

The Politics-Violence Frontier

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Abstract

This article analyses how early twenty first century political activists in Italy construct the frontier between politics and violence. It puts these constructions into the context of more conventionally theoretical accounts of violence and politics. Analysis of internet discourse published by left/anarchist bloggers and group members focusses on how activists criticise the conventional view that electoral politics is non-violent, and endorse the view that violence is politics' main means. This means that the role of violence in oppositional politics then has to be negotiated. Discourse analysis shows how ideas of resistance, and anti-state force, are articulated in such a way as to draw distinctions between us and them, and their politics and ours. The article discusses the significance of these articulations of the politics-violence distinction for the construction of political agency, and for the justification of forms of political action, seeking to show that boundary work is fundamental to political agency.

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1. Introduction

Extract 1

The vote is like a missile. A missile fired at an invisible target. From thousands of kilometres away. A cleaner method of participating from a safe distance in the worst violence can't be imagined. From the moral and ethical point of view, it's a way of reducing their proper level of responsibility for the violent acts of the government, in which the individual voter isn't personally implicated, that they don't want to be committed in their own name. It's a way of expressing the depth of your commitment to the respect for life and your repudiation of violence. Of course, one can ignore all that, and believe the other aspect of the illusion - believe that the problems aren't intrinsic to the form of the state and its power, but are simply the result of 'bad politics', resolvable, accordingly, by the election of people with greater capacities. (*Disquisendo*, activist blog post, October 2012; linked from Movimento di Lotta per la Casa, activist organization website)¹

In this article we discuss how the 'politics-violence frontier' is articulated in political activists'

discourse and arguments. Our sources consist of internet text and some print ephemera collected

from broadly left and anarchist groups and campaigns present and active around Florence, Italy, in the period March to May 2015.²

Establishing what counts as violence, and what as politics, is a crucial political, problematic, task for all political actors and thinkers. How violence relates to politics is often taken for granted; but nevertheless is deeply contested. Much political thought accords with the Weberian view that political organization emerges out of violence, and accordingly that violence is politics' main means. Politics deploys other means also - religious pacification, civil agreements and exchanges, and normative order, all underpin the political and social orders of states. But governments monopolize legitimate violence, and violence is the fundamental way of maintaining territory, systems of rule, and laws, as well as executing directly violent state functions of policing, prisons, and military force.³ On the other hand, liberal political thought is often premised on the equally commonsensical view that in political institutions the pacification of violence is achieved, and resort to violence accordingly is either extra-political, or antithetical to politics. According to liberal democratic ideals, political competition between individuals and parties for the power to govern, and decisions in the context of legislation and administration, as well as general patterns of social order, can be regulated by compliance with and endorsement of norms and rules which are established cooperatively and with the mobilized consent of all.⁴ Thus violence can be understood as politically excluded from public contention, from normal governmental activity, and from the interpersonal exchanges of those in political roles (including such roles as citizen, subject and protestor, as well as officer, representative or governor) as they seek advantage or to promote particular policies. According to this view, voting for a particular party or individual, or participating in the constitutional process of policy formation and decision - as well as engaging in other forms of democratic political action - is non-violent, and, indeed, is an expressive endorsement of non-violence. A distinction is drawn between politics on the one hand, and violence on the other.⁵ Although there is a significant category of violent politics - associated with protest and dissent, rather than with the force used by state authorities - this violence is illegitimate, and subject to criminal punishment.

We analyse how the deployment of discursive political power, by a range of organized actors identified with, broadly, the anarchist and/or Marxist political traditions, in the context of global anti-capitalist organization and demonstration, and the specifically Italian organization of urban counter-cultural presence and action, seeks to establish the limits of politics in relation to violence. Our analysis of published internet discourse shows how this invariably involves drawing further distinctions, between good and bad politics, and between good and bad violences. Contestation, assertion, and defence of these frontiers are critical moves in the formation of collective political agency. Further, the construction of such boundaries fixes a pivotal point from which momentum for further political argument and reason is gained.

The blogger quoted in Extract 1 draws on the account of politics that emphasizes the intrinsic violence of governmental power and action. They draw an analogy between the indirect violence of voting, and the 'indirect violence' of the operator of a missile system who is quite disconnected from their target. This violence is the worst kind - in the case of the missile operator the destruction of human beings: 'genocide, mutilation, executed, burned alive'.⁶ In the case of the voter the violence is the direct coercion, the uses of military and police violence, and the violence of state punishment and warfare, including the worst violences, that are prosecuted, in the name of the state, by the elected government. Between these two, the worse hypocrisy is on the part of the voter. The missile operator will hardly point to their job in order to evidence her commitment to pacifism. But the voter can - and does - refer to their participation in politics as evidence of their endorsement of peace and non-violence.

Some voters, to be sure, the argument continues, will lament the violence of states, governments, and corporations, and their agents. But they are likely to attribute this to failings in the political process, rather than to the political process as such. The wrong persons are running states; or their policies - of warfare, policing, punishment, or the injuries and deprivations of economic measures and systems - are wrong. Such positions wrongly locate the problem in the existing government or system, with the implication that personnel and policy changes could

diminish or eliminate the violence. They don't see that violence is intrinsic to the structure itself. The nub of the argument, for the purposes of this article, is that the politics-violence frontier is shifted - violence is not extrinsic, but intrinsic, to politics. To live and to act beyond violence will mean living and acting beyond the politics of capitalist states and societies.

This analysis trades on, and has implications for, our understanding of the predicate 'political'. What counts as political and non-political is always, in itself, a political matter.⁷ This is in two senses. In a first order sense, a political claim will be opposed, whether overtly or not. In a second order sense, what it is to make a political claim will itself be contested. Further, political power is always contested. Our analysis shows that essays at fixing the political violence distinction are always dialogical, and never final. In the case of some of our examples, that provisionality is principled; in other cases not.⁸ We analyse the discursive processes by which locations of the politics-violence frontier are negotiated, and the argumentative strategies that either attempt to fix them, or to deploy them as premises in further argument.

Within political science and sociology, we meet the explanatory problem that proceeds from the question why some actors cross the politics-violence frontier - why and how they move from forms of political engagement such as campaigning, protest, or participating in electoral politics, to violent forms of riotous demonstration, physical fighting with security officers, or taking up arms. Our analysis focusses on the prior conditions for any such 'crossing'. First, the boundary has to be conceptualized and established, such that it can be crossed. Conceptualizations and essays at establishment take political work, and second, there will be contestation. The blogger in Extract 1 contests the dominant view, arguing that voters have crossed the violence frontier already. However, voters for the most part will dissent from the judgement that they are acting violently. Second, specific arguments, based on specific exemplars, are deployed in the rationalization or justification of cases of conscious 'crossing'. Examples salient for the political context discussed in this article include 'black blocs' at protest events, who coordinate actions which exceed the norms of non-violent protest;⁹ and the historical context of Italian politics also includes the cases of civil war

resistance to fascist rule, and the 1970s *anni di piombo* ('years of lead').¹⁰ All these are salient for the activists and bloggers whose texts we examine here. The global context of anti-capitalist action is recognizably represented visually on our sampled websites, and, together with direct urban action on issues such as housing, is the topic and the occasion for political argument. The *anni di piombo* are present in our corpus as a topic. Several lengthy interviews, book reviews, and blog posts in our dataset were occasioned by the publication of Gabriel Donato's book on left violence in Italy 1969-1972.¹¹ A connected blog post on the website of Collettivo Rosso Mal Polo, on the subject of violence and politics, cites the work of Donatella Della Porta.¹² The partisan action against Nazi occupation 1943-45 and the contemporaneous civil war between the Resistance and the Co-Belligerent Army loyal to the king on one side, against the Fascist Italian Socialist Republic on the other, is remembered in Italian political culture, and this remembrance is notable in our corpus both in announcements of meetings and demos, and in the use of resistance photos and posters as visual illustration.¹³ We discuss these historical contexts for radical Italian politics in more detail in Section 3.

Our analysis aims to show how the political work of establishing the frontier between politics and violence or nonviolence contributes to the constructive work of political identification, mobilization, and collective agency, and to the strategic understanding of what political action should consist in. Where sociological or political science explanation marshals political variables as explanans, our view focusses rather on political action and work itself as constituting political outcomes - in particular constituting the situation of collective actors vis-à-vis the politics-violence frontier. Our focus is on how the work of boundary setting is done. As is evident from Extract 1, the metaphor of politics as war does a good deal of work for this blogger. It sets up an analogy, and also conveys ethical judgement of twenty-first century warfare, and of politics and politicians. The metaphor of politics as war is one that runs very deep in western polities. The two are identified in the history of modern states, in the thought of Clausewitz, Weber, Foucault, and numerous others, such that the distinction between war and politics is understood to be a precarious ideological

achievement.¹⁴ For many activists, the idea that 'we are at war' is an obvious way of making sense of public and social life.¹⁵ It has the status of a 'metaphor we live by'.¹⁶

In this extract the rhetorical form of 'we versus they' also does a good deal of work. More than one 'they' is referred to here: those who prosecute governmental violence; those who are irresponsible, and distance or insulate themselves from the violence that is perpetrated by government; those who hypocritically present themselves as non-violent; and also those who acknowledge the violence but don't connect it, appropriately, to the structure of state government and modern politics. The contrastive construction of 'we', clearly enough, is a mobilizing task. This work is also one of contestation. Authors within our dataset contest with each other - some cite Marxist and other arguments as coherent accounts of why violence is inescapable; others are concerned to point out the fundamental problems of such a view, and to consider how violence might, precisely, be evaded.

In our account, these are effortful exercises of power in discourse. Accounts of metaphor in social theory can emphasise the taken for granted, unnoticed, in some cases somatized and internalized, non-effortful nature of metaphorical saying.¹⁷ Similarly, many of the grammatical, semantic and performative elements of discourse that Fairclough analyses are not obviously consciously and deliberately employed, for power purposes, by those who author or speak them. Although they certainly have power effects, these cannot be assumed to be intentional effects.¹⁸ By contrast, the explicit aversion to 'they' versus 'we' in political speech, in particular in our data, is more clearly conscious, and more explicitly politically purposive.¹⁹ Also, as we go on to discuss, it must be seen as a crucial element of the constitution of political identity, and an ineliminable political element of any explanation of political action - whether violent or not.

The construction of we versus they, and also the shifting and fixing of the politics-violence frontier, are both instances of what we refer to in the analysis that follows as work of distinction. When asked in interview about matters of preference and consumption, Bourdieu's respondents articulated distinctions between self and constructed others. These constructions, in Bourdieu's

account, serve to establish the personal, social, and political identity of the respondent, by reference to what they are not.²⁰ Our analysis shows how the politics violence frontier - shifting it, attempting to fix it, and, importantly, contesting how it is understood and located by rival political groups - is constitutive of the construction of who we are, as a movement or party of political actors. The specific location of the politics-violence frontier also contributes to a programmatic account of what political goals are set, and what political strategies and tactics can rightfully be deployed.

In the next section we put our data and analysis into the context of other recent relevant accounts of 'boundary activation' in political action.²¹ Section 3 then interprets our textual data in more detail by reference to the current context of recent anti-capitalist discourses, actions, and political culture, and the context of the specifically Italian inheritance of left- and right-wing accounts of violence in connection with politics. We discuss further the uses of metaphor, and the political discursive construction of a collective agent, in and by these texts. In so doing, we show how our actor-writers negotiate the concepts of violence and of politics, and how they engage in the political work of distinction.

2. The politics-violence boundary

In this section we consider how the politics-violence boundary has been constructed in some significant examples of social or political science. Our purpose here is to show how problematic any clearly objectified distinction is, when we consider the political process of articulating identity and agency in relation to power. We understand such construction of identity and agency to be prior to any action such as voting, refusing to vote, participating in protest, or participating in violent protest or direct action. Our data and analysis are confined to internet discourse, so our focus perforce is on the discursive work of identity articulation, which we cannot link to any further action or conduct on the part of our writers or their readers. We argue, nevertheless, that this discourse analysis makes a meaningful contribution to our understanding of political agency, which goes beyond examples we have found in political and social science.

Della Porta in her studies of political violence focusses explicitly on the theme of frontier crossing - thus taking the frontier as a given for the purposes of her analysis.²² She asks how it is that some individuals and groups, not others, are recruited to violence. Her analysis focusses on cognitive, relational, and affective mechanisms which in interaction sufficiently explain recruitment and continued adherence to violent means for political ends or in political contexts. Cognitive mechanisms are less about the broad ideological commitments of a person, and more about the 'specific frames and narratives that arise in a particular situation'.²³ These make sense of the identity and commitments of the resistant actor. Cognitive frames are simultaneously affective and relational, in that they are stories about injustice, repression, and martyrdom, and identify the militant actor with their comrades in a common struggle. Affective ties of love, friendship, and solidarity among militant activists support the production of individual and collective identities that reinforce identification with violent action. 'Radical ideologies engendered violence' not automatically, but only 'when political opportunities triggered escalation'.²⁴

Alderdice, in a contribution within the discipline of psychotherapy, also focusses on the significance of narratives of injustice.²⁵ For Alderdice the phenomenology is less about boundary crossing, and more about the loss of proper agency which accompanies the dissolution and reconstruction of boundaries. Felt injuries of humiliation and resentment - retold and re-experienced in narratives and myths - can be powerfully painful, and contribute to losses of differentiation.²⁶ On the one hand, there is collapse of past, present and future - evident in the way that historic and even ancient injustices can be reported as though they happened yesterday.²⁷ On the other hand, boundaries of the self become inchoate, which can lead to a 'visceral sense of oneness' within the injured, or the activist, group.²⁸ These boundary dissolutions can then be compensated by exaggerated boundaries between in-group and out-group.²⁹ In turn, violent engagement with the out-group is more or less over-determined, as it becomes a form of self-defence, revenge, or punishment.

For both Alderdice and Della Porta, then, violent engagement is a function of narratives of self, relationships and opportunities. For Tilly, by contrast, politics, rather than psychology or subjectivity, must come first.³⁰ Political violence can't be a matter of individual 'willingness to resort to violence'.³¹ Rather we must begin from the context of claims and counter-claims on government, the contention between parties in competition for advantage, position, and the power to govern - and their contention with government agents. The category 'polity' is as basic, and as salient, as those of 'society' or 'individual'. Given this, and given the role of violence as a main means of government, political actions such as demonstrations, or strikes, or electoral competitions, which are not in themselves violent, are more or less liable to develop into violence, given engagement with state and government agents.³² Violent or non-violent action is the outcome of the interaction of movement dynamics with political opportunities and constraints, and with a series of more or less deliberate processes of formation of collective actors.³³ Tilly and Tarrow emphasise such processes as 'brokerage' and 'certification' - the processes whereby groups and individuals form alliances and gain recognition from each other as political actors.³⁴ The emphasis here is on boundary activation - which can result in coalition and alliance, or in polarization.³⁵ They also emphasise the performative aspect of contention and claim making: the way repertoires of action can be transmitted across contexts, and transform as they go.³⁶

All of these significant examples of analysis of boundary work are consistent with the problematization of how the boundary between violent and non-violent action, or between established politics and violence, is constructed in the first place. They differ in their emphases regarding how surprising - how explanatory worthy - political violence is. Della Porta's study of clandestine political actors emphasizes the significance of Manichean narrative, and ideas of great violence as a prelude to a new world, or to rebirth.³⁷ For those who take up armed struggle such narratives are important. Similarly, Alderdice's account emphasises the way Manichean narratives focus on ancient wrongs and victimization, generating an impetus to fight back.³⁸ By contrast, and more prosaically, political scientists and political thinkers often treat violent action as one kind of

technique or tactic which can be chosen and used according to the particular circumstance and the task in hand.³⁹ Such an instrumentalist, no-nonsense approach to violence is clearly articulated in the thinking of some activists, for whom the justification of violent engagement is couched in terms of tactics, and 'what works'.⁴⁰ According to such views of strategic political reasoning there is no need for myth or ideology. The view that in a context of violence, violent action and engagement are unavoidable, is shared by numerous thinkers from, in particular, left and anarchist political traditions, who challenge arguments that only non-violent political action is justifiable.⁴¹ As we will see, the idea that violence is ubiquitous, and is structured deep into politics, so is unavoidable, is a dominant note in our data. So also are fecund symbolic categories, such as autonomy, resistance, and war, which operate as challenges to established institutions of politics such as voting and supporting governmental authority.

3. Political activism, autonomy and resistance.

The organizations and bloggers from whom we collected our data can be identified broadly with contemporary anti-capitalism. This political theme reaches back into the late 1980s in the form of anti-roads protests and the formation of movement organizations such as Earth First!. It has developed particularly with the anti-capitalism and Occupy events of the first decades of the twenty first century.⁴² Studies show continuities and inheritances across these contexts.⁴³ In this history the G8 Summit protests in Genoa in 2001 are notable, not least for levels of violence in confrontations with Italian police forces, including one death, and for the use of anti-terror laws against protestors. The detailed story of controversies about the propriety of forms of political organization and action, and the tensions between participating groups, in particular about tactics of direct action and violence, is obviously beyond our purposes here. Where our data adverts to questions of violence it is more in the context of urban and neighbourhood politics, although anti-capitalism is a clear theme.

Notably, our sample of discourse does not include explicit identifications with anarchism. As Gordon argues, activists have good reasons to be wary of labels and categorizations. Nevertheless the cultural values, the criticism of mainstream political institutions and actors, and the identification of what, exactly, is wrong with capitalist cities and states, can be identified with anarchist thought and action.⁴⁴ However, we must note that named citations in our sample are not to anarchist thinkers. Machiavelli, Marx, Engels, Weber, Lenin and Mao, though, all are explicitly cited in the course of discussions of violence in relation to states and politics.⁴⁵ A post on Noi Saremo Tutto - a national network of political collectives - discusses the development of the imperial war state into the welfare state; the way overt repressive state violence has translated into domination by social inclusion, and harm and injury to those excluded; and the relation between these state forms and so-called rogue states.⁴⁶ The engagement with Marxist and broadly left radical critique of welfare states is clear.

The tenuousness of the link between our thinkers and either the Marxist or anarchist traditions explicitly can be understood in the frame of 'autonomism'. This is particularly significant in the Italian context, although relevant also more widely. A Florence building associated with one of our organizations carried in 2015 a beautiful sign: 'autorganizziamoci in ognire quartiere' (let's organize ourselves in every neighbourhood).⁴⁷ Here we have play on the significance of 'auto' - not auto-rule (autonomia) but auto-organization. By autonomism in the Italian context is meant, primarily, a definite dissociation - which goes back in the post world war two era - from the Italian Communist Party (the PCI), and from Stalinism more generally; and also resistance to the developing ideas of Eurocommunism.⁴⁸ The theme of autonomism is critical to the history of feminism and other 'new' social movements in Europe and elsewhere in the latter decades of the twentieth century, and signals the avoidance of any formal or even informal party alliances, as much as dissent from established Marxism.⁴⁹ Feminists, environmentalists, and sex and gender identity movements, have all declared themselves to be independent of established social and political institutions including parties, to be at odds with dominant state and social forms, and to embrace autonomism

as an explicit political value.⁵⁰ Autonomism has particular significance in Italy, because of the prominence of the idea for the left, but also for the fascist right, in the 1970s, and the specific Italian development of anti-state activism of both right and left which, often, employed violence.⁵¹ The identification of the state as target is not confined, obviously, to violent groups, nor is it specific to any particular tradition of political thinking. Anarchists often lay claim to the heart and the origin of the idea of autonomy.⁵² However, perhaps particularly in Italy, given the significance of 'autonomous Marxism' in the workers' movement, this claim is actively contested.⁵³

In our interpretation of our data the theme of autonomism is central to the work of distinction between 'their politics and ours'.

Extract 2

We believe that the city is for everyone, all who live in it; that essential services and public spaces are collective property, to be managed for the benefit of citizens, not for the benefit of banks and developers; that this good should be defended even by forcing the limits of the law [azioni di forzatura legislativa] if necessary; that there is value in the autonomy of politics from market economy, a field of cultural and political struggle against the budgetary constraints imposed on local administration, a challenge that arises from the city as the theatre for a winning alternative, a convincing answer to the politics of austerity and party politics. (Uncittaincomune, activist organisation website)⁵⁴

The ideal of organization of the city for the benefit of its denizens is endorsed, as is the autonomy of politics from markets, and an association of political with cultural struggle. The question for, and the aim of, politics is how we live. There are hints in this extract of an ideal of city and political life - public, with the analogy of stage and action. What is rejected is the domination of city government by the economic interests of developers; the submission of the city to the regime of austerity - which has been imposed from outside, from the capital, and eventually from the global economic powers and authorities - and party politics. Their politics is steeped in the kind of violence that is evident in the presence of police and security forces on the streets and in particular in the vicinity of any protest.

Our sources speak of a different kind of politics:

Extract 3

Cortocircuito was born with the intent to work on a central and open nerve in the antagonistic political struggle: political communication. ... Information has the effect of

producing truth, defining what's true and what false. Mainstream information, falsely neutral, is an instrument for the prevalence of the dominant class's reading of reality. By contrast, our information, the same as our political action, will immediately declare what side it's on. (Cortocircuito, activist organization website).⁵⁵

The description in Extract 2 of Florence as a city of violence is an instance of this kind of political communication. Second, politics will be done in the building of new relationships:

Extract 4

The territory as we have it today has been produced by police operations. The people have been driven off their land, then from their streets, from their neighbourhoods - replaced by condominiums, and the stupid hope of enclosing all of life in privacy. For us, the problem of territory isn't what it is for the state. For us, it's not a matter of maintaining territory, but of making communities, movement, relationships, more dense - so that the territory becomes illegible, indecipherable, opaque to the eyes of the authorities. (Via del Leone Occupazione, organisation website)⁵⁶

Here politics - as the building of community and life - evades and conceals itself from state authority. The idea is to construct ways of life which are dense - and hence potentially can satisfy human needs in a place; which do not conform to the patterns of movement in space and time that are mandated by neo-liberalism and capitalism, and which state authorities take for granted and effectively enforce. According to visuals of these websites - pictures of demonstrations, marches, banners - politics is conceived of also as public struggle in the form of protest and public solidarity.

Extract 5

Struggle is the only way. But struggle takes multiple forms and acts at numerous levels. That is why in the last years we have taken part in strikes and marches; we have organized public assemblies and rallies; we have stood together with the workers at the picket lines and have given them technical and material support at times of mobilization, organizing resistance funds, solidarity events, and putting our inquiries into the service of their battles, helping them find the 'right' ground for their struggles. (Clash City Workers website)⁵⁷

The theme of resistance is significant for activist politics in general, but also has particular salience in the Italian context. In 1946 the Togliatti amnesty, which offered amnesty to certain fascist actors, as well as clemency for civil war partisans and resistant fighters who were associated with atrocities in reprisal, was an attempt to conciliate the PCI and the Christian Democratic parties. Twenty years later the theme of 'resistance betrayed' - that fascism had not been defeated - was important in left circles and in some cases justified a shift to militant (violent) tactics. Fascist

thuggery, in an effort to eliminate communism, was supported by continued fascist belief in a 'society enmeshed in social chaos'.⁵⁸ This violence in the form of social chaos is understood, in fascism, to be susceptible only to organized violence for order. Post war, fascist and right-wing activists identified communists, Trades Unionists and the left generally as an enemy to be attacked with violence. Obviously, left wing groups understood themselves in terms of the resistance which is still memorialized in Italian political culture, and forms both a topic, and a resource, for our sample websites, for representation of WWII partisans as ancestors, and of fascist rallies as the assembled foe.⁵⁹

However, notwithstanding 'violence as resistance', we must take into account the ultimate inconclusivity of attempts to fix the meaning of violent acts. First, we must note the explicit disavowal of finality by Cortocircuito's account of the nature of violence in Extract 3. Here 'politics' is practical communicative action which is premised on the provisionality of meaning. That provisionality must also apply to Cortocircuito's own view of the politics-violent relation. On the other hand, some of our contributions are less reluctant to be definitive about the nature of violence. For instance, the practice of resistance as set out by Via de Leone Occupazione in Extract 4 relies on the explication of the state power that is resisted in terms of the violence visited on those who are 'driven from their land'. Violence has to be definitely located, so that the politics that will resist it can be constructed.

The 1970s years of lead saw attempts by competing actors and commentators to fix the meaning of violence - but in vain. Armed perpetrators, the imprisoned leaders of relevant groups, supporters and the wider left movements, the government, the police, the judiciary, and media commentators, all made numerous, endless, essays at fixing meaning - from violence's necessity, to its efficacy, to its symbolic value, to its heritage of the values of the Resistance, to its destructiveness (but of what?), to its criminality, and so on.⁶⁰ Moss refers to these disputes as 'the politics of interpretation'.⁶¹ Early left organization for defence against right-wing violence, with the formation of permanent Anti-Fascist Committees from 1969, developed into specific organizations for direct

retaliation and attack. These separated themselves from the wider organized working class context.⁶² Concerned to encompass violence within political action, nevertheless they needed to practise a form of violence which avoided any hint of fascist styles of paramilitarism.⁶³ Accordingly, they had recourse to the language of resistance,⁶⁴ and to that of class war, and warfare.⁶⁵ Such terms, as Gerusa points out, evade the normative problem of violence which, in Italy, has or had at the end of the 1960s inescapable associations with the bomb massacres, reprisals, and summary executions of Nazism and fascism.⁶⁶

Similarly to the indeterminacy of what the 1970s violence was, more recent violent actions, in the context of anti-capitalist protests and the like, and more recent forms of terrorism, have been interpreted and disputed by various parties. Police and public authorities, the corporations whose premises have often been targeted, the violent actors themselves, the wider network of participants in the context of demonstrations, supporters of the cause, the partisans of pacifism, and judges and magistrates in resulting criminal trials, all attempt to fix the meaning of violence.⁶⁷ A post on the Collettivo Prezzemolo website argues, in a definite essay at the politics-violence distinction, that 'terrorism is a political phenomenon, but not a political force'. Terrorism utilizes violence instrumentally, in order to achieve a political consensus within the very polity that is damaged by violence (and therefore consensus cannot be achieved).⁶⁸ Here a distinction is drawn between instrumental uses of violence, and political achievement, criticising the left concern (in particular in the 1970s) to extend the concept of politics to encompass violence.⁶⁹ Discussions of the history of Italian violence in war and politics from our data are overwhelmingly infused with critique - the dominant tone combines understanding of the dynamics of fascism, civil war and the anni di piombo with the view that left violence had failed, at very high cost. 'Political battle can't resolve itself into the justification of armed struggle, or of violence of any kind'. Instead we need deep transformation of the system. (Carpe Diem, lone activist blog)⁷⁰

With regard to the 1970s, Moss remarks that the various parties had to acknowledge the ambiguities of the violence. All were prisoners of the repertoire of meanings associated with others,

not themselves. This means, at least, that the authors of violence - whether of a kidnap, such as those carried out by Italian militants in the 1970s, or of breaking a store window, as has been perpetrated in anti-capitalist demonstrations - do not have the power to determine its meaning.⁷¹

4. The politics-violence frontier.

There is, though, one clear meaning of violence, unambiguously articulated in our data. Throughout our sample the view is articulated that violence is the political means that the state, and capital, use in order to maintain rule. Violence here is the use of police force - for evictions, or in order to control protest. Visually, the websites at the time of our data collection feature representations of police and security personnel lines in the vicinity of demonstrations, placards, and marches demanding justice. These are representations of unconcealed incipient violence. Arrests, physical removals—it is clear from these pictures—will be immediately consequent on any resistance to state force. It is also state power projected globally in wars and killing on behalf of the capitalist world, as in Extract 1. There is also the more insidious violence of deprivation, marginalization, and exclusion:

Extract 6

In a society divided between the included and the excluded, life can become unbearable to the point of suicide. (Cortocircuito)⁷²

Noi Saremo Tutto argue that the twentieth century alienation of society from 'official politics' has brought about a 'renunciation of politics' on the part of many. This has left the terrain of society to be carved up by capital, and has left people to be engaged on one side or the other in the disputes that inevitably follow from uneven development in cities.⁷³

Extract 7

If we put all these elements together, a completely different vision of the city emerges: not 'Florence the open city', but Florence the city of repression, of hypocrisy, of unjustified violence, state homicides, of evictions, and selective inclusion which creates an ever higher barrier between the included, who consume great services, and the excluded - the undesirable elements who are forced to stay on the margin, those who've lost work, who are classified as deviant (Cortocircuito)⁷⁴

This webpost makes a very clear move to locate the violence-politics distinction firmly beyond the terrain of 'normal' city and state politics. Far from being the pacific administration of civic institutions, on the basis of democratic agreement, the city is based on the violent exclusion, repression, punishment, and indeed murder, of certain classes. The ideal of Florentine civic politics is really civic violence, and in some cases this is violence of the worst kind.

The identification of this violence of politics operates as a fixed point from which to discuss how to act against it. A different kind of politics is needed. A conundrum is obviously posed about the nature of 'our' alternative politics in this context of actual and incipient violence. These activists set out to claim a politics that faces down the real violence of capitalism, state security and policing, and party competition, while maintaining a politics-violence frontier. A first achievement is the assertion and projection of an alternative political, collective, subject. Partly, it is achieved discursively simply by the repetition of the word 'we' and the possessive 'our'. This is, of course, enforced by the conventions of web design - organizations invariably complete a section entitled 'who we are' (chi siamo).

Extract 8

For a year, we've been here in this neighbourhood ... The space in which we live determines what we are. (Via del Leone Occupazione) ⁷⁵

In some of our data the trope of war is prominent. States are at base war machines, needing to socialize killers (soldiers).⁷⁶ 'We are at war' - a social and economic war.⁷⁷ Imperialism is the decisive trait in state politics - which maintains policy based on military repression and terror.⁷⁸ In response to this reality, the idea of a counter-power violence which might eliminate the violence of power, recurs. For instance, the website of the campaigning and protest group L'infanzia Non si Appulta, in a discussion of canonical theories of violence, postulates the idea that violence might destroy the 'real violence' of the established legal order, so that we can emerge into a society without violence.⁷⁹ A religious pacifist organization, whose publicity was present in the city at the time of our fieldwork, rehearses arguments that we can distinguish between violence for good - for

instance, revolutionary violence in favour of the oppressed - and violence for evil.⁸⁰ 'Partisan banditry was justified during the effective Nazi occupation - any political action can be justified.'⁸¹

Unsurprisingly, we don't find in these organizational websites prescriptions of armed struggle, violent protest, or other actions that could on the face of it be construed as crossing the politics-violence frontier. However, against violence there must be resistance - and not only that:

Extract 9

[the common] good should be defended even by enforcing the limits of the law [azioni di forzatura legislativa] if necessary.⁸²

Forzatura legislativa can be translated as enforcement of the law - a familiar theme from republican and liberal politics, where this is the police function, supported by citizen consent and endorsement. But here we have the connotation of the enforcement of the laws as they should be. The laws as they are encoded in the context of capitalism set a limit, but the limit cannot be treated, by oppositional political actors, as a clear line. Rather it is a frontier area, and Cortocircuito calls for action at the frontier – 'forcing the limits of the law'.⁸³ They declare themselves committed to 'disobedience to the stability pact' represented by urban development, and to the pursuit instead of the reclamation and regeneration of disused properties. Our politics will be able to differentiate politics proper from state violence and corruption, and from the implication in violence of normal electoral politics - and from normal compliance with law. Our politics will push at the law.

This assertion of a 'we' in contradistinction to various 'theys' - this political work of distinction - fixes a discursive point from which further political reason and argument can be prosecuted. The second achievement is the development of alternative politics, from the anchor point of who we are and what we have done. From this point, logically, accounts of what we aim for proceed. And those aims, strategies and tactics are elaborated in the context of an account (a theory) of capitalism, electoral politics, bureaucracy and urban development, which applies generally. The presentation of these arguments does not pretend to the disinterestedness that our activists see in the misinformation, and disguise of class domination, and of violence, of 'mainstream information' (see Extract 3).⁸⁴ Strategies and tactics that can rightfully be deployed, given these

explicit class aims, are based on an understanding of how the world is, which is valid, and for which evidence is produced.

Third, visions of another politics are developed. We met earlier the idea of establishing networks of local relationships that are dense, and that evade the understanding and control of the state and capital.⁸⁵ By contrast to the separated state, and to politics which distances people from power, the strategy for progressive groups must be to close the gap between society and politics, for political activists and organizations to make themselves comprehensible - to speak, appropriately, to members of society. (Noi Saremo Tutto)⁸⁶ At the same time as the society-politics gap is closed, the autonomy of politics from economy must be secured. Established parties, governments, and bureaucracies are beholden to dominating economic interests, to the detriment of social groups and classes, of neighbourhoods and public spaces. Free associations, public spaces that do not exclude, public services that answer to the common good, are all possible, and meanwhile can be provided autonomously.⁸⁷ Society can be less fractured, more complete - if we practise this politics.⁸⁸

In the 1970s left groups found themselves constrained to use state-like apparatus and categories. For instance, the 77 Movement (a violent fraction which emerged from the Autonomia loose coalition of autonomous collectives) 'outlawed' the Red Brigades (BR).⁸⁹ The left wing aim to unmask the structures that bind capital, parties, and state together was ironized, in turn, by BR's demand that the judiciary take the proper responsibility allocated to them by the constitution, and decide on the question of freeing political prisoners.⁹⁰ This instrumental reliance on the rule of law opened BR up to the accusation that this was, actually, a political manoeuvre, and one designed primarily to secure its advantage over its competitors on the left.⁹¹ They could be accused of using 'the state's own means' with their 'interrogations, 'detentions' and the like - to which a BR spokesman replied 'we have no other means, no other words'.⁹²

Strategically, the Red Brigades' style of direct violence against economic, party and governmental power, led them into communication with state and government in a style which mimicked, which perhaps ironized, but nevertheless enacted, a particular relationship of violence

and force to their melioration in constitutional, legislative and judicial forms. By contrast, the political actors analysed here are careful to maintain a clear distance from such political forms, and to locate violence - the worst violence, the violence that injures and kills - clearly within, intrinsic to, those forms. This clear frontier relies on a pervasive, and frequently implicit, metaphor of surface and depth. It looks, if you see the beauty of the city of Florence, as though all is lovely. But for us, who see below the surface, and live at the level of real life, the level of survival and injury - for us it is clear that 'the beauty of Florence is yet another disaster'.⁹³

The authors analysed here achieve the production of the politics-violence frontier dialogically - in oppositional dialogue with neo-liberal, republican, and democratic political theory which conceals violence, and in dialogue with voices from the history of political thought who have been understood as defending good violence for justice. The injury and damage done by capitalist and state domination over disadvantaged people's lives and bodies is also juxtaposed to images of police and security presence and action which clearly tell of the way that contentious political action is more or less likely to develop into physical fight. The frontier between violence and politics is a frontier between the forces that defend the status quo, and the physical, political, presence of organized protest. The establishment of this frontier makes sense of the organizations' political positions and actions, and sets the terms on which contributors to the websites engage and content with both political allies and foes. Politics, as an activity, cannot be taken for granted, and what counts as political - with respect to action, to relationships, to aims - has to be established in a process which itself is political.

Fig.1.

Photo: Lucy Abbott 2015



¹ Extract from *Disquisendo*, lone activist blog post, October 2012: <https://disquisendo.wordpress.com>. There was a link to this blog post from the website of Movimento di Lotta per la Casa, <http://www.inventati.org/lottaxlacasa> downloaded May 2015.

² Materials from organizations with presence (evidenced by posters etc, in some cases by organizational premises) in Florence were collected during fieldwork in and around Casa del popolo, Fiesole; Circolo San Niccolo; Circolo ARCI Novoli; Archivio del movimento di quartiere di Firenze; Unione ricreativa dei lavoratori di San Niccolo; CSA Next Emerson; municipal areas of Scandicci, Santo Spirito, Careggi,

Novoli, Fiesole, March-May 2015. The analysis here is of text downloaded from relevant organizational and individual websites, analysed using QSR N-6. Here we present analysis of text coded as adverting to 'violence/non-violence', 'politics', 'state', and 'society'.

³ M. Weber, *Economy and Society*. G. Roth and C. Wittich, eds., 2 vols. (Berkeley Ca: University of California Press, 1978, first published in German 1921), Vol. I, pp. 54-6; E. Frazer, and K. Hutchings. "Virtuous Violence and the Politics of Statecraft in Machiavelli, Clausewitz and Weber." *Political Studies* 59, no. 1 (2011): 56-73.

⁴ This view can be associated both with the liberal tradition in general, incepted in the work of Locke and the social contract tradition, in which the violence of the state of nature is exchanged for the security of the political state; and in the twentieth century with the differently based critical thought of Arendt. J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. P. Laslett, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960, first published 1690); H. Arendt, *On Violence*. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969), also in H. Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1973, first published New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1972). E. Frazer and K. Hutchings. "Politics, Violence and Revolutionary Virtue: Reflections on Locke and Sorel." no. 97 (2009): 45-62; "On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon." *Contemporary Political Theory* 7, no. 1 (2008): 90-108.

⁵ Violence is not the only significantly liminal concept with respect to politics. The relationship and boundary between polity and society, or polity and economy, or polity and religion, and others, similarly are conventionally established and simultaneously contested. In such cases, too, we would argue that a first political problem, for political actors and theorists alike, is to establish the frontier of politics.

⁶ *Disquisendo* blog post (extract 1), *op.cit.*, Ref.1.

⁷ M. Freedman *The Political Theory of Political Thinking: the anatomy of a practice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.111

⁸ Compare Freedman, *ibid*, p.73 on the political centrality of attempts to fix meaning.

⁹ U. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive. Anti-authoritarian politics from practice to theory*, (London: Pluto Press, 2008), p. 80; P. Gelderloos. *How Nonviolence Protects the State*. 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: The Anarchist Library, South End Press, 2007), p. 78.

¹⁰ S. Wright, 'Missed Opportunities: New Left readings of the Italian Resistance', in A. Davidson and S. Wright (eds.) *Never Give In: The Italian Resistance and politics*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1998), 77-97; D. Moss, *The Politics of Left-Wing Violence in Italy 1969-1985*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

¹¹ G. Donato, *La Lotta e Armata*, (Roma: I libri di Derive Approdi, 2014).

¹² A review of Donato, *ibid.*, published on the Derive Approdi website (6) is linked and referred to by the website of student organization Collettivo Prezzemolo (<http://collettivoprezzemolo.blogspot.co.uk>) as well as by that of student organization Collettivo Rosso Mal Polo: <https://rossomalpolo.noblogs.org> (download May 2015). We have relevant citations also from the Cinque Stelle movement/party website which at the time of our fieldwork was at www.beppegrillo.it/movimento; downloaded May 2015; at Jan 2018 this link does not exist: instead: www.ilblogdellestelle.it/.

¹³ P. Cooke *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2011); S. Costalli and A. Ruggeri, 'Indignation, Ideologies, and Armed Mobilisation: Civil War in Italy 1943-45', *International Security* 40(2): 119-157, (2015). For relevant event announcements and visuals Noi Saremo Tutto, activist organization website: <http://www.noisaremotutto.org> downloaded May 2015; at March 2018 that address no longer links to Noi Saremo Tutto, internet search for which now goes to: <http://www.militant-blog.org> - visuals of 1943-44 resistance are on the front page (consulted August 2018).

¹⁴ Frazer and Hutchings, *Virtuous Violence op.cit.* n.3.

¹⁵ The Cinque Stelle website said it baldly: We are at war - a social and economic war. *op.cit.*, Ref.12.

¹⁶ G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003 first published 1980).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 243ff.

¹⁸ N. Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Longman 1989).

¹⁹ The 'we v they' scheme has obvious affinities with the Schmittian identification of the 'friend v enemy' distinction as central to the logic of political power (C. Schmitt *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996, first published German 1927). Cf. Freedman, *Political Theory of Political Thinking*, *op. cit.*, Ref.7 on the decontestatory purposes of political language.

- ²⁰ For example, one respondent emphasized that he values things for their own sake, whereas others have them only for show. P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1986, first published French 1979), p.275.
- ²¹ C. Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.21.
- ²² D. Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state : a comparative analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); D. Della Porta, *Clandestine political violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- ²³ Della Porta, *Social movements, ibid.*, p. 226.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.196; *Clandestine Political Violence, op. cit.*, Ref.22, p.208.
- ²⁵ J. Alderdice, 'Fundamentalism, Radicalisation and Terrorism. Part 1: terrorism as dissolution in a complex system. Part 2: fundamentalism, regression and repair'. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 31, 3 (2017), pp. 285-300; 301-313.
- ²⁶ Alderdice Part 2 *ibid* p.4.
- ²⁷ Alderdice Part 1 *op.cit.* n.25, p.11; Part 2 *op.cit.* n.25, p.5.
- ²⁸ Alderdice Part 2 *op.cit.*, n.25, p.2.
- ²⁹ Alderdice Part 2 *op.cit.*, n.25, p.5.
- ³⁰ C. Tilly, 'Does modernisation breed revolution?', *Comparative Politics* (5.3, 1973, pp. 436-8); C. Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.9.
- ³¹ Tilly, *ibid.*, p.439.
- ³² *ibid.*
- ³³ C. Tilly and S. Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), pp. 10-11.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* pp.11-13; Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 30, pp. 20-22.
- ³⁵ Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 30, p.21.
- ³⁶ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics, op. cit.*, Ref. 33, p.21; Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 30, pp. 45-50.
- ³⁷ Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence, op.cit.*, Ref. 22, p. 205.
- ³⁸ Alderdice Fundamentalism, radicalisation and terrorism, *op.cit.*, Ref. 25, Part I, pp. 7-8.
- ³⁹ M.J. Boyle, 'Progress and Pitfalls in the Study of Political Violence', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24/4, (2012), pp. 530-1.
- ⁴⁰ P. Gelderloos, *How Nonviolence Protects the State, op.cit.*, Ref. 9; P. Gelderloos, *The Failure of Nonviolence* (Seattle: Left Bank Books, 2015).
- ⁴¹ Gelderloos, *How Nonviolence Protect the State, op.cit.*, Ref.9; *Failure of Nonviolence, ibid.*; D. Graeber, *Direct Action: an ethnography*, (Oakland Ca: AK Press, 2009); Gordon *Anarchy Alive, op.cit.*, Ref. 9, ch.1.
- ⁴² Graeber, *Direct Action, ibid.*; Gelderloos, *Failure of Nonviolence, op.cit.*, Ref. 40, p.4; P. Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, citizenism and global protest* (London: Hurst and Company, 2017); Gordon *Anarchy Alive, op.cit.*, Ref. 9, pp.5-7.
- ⁴³ See also Yousaf Ibrahim, 'Political Distinction in the British Anti-Capitalist Movement,' *Sociology* 45, no. 2 (2011): 318-34.
- ⁴⁴ Gordon, *Anarchy Alive, op.cit.*, Ref.9, pp. 30-5.
- ⁴⁵ Movimento di Lotta per la Casa, *op. cit.*, Ref.1; and *Disquisendo, op.cit.*, Ref.1 - both discuss Weber; Infanzia Non Si Appalta : www.linfanzianonsiappalta.it (downloaded May 2015; at March 2018 the link to this organization, which no longer exists as it did at the time of our fieldwork, is: <http://www.linfanzianonsiappalta.org/>) included a blog discussing Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao on violence; Colletivo Prezzemolo *op.cit.*, Ref.12, in material in our download May 2015, cited Machiavelli's argument that the ends justify the means. Cf. Ibrahim, 'Political Distinction in the British Anti-capitalist Movement', *op.cit.*, Ref. 43, pp. 326-30.
- ⁴⁶ Noi Saremo Tutto, activist organization website, *op.cit.*, Ref. 13.
- ⁴⁷ See Fig.1. Occupazione via del Leone 60/62, activist organization website <https://viadelleone.noblogs.org> - see the website for the latest decoration of the building.
- ⁴⁸ L.M. Alcoff and J. Alcoff, 'Autonomism in theory and practice'. *Science and Society* 79(2) 92 (2015), pp. 221-242; Gerbaudo, *Mask and Flag, op.cit.*, Ref.42, pp. 64-67; S. Wright, *Storming Heaven: class composition and struggle in Italian autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto Press 2017, 1st edn. 2002).
- ⁴⁹ Alcoff & Alcoff, Autonomism in theory and practice, *ibid.*, pp.223-30.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.230-6.

- ⁵¹ D. Moss, *Italian political violence, 1969-1988 : the making and unmaking of meanings* (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1993), pp.23-24; *The Politics of Left-Wing Violence in Italy 1969-1985* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 123-4. During the 1970s the fascist activist groups were finally disowned by parliamentary parties and took up the language of autonomism: Moss, *Politics of Left Wing Violence*, p.127; *Italian Political Violence*, pp.13,18,20-21.
- ⁵² Gerbaudo, *Mask and Flag op.cit.* n.42, p.65; Alcoff & Alcoff Autonomism in theory and practice *op.cit.* n.48, p.223.
- ⁵³ Wright, *Storming Heaven, op.cit.*, Ref. 48, p.1.
- ⁵⁴ From Una Città in Comune Firenze, activist organization website: <http://unacittaincomunefirenze.it/> downloaded May 2015.
- ⁵⁵ Cortocircuito, activist organization website <http://www.inventati.org/cortocircuito> downloaded May 2015.
- ⁵⁶ Occupazione Via del Leone, *op. cit.*, Ref.47.
- ⁵⁷ Clash City Workers, <http://www.clashcityworkers.org/78-chi-siamo.html> downloaded Jan 2018.
- ⁵⁸ Moss, *Italian Political Violence, op.cit.*, Ref. 51, p.17; S. Wright, 'Missed Opportunities: New Left readings of the Italian Resistance', in A. Davidson and S. Wright (eds.), *Never Give In: The Italian Resistance and politics*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.,1998) pp. 77-97; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence, op.cit.*, Ref. 22, esp. ch. 3; P. Antonello and A O'Leary (eds.), *Imagining terrorism : the rhetoric and representation of political violence in Italy 1969-2009*, (London: Legenda/Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2009).
- ⁵⁹ For instance, Noi Saremo Tutto, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13.
- ⁶⁰ Moss, *Italian Political Violence, op. cit.*, Ref.51; Antonello and O'Leary. *Imagining Terrorism, op. cit.*, Ref. 58, pp.18-20; L. Gerusa, 'A (conceptual) history of violence: the case of the Italian extreme left in the 1970s'. in Antonello and O'Leary (eds.), *Imagining Terrorism, op. cit.*, Ref. 58.
- ⁶¹ Moss *Italian Political Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 51, p.3; *Politics of Left Wing Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 51, pp.116-7.
- ⁶² Moss, *Italian Political Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 51, p.10; Della Porta *Social Movements, political violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 22, pp.70, 80-1.
- ⁶³ Antonello and O'Leary, *Imagining Terrorism, op. cit.*, Ref. 58, p.19, p.135.
- ⁶⁴ P. Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2011), pp.118ff.; Wright, 'Missed Opportunities', *op.cit.*, Ref. 10, p. 88; Moss, *Italian Political Violence, op.cit.*, Ref. 51, p. 17.
- ⁶⁵ Gerusa, A conceptual history of violence, *op. cit.*, Ref. 60, pp.133-4.
- ⁶⁶ Gerusa, *ibid*; Moss, *Italian Political Violence op. cit.*, Ref. 51, pp.4-5.
- ⁶⁷ Gelderloos, *Failure of Nonviolence, op. cit.*, Ref. 40, pp.20-5. C. King, 'The Micropolitics of Social Violence', *World Politics* 56/3, (2004), p. 450; J. S. Murer, 'Ethnic Conflict: an overview of analysing and framing communal conflicts from a comparative perspective', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24/4, (2012) p. 574. Both King and Murer also speak of conflicts over sense making.
- ⁶⁸ Collettivo Prezzemolo, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12.
- ⁶⁹ Moss, *Politics of Left Wing Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 51, p.125.
- ⁷⁰ Carpe Diem, <http://alessandrovalutoferro.ilbombarolo.it/> downloaded May 2015; at Jan 2018 this link does not exist.
- ⁷¹ Moss, *Politics of Left Wing Violence, op. cit.*, Ref. 51, p.164.
- ⁷² Cortocircuito, *op. cit.*, Ref. 55 - this post discusses the death of asylum seeker Mohamud Guled in June 2013.
- ⁷³ Noi Saremo Tutto, *op. cit.*, Ref.13.
- ⁷⁴ Cortocircuito, *op.cit.*, Ref. 55.
- ⁷⁵ Via del Leone, Occupazione, *op. cit.*, Ref. 47.
- ⁷⁶ Disquisendo/Movimento di Lotta per la Casa, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1.
- ⁷⁷ Movimento Cinque Stelle, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12.
- ⁷⁸ Noi Saremo Tutto, *op. cit.*, Ref.13.
- ⁷⁹ L'infanzia non si appulta, *op. cit.*, Ref. 45.
- ⁸⁰ Collevaenza, religious organization promoting non-violence, <http://www.collevaenza.it/default.asp>, downloaded May 2015. An anonymous referee suggests that 'progressive catholicism' is likely to be a more significant presence in this context and these discourses than our analysis suggests. This may well be so, and more extensive sampling may well generate a different analysis. However, our sample, comprising a snapshot of groups and campaigns with visible presence in one location at one time, included only one organization organized around Catholic social teaching; so in the confines of this

article we cannot say more. We should note that the citations in Collevaenza's website post are to the broadly Marxist tradition specified at the beginning of section 3.

⁸¹ Clash City Workers, collective of unemployed and precariat, www.clashcityworkers.org/ downloaded May 2015.

⁸² Cortocircuito, *op. cit.*, Ref. 55.

⁸³ We are grateful to Andrea Ruggeri, Laura Lauro-Taroni and Enzo Rossi for advice about the ambiguity of this term; the English translation 'forcing the limits of law' is ours.

⁸⁴ Cortocircuito, *op. cit.*, Ref. 55; Clash City Workers, *op. cit.*, Ref. 81.

⁸⁵ "... making communities, movement, relationships, more dense - so that the territory becomes illegible, indecipherable, opaque to the eyes of the authorities." Via del Leone Occupazione, *op. cit.*, Ref. 47.

⁸⁶ Noi Saremo Tutto, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13.

⁸⁷ Una Città in Comune, *op. cit.*, Ref. 54.

⁸⁸ Cortocircuito, *op. cit.*, Ref. 55.

⁸⁹ Eleanor Spaventa, 'The Rule of Which Law? The Use of Legal Language in the Rhetoric of the Anni Di Piombo,' In Antonello and O'Leary (eds.) *Imagining Terrorism*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 58, pp. 116-27; p. 121.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.122.

⁹¹ Moss, *Politics of Left Wing Violence*, *op.cit.*, Ref. 51, p.125.

⁹² Spaventa, 'Rule of Which Law?', *op. cit.*, Ref. 89, p. 121.

⁹³ Extract 4; Via del Leone occupation, *op. cit.*, Ref. 47.