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## A Study in Anthropology

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-The Anti-Globalization Movement and the City of Naples, Italy-\*

|Eduardo Zachary Albrecht|\*\*

### 인류학연구

반 세계화운동과 이태리 나폴리 도시

이 논문의 목적은 세계화에 반대하는 운동과 이태리 나폴리 지역에서의 사회적이고 정치적인 전후사정 간의 관계를 규명하는 데 있다. 이 연구에서는 크게 두 가지 질문에 대한 대답을 추구하고 있다. 첫째는 어떻게 나폴리 지역에서의 사회적인 상황들이 지역 내의 항의 운동에 영향을 줄 수 있는가에 대한 것이고, 둘째는 그러한 항의 운동들이 나폴리 도시의 정치적인 상황에 어떤 영향을 미치는가에 대한 것이라고 할 수 있다. 이 두 가지 질문에 대해서 본 논문에서는 세 가지 요인들을 이용해 평가하려고 한다. 첫 번째 요인은 가족, 범죄 그리고 교회의 역할에 대한 것이다. 두 번째 요인은 나폴리 도시에 대한 민족적인 서술과 이 도시의 사회적인 체제이다. 마지막 세 번째 요인은 나폴리 도시에서의 정치적 운동과 저항 운동 간의 관계이다. 이러한 질문과 요인들에 대한 본 논문의 결론을 말하자면, 반 세계화운동과 나폴리 지역에서 일어나는 항의 운동 사이에서는 정치적인 결과물이나 연속성을 찾아볼 수 없다는 것이다. 하지만, 나폴리 지역의

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항의 운동은 젊은 계층들이 참여했다는 점에서 심리학적인 면에서 매우 중요한 역할을 했다고 볼 수 있다. 왜냐하면 그 운동은 나폴리 지역의 젊은 층에게 높은 수준의 범죄율과 권위 있는 위치에 있는 사람들의 부패 그리고 도시 내에서 보편적으로 발생하는 폭력에 대한 그들의 불만과 좌절감을 표현하는 데 일조하고 있다고 할 수 있기 때문이다. 이 연구는 저자가 나폴리에서 2002년 9월부터 2003년 7월까지 약 1년을 보내면서 참여 관찰과 질적 연구 중 하나인 대상자들과의 인터뷰를 통해 이루어졌고, 또한 그 해에 나폴리 도시에서 반세계화 운동으로 조직된 다양한 정치적인 항의운동에 참여하는 것을 통해 이루어졌다. 저자는 항의자들과 매일의 보통 일상생활에서 관계를 맺으면서 조사하였고, 그 기간 동안 도시의 항의자들과 일반 시민들 간의 100개 이상의 인터뷰 자료들을 수집할 수 있었다. 참고문헌들은 인류학과 정치학 두 분야 모두에서 사용되는 것으로 인류학 분야에서는 Italo Pardo and Thomas Belmonte의 연구에서 많은 도움을 받았고, 정치학 분야에서는 Edward Banfield, Isaia Sales and Robert Putnam를 비롯한 많은 여러 학자들의 연구에서 도움을 얻었다.

[주제어 : 인류학, 나폴리 지역, 반 세계화주의, 항의 운동, 가족주의, 범죄조직, 부패]

## 1. Introduction

From September 2002 to July 2003 I conducted fieldwork amongst anti-globalization protesters in Naples, Italy. At the time, anti-globalization ideals and stances were articulated through a large and dynamic protest movement. Young protesters expressed their dissatisfaction with the neo-liberal economic policies of institutions such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and

the International Monetary Fund through various activist groups and mass gatherings. In addition to protesting economic globalization, protesters also demanded the dropping of 'third world debt', sought to fight environmental degradation and pushed for the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, amongst other things.

The first few years of the 2000's saw many anti-globalization mass protests in cities across Europe and the US. In November 1999 the 'Battle of Seattle', a large scale demonstration against the new millennium goals of the World Trade Organisation, kicked off a long season of anti-globalization protests. In the following years, European cities like London, Nice, Prague, Gothenburg and Genoa were brought to a standstill every time world leaders attempted to stage a meeting. In particular, protestors took aim against any planned or actual meeting of the Group of Eight, a high level conference amongst the leaders from the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan.

Eventually the mass protests subsided, especially as the attention of the media was brought to focus on the events of September 11 2001 and the consequent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the 'zeitgeist' of the movement did not die out completely and continued in many smaller, more localized protest movements such as the one I researched from 2002 to 2003 in Italy. By then, the international impetus of the anti-globalization movement had fractured into a number of nationally focused movements. In Italy, protestors staged public gatherings, occupied schools and universities and organised 'resistance festivals' where anti-globalization musicians performed to large crowds of young activists. The protestors took issue with such things as the then escalating US led 'War on Terror', European anti-immigration policies and Berlusconi's right wing government in Italy.

In Naples, as elsewhere in Italy, a social scene developed around these

gatherings and events. Social networks grew and developed around a set of common ideals. Members of this **movement** identified each other through shared antagonistic political stances. Furthermore, not only did they share a common political culture, but also similar styles of dress, tastes in music and use of recreational drugs. A set of lifestyle practices developed that permitted members to cut out their own social scene within the city in which they lived. This social scene provides the field for my research.

Now, this social scene was very much embedded in the city in which it was found. Anti-globalization protestors in Naples might have been protesting the World Trade Organisation's neo-liberal economic policies, but they were also inhabitants of a complex and distinct socio-political landscape. This is a study in anthropology and, as such, the local context is of primary importance for us to understand the aspirations and anxieties of those individuals involved in the protest **movements** of those years. Paradoxically, we cannot extrapolate the significance of an anti-globalization **movement** from the *local* political context in which it is found. The title of this paper reads: 'the anti-globalization **movement** and the city of Naples', implying that there might be a dialectical relationship between the two.

There are many works on anti-globalization politics, as there are many works on Naples. This effort is situated in between. In particular I want to investigate the relationship between the anti-globalization social scene and the urban context in which it is found: the city of Naples. **Therefore**, this study will explore two questions. The first is: how did the social and political situation in Naples affect the nature of the anti-globalization movement there? The second is: did the anti-globalization movement I was researching have any effect at all on the political situation in Naples?

Such dialectical analysis is necessary for a number of reasons. For one, the history and culture of Naples sets it considerably apart from the rest of Italy, so that

we cannot easily compare the anti-globalization movement in Naples to the same movement in cities, for example, in the north of the country like Milan or Turin. Secondly, important events occurred in Naples in the early 2000's that put special pressure on its inhabitants. In particular, the city was struggling to fend off the **growing** influence of the organised crime syndicate known as the Camorra. This influence culminated with the infiltration of the gangs into many of the cities institutions. As a consequence, things like bureaucratic inefficiencies, widespread corruption and a chronic waste **management** 'emergency' all served to put a local twist on the scope and objectives of the protest movement. These issues will be dealt with in more detail below.

This paper is divided in six different parts. In this first part I have briefly introduced the reader to the protest movement and stated my objective. In the next part I will better define the methodology used to collect data on the **movement** and on the political situation in Naples. Part three will introduced the reader to the political structure of Naples through the three most commonly used analytical tropes reserved for it: the family, the church and organised crime. In part four I will give a more detailed ethnographic description of the urban and social landscape in Naples. Part five will illustrate the relationship between the political life of the city and the protest **movement** under investigation. Finally, part six will offer some conclusions regarding the political effectiveness and the social role of the anti-globalization **movement** in Naples.

## 2. Methodology

The main method with which I have collected ethnographic data on the anti-globalization movement and on Naples is through participant observation. I also conducted a large number of informal interviews with movement leaders, activists and regular citizens. The vast majority of the information displayed in this paper will be drawn from the explanations and opinions of my informants.

I should like to explain this process of data collection in more detail. For the participant observation I lived in Naples for roughly one year, from September 2002 to July 2003. During that time, I rented a small one-bedroom apartment near the port in the old city centre. Most of the protests I participated to were held in this area. Also, all of the places associated with the social scene that animated those protests were in this area. I am referring to the piazzas, the bars, the cafes and the social centres where young activists would meet and socialise. For the participant observation part of my methodology, I spent a great deal of time in these places. These places provided me with my research field.

The old city centre was also the area in which most of the universities were located. A great majority of the protestors were university students. More on this aspect will follow.

The old city centre where I stayed is not very big. Dating back to the time of ancient Greece, it is designed so that everything is within walking distance. Even beyond the city centre, the congested nature of the city means that the total urban sprawl is not too vast by modern city standards. If we exclude the peripheral towns around the urban centre, the population of Naples reaches 1 million inhabitants. This meant that I could easily reach events staged in the different neighbourhoods of the city whenever I needed to and by foot.

My methodology required that I not only participate in the protests and in the activist social scene, but that I also participate in the everyday life of 'normal' Neapolitans too. In this sense, simply living in Naples and doing ordinary activities such as shopping in the market for food, using the public transportation system or making friends, was very helpful towards gaining a deeper understanding of life in Naples.

The interviews were of the one-on-one, semi-structured and informal type. I interviewed roughly 100 people in around 10 months time. While it was impossible to get a representative cross section of the city, I tried nonetheless to distribute the interviews evenly amongst three different categories of people (1/3 of the total each). The first category was the movement leaders or prominent personalities within the movement, the second category was regular activists, and the third category was people that were not directly involved in the protests. I included the last category as something of a control group. The ages of the interviewees ranged from early 20's to late 30's, and were evenly distributed amongst men and women. The interviews occurred in different settings and at different times of the day. Most were held in the old city centre described above.

Every interview started with the same set of questions. I asked the informants questions such as: what they thought of politics in their city, what they thought of the anti-globalization movement, etc. After this first set of questions I would allow the interviewee to take the discussion in whichever direction he or she wanted. From here each individual would talk about personal issues, political issues, social and cultural issues, and often all these issues at once. The interview could last from several minutes to several hours. All were recorded on a video camera and then transcribed to paper.

These opinions provided me with my ethnographic data. A synthesis of this data is presented in this paper. All of the following opinions about politics and about the social structure of Naples are taken directly from these interviews. Unless I

explicitly quote an academic source or unless I specify that I am expressing my personal opinion, then the reader can assume that the information presented will have come from the interviewees. This qualitative ethnographic method relies on the local informants for data, and not on professional opinion makers, journalists or political analysts.

Most of this data will be concentrated in part five, in which we deal with politics and protest in Italy and in Naples. The conclusion part will present my personal opinion and analysis concerning this ethnographic data.

Lastly, there are a few clarifications I should like to make before we continue. First, I would like to inform the reader that, while occasional reference will be made to authors writing in the political sciences, my primary references will be anthropological works on the city of Naples and beyond. Second, I would like to clarify that the subject of this paper is not the anti-globalization movement per se, nor is it the relationship between Naples' anti-globalization movement and the international anti-globalization movement. The subject of this paper is the relationship between the people involved in this particular protest movement and the political and social life of the city of Naples.

### 3. Family, Church and Camorra

To say that Neapolitans, like other southern Italians, can be described through the lens of the family, the church and organised crime is in my opinion a gross error and a grave academic shortcoming. It is tantamount to studying northern Europeans through the outdated trope of the protestant work ethic, or sub-Saharan Africans through the typecast of their musicality. Just like any stereotype, it is a

reduction of reality to the easily graspable and manageable categories that can then be sold and shuffled around as academic currency.

That said, I too must succumb and at least address these three topics. For one, it is necessary to deal with these three topics because this is what academics before me have written about. Often with great insights. Also, it is necessary to address these topics because I am writing to an academic community that expects and requires me to do so. I should demonstrate how those insights gleaned upon the role of the family, the church and organised crime relate to the subject at hand in this paper. Lastly, it is in my interest too to be able to reduce the complex multiplicity of social factors in Naples to a handy set of analytical devices. It makes my job all the easier.

Without further ado, let us start with the family. Or rather, in the words of Edward Banfield, the amoral family. Banfield, in *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1967) lays out a cultural theory to explain the economic and political conditions of a southern Italian community. His ethnography, conducted in a village in the nearby region of Basilicata in the mid 1950's, concludes that there is an excessive value given to the role of the nuclear family at the expense of the collective interest. This is the basis of amoral familism. It is termed amoral not because family members treat each other amorally, but because outside of the nuclear family there is no moral code of conduct other than that of maximizing your own family's profit. The absence of such moral code explains the absence of economic development and political cooperation.

This theory has been the subject of fierce controversy. Silverman, in *Agricultural Organization, Social Structure, and Values in Italy: Amoral Familism Reconsidered* (1968) pointed out the weak methodological basis of the study and the fact that the findings in that one village could not so easily be generalized to the whole of southern Italy. He also noted that you cannot explain economic conditions starting

from the culture of a society. For him, you must go the other way around: economic conditions (rural poverty) explain the cultural values (familism).

Another set of criticisms came from the Italians themselves. Sciolla (1997) maintains that amoral familism is an oversimplification that overlooks a large array of collective organizations in southern Italy, such as artisan guilds and local autonomy movements. My own opinion is that Banfield's work must be considered within the academic context of the 1950's, and, in particular, within the context of other ethnographic studies of Southern Europe conducted by British and American academics. There was a desire then to come to terms with what was seen as a Mediterranean 'backwardness' (as laid out in the very title of Banfield's work), that failed to consider that perhaps that was only a backwardness from the point of view of one's own Anglo-Saxon cultural standpoint.

That naiveté produced a series of somewhat imprecise macro-concepts that were, at the same time, also incredibly incisive explanations that can be of value today. There is one aspect of Banfield's theory that I find especially useful in describing the situation in Naples: according to Banfield, in an amoral familist society anyone who interests him or herself in politics is seen to do so out of self interest alone and is therefore looked upon with suspicion. All public officials are seen as *a priori* corrupt. This will turn out to be exactly the case in contemporary Naples. According to the vast majority of my informants, all elected officials are not only sometimes corrupt, but are invariably corrupt. We will return to this point in part four.

The role of religion in southern Italy has also attracted a great deal of academic attention. When it comes to religion there have been two broad currents of interest. The first is that of a presumably undying pagan culture amongst southern Italians. This has been explored by a host of post-WW2 anthropologists working in the region, such as Di Nola (1976) who finds that there is a pagan culture that runs bellow the official Catholicism of southern Italians, or De Martino (1996, 2000) who

studied what he described as the pre-modern and mystical superstitions of the local people.

The second current is that of seeing the church as an all-pervading influence in the social and political lives of southern Italians. According to Putnam (1993) vertical religious networks such as the Catholic church fill in for the absence of horizontal democratic institutions. Apparently, the shady hierarchies of church authority play a stronger role in the south than in the north of the country, where cooperative organisations fare much better. Incidentally, these same vertical network models are mirrored by criminal organisations such as the Mafia in Sicily. This, at least, is the thesis put forth by Sales (2010) in his new book on the history of the relationship between the Mafia and the Catholic church.

In this book he asks whether the teachings of Christ are compatible with the criminal organizations of Southern Italy. The historical findings are impressive. Not only are some of the world's most ferocious criminals devout Catholics, but there are numerous incidences of criminal complicity on behalf of Church officials. The reasons for such an unholy collusion are to be found in the existence of a sort of criminal theology that acts as ideological support to the Mafia. This 'theology' grants legitimacy to the leaders, establishes proper ritual and defines what is taboo and what is sacred within the criminal 'family'. In other words, the Mafia needs a cultural framework, and the church provides it.

Sales finds that at the basis of this framework, unsurprisingly enough, is the same amoral familism described by Banfield, where members of the Mafia come to view themselves as 'favoured children' within a religiously sanctioned familial network. Needless to say, everyone outside that network is but an obstacle in the way of ever more profits. For the purpose of this paper, I would like to point out that Sales (who lives and teaches in Naples) is not the only one to have noted the existence of some sort of alliance between the church and the Mafia. The church

was often seen by the anti-globalization protestors I interviewed in Naples as, indeed, part of the city's endemic problem with corruption.<sup>1)</sup> In their view, however, the church-crime connection must be extended to include various political parties in power at the national and local level, too. We will deal with this notion in more detail in part four.

For now, we are beginning to see how each of these analytical tropes feeds into the other: we open the lid on a superstitiously religious south and find a paranoid and protective family, we look into that family and find the seed of a fundamentalist and sociopathic criminal organisation, we look into that organisation and find the church... and on and on, in what amounts to a self-exhaustive explanatory cycle. Now, I feel that such explanatory cycle is as powerful as it is, unfortunately, close-ended. I believe we should take what we can from it and then move on to the details of an ethnographic account. An account that hopefully can give substance to these slightly stereotyped categories of life in southern Italy.

There are three useful things we can take with us from this small discussion of the family, the church and organised crime in southern Italy. Firstly, the hypothesis that all politicians, and indeed all political activity, is seen as unavoidably corrupt. Secondly, the suspicion that there is an organic connection between the church, organised crime and possibly mainstream political parties (at least in the political views of the protestors I interviewed). We will try to relate these hypotheses to the ethnography below. Lastly, I hope that this discussion may serve as an introductory note on the geographic region in which this fieldwork was conducted.

1) Many members of the movement maintained, citing the popular Marxist maxim, that religion is the opium of the people. However, to be fair, it is important to point out that not all anti-globalization protestors were anti-catholic. A sizeable sub-section of the movement was in fact composed of various church-based humanitarian groups. Yet these had their own social scene, and did not socialise with the rest of the movement outside of the public marches and protests.

#### 4. The Urban and Social Geography of Naples

Since the 1980's, anthropological studies of cities began to 'document how structural forces shape urban experience'. They deconstructed the physical city with a special view on how spaces contributed to the creation of 'inequality and alienation'. Urban ethnography linked 'everyday practices to the broader processes of class formation', where the 'urban built environment becomes a discursive realm' (Low, 1996: 238; Jacobs, 1993: 827-848).

According to this line of thought a city is a 'discursive realm' where people read the landscape and use this 'text' in order to negotiate issues of class, gender and ethnicity. Identity is a matter of appropriating certain symbolic structures in the city, like residential quarters, shops, restaurants, etc. For example, people often make connections between social classes and the neighbourhoods they supposedly live in.

McDonough (1993) saw these connections when she investigated the experience of being Black and Catholic in the divided city of Savannah, Georgia. She found that life in the city was characterised by a 'continuous tension' that shaped the activities of citizens according to the places they frequented and the 'urban cultures' in which they participated. In Naples too there is a 'continuous tension' between the different 'urban cultures' sharing the same city.

For example, my informants in Naples explained that 'normal' people like themselves, afraid of being robbed or just molested by gratuitous violence, prefer not walking in the streets in certain neighbourhoods and after a certain hour. As a consequence the social life of many Neapolitans revolves around a limited number of safe havens, such as a handful of selected streets, nightclubs, private residences and restaurants. This creates a parallel geography within the physical geography of the city, a sort of city inside the city. Naturally, many routinely



venture out of the safe zones, but it is widely accepted that you do so at your own peril. It is that accepted sense of peril that writes the 'continuous tension' into the text of the urban landscape.

This phenomenon has been dealt with amply in anthropology. Many authors have given thorough descriptions of how interclass violence can create parallel geographies within the same city. For some examples see Anderson's *Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community* (1990), Wacquant's *Dangerous Places: Violence and Isolation in Chicago's Black Belt and the Parisian Red Belt* (1995), Bourgois' *In search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (1995) or Caldeira's *Fortified Communities* (1996).

One thing that makes Naples different from the places studied above is the relative absence of the racial or ethnic element.<sup>2)</sup> Anthropology of the city usually focuses on different aspects of racism and racial segregation, such as displacement of certain minorities through real estate activities, discriminatory urban planning and other practices designed to ultimately insulate the usually white, upper classes from real or imagined threats. The case in Naples is slightly different, and presents a novelty in respect to these studies. From my fieldwork, it emerges that middle and upper class Neapolitans feel foreign to the same-race general population of their

2) While immigration and racial tension has been an issue in Italy for some time, especially in the wealthier northern and central regions, it cannot be said that there are many open social conflicts between the immigrant minorities and the 'native' population in Naples. One reason could be that the ethnic minorities that do live in Naples, such as the Sinhalese, the Ukrainian and the North and West African communities still mostly keep to themselves to the point that any possible points of friction are kept away from the public eye. Nevertheless, recent news has begun to uncover some of these hidden conflicts. In 2009, conflagrations between African immigrants and organised crime in towns such as *Casal di Principe* and *Rosarno* have brought the media's attention to immigration in southern Italy. In particular, they have highlighted the connection that exists between cheap immigrant labour and criminal syndicates. This connection has been described by some journalists as bordering closely on slave labour. Alas, the nature of the parties involved in this business leads us to predict that despite the recent spotlight on the issue, it will return 'under the rug' for many years to come.

own city.

Without going into too many details, a brief summary of the history of Naples may go a long way in explaining why this may be so. Founded by the Greeks as a merchant colony, the city was soon overrun and incorporated by the Romans. In the middle ages it was conquered by the transalpine Normans, followed by Spanish Bourbon rule during the Renaissance. The unification of Italy in 1860 is still viewed in Naples as an invasion on behalf of the house of Savoy from Northern Italy. Even the post WWII era is seen as a time of American dominance, Naples being the site of the Southern European NATO Command and home to about 40,000 American soldiers and their families.

Now, there is not a city in the world that has not been shaken by wars, invasions, mass migrations and mixes of nations and races. However, I think it is telling that Naples has not had one minute of genuinely autonomous self rule. An old proverb in Naples says, *Francia o Spagna, basta che se magna*, which explains: whether it is France or Spain that rules us, who cares as long as we have food. Without sidetracking my argument into a historical discussion, I believe that this particular history of continual foreign dominance is written in the urban and social geography of the city. This circumstance, in turn, results in the palpable social segregation that exists between the middle and upper classes and the general population. Certain Neapolitans feel foreign to the general population of their city, because they often were foreign.

This feature of the social geography of Naples is important to our discussion because the members of the anti-globalization movement in Naples were also members of the middle and upper classes of the city.<sup>3)</sup> What they habitually

3) We know that they were members of the middle and upper classes for a number of reasons. Firstly, because they described themselves as such. Secondly, because of their obvious economic means (many were university students supported by their families). Thirdly, because of their command of the Italian language. Lower classes in Naples typically speak with a strong local dialect.

referred to in the interviews as the 'normal' class. This normal class was set in opposition to the underclass of the general population of the same city. The 'uncouth' and 'uncivilised' masses that made venturing out into certain neighbourhoods a dangerous affair. I should like to recount an incident from the ethnography to illustrate this point. The following vignette may help the reader better comprehend the 'discursive realm' in which this protest movement was immersed.

At a dinner party amongst some of my informants in *Vomero*, an upper class residential neighbourhood propped up on top of a hill overlooking the rest of Naples, an argument broke out over the benefits and drawbacks of the new subway system that connected *Vomero* to the lower class neighbourhoods in the periphery of Naples. The majority of the people at the table insisted that the whole subway project was a bad idea, basing their argument on the fact that they all had cars so had little need for a subway. They explained that the only people who took the subway were those that came from the 'bad' periphery neighbourhoods to loiter in the 'nice' downtown neighbourhoods like *Vomero*. What struck me was that these people were not being accused of any illicit activity, like stealing or being disorderly, but were simply being accused of ruining the clean, safe atmosphere in *Vomero* with their 'inappropriate' and 'disturbing' presence.

What emerges from these comments is the idea of a 'contested city... the city as a site of ongoing urban conflicts' (Low 1996: 391). Another way to put it is as a 'dual city' comprised of an upper class of professionals who act as a group pursuing their own ends, and then everyone else, who are seen alternatively as criminal, invisible, or simply annoying (Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991).

Individuals in Naples continually relate the physical, urban geography with the class-based, social geography of the city. The informants at the dinner party overlaid material boundaries (neighbourhoods) with discursive boundaries (property

of those neighbourhoods). This could be tied in with the violence middle and upper class people perceive when they go for a walk in those neighbourhoods where they are not, so to speak, the owners. They could expect that violence, and by an ancient circularity, those from whom the violence is expected, deliver it.

I should like to recount another vignette from the fieldwork that illustrates this point. I was walking one day with a group of informants in one of the 'off limits' neighbourhoods near the port area downtown. We were looking for a famous tavern where we were planning to have lunch. One individual in our group, a Neapolitan, mistakenly looked a man in the eyes. I don't know what he communicated with that look, but this man walked over to us and asked, 'what's your problem, you don't like the people in this neighbourhood?' I remember thinking what an odd question. I did not, however, have the time to reflect any further because the man attacked us and we were forced to flee the neighbourhood.

Fortunately, I now have all the time I need to reflect upon that question. The conclusion is that quite simply, we were attacked on the suspicion that we did not like 'his people'. This I believe is proof enough that Naples is indeed a contested city in which there are at least two very distinctly different urban cultures. The result is that we are left with two cities in the space of one. As we are given to see from these vignettes, these two cities are not always separated but often overlap. When they overlap, there is friction.

When considering these radical divisions in the way the city is viewed and lived, the concept of the 'hyperghetto' comes to mind. Wacquant (1994) describes how cities in post-Fordist America are racially and socioeconomically segregated into different sections. The poorer sections are characterised by the 'depacification' of everyday life, the 'desertification' of organisations and institutions, and the 'informalisation' of the economy.

These three terms describe many parts of Naples. However, the term ‘depacification’ struck me as particularly apt in describing the entire city, rich and poor neighbourhoods alike. Goethe famously described Naples as ‘a paradise inhabited by devils’. It is not that Naples is outright dangerous, but it is as if everyday life in Naples were characterised by a sort of ubiquitous, underlying sense of conflict. My informants in Naples took pride in their capacity to anticipate and neutralise threats, whether from petty thieves, cheating shop-owners or extortionist cab drivers. They explained how a real Neapolitan knows how to always watch his back.

One consequence of this condition is that people have learned to adapt to the anxiety of a ‘depacified’ city through a variety of individual and collective strategies. Strategies of survival, if you will. The anthropologist Italo Pardo writes about these in his book *Managing Existence in Naples* (2006). Pardo recounts how people in Naples ‘mobilise’ within a ‘hostile’ urban and social geography to achieve their basic needs.<sup>4)</sup> In his ethnography he uncovers a number of imaginative ways in which Neapolitans attain moral and material self-fulfilment. In particular, he finds that Neapolitans possess an especially creative ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ with which they stake out their spaces of identity and action within the city.

These may range from *ad hoc* commercial ventures and small business partnerships to social and recreational networks of various kinds. May we posit that also the anti-globalization movement in Naples is one of these staked out ‘spaces of identity and action’ within the city? Does this movement serve a community of young people in search of a ‘common space’ within a hostile and depacified urban and social geography? In this paper I will try to consider the protest movement’s social scene as a milieu where participants could meet to attain moral (a sense of justice?) and material (safety in numbers?) self-fulfilment against the background of

4) For an anthropological discussion of how individuals make their livelihoods in Naples see also Goddard’s *Gender, Family and Work in Naples* (1996).

a contested, ‘dual’ city,

## 5. Politics and Protest<sup>5)</sup>

The significance of the protest movement I studied, while purportedly an international movement dealing with global issues, can be tied in many ways to the political circumstances in Naples and in Italy.<sup>6)</sup> It might be helpful thus to start with a description of the political situation in Naples and Italy in the years of my fieldwork, 2002-2003. The descriptions that follow have been synthesised from months of observation, interviewing and ethnographic fieldwork.

In order to understand the early 2000’s we must rewind at least to the early 1990’s.<sup>7)</sup> This was a time of transition for Italian politics. *Tangentopoli*, the series of graft scandals that shook the corrupt first republic to the ground, had brought about a new season of political realignments. The two major political parties, the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) shattered into a

5) The political parties mentioned in this chapter may or may not exist any longer at the time of reading. Political parties in Italy are dismantled and recreated (or at times simply renamed) at a disconcertingly fast pace.

6) Many have studied the international character of the movement. For a detailed, multi-sited ethnographic account of the anti-globalization movement see Juris’ *Networking Futures* (2009).

7) Ideally we should go back to the late 1960’s, when the famous 1968 student revolts took place, and to the 1970’s, the *anni di piombo* (years of lead) when various radical organizations, such as the *brigate rosse* (red brigades) terrorized the peninsula with guerilla political tactics. As a matter of available space, however, we will have to forgo a detailed discussion of the history of protest in Italy. Let it suffice to mention that Italy’s current protest tradition dates back to the decade between 1968 and 1978, the year the president of the Christian Democrats, Aldo Moro, was kidnapped and killed. In those years, activists of communist ideological background joined in the many violent student protests going on at the time. That movement also interpreted the ideological aspirations of a rising working class and the changing social conditions of women. The contemporary protest movement I researched borrowed heavily from this era’s legacy.

myriad of smaller parties. At one point in the mid 1990's there were 56 political parties in Italy.

This period of transition inaugurated a long season of 'soul searching' for Italian politicians. By the end of the 1990's, the once weighty communists were still coming to terms with a soviet-less post cold war world. A part of the defunct PCI was trying to redefine its identity through the newly charged issues of anti-capitalism and anti-globalization. The new communist splinter parties, together with the environmentalist movement and many other interest specific activist organisations, were coagulating into a unified movement through various mass protests around the country.

In the meantime, these radical stances were pitched against a mounting populist sentiment that was mustering around the ever-growing supremacy of Mr Berlusconi and his media empire. This populist wave joined forces with the now defunct, fascist *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance party) on the one hand, and the still popular, northern separatist and xenophobic *Lega Nord* (Northern League party) on the other.

This radicalisation of the political debate in the 1990's (protesting communist, environmentalist and activist on the one side, populist, fascists and xenophobes on the other) coincided with a polarisation of political affiliations amongst youths. Critically minded youths became ever more involved in the activity of the *centri sociali* (social centres). The *centri sociali* were left-leaning autonomously organised spaces that hosted live music, art shows and events aimed at promoting awareness of this or that social issue. In Naples, like elsewhere, they quickly became centres of alternative and antagonistic cultural diffusion, helping young Neapolitans make sense of a new and changing political landscape. Their ideological orientation could be described as radical-communist. Much of the fieldwork I conducted took place within three of these *centri sociali*: *Officina 99*, *SKA* and *TNT*.

A social scene developed around these *centri sociali* that encompassed many different cultural facets. The most visible of these was music. In Naples, a number of bands emerged that performed an eclectic mix of electronic music, punk, rap, dub, reggae and ragamuffin. Some of the more famous of these include 99 Posse, Almamegretta, Bisca and 24 Grana. Their lyrics and world-views were just as eclectic, encompassing classic Marxist views with more contemporary anti-capitalist stances. Their lyrics often dealt with such issues as workers' rights, cannabis legalization, anti-racism, and the rights of indigenous peoples in the global south.

Perhaps the best way to give the reader an introductory idea of this social scene is by transcribing some of the song titles of the music they listened to. Take for example 99 Posse's *Rigurgito Antifascista* (antifascist regurgitation), Almamegretta's *Black Athena*, and *Figli di Annibale* (sons of Hannibal, rediscovering Italy's roots in Africa), Bisca's *La Bomba Intelligente* (an ironic take on the US's use of intelligent missiles in the Iraq war), or 24 Grana's *kanzone anarkika* (anarchic song). These titles give a pretty good idea of the political inclinations that characterised this particular social scene.

By the beginning of the 2000's, parts of this social/cultural scene became the anti-globalization movement in Naples. The members of the protest movement socialised in the *centri sociali* and described themselves, to larger or lesser degrees, as communists. But what exactly does it mean to be communist in Southern Italy in the third millennium? Let us have a better look at this political label. As I mentioned above, the old Italian Communist Party after the fall of the first republic in the early 1990's divided into different splinter parties. The majority became the mildly left wing *Democratici di Sinistra* (Democrats of the Left party<sup>8</sup>), while a smaller section decided instead to resist the 'modernisation reforms' and stayed loyal to the basic

8) The Democrats of the Left's policies may be likened to Tony Blair's New Labor in the UK or the Clinton era Democratic Party in the US.

Marxist ideals. The biggest contingent of loyalists become the party of 'Communist Refoundation'. At the time of the fieldwork the party of Communist Refoundation oscillated between 4 and 7 percent of the electorate in Naples.<sup>9)</sup>

The Communist Refoundation political party thrived in two sorts of environments. The first was amongst factory workers. These were especially numerous in and around the few industrial complexes in Naples. For example, near the *Alenia* aircraft or *Alfa Romeo* automobile factories, in addition to some small shipbuilding plants along the coast. The second was in the universities, especially the departments of social science and architecture. Here, the young student/intellectual was involved in a totally different sort of production, engrossed in the world of ideas. Naples has the biggest universities in the south of Italy. Students came from all over the region to study in Naples. Not infrequently were some of these universities occupied by activist students in the name of 'communist resistance'.

The students would basically 'self-organise' classes and would not allow professors or security officers inside the buildings sometimes for weeks on end. Eventually things would settle down and business as usual would resume, until it would start all over again. This custom of occupying schools and universities has been around for decades in Italy, and, as you may imagine, provided fertile ground for left wing ideological rhetoric. The members of the protest movement I researched were to a large proportion university students.

Yet both worker and student believed in the same set of things and reacted toward social issues in similar ways. A very high degree of solidarity was demonstrated towards struggles for equality and workers' rights both at the national level and in developing countries. The major communist-oriented newspapers, like *l'Unità* or *il Manifesto*, in addition to the ferocious criticisms of Italy's then centre

9) For an anthropological treatise on the role of Communist culture in Italian politics see Shore (1990).

right government, continually debated over the evils of neo-liberal economic globalization and the wars in the Middle East.

The communists in Naples held something of a discursive monopoly over a number of social struggles. For example, at the time a great debate was growing in Italy around the issue of workers' rights and the abolition of 'article 18' of the workers' statute. This article dealt with the issue of re-integrating unlawfully discharged employees. Mr Berlusconi and his liberal majority in government were dismantling much of the jurisdiction concerning labour protection laws, replacing it with a flexible labour market regulation to better respond to increasing pressure from global competition. Debate in communist circles over this issues was very intense at the time and public protests and strikes were frequent.

Another struggle embraced by the radical left in Naples was that of immigrants' rights. The xenophobic party of Mr Bossi and the fascist party of Mr Fini, both in the national government at the time, had passed a new law on immigration that introduced lower entry quotas, special detention centres, severe boarder controls and the use of military ships to patrol the coasts against what were described as 'invasions' from the Balkans, the Near East, and North Africa.<sup>10)</sup> At the same time these immigrants, many in Italy since the 1980's, were beginning to get politically organised, often converging with the workers' unions' struggles, human rights organisations and substantial parts of the radical left.

Anti-globalization protestors in Naples rarely missed a chance to speak their mind on these twin issues of workers' and immigrants' rights. The political rhetoric of the protest movement was very much in tune with the demands of workers and immigrants. However, beyond the rhetoric, the bulk of the protestors' specific criticisms were directed toward the party of the 'Democrats of the Left'. The

10) For a discussion on immigration in Italy see Grillo (1998, 2000).

Democrats of the Left (in government for large chunks of the 1990's) were seen as responsible for allowing the dismantling of workers' and immigrants' rights. Their opposition to the right wing coalition in government at the national level was described as inefficient if not downright collaborationist. In the course of the interviews, many of my informants complained that the Democrats of the Left were 'betraying' the original socialist ideals of worker equality and human solidarity.

The Democrats of the Left were in power at the municipal, provincial and regional government level in Naples at the time of this research. It is to the politicians of the Democrats of the Left in power in Naples that most of the criticisms of my communist informants were directed. It might be helpful at this point to spend a few background words on the recent political history of the city of Naples. In order to picture the situation in the early 2000's we need to go back at least to the 1980's. That decade was a particularly dark time for the city. Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party took turns stripping the city of its resources through vast clientelistic networks of graft and corruption. The 1984 earthquake did not help, and by the late 1980's the city was ridden with crime, broken monuments, poverty and a chronic problem with waste management.

In the 1990's things started to look cheerier. On the 5th of December 1993 the ex PCI member Antonio Bassolino won the elections against the right wing candidate, Alessandra Mussolini (Benito Mussolini's grand-daughter), inaugurating a long season of growth and reform under the party of the Democrats of the Left. The city cleaned itself up on occasion of the G7 meetings held in town in July 1994<sup>11)</sup>, and then again in November of the same year for the United Nations Conference on Organised Crime. The new administration cleaned up the streets, the monuments

11) Predecessor to the G8 and, eventually G20. The 1994 G7 meetings in Naples were met with protests, where people were beaten and jailed by the police. In fact, the protest movement that grew out of the *centri sociali* in Naples gained much of its momentum from that demonstration.

and much of the city's bureaucracy, giving the city what has been called the *Rinascimento Napoletano* (Neapolitan Renaissance).

The city was booming with events, festivals, and more importantly, a sort of renewed pride that to a large degree passed through new forms of artistic and musical expression. Obviously, there were some problems during this period of growth, too. Despite the general face lift, many of the city's more endemic problems, like unemployment and the black market, remained largely unaddressed and fundamentally unchanged.

By the year 2000 the reform energy of the 'Neapolitan Renaissance' began to fizzle out and the usual problems of the city re-emerged. A cycle of scandals and crises unfolded as the city's rebirth came to an end. My informants blamed the Democrats of the Left for succumbing to corruption and compromise instead of continuing on the path of reform. They were accused of a combination of three big sins. First, a gross mismanagement of the urban waste cycle that left heaps of trash laying uncollected and rotting in the streets. Second, the creation of a giant clientelistic network of fake consultancies and rigged public contracts that left many of the big construction projects, like the modernization of the *Bagnoli* seaside neighbourhood, wallowing in corruption. Last but not least, they were blamed for allowing the Camorra, the Neapolitan version of organised crime, to regain prominence in running the city.

At the time of this research the Democrats of the Left were described by my informants as clientelistic and conspicuously corrupt.<sup>12)</sup> They were described as openly and obviously partnered with the Camorra in such sectors as construction, government procurement and waste management. Not one politician, at any level

12) Since 2009 there has been a shift in favour of Mr. Berlusconi's new *Popolo della Libertà* (People of Liberty) party in and around Naples. The 'People of Liberty' won the majority in the provincial and regional governments in 2009 and 2010, and are likely to win in the upcoming municipal elections.

of power, was spared this description. When I asked why they were all corrupt, the answer on most occasions was because they *could*. Power corrupts, my informants explained, so the solution was to abolish power, not just the politician. Therefore anarchic and/or radical communist political positions were favoured. This circumstance would seem to confirm the view, put forth by Banfield in the 1950's, that public officials in southern Italy are invariably seen as corrupt.

The members of the anti-globalization movement in Naples complained bitterly about the Democrats of the Left and described themselves as the complete opposite of this group in power. They defined their communist ideals as ethically superior, and themselves as morally upright in spite of a city corrupted by greed and corruption. They also set themselves fundamentally apart from the rest of the city's residents, who were described as complacent and unable to stand up to the situation. Above them, they saw corrupt officials, below them, a general population inert in the face of widespread corruption.

Now, this general population was the same that were identified in part three as the uncouth and uncivilised masses to which the middle and upper classes felt foreign. Those that made urban life unbearable and certain areas of town off limits. Those that depacified the city. The relationship between members of the protest movement and this section of the population is of great significance. One would think that the dispossessed, the have-nots, would be the subject of solidarity on behalf of those that professed a 'communist' faith. However, this was not the case.

My informants explained that the general population of Naples were actually supporting - through their ignorance - hierarchical and undemocratic power structures such as the Church, the Camorra and clientelistic political parties like the Democrats of the Left. So not only were they complacent, but guilty.<sup>13)</sup> The Church

13) The protestors would thus seem to fail Mao's maxim that a revolutionary swims amongst his people like fish in the water.

was seen as especially powerful because we were in Naples. Members of the protest movement, like the anthropologists Di Nola and De Martino considered above, lamented the exceeding religiosity of the 'common' people in the south. Therefore, while the Church was not directly accused of being corrupt or criminal, it was accused of keeping the people ignorant and therefore indirectly stoking the twin furnaces of corruption and criminality in Naples. The Church and the Camorra thus came to share an important characteristic: they were both institutions that belonged to the plebe.

We therefore find that this protest movement drew much of its ideological impetus from being *in opposition* to an all pervasive politico-criminal-ecclesiastic machine that was, for them, the city of Naples. Interestingly, this recalls our attention to the three analytical tropes we dealt with in part two. In sum, the protest movement I researched, despite having its ideological cross hairs placed much higher (anti-capitalism, anti-war, anti-free trade) was in practice largely about opposing local (and ancient) power structures that existed in Naples. This should answer the first question I set out to investigate in this paper: how does the social and political situation in Naples affect the nature of the anti-globalization movement there? Now we may proceed to answering the second question: does the anti-globalization movement have any effect at all on the political situation in Naples?

## 6. Conclusions

I should now like to summarise the information on politics and protest gathered from the fieldwork, and offer some opinions and conclusions of my own. Recapitulating, in this paper we have tried to contextualise the anti-globalization protest movement within the local social structure and political history of Naples.

We found that members of this movement were to a large extent reacting to a corrupt political environment by organising into a morally parallel social network. This group socialised through such loci as the *centri sociali* and defined its interests via a radical left wing ideology. This would seem to fit in well with Pardo's (2006) observation that individuals in Naples 'manage' their 'hostile' environment in socially creative ways.

Low mentions that individuals react to life in a crowded, modern city by representing their values and beliefs through 'self-identified communities, which result in the rejection of other communities' (1996: 394). May we posit that for the protest movement described above the 'other communities' being rejected were the city's corrupt administration? Yes. However, we saw criticism was not limited to the politicians in power, but was also directed toward those of the 'general population' that, through their very ignorance and/or traditions, were but a guilty part of the Democrats of the Left power structure.

Paradoxically, the lower classes were deemed responsible for the radical social divisions that existed in the city. They were seen as guilty of sustaining the very patterns of hierarchy and disparity that suppressed them. Members of this protest movement were placed within a bizarre limbo. Above, the powerful and the self-serving. Below, the ignorant and violent. A dual city in which they themselves were neither here nor there.

The ethnographic data suggests that young protestors were contesting exactly this type of dual city, or unfair city. They were reacting to the 'depacification' of their city through the highly charged idealism of their protest movement. We may identify two salient features of this idealism. First, it was cast in the language of radical communism. Second, it was ideologically set in a global context, as it officially protested things like neo-liberal globalization, workers' rights, anti-immigration policies, the US led war in the Middle East and so forth.

I should now like to answer the question I posed in the introduction: did this protest movement have any effect on the political situation in Naples? I believe the answer lies in the very nature of the protest movement. It was a movement of reaction. In particular, it was an idealistic reaction to a very real situation. The idealism of the movement (socialist, pro-peace, etc.) stood out in stark contrast to the reality in Naples (hierarchised, depacified, etc.). Therefore, I find that the language of the reaction was not adequate to the circumstances of the stimulus.

This provided for a discrepancy between 'the movement' and 'the city' that meant that there was no real dialogue between the two. Therefore, there was little possibility for the movement to actually contribute to, or participate in, city life. Similar discrepancies may be further witnessed in two important details.

Firstly, there was an inconsistency between the young university students who participated in the protest movement and the ideology they had chosen to represent their interests. Many if not most of these university students were from middle or upper class families. Yet their ideology was borrowed from the hard line splinter groups of the ex PCI such as the Communist Refoundation party. The Communist Refoundation official party line called for the abolition of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such platform may make sense for a factory worker, especially during those years of reform in the labour market, but there is arguably very little beyond the emotional and intellectual appeal of Marxism that can be of practical use to a middle class university student in Naples.

Secondly, there was an inconsistency between the official enemy of the movement and the actual object of their frustration. The official enemy was 'globalization', an indistinct notion that fused together greedy multinational corporations with imperialistic minded institutions. Yet, we found that the real source of aggravation was a difficult and contested city. A depacified city, where violence, deception and fraud were lurking round every corner. A failing city, in which what little hope for



progress there was from the Neapolitan Renaissance was increasingly being frustrated by an openly clientelistic and para-criminal political elite.

In conclusion, we find that political success is improbable if the ideological 'weapons' one has chosen do not fit one's practical interests. Success is also unlikely if it is unclear who one is fighting against. So, no, the movement had no effect on the politics of the city. Yet, this conclusion leaves us only partially satisfied. If the protest movement was so politically inefficient, then why was it so popular? Perhaps a protest movement does not have to fulfil its stated or unstated purpose in order for it to be 'efficient'? Perhaps its true and final purpose eludes a strictly political analysis?

This may be especially true in a polychronic society like Naples. In *The Dance of Life*, anthropologist Edward Hall distinguishes between monochronic and polychronic cultures. In a monochronic culture 'time is linear and segmented like a road on which one travels'. All important activities in a monochronic culture are organised and scheduled according to a logical plan. This allows for all action to have a clear and obvious consequent action. In a monochronic culture a protest movement would be geared to the completion of a specific outcome.

In a polychronic society, however,

people often place the completion of a task below the importance of being together with family and friends ... people live in several time frames at once and they accomplish different tasks simultaneously ... A polychronic society's chains of action are built around human relations; interruptions occur frequently and they are tolerated or even welcomed. Priorities shift constantly (Neidhart 2002: 13-14).

I believe Naples can be safely placed within the polychronic category. Thomas Belmonte's ethnography of Naples goes a long way in proving this point. In *The*

*Broken Fountain* (2003) he paints the portrait of a Neapolitan family, examining their dreams and frustrations as they manage their daily lives in a popular neighbourhood of the old city centre. He finds that individuals sink into spirals of molestful love and reciprocal exploitation just to get by. What emerges from this picture is that in a hyper-pressurised environment like Naples, even apparently contradictory emotions like love and hatred are pressed into the same condensed relationships. Individuals are thus forced to accommodate a broader spectrum of possibilities in their relationships, where contradictions co-exist and no one expects events to have any sort of logical consequences.

The point is that a society that has a polychronic idea of time tends to have a similar way of reasoning in other fields of interaction as well. Many things in Naples are 'polyform'. Just as people in a polychronic society can live in several time frames at once, people in Naples can handle several qualifying versions of the same phenomena. This is possible only as long as definitions, boundaries, priorities and objectives are always kept shifting and unclear. Belmonte identified this process as a 'continual melodrama', where everyday life becomes a seemingly pointless performance.

Yet, that performance may not be as pointless as we are led to think. We cannot easily judge a polychronic culture from the point of view of a monochronic culture. Belmonte (2003) noted that such melodrama was in fact part of an urban survival strategy. Pardo (2006) too, came to similar conclusions regarding the creative entrepreneurial spirit of Neapolitans. In this conclusion we may interpret the anti-globalization movement in Naples in a similar way.

While we are forced to conclude that the movement had little practical political sense, we might also recall how it functioned particularly well in responding to the psychological necessities of a generation of young Neapolitans in search of a voice, social recognition and, ultimately, peace. Not peace in the world, but peace in their

own everyday urban lives. We find that a protest movement in Naples can be simultaneously useful and useless, as it caters to multiple objectives, not all of which are obviously political. So, while the movement had little influence on the city in which it operated, the city did have considerable influence upon the movement.

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