outcome of new forms of participation, both on the individual and the collective level? May we compare new mobilizations to "swarms" (Bauman 2008), where both input and output are individualized? Is participation suffering a "neoliberal" transformation, merely becoming an individual tool to express individual concerns and to pursue individual interest? Or does networked individualism, challenging old structures and interaction modalities, allow people's uniqueness to converge in building a collective long-term project of political and social change?

"What happens to the youth participation in Europe?" is the demanding question proposed by Simona Gozzo and Rossana Sampugnaro, managing data from European Values Study researches. *The answer is blowin' in the wind* of structural characteristics of post-industrial society, rather than in the mere individualization process. The actual youth propensity for traditional political involvement is limited, in comparison to that of other age groups, and mainly involves self-related patterns, at the expense of the conventional participation. In the Authors' opinion, "this does not mean that young people do not act in a politically meaningful way, but they do so by linking their actions to specific issues, often related to the intimate sphere or that of everyday life" (*infra*: 772). The incidence of individualization determines one's choice of participation, but structural constraints do not disappear, as young people with a lower level of resources need a solid support to activate their own biographies, shifting from the "silent revolution" to the "silent rebellion", that is to say moving from Inglehart to Beck.

As democracy is a complex concept, Liberto Carratalá Puertas and Francisco José Francés García investigate the indicators commonly used to measure the democratic performance among the citizens. Their findings reveal how young people's expectations on democracy scarcely match with adults' point of view, identifying age "as a substantial difference in the definition of democracy" (*infra*: 795). Hence, democratic values are influenced by the social, economic and cultural context of those who possess them, instead of being immutable guide for theory and praxis. More deeply, values constitute adaptation to social environment and aim to preserve human societies. As a consequence, democracy itself should not be considered ad an invariable concept, external to citizens, but as an evolving instrument, depending on both individual and collective life.

Whereas Andrea Pirni e Luca Raffini illustrate the "reinvention of politics" in young generations – moving from theoretical contributions of sociological masters such as Beck, Giddens, Touraine, Melucci and Castells, and suggesting a new morphology in public spheres and collective identities – Lara Monticelli and Matteo Bassoli stress the role of job precariousness and unemployment as transnational "trigger" for youth collective mobilization. The authors address the existing limitations in the sociological literature on the topic and portray a set of ideal-typical individual profiles of participation of precarious workers, taking into account individual and contextual variables.

Riccardo Guidi, Marta Bonetti and Mariella Popolla explore a peculiar experience of youth participation, the University student organizations, suggesting a shift toward a reflexive and more professionalized approach to collective involvement.

Another common field – useful to a comparative research on young people's participation – is represented by blogging activism, which joins – in Yên May's and Sofia

Laine's article – two women coming from different and far distant countries, Tunisia and Vietnam. "Blogs are processes of production and consumption, a form of knowledge, communication and leisure activity, adopted and used in everyday life" (*infra*: 913): through the weblog, the two girls express their participatory culture and civic involvement, enabling a global identity and constructing their own home-space, "in order to bring positive changes into the communities, and not necessarily overtly challenging a political government" (*infra*: 894).

The use of digital platforms is the key element in Davide Arcidiacono's and Giuseppe Reale's research as well: the Open Data Sicilia movement – which they have investigated – is at a turning point, from an elitist and technocratic mobilization to a broad constituency. Finally, the 2015 Expo in Milan constituted an universal spotlight for both the city daily life and the network of activists who organized a counter-campaign, named after "Attitude NoExpo", which aims in the short term to produce noise and interference against the megaevent, and to develop the three main dynamics of the protest – debt, cement and precarity – in the long run: that is, an ambitious task, according to Luca Massidda's and Stefania Parisi's opinion, as the attitude at presentification involves also the unconventional politics.

2. Young people among anti-politics and new politics

Deinstitutionalization and desocialization processes (Touraine 1997) radically transform the social experience on various levels. On the individual biography level they encourage destandardization and disarticulation dynamics, while on the collective identity and social integration level they intensify social individualization and fragmentation processes. This happens in a presentified context (Leccardi 2014) which makes life-plans more and more reversible. In a nutshell, social change steps in, deeply altering territorial belonging, group membership, and standard life paths inclusion of individuals. It modifies individual and collective identities and planning perspectives. These processes especially affect the political participation sphere. Individualization and presentification seem to wear some of the collective action's premises away: collective identity creation and mobilization - on both symbolic and representation of interests levels - and long period social planning ability. Young people are both actors and spectators of this change. Individualization, presentification, deinstitutionalization, and desocialization lead to differed reactions. The common experience of traditional social structures and "overlapping rationality claims" (Beck 1992) weakening entails the risk of isolation, atomization, privatization, and depoliticization for some, while for

others it implies a "reinvention of politics" (Beck 1997) process. Such a diversification can be explained by the intersection and interweaving of structural and individual variables. In order to meet the challenge of individualization and presentification, new generations develop significantly differentiated approaches, values, strategies, and relational dynamics, based on their varied economic, social, and cultural assets, to express themselves as individuals and engage with society. As Bettin Lattes states, young people are a "kaleidoscope" made of flexibility, reversibility, and paradoxical intersection of behaviors (Bettin Lattes 2007).

To critically analyze this kaleidoscope's different facets, it is necessary to permanently turn from some oversimplified and reductive interpretation keys, which are still quite common in public displays and define the young people as apathetic and inert. Those interpretation keys took hold as a crystallization of theories that belonged to a different past historical and social context. The fact that they are still brought back up reveals the social sciences' inability to update their analytical tools. Youth's political apathy theories have been paying a methodological bias since the beginning: they have been looking for politics among institutional political systems and their actors, while it was not there anymore and they have been late in looking for politics in those new places where it was taking shape, out of the political system boundaries and into society (Alteri and Raffini 2007). Thus, the youth's indifference to politics surmise reproduced itself, broadening itself from a specific generation - the Eighties "invisible generation" (Diamanti 1999) - to all of the young people, from that decade onwards, to the point that this youth's political apathy theory has become a wider and more general citizens' political apathy theory. The young people of our time represent a kind of second generation of political disenchantment: they are the "children of disenchantment" (Bontempi and Pocaterra 2007); their relationship with politics is not put in comparison with that of supposedly politicized previous generations, but is put in comparison with that of their older brothers, sisters, or parents, who already grew up in a phase of participation crisis and change. On the other hand, the social, economic, cultural, and political context of the first decade of the new century significantly diverges from that of the 1980s and 1990s, since a whole set of different dynamics affects the social and political context. For the first time in decades, new generations are being socialized in a crisis setting; new economic and job uncertainties emerge; new arising conflicts and the global terrorism specter foster a deep sense of insecurity; the seemingly relentless process leading up to a global and culturally diverse society, according to some, seems to halt; new walls and new borders are established. All this plays a part in determining the relationship between young people and politics.

One of the interpretation keys that attempted to explain the "eclipse of politics" (Ricolfi 2002) among the generations that followed one another since the 1980s is the combined effect of social security and economic wealth increase, which contributed to reduce the urge for and the prominence of a political commitment (Van Deth 2000), shifting the values focal point towards the private sphere and the postmaterialist principles (Inglehart 1990). Politics focuses on "life-politics" and "subpolitics", today. Giddens uses the first of these two concepts to formalize the gradual decline in the significance of emancipation policies, aimed at reducing or ending exploitation, inequality, and oppression from social relations and promoting life-politics, individuals' empowerment and reflexive construction of their life project (Giddens 1991), against a backdrop of increasing risks and uncertainties, caused by the man-made action itself. The subpolitics concept defines certain domains that were considered non-political during the early modern period, but are becoming political now: economy, labor, consumption, and leisure time become new settings for politically relevant actions. Politics overcome political system's boundaries and dilutes itself into society (Beck 1992).

This "new politics" (Alteri and Raffini 2014) development and emergence process began long ago; it is rooted in the Sixties and Seventies movements, when the same generation which is now used as a benchmark to stigmatize the following ones' apathy, had a prominent role. At this stage, criticism and discontent for conventional politics and its actors constitute the reason behind "new social movements" (Melucci 1982; Touraine 1992): core values and claims are radically changing along with participation repertoires and collective action models. Traditional European social movements studies still represent an essential theoretical foundation, but they do not suffice to explain new forms of participation in the era of individualization and presentification, mainly because of the radicalization of those same elements, that scholars highlighted as underlying the change in the forms of participation. Individualization, collective identities' erosion and desacralization, cultural and values-related dimension's pluralization, intolerance of hierarchies and authority, growing attention to individual freedoms and self-realization have been fully accomplished, today. And that is true to the extent that unconventional participation - which is generally associated with the expression of new awareness and values that challenges mainstream politics - has somehow become mainstream politics itself, given that traditionally unconventional participation activities are more widespread than conventional ones, today. Is there any sense in describing those activities, which are particularly common among the young people, as "unconventional", in a sociological perspective? Could this be undeniable proof that the social and political innovations, initially claimed by a

minority, propagate to society? In this regard, it has been suggested that we could be witnessing the advent of a "movement society" (De Nardis 2009), in which the forms of participation and protest that characterized social movements become widely common. This new kind of participation developed between the individual and collective spheres, between the public and private dimensions, invades institutional politics, spreading new collective action repertoires that are distinctive of an unconventional kind of participation. Unusual approaches to politics and collective action repertoires take shape as non-institutional, horizontal, informal elements; they are more and more individually oriented and less patterned after robust collective identities and strong social rifts; they put aside traditional organizational structures and take on fluid and informal modalities. Young people, unlike their parents who were socialized when institutional politics started declining, have a main role in this process since they have been socialized in a structural crisis context, where - given that traditional actors failed and cannot be relied upon anymore - experimenting with new forms of participation is not an alternative way of being in politics, but it is the only way to do it. Therefore, for many young people the once defined "unconventional participation" sums up the entire political experience, even if this is not how they define it or deal with it. Collective identities seem to be vanishing to such an extent that society appears to be made up of individuals who are bringing forth fluid, temporary, and unstable collective actions and activism, in which the individual dimension does not disappear into the collective one, but keeps a main role.

The underlying question to be answered to understand the relationship between youth and politics is still the one that Melucci posed himself while studying new forms of activism among the "nomads of the present" (1989): why do individuals perform collective action in an increasingly personalized society? Melucci, just like Touraine, believes that the answer to this question cannot be other than cultural. This does not mean that we can - or must - leave the material dimension of life behind, even more in the existing context of uncertainties, risks, and new forms of inequalities, that mold individuals' lives, perceptions, and values, with arising conflicts that seem to be purely cultural, but basically still retain their material nature. Even the signs of rapprochement between young people and politics can be explained through cultural (new media participatory culture, networking tendency) and mainly structural drivers. Labour and social precarization, economic insecurity, and lack of expectations make collective action relevant and compelling for the so-called "precarious generation" (Standing 2013, Raffini 2014).

Basically, youth depoliticization theory seems to register just one aspect of the ongoing sweeping change, revealing its inability to understand and read into the

existing repoliticization and subpoliticization processes (Beck 1992) or the participative experimentation that took form along with the general deflection from institutional politics. The lessening of conventional participation goes with a citizens' increasing tendency to become involved in unconventional participation actions (e.g. protest movements or actions) and individualized activities. We need to work out new conceptual categories and interpretive tools to understand the reinvention of politics process - which resourceful and proactive young people are developing - that is going on beyond the current crisis of politics.

3. Individualized and networking participation: new forms of recomposition?

Reinvention of politics (Beck 1997) takes shape by means of overcoming restriction of politics to mere political systems and "dissolving" it into everyday life. This is a very complicated process: empirical repoliticization of new generations clashes with new, much more robust, depoliticization trends and with the cultural and structural obstacles that collective activism has to face. Reinvention of politics takes place from everyday habits, such as political consumerism, which constitutes the politicization of consumption (Forno and Graziano 2015) and is a classic example of an "individualized collective action" (Micheletti and McFarland 2010), or networking participation - especially on Social Networks Sites (Mosca and Vaccari 2011) - where public actions take place in private spaces or, depending on the case, private actions take place in public spaces (Papacharissi 2011). Activities carried out in the digital environment, are not purely and immediately politically oriented, but can *also* acquire political meanings through a hybridization and de-differentiation process involving codes, languages, and forms of action. In this respect, suffice it to mention the political significance and impact of social enterprises or sharing economy (Raffini 2016). This new politics manifests itself, often covertly or even invisibly, in territorial disputes, countless single-issue movements, and single-event mobilizations; nonetheless, it also emerges publicly, especially when the Global Society's environmental, social, economic, and political awareness rises. Social forums experience or OccupyWallSreet and Indignados mobilizations are just some of the stages marking this new politics emergence: these cutting edge forms of mobilization prove that collective action is feasible even without strong, predetermined collective identities or organized political structures. The key factor behind these new forms of participation that young people are experimenting with is the tendency to actively participate as individuals rather than community members. This induces a change in the role of political organizations and, above all, a

radical transformation of the relationship between collective identity and subjectivity and between individual identity and subjectivity. Members and activists no longer have a leading role in the "new politics": they give way to "networked individuals" (Renie and Welmann 2013), whose interactions set up a different kind of mobilization, which Bennett and Segerberg (2013) suggest to call "connective action" instead of "collective action", just to emphasize the relevance of individuals dimension in relation to their public connection. Networking politics doesn't need the same big bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations that characterized industrial society and also assigns an increasingly weaker role to informal, fluid, unstable collective subjects, such as political movements.

The actual impact of these new forms of participation on social and individual levels remains an open question. New forms of participation have a particularly temporary and unpredictable nature, as revealed in recent youth mobilizations. Such mobilizations embody an original identity, which is capable of combining individual experience with global dimensions (Pleyers 2010), but could be incapable of establishing a common horizon of meanings and practices, replacing collective action with sporadic initiatives that have no impact. From a skeptical point of view, we can say that new forms of mobilization could lead to the individualization, psychologization, and culturalization of conflict, disanchoring it from large-scale social identities and obtaining countless yearning individual units, which cannot go beyond the tribal horizon and can be easily reintegrated into new consumption practices (Formenti 2011). Conversely, the reinvention of politics practices, achieved by individuals' reconnection, can be seen as a political answer to liquid society's processes (della Porta 2013). Implementing reconnection allows differentiating an "atomized individualization" from a "publicly connected individualization", and reinvents politics within an individualizing context.

Participation is increasingly becoming an object of choice and negotiation: social relationships are losing their self-obvious nature to become objects of choice, so we should rethink participation also as a conscious act of choice that moves forward through experimentation and produces temporary, fluid forms of collective action. Prior identities, values, and common interests - which are very rarely seen in late modernity - or public rituals and liturgies reiteration do not support any form of participation in collective actions. Insecurity, uncertainty, and collective mobilization temporary nature remove the crutch that industrial society had been using and make participation a more costly - even in terms of fulfillment - and uncertain act. A deeply undefined and unstable participation loses its self-obvious nature. Within a context of youthfulness forced expansion, where presentification (Leccardi 2014), uncertainty, and insecurity reduce structural opportunities and motivations to collective action,

young people participate to build their individual and collective subjectivity, against the "corrosion of character" process (Sennett 1998), caused by neoliberal individualization and fragmentation tendencies.

Networked individuals publicly debated genuinely "public" matters, such as democratic procedures, inequalities issues, and the relationship between politics and economy. In doing so, they brought this kind of analysis back at the center of politics. In brief, they put the question of authority back at the center of debate.

All things considered, there seems to be something new: this new politics appears to be going beyond the traditional contrast between unconventional and institutional participation, towards a kind of hybridization of the two, aiming to convey practices, approaches and meanings from the first one to the second one, to modify it. We are talking about the so-called "movement-parties" (Kitschelt 2006), which stand for elections with specific approaches and organizational systems and represent an example of organizational hybridization (Bimber 1993). Movement-parties are not mass parties, which are based on the "identifying representation" (Pizzorno 1993) of stable and pre-existing collective identities, nor "catch-all parties" (Kats and Mair 1995), which are consumer-oriented: they represent a new way of setting and creating a political project in a networking individualism context, instead. Suffice it to mention movement-parties such as Syriza, M5S, and Podemos (Raffini 2017), which aspire to take the power keeping their typical structures and processes. They all share an ability to grab and give voice to young people's participation, also through populist approaches.

Precisely a kind of left-wing populism - overcoming the traditional left-right dichotomy and the centrality of the concept of class - according to a laclauian perspective, is more and more seen today as a strategy of rethinking politics. The "construction of people" (Laclau 2005; Errejón and Mouffe 2015) take place through the convergence of multiple social demands into a chain of equivalence. As a result, the society is divided into two antagonistic camps, the dominants and the dominated - the few and the many. The construction of people is the result of the integration of those who are denied an identity in a given order (cfr. Arditi 2010). The unitarity of the people, in a highly fragmented society, does not reflect the unitarity of condition and the homogeneity of social demands, but it is the result of a recomposition, that give voice to otherwise fragmented and individualized individuals, as precarius workers, working poors, migrants, ethnic minorities. In a post-ideologic society, the counter-hegemonic struggle is not reduced to the class struggle, as it represents just a line of conflict among others. It comprises a plurality of political identities and ethnic, gender, sexual, territorial, economic and cultural conflicts. Summing up, populism, according to Laclau, represent a way to overcome the crisis of representation and the growing anti-politics that charac-

terize liberal democracy. It is alternative both to personalization and to regressive appeal to people, conceived in substantial terms and allow for a reinvention of politics in the context of individualism,

The populist approach apparently share the basic assumption on which Negri and Hardt built their theory on the "Moltitude" (Negri and Hardt 2005). The theory of Multitude, according with the process of individualization above explored, argue that individuals and not people, nations, and classes, are the main actors of politics. The main difference is that, in the latter, no recomposition is expected. Multitude, defined as "totality of productive and creative subjectivities" (ivi) are ever changing singularities which struggle to be recognized. Multitude are not one people but many networked people, that substituting collaborative relationship for hierarchical authority, can build a "democratic resistance to Empire" by means of networking and sharing.

Trying to draft a partial conclusion, the widely spread diagnosis about individualization and social and political fragmentation does not necessarily leave to support a depoliticization thesis. Behind the crisis of the liberal-representative model of democracy and the erosion of the traditional forms of participation we find a reinvention of politics and a rethinking of the very concept of democracy. New politics takes place in sharing and cooperation between networking individuals, more than inside pre-existing groups and collective actors. Yet, the question that remains open is not about the possibility of new kind of participation and the spread of new way to think and practice democracy, especially among youth. What is still to critically assess is the ability of the new practices of subjectification, sharing, and resistance and conflict realized by individuals and multitudes, to merge in a collective project of transformation of society. Otherwise, we should conclude that the spread of new politics is possible, but it is unable to change the dominant structure of society and its power relations. In other words, it would be ineffective and easily reabsorbed in the dominant model and its political, social and economic logics. It's a kind of critical analysis that we can be applied to a plurality of phenomena and practices that are protagonized by youth, from the new forms of mobilization to the sharing economy.

5. The challenge of responsibility

Does it represent a true novelty? Being absorbed in a society is no more explainable as a river, but "as a set of puddles and swimming pools" (Bauman 1999), do young people indeed face new living conditions or do they offer unprecedented versions of the old model of compromise, between family continuity and generational cleavage,

resilience and permeability, identity and identification? Are they presenting old demands introduced with a new appearance, post-modernist updating of social-biological anxieties? Though everything massively changes, young people remain young people, and they increasingly seem to be younger and to consider themselves *as young people*. Considering that generations follow one another, synthesizing them is a fascinating exercise between social sciences and literature (Bettin Lattes 2008): focusing only on the twentieth century, we could list the youngest cohorts of the Fascism and the Nazism, those engaged in the Resistance, the "Sceptic Generation" of the second Postwar period, centered on the initial "silent individualism"; furthermore, there is the stormy Sixties – a cleavage rather than a political generation – the climate of violence of the following decade, the *invisibility* of the Eighties, the "Risk Generation" divided between political ecology and anti-neoliberalism and finally the "disenchantment" of the 2000s. Generations pass, while in the course of time the issue of the "culture of responsibility" claims attention, defined as the ratio between the *actor* and the *action*, far from of the incidence of duty in social life: on the one hand, there is the constant reference to the *commitment of choice*, politically shaping the minute aspects of daily life, on the other hand, there is the loss of accountability towards ethical options and adhesion to the "Metanarratives", which are replaced by *prêt-à-porter* convictions and by fragmentary political frames (honesty of the political élite , public security against illegal immigration, the Euro opposition). In the end, which is the message in the bottle?

A rationalization without any plan and a dissent without any conflict. Responsibility is something different, indeed: the strategic dimension of the action which does not exclude *a priori* uncertainty and ambivalence, synthesizing them within the ethical field, where the *logos* – i.e. the "Absolute Truth" – comes to terms with the *demos* (i.e. the principle of political representation on which the modern state is based). On the contrary, now we claim that the state system is ethically neutral, but then we are surprised when political and religious movements refuse to enter the public sphere and make their own – both physical and symbolic - places of discussion autonomous. Do we therefore have to think about "search for meaning" performed by *uti singuli*? Not necessarily, in fact empirical evidence suggests the opposite: the environmental protection, the promotion of subcultures, the gender issue, the interfaith dialogue, the solidarity with vulnerable groups constitute aggregation and recomposition factors which presuppose, however, a new reflection about social ties and citizenship, with the aim of giving visibility to public spheres that already exist, though in a minority condition, and not always are capable of negotiating.

Thus, the Experience is not finished yet, but multiplied, made continuous, inter-mittent in duration and intensity. Moreover, it is interactive and does not provide an *inside* and an *outside*, namely an external space from which it could be observed and, in case, activated. As a consequence, the ones who announced "the end of the Experience" should shift themselves towards the end of "metaphysics of presence" (i.e. n.117 issue of *Philosophy Now*, with the provocative question "Is *Metaphysics* out of date?") that is the belief in the existence of an external reality pure and independent from the actor. On the contrary, knowledge is "autopoietic", it neither pretends having godfathers or masters, nor does it respect copyrights or creators, it considers itself material and immaterial. This happens primarily because there is a lack of shared consciousness – that also could allow to historicize one´s place in the world – and because the above mentioned experiences often are digital, horizontal, interconnected and time is too short for assimilation. Nowadays the chronological horizon is shortened and inevitably focused on the present, so as to promote a self-regulated ethics instead of an adhesion to the "Great Ideals". Even more necessary, therefore, is the appealing of the responsibility, at least in a developed version, consistent with the late modernity: not a Kantian ethics of duty, but the expression of a social action by which the individual meets the community stimulation. From rationality to relationship, in a way; from being imputable to being able to answer.

The "sociological responsibility" does not live in the imperative, but is expressed in experienced life: it is not sought to be "credible", but coherent with the society frame. It matters an individual's prerogative, but in terms of his/her being *inner to the history* and *inside the society*, playing the part of the "moral agent by himself" (Leccardi 1999). In the modern period ethical behavior was delegated to the institutions, which ensured its rational development, so that, from Durkheim onwards, the absence of values was considered a social problem, more than an individual deficit. Nowadays a secular and universalistic ethics is seemingly impractical, that is why the responsibility for one's behavior is sent back to the individual and "re-personalized". This is the case, however, of the establishment of a theoretical system of obligations – which today is also absent and replaced by the "empty technicolor" of the consumer society (Lipovetsky 1983) - rather of the expression of emotions and moral feelings, plenty of uncertainties, contradictions, discontinuities… and based on the recognition of differences upon every point of view. If society can no longer hinge on generalizable moral ties, the individual faces two alternatives: giving in to the lure of a merely cosmetic society or self-assembling one's own ethical path, by the means of a constant interpretation and re-interpretation of one's actions. In the first case, it would mean cultivating only selfish interests, punching the ticket of one's transcendence in the "postulated and imagined

communities", thus adhering to rituals defining spaces of irrationality; in the second case, instead, the dimension of inter-subjectivity is "saved" by a compatible and non-aesthetic reflexivity, that "outsources" one's Self towards the Others, avoiding to reduce it solely to its uniqueness. But there is one issue at stake.

The individual is not a monad, and the society is *blood and bone*: the possibilities and limits of social action are defined (perhaps above all) by the external variables and structures of the social system. An example is the scientific know-how of the time and its skill to accelerate social relations and to repress them. Science weighs subjectivity and responsibility, as if it sets the instruction manual for social action, from the starting point of the individuality, being however strictly bounded by the political and economical structure of the context. Not by chance, at the decline of the "classic" industrial society – which assigned to the First World working class the production of goods and used the Third World only for the surplus outlet – corresponds the crisis of modern politics, in which the institutions of the Party, the Trade Unions and the nuclear Family are no longer able to guarantee the legitimacy of the democratic political system. As it follows, economic interests move a massive attack against labour rights, carrying in the First World the working conditions which were prerogatives of the Third one, and going to fill, by this way, the vacuum of political leadership.

In order to understand the issue, we have to move a step forward. The context of Weber's theory has changed, specifically in the sense of the ethics of responsibility, aimed at proposing rational actions free of any moral values. The German sociologist set the above mentioned ethics as a value in itself but, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Weberian State had been growing fast and its bureaucracy – almost as an "iron cage" – made necessary room for subjectivity, on the condition that it was compatible.

Today the state has abdicated its function of integrating both the proletariat and the working class, whose material conditions of social life and the diffusion of shared values pay the consequences of the eclipse of the state itself. Under the ashes "the flame of pure conviction" burns, shaping a religious frame in the Jihad case and threatening the Enlightenment approach, more than Western culture *tout court*. Does our society suggest to seek a transcendental interpretative key, far from the science syntax and the democratic mechanism? What can we offer to those young people who, albeit indifferent to Muslim radicalism, convert their political engagement into extempore urban riots? At this point "the surplus society" needs to be mentioned, both in the version of unexpected and "spiteful" electoral votes (against the permanency of Great Britain in EU, in favour of Donald Trump, or supporting differentiated anti-system parties) and of

the contentious action of the "banlieue sons" that devastated the city center (Alteri 2013).

Today, another difference compared with the past is also the incidence of the science, measured by the biographical self-construction (Giddens 1990) to which post-modernism obliges the individual. The path towards responsibility comfortably conforms itself to the agenda setting imposed by technology, especially about issues directly involving one's biography. The boundaries of our moral responsibility risk to be limited by opinions on abortion, euthanasia, Pacs and civil unions, the procedure for child adoption, that is fifty-fifty arguments whose subjective opinion is based on the latest technicality, as a further example of the increasing "juridification" of social relations.

Younger generations are not expected to handle a "rational world paradigm" – being free from the metaphysical weight of the *Weltanschauung* – but only "talk show-opinions", not surprisingly learned just from talk shows. The development of responsibility is built on sand since the gap between the importance of the decision areas (genetics, economics, politics, religion) and the cultural tools made available to young adults: life, death, sexuality, identity and gender roles, represent themes of debate, negotiation and decision. Too often, though, the inputs provided by the market, the welfare state or the institutions of collective life seem to be just acts of "voyeurism" performed by those who wish to enter our private sphere, rather than supplying guidelines able to suggest certainties or doubts. Hence, inter-personal relations are governed by immediately practical interests, and require instant responses: responsibility is no longer interpreted as an "imputation" but as a "relation", which means that it never rests and is always on the move, producing an ethics functional to the action, more than to the belief. It is everyday life, even before heroic achievements or exceptional events, which demands "operational" guidelines limited to a "routinely ethical know-how" (Leccardi 1999: 77), not aimed at defining any Very Important Person, nor unbelievable Wickedness, but "present-codes of behaviour employees", managing responsibility just as a procedure. Moreover, if daily life is sub-politicized, ethics seemingly becomes the handbook of micro-interactions, played between the thrust of individuality, and the pressure of conformity. The path is not smooth and peaceful, indeed, doubts and uncertainties are largely widespread. The point is not the risk of standardization of response strategies - which is common to make various attempts in order to reduce complexity - but the gap between the demand for self-defined responsibilities and the decline of institutional organs that should contribute to form them. That is what Zygmunt Bauman (1992) famously pointed out by "ethical paradox of post-modernity" definition, namely the contradictious mismatch between

the new authorities of the individual ethical choices and the adequate availability of social resources. Bauman notably referred to universal principles, but today the deficiency is extended to those institutions and political structures whose bankruptcy makes *pactum unionis* ethereal and elusive.

5. Social Actor and Social System in the Hyper-democracy Era

The matter under discussion here is the death of metaphysics, which is explained by the materialization of responsibility and in the triumph of corporealness, like a desperate response to the digitized world and the virtualized experiences. In the self-definition of the responsibilities we mark the differences with the Other and commit ourselves to give Him/Her a warm welcome or, on the contrary, we refuse this awareness and reject the Migrant. Both cases lack a Great Theory about the model of society, the amount of rights, the means of production, the social punishments and the limits and the boundaries of freedom. There is no longer the pursuit of Myth, which Nietzsche argued would replace History, instead it is substituted by a sort of pragmatism whose symbolic elements represent the interpretative keys of everyday life. There is no longer the Counterculture - which according to Luciano Gallino constituted the primacy of feelings and emotions against the rationality, as well as the expansion of consciousness and the attempt to overcome the sensory limits - as there is no longer even a Culture to be opposed to; just a frame of "cool efficiency", within which we find the claim of honesty, a kind of undifferentiated "blobbling" where the whole political élite is absorbed. Hence, there is no longer Counterculture, but Subculture, where young people are unable to produce an original and alternative Metanarrative: they simply "abstain" themselves from the dominant culture, proposing new issues and standards, though without the aim for a general validity. The results are micro-social pacts applied only to members of the subculture, without radically changing the status quo.

It is insufficient and in the end misleading to argue that the field of Culture and Subculture stably occupies the area of the conflicts in the "second modernity": according to a deeper analysis, it is a dispute concerning spatiality rather than politics, by modulating the borders among Culture and Subculture, referring to a quantitative, rather than a qualitative relation (Alteri and Raffini 2014). Belonging to a subculture, indeed, means sharing a group or near-group whose "agility", however, is determined, almost "granted", by mainstream culture, prompt to co-opt innovative and compatible instances. The actual horizon of the conflict overcomes the category of 'against' and

seeks to dismantle the dichotomy "above/below" as the main cultural issue and its subordinates. In the most virtuous contexts a kind of cultural sprawl is produced, i.e. a messy conglomeration of room, time, identity and issue, proudly horizontal and able to draw the new map of complexities. Individuals, especially the younger ones, cross the Self and the Other, defining their commitment in society according to the character-ristics of the New Politics: in the absence of a renewed 1917-Revolution there is anything but a polycentric and often contradictory set of powers. What is – if any - the room for contentious action? Or, on the contrary, will Millennials generation not be characterized by political protest, as often happened in the past decades? If youth culture is no longer "against" and its politics no longer specifically "anti-something" may there be an inter-generational *continuum* of values? Or would the confrontational attitude of the young people only aim at the full membership in the "adult society"? The "late modernity", moreover, highlights the identity differences - instead of homo-genizing them - and provides people with new aggregative dimensions (in the terms of territory, consumption, communication protocols), with respect to *political transverse* and the end of the redistribution paradigm. Who opines that this happens more or less congruently with New Left's assertions forgets that, in the second half of the twentieth century, the issues of national liberation, cultural recognition and promotion of differences aimed to overcome the neoliberalism and capitalist system, without igno-ring the economical frame.

Nowadays, on the contrary, some vanguard try to "politicize" the territorial identities and the cultural issues, by a wise use of new media platforms. Hence, "the politics lands at the Web" and a growing layer of population has an experience *always-on*: they do not surf the Net, they live on the Net (Raffini 2014: 169), by shifting there the entire staff (media management, class struggle, control agencies, the so-called "silent majority") and focusing on the supposed uniqueness of the individual, hence, for the latter, the ever-lasting need of identification. In such a context, Politics continues to provide resilience paths and old *checks and balances*, in coherence with the modernity which will not abdicate its role: the protagonism of civil society, the politicization of the different fields of social action, the '2.0 activism', the direct accountability requested by the citizens to their representatives are the insurgent variables of the participatory outline. The latter suggests that it is not the Politics, but the political organizations to be in crisis; the party on the ground and not the Party *tout court*; the state admini-stration and not the Sovereignty; the physical location of the decision making - more volatile and transnational than in the past - not the Legislative power; finally the work as the linchpin of social identities, not the Labour.

Politics means positioning social relations on the highest level of generality, which would make an actual empirical quest virtually impossible, as argued by Leonardo Morlino (1994), except through an appropriate balance between the exact distinctiveness of Politics and its "universal ontology". Which is the new generation's point of contact? It depends on their concept of power, the class division, the party system, the distinction between the elite and the masses, the network of solidarity and cooperation: in a nutshell, it depends on the *quidditas* of Politics. Transferred to the individual, the responsibility itself becomes the point of contact between the political supply and demand, avoiding the regression of the political supply into populism and of the political demand into 'pretence' (term taken from Bruno Leoni's path-breaking study in 1957). At the conjuncture of the two lines of responsibility there are both the issue of Power and Politics; similarly, the present eclipse of the responsibility is due to a double crisis - as it is argued by the articles of this issue - both in the political supply and demand: a discouraged citizenship and a de-legitimate political system. Politics is downgraded to "administration of the existing order", with honesty and efficiency as benchmarks, and *téchne* substituting the Law (Larochelle 1990), albeit just in favour of the élites. The incidence of economic crisis and the complexity of global society produces a process of social simplification confirming the Marxian thesis of the proletarianization of the middle classes, that is the actual heritage of assertive capitalism (Therborn 2007; Burgio 2009).

This is *a game of snakes and ladders*: at this point we can speak of "democracy at risk" and of authoritarian regression, as citizens are unable to formulate their own vision of society, whereby thinking and making rational choices. If you lack class consciousness and subjective awareness, your daily life seeks those immediate responses to your needs that populistic suggestions seem ready to furnish. Moreover, this radical change in the role of the state, which is today limited to the authoritative endorsement of the relegation as "a fact of life" and to the effectiveness of the "condition of exemption". Instead of deepening the effort to keep the underclass in, the "post-panoptical power of the states" skills are developed by keeping out the undesirables, such as outsiders, inmates or *human rejects*. There is a lot of political capital ready to be creamed of the war against the "aliens" or the "alienated".

The hyper-democracy (Rodotà 2004) derives not only by the ICTs pervasive utilization in the political praxis, but generally by the plebiscite-like transformation of late modernity politics, to force the citizens to a yes/no vote, as in a permanent "instant referendum". Already Ortega y Gasset described this condition as "an emotional manipulation" of the masses, similar to the one in the totalitarian regimes. Back in vogue, the Gramscian definition of "passive revolution" explains how the class struggle

has been transformed into an opposition between 'high' and 'below', namely an oligarchy and an indistinct crowd, with no potential intervention by trade unions and political parties. Nowadays the only extremism is conservative.

Not only 'revolution': as well as concepts like 'public interest', 'citizenship', 'commons', 'decision-making', 'security', even 'nationalization' (thinking of the heavy state intervention to rescue several financial institutions) do acquire a new meaning and invite social scientists to update the interpretative keys. What do we respond to those who wander in the night? To cut the long story short, a shift of paradigm, getting over the barrier between the theories of the Social Actor and the ones of the Social System: if the latter, as already noted by Luciano Gallino (1987: 5), inevitably characterize sociological discipline, they become "a sort of uncritical behaviorism" without a solid theory of the Social Actor. Quantitative analyses, socio-demographic data, surveys on political participation and cultural identities cannot dispel the *black box* darkness, from which "the output of strikes and votes, migrations and deviant behaviours, religious practices and ideologies emerges" (ibid).

The deficient dialogue between Social Actor and Social System theories offers two further negative externalities: it weakens the reflections about collective action – progressively limited at *ex post* explanation of the observed events – and postpones the solution of the "sociological dilemma", by which scholars investigating society are inevitably agents of the society itself. Therefore, the observer seems rather unlikely being able to formulate a theory of the observed object, unless he is fully capable of describing himself.

6. Alter-activism and indignation

Putting the different aspects of contemporary forms of participations into relation, as they emerge in the articles published in this issue of the journal, a concise term that appears able to give the new characteristic of this participation is surely alter-activism (Juris and Players 2009; Glasius and Pleyers 2013). The alter-activism that we are here referring to encompasses the vision of politics that today's youths express: a vision founded on the coherency between practices and values; on the transformation of the self, inseparable from commitment to transform the world; on the centrality of subjectivity and creativity; on the experimentation of forms of direct democracy. The form of temporality to which alter-activism is connected is the present, but it a present with a different quality to that which presentism nurtures and with which youths and not so young people as well need to face. The present can, in the framework of alter-activism,

turn into a political present in its own sense. In this framework, the present becomes the temporal dimension that encompasses change: first of all the change of the self entwined with the changes of everyday relations, a sure indicator of the horizon in which the new forms of political participation move. Under this profile, it is important to remember the close relation between redefinition of the present and politics – the present is here a time that welcomes and supports the political project – to avoid reproducing a reading of the youth that takes refuge in the here-and-now as an escape from commitment and participation. The form that political planning takes on today directly leads to the construction of daily spaces and times in which one can express oneself as an individual, in search of foreshadowing of the world that one intends to construct (Pleyers 2016).

The widespread sentiment that accompanies this redefinition of politics and participation is a mix of trust in the possibility for everyday change, beginning from the change in oneself, and of the manifestation of indignation. Regarding this last aspect, strictly connected to the "new politics" and the background of all the practices of contemporary participation, is worth pausing on here.

The indignation expressed by young alter-activists encompasses a plurality of aspects of contemporary public life, all connected and attributable to the hegemony of neo-liberalism: indignation for the increase in inequalities in the globalised world and for the destruction of the ecosystem; indignation for growing job insecurity and life precariousness, which dramatically affect the possibility of reaching aspirations with life practices.

In an age like ours of "sad and cold passions" – to refer to key words of Benasayag and Schmit's essay (2003) – indignation looks like a vital and "hot" social passion, able to construct civic awareness, to introduce, no differently from other moral emotions, awareness of the world and development of reflexivity. Indignation removes the veil of injustice, and makes injustice identifiable. At the same time, it opens to the "capacity to aspire" (Appadurai 2004): to the possibility of imagining a different future, and to construct it beginning with everyday life. Since through the sentiment of indignation the "same wound is felt by those who are not directly hit by injustice, but who experience it as such" (De Monticelli 2011: 85) it contributes to increasing social bonds.

From the visual point of view here privileged, we can state that the presence of this moral sentiment appears opposite to the "passion for wellbeing", which recalls individualism conceived as utilitarian egoism (Pulcini 2011). Indignation as civil passion recalls awareness of being faced with a violation – of the democratic ideals of equality, dignity, justice, freedom, and of the corresponding rights. In this sense, it actively obstacles the individualism analysed by Tocqueville as disposition to be concerned only with

one's wellbeing and the wellbeing of one's own circle of family and friends, avoiding public involvement (Tocqueville 1835-1840/1981). Indignation calls us as individuals, but brings us far from this concept of individualism: questioning our singularity and uniqueness to connect it closely to our sense of personal responsibility. Just as taking on responsibility, indignation does not allow for mechanisms of delegation. In this sense, as will be later argued, indignation interrogates the single individual, creating an individualism that has nothing to do with selfishness. While it directly involves, while it mobilises the individual, it evokes the plan of social justice.

In the frame of indignation, the individual is brought into play as *a citizen* – on the basis of an active and everyday concept of citizenship. In this framework, citizenship is not just a question of rights and obligations, but of relations and everyday practices. In fact, there is a close connection between *lived citizenship* (Lister 1997) and experience of civil indignation. The later, if placed in relation to the first, creates identity and belonging, and above all becomes an important medium of participation. Its quality is of keeping the near and far united, as well as the space and time of the local and the global, the sense of cosmopolitan belonging (in its different faces, cultural and political) and the specificity of here-and-now involvement. A new vocabulary of action is constructed in which first person involvement and responsibility are two sides of the same coin; in which emotional and ethical dimensions and political issues enter in positive conjunction. In this sense, indignation opens to motivations and fresh perspectives for political action, sheds light on a new mental *habitus* and a new *modus operandi*.

If indignation is a traditional precondition to the development of forms of civic engagement (Hessel 2001) – and, in the new century, also a means to develop a new humanism (Capelli 2012) – in recent years it took on a special significance. On the one hand, in many parts of the world – from Europe to America, from Africa to Asia – this sentiment is at the centre of forms of collective action and paves the way for anticapitalistic political programmes (like the political youth movements at the beginning of the second decade of this century have shown). On the other hand, it seems fitting to the emergence of forms of individualism in which the ethical dimension is central.

7. Indignation and individualism

To fully understand the meaning and weight of this affirmation, together with its cultural and political repercussions, it is opportune to briefly pause on the dynamics of contemporary individualism. In an age of "institutionalized individualism", as it has been defined (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), collective attention falls on the individ-

uals who "construct their own life" – a sort of new categorical imperative of the contemporary age. Social problems tend to be elaborated as individual crises; structural changes as cultural changes. Each individual must write their own existential script, take responsibility for their own decisions even when the problems are clearly from outside (for example, those connected to work). In the perspective traced by institutionalized individualism, the individual is called to elaborate in biographical terms (and find personal solutions) for these questions of systemic character. Summarising this debate, Bauman (2000) states that the process of contemporary individualism transforms human identity from a given to a task to be accomplished, attributing to actors the entire responsibility with respect to the realisation of this task.

But this is just one side of the coin. On the other side are the ways individuals continue to negotiate forms of self-construction able to guarantee autonomy; they ask for recognition and produce strategies for achieving this goal. The capacity to feel indignation towards violations of one's own and others' dignity can be considered a typical expression of this process. Despite the impoverishment of public discourse and the marketization of social relations, privatism does not represent the only key through which contemporary dynamics of individualisation can be interpreted.

The French sociologist Danilo Martuccelli (2010), proposes the term *singularisme* to encompass the complexity of these dynamics. The matrix of *singularisme* would be of an exquisitely social character. If in individualism personal independence is most important, together with the supremacy of individual interests with respect to group interests, in *singularisme* originality, incomparability, being unique is most important. Thus, if privatism is characterised by a *tout court* loss of the community, in *singularisme* the relationship with the other is not negated, but passes through the relationship with oneself and the search for their own uniqueness. The relationship with the social sphere is here connected by the centrality of the relationship with oneself. In this framework, that which is collective is indicated *beginning with* each individuality.

The indignation of alter-activists in the twenty-first century can be considered the expression of this "singularist" tendency, within which subjectivity plays an important role. The sentiment through which indignation is expressed is, as can be said, the fruit of the profound work that individuals perform on themselves – through a process that, however, does not isolate them, but puts them in relation with the other and the social sphere. In this context, the dimension of experience, the re-elaboration of one's own life experiences, is central: for example, shedding light on the social limits of the possibility of personal self-realisation today. The relationship with the social sphere does not disappear, but is built on the connections between one's own and other personal expe-

riences. All these experiences are characterised by the impossibility to fully express abilities and competences, and to have them recognised.

Here we can insert an aspect of particular analytical interest brought to light by Martuccelli regarding the role of institutions in social and personal life. Institutions are no longer the engine of social integration, but rather are viewed as guarantors of personal realisation, considered *at the service* of individuals. Under this profile, the crisis of the welfare model that today weighs on the individuals' shoulders becomes an occasion for analysis of the limits of personal relations with institutions. The crisis of the European social model is proposed in concrete terms, in relation with one's life chances. In fact, welfare's strength, in final analysis, was to guarantee those possibilities for self-determination, so central to the increase in *singularisme*. The uncertainty of the present and of the future makes these life chances more and more precarious. The weakening/reshaping of welfare is therefore transformed from a public political question into a personal problem. Indignation is born and develops also in response to this injustice, which deals with the individual just as much as with the group. And against this injustice – when, for example, one is faced with the enormous destruction of wealth generated by international finance – that a stand is taken. The profound sentiment of indignation that comes from this, we could say by borrowing the language from the women's movement of the seventies, connects the personal and political. In this way, a sort of "sociological imagination" – to use the term of the American sociologist Wright Mills (1959) – is reintroduced: the possibility to keep biography and history, the micro and macro social dimensions, and everyday life and historical processes together. However, unlike that of Wright Mills, here the starting and finishing point coincide: personal life, the uniqueness of one's experience are fundamental reference points. Indignation allows the connection between that unique life and personal experience and the other and the elsewhere. In a nutshell, *singularisme* leaves privatism behind.

8. A different political intelligence

In his reflections on *singularisme*, Martuccelli wonders if it also carries an epochal change of political intelligence. This is an important question, especially for our reflection. Why another political intelligence? Because in this frame the individual is the starting point of the process: through one's emotions, for example, public issues can be discussed; expert knowledge is no more the only reference point for competent action. Indignation as a political sentiment incarnates this feeling well. Following Martuccelli,

the "singularist transformation" would be marked by several indicators. Let's take a closer look at them.

First, social relations would often be perceived in the same way as human relations and social injustices would tend to be represented as recognition problems rather than problems of redistribution. For this reason, the conflicts would be inclined to be personal and, consequently, their emotional impact would increase. The sentiment of indignation can easily be connected to this surplus of emotions. At the same time, it does not allow that political potential, which is already within the social relations of conflict, to be lost.

Second, as regards the relationship with institutions *singularisme* would underline the need for institutions to be able to *offer services* to the individuals. This is far from a traditional vision of institutions as regulatory machinery with which they must simply synchronise. The individuals must be able to "lean on" the institutions, gather resources for action from them, and not obligations. Today, institutions are requested to recognise the role individuals play within them; to show awareness regarding the centrality of individuals' lives for institutions' continuity (without individuals there are no institutions). The institutions are the ones that need the single individuals because they continue in virtue of their existence, and not vice versa. Indignation expresses well not just this distance from the existing institutional universe, but also the *question* of different institutions founded on equality and equal opportunities.

Thirdly, attention on everyday live emerges, in *singularisme*, more as centrality assigned to practical life than as importance given to continual participative engagement. In this sense, moments of mobilization would be privileged with respect to a constant engagement. In accord with this vision, the mobilization of several contemporary social movements, for which indignation can be considered an unifying ethical/political sentiment, are guided by karstic form of organization: they appear and disappear, can be active but not visible from all perspectives. The logic of participation and political action that they show are in this sense far from the idea of traditionally conceived political engagement.

Fourthly, there is a relation between forms of empowerment and *singularisme*. Today the difficulty connected to forms of collective mobilization would be unbalanced by the increase in power of individual action, especially thanks to the web (and, more in general, thanks to the consistent increase of education). Just as in the framework of ICTs individual and collective action often appear to be difficult to separate, also indignation can connect the two dimensions of the individual and the extra-individual. Furthermore, on a wider plane, one can say that the forms of empowerment also act on

the potential for indignation by individuals and groups: the more their empowerment grows, the more their capacity for indignation increases.

Finally, we must at least mention the complex relation between *singularisme* and issues of justice. Within *singularisme* personal situations can be read as issues of social justice, while fields that are considered *par excellence* estimable in terms of justice cannot just be presented in this key. For example, injustice can become a synonym of that which impedes forms of self-fulfilment. Obviously, this doesn't mean that the big social issues that accompany neoliberalism are not experienced as issues of justice. The increase in social inequality to that of job insecurity are processes that have serious consequences on the lives of individuals. That which is highlighted is above all the nexus between one's own existence and the big public issues. Indignation expresses completely the intertwinement between the self and the social: the possibility for self-control as subjects, to keep the horizon of possibility open, and to build the future are tightly linked to the destiny of social justice.

In conclusion, indignation as political passion is a strategic dimension not only to understand meaning and forms of political engagement today - starting from alter-activisme. It is also strategic to understand the changes which involves the relation between citizenship and new "social singularities". The generations can be united by this passion (Stéphane Hessel, author of the well known pamphlet *Indignez vous'!*, was born in 1917 and was 93 when he wrote it). In this historic time, it is not a minor connection.

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