Labor disputes in the Italian crisis

The crisis of class conflict in Western countries is one of the key political events of the last thirty years. Class conflict has innervated modern politics since the second half of the eighteenth century to the seventies of the twentieth century (Bartolini 2000). It is largely on this basis that the distinction between right and left have been built, that politics has become mass politics, that modern ideologies have received their basic features. It is therefore from the weakening of the class cleavage that these dimensions of politics have lost visibility and strength.

The class conflict that innervated the political struggle in eighteenth and nineteenth century is that of the subordinate classes against the ruling elites. This is the direction of the conflict that is in crisis. Then there is the conflict of the ruling classes against the subordinate classes. As recently wrote Gallino (2011), this second line of the conflict is particularly active today: the ability of the elite to reduce wages, legal guarantees, political and symbolic power of the lower classes has grown significantly just since the Seventies. This process has been described as a rematch of capital over labor (Harvey 2010), as capital managed to poise in its favor the balance of power that in the first three postwar decades had changed in favor of work.

The crisis of the bottom-up line of class conflict is due to various phenomena. The first is what in the literature of the sixties and seventies was called "gentrified worker". The growth of the income of the workers, their entry into the market of mass consumption, their exposure to mass media, the reduction of fatigue in factory work, the increase of qualitative work, the political achievements of labor, reduce, from those decades, the material and symbolic gap between classes (Goldthorpe and others, 1968-69). The younger workforce, working in companies with advanced technologies and labor relations, began to change the self-representation of the worker's labor, which acquires an instrumental dimension and is perceived as a means to achieve functional purposes unrelated to work. At the same time it develops, since the seventies, the erosion of the two essential areas of workers' solidarity: the large factory, that was the center of solidarity within the work process, and the working-class neighborhood, that was the center of the everyday life solidarity, mostly owith a communitarian origin, which had the highest importance in the construction of the sense of separateness that substantiated the identity of the workers' movement (Hobsbawm 1984). The deconstruction of these two places is not simply the result of the "natural" evolution of technological and urban systems. Instead, it has also a political nature, consisting in the intention to weaken the solidarities on which the labor movement has built its ability to collective action.

Outsourcing, lean production, automatization of production, the transition from the big integrated factory to the so-called network-factory and to the world factory, were also a momentum of the class conflict.

In the same years is also carried out the integration of the European socialist parties in the sphere of government. This phenomenon favors the gradual programmatic moderation of these parties and their abandonment of the political investment on the class cleavage, leading to the current separation between the sphere of representation and the demands coming from the workers. Globalization of production and finance is considered to be another decisive factor in the crisis of labor movements, as evidenced by such phenomena as the decline in strikes and other forms of militancy (Shalev 1992), the decline in trade union membership (Western 1995) the lowering of wages and the growth of precarious employment. Phenomena that Silver (2003) leads to the mechanism of the "race to the bottom". The mobility of capital and production increases international competition among workers, dividing unionized workers and non-unionized workers, weakening their bargaining power and resulting in a race to the bottom in wages and guarantees.
The key element of this process is the limitation of the regulatory power of the States in front of the international mobile capital, that is free to move in the most convenient places, pitting them in terms of wages, legal guarantees and levels of taxation, reducing their ability (and willingness) to protect the workers’ living standards and rights. The replacement of the integrated factory with "global value chains" based on subcontracting networks also disorganized and fragmented the working class, leading workers in an attitude that Hyman (1992) has called "politics of resentment", an anger oriented not towards the elites, but towards their peers or to the marginal sections of society, what leads to de-legitimize the trade unions and left-wing politics, perceived as powerless in face of current changes.

Wright (2000) traces the bargaining strength of labor in two types of power: the structural power and the associative power. The structural power, in turn, is composed of a bargaining power tied to the market and by a power bound to the workplace. The first increases with the rigidity of the labor market, the skills of workers, high levels of employment levels and of non-wage sources of income. The second comes from the placement of workers in a prime industrial sector and the degree of integration of production processes, which increases the effects of the strikes. The associative power depends on the formation of collective organizations of workers, that is trade unions and political movements and parties.

Globalization erodes the structural power, because it places on the world market a large "industrial reserve army". The postfordist transformations of production, with the vertical disintegration of the production process, weaken the bargaining power linked to the workplace. The neo-liberal policies have also led to a significant reduction of non-wage sources of income (welfare). These three phenomena affect the associative power, making it more difficult to build collective action of workers, just as, as is the case since the early Eighties, the neoliberal policies pursued a decrease in the political weight of unions, largely de-institutionalizing labor policies, subtracting to the unions a portion of their capacity to intervene in the definition of these policies through neo-corporative paths and collective bargaining. Finally, the global competition among workers promotes protection requirements based on alternative identities to those of class, such as ethnic and communitarian. Not all interpretations of the relationship between globalization and labor movements converge, however, to decree their irreversible crisis. This crisis has been announced many times. When Fordism arrived, the weakening of the role of the technical skills of skilled workers, the ability of capital to tap into new sources of culturally diverse workforce, the development of technologies fragmenting and alienating labor, were seen as factors of decline of the labor movement. Furthermore, the manufacturing jobs has always been characterized by a high heterogeneity and plurality of professionals, contract types, tasks, technologies and processes (Musso 2011). The image of a working class "naturally compact" was built only ex-post, in consequence of the affirmation of trade unions and mass parties of the left.

The effects of the "race to the bottom" may be impaired, it is argued, by the fact that global production will help to create a world working class, subject to similar conditions of work and life (Robinson and Harris, 2000). Production on a global scale of the multinational companies makes theoretically possible the defense of common interests between workers of the same company. Second, the cultural fragmentation of workers in the world would not be greater than that of the XX century between the workers of the same nation. The current spread of a global culture, especially due to the influence of the media and the spread of communication technology, would make the cultural distances even smaller than the old intra-national differences (Evans 2010). If one of the arguments with which the end of the labor conflicts is declared is the reduction of state power, it is argued that the nation-state has been a useful means to improve the life condition of workers only in limited moments of contemporary history, and always as a result of the emergence of sharp conflicts. State policies on employment and economy are also reaching high levels of inter-national homogeneity, and this makes it possible to identify the political demands of work concerted at a supranational level. With regard to the structural power, the just-in-time production can increase the vulnerability of capital to possible interruptions of the flow of production, and the mobility of
productive capital is limited to relatively few products and services, while many of these are still strongly tied to the place (Evans 2010). It also points out that globally, the number of employed persons has never been as high as today (3 billion), as well as the number of workers enrolled in unions participating in international trade union federations, which is 150 million (Munck 2010).

According to Silver, in the history of industrial capitalism, the working class has been cyclically constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. At the core of this process is an oscillatory mechanism. The expansion of production tends to strengthen the workers and leads the capital and the states to make concessions to the demands of the labor movement. These concessions lead to profit crisis of capital. The resulting efforts to raise capital profits by breaking the earlier social pacts and by a greater commodification of labor, in turn, determines a crisis of legitimacy of capitalism (which can also be guided to single social subsystems, as in this phase, where it is addressed to a large extent against the political systems), and therefore new resistances of workers.

The place of the cyclical conflict reconstruction of the labor movement is that of the driving industrial sectors, as were the textile industry in the nineteenth century and the automobile in the twentieth. Silver does predict that the crisis of the labor movements that began in the late twentieth century is temporary, and new movements will be established in what will become the leading sectors of global production. As always, this trend has not only economic variables, but also depend on the national and international political processes.

With regard to the unions, in the advanced capitalist countries, there was a decline of unionization rates, which in countries such as France falls to levels close to 10% (Visser 2006), and their concentration in the most traditional sectors (manufacturing, transport, public sector). Over the past three decades the content of bargaining has also changed. If until the Seventies it had an acquisitive character, now it has a primarily defensive nature, aimed more at limiting the damages than to obtain new rights (Baglioni 2008). The strategies of unions to adapt to the new situation are three.

The first is to move the unions action from conflict to cooperation with the companies and with the institutions (Regini 2003). The second is to focus, more than on the construction of collective claims, on the supply of selective incentives and individual services for the members (Waddington and Hoffman 2000). In countries where there is a greater institutional weakness of unions (the Anglo-Saxon countries and the countries of the global South), however, there arose the model of "social movement unionism" (henceforth, Smu). The fact that in European countries the unions pass through difficulties - in particular for the de-institutionalization of industrial relations - has made the discussion on Smu present also in these countries (Turner 2007).

The innovative elements of Smu reside in the relationship between activism and organization and in the repertoires of collective action. The unionizing campaigns aim at a strong mobilization of the base, to strengthen the capacity for self-organization of work, the involvement of workers in bargaining and in the policy of the union, seeking, in particular, the unionization of the groups hardly achieved by traditional syndicalism: low-skilled and low-income workers in the informal economy, migrants, youth, precarious. As for the repertoires, these organizations use those that are typical of social movements: campaigns, direct action, boycotts, appeals to the public opinion, identification of weak points of the production network, construction of large social coalitions that go beyond the workplace involving social movements, consumers, citizens, local communities, users of public services. The struggles transcend the working dimension and approach the class identity to other identities. This form of militant trade unionism echoes the forms of action of the origins of European Trade Unionism. The analogy can be traced back to the historical fluctuations, typical of unions as of other forms of collective action, between movement and institution: since the end of the second world war to the Seventies, the strength of trade unions allowed them to acquire institutional centrality; the subsequent erosion of this central role tends to lead them back to recruitment and mobilization strategies typical of the previous phases, as well as typical of the transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are the radical heterogeneity of professionals, the widespread social insecurity, the lack of collective guarantees, the lack of institutionalization of industrial relations. Two similar economic policies (liberalism between the
nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the current neo-liberalism) tend to produce similar forms of union mobilization.

These innovations have been analyzed in recent literature comparing the Marxian and the Polanyian approach to capitalist conflict. The "Marxian root" of conflicts is based on the conflict between classes within the production relationships. It is a conflict that defines work as exploitation and is expressed in the dialectic between business strategies and resistances of workers. In Polanyi’s perspective, however, the fundamental nature of capitalism does not lie in exploitation, but in commodification, particularly that of goods - such as money, land and labor – that can be considered as commodities only by causing a crisis of reproducibility both of these goods and of social bonds. The history of capitalism is for Polanyi the story of a double movement, a dialectic between historical movements of commodification (now focused on goods such as knowledge and health), and counter-movements of social resistance to commodification, that is, of "defense of society". According to Polanyi labor exploitation is a moment of commodification, while for Marx commodification is grounded on the exploitation of labor, that is in the need for capital to extract surplus value from work containing wages, extending and intensifying the work time (the absolute and relative surplus value), deregulating the labor performance. From Marx to Polanyi the place of conflict moves from production to the market, from classes to society. The emphasis is no longer on the conflicts that are internal to the production relationships, but on building wide social movements inclusive of plural orientations, focused on de-commodification and on the democratization of social life. Recent perspectives on labor analysis (Buroway 2010, Borghi and Dorigatti 2011) indicate in the interweaving between the Marxian and the Polanyian root of modern conflicts a possible way of rebuilding the defense of labor.

The current scenery in Western countries, is therefore characterized by a crisis since thirty years of the class conflict (but only along the bottom-up line), by mainly negative consequences of globalization, of the transformations of production processes and of de-industrialization on the mobilizing strength of work, by the cancellation of the relationship between labor and political representation, the difficulties of the traditional trade unionism and the emergence of the Smu paradigm.

In this paper, these phenomena will be analyzed from the point of view of a new type of labor dispute: the struggles of workers against the closure of factories. I will try to analyze what are the mobilization factors on which the struggle lies, the presence or the absence, in the representations of workers, of references to class conflict, the major proximity of these mobilizations to the paradigm of traditional syndicalism or to that of Smu, the prevalence within them of the Marxist or the Polanyian root of conflict. This analysis will be based on an empirical study carried out in an engineering company in the province of Milan.

2. Labor disputes in the Italian crisis

Following the recession caused by the international crisis that began in 2008, in Italy it spread a specific form of protest against the closure of production activities. Following the declaration of cessation of the activity or the announcement of significant reductions in the workforce, in front of the factories take place permanent garrisons or the factories are occupied. These actions often use repertoires that involve physical risks for workers, and their function is mainly to draw the attention of the public (Ferrara 2011). At the base of the multiplication of these repertoires there is a typical mechanism of collective mobilization, that of diffusion (McAdam and Tilly 2001), by which the experience of an important (and often successful) conflict becomes a template for similar situations. In this case the model is the Innse, a factory in Milan that was occupied following the announcement of closure by the property. The occupation had the function of avoiding that the property could reclaim the machinery making the area completely available to not productive use destinations, removing any possibility that workers could maintain their workplace. In 2008, five
workers climbed up on a crane 17 meters high and remained there until a new owner was willing to acquire the company.

Several similar cases have subsequently occurred. The roofs of factories were occupied at Videocon in Anagni, Yamaha in Lesmo, ISPRA in Rome, Novaceta in Magenta, Manflow in Trezzano sul Naviglio. In other cases, the "climb" of workers covered monuments and landmarks of the city: in Turin the workers of Ages took the Lingotto, the workers of Conus the Gazometro in Rome, the workers of Antonio Merloni in Nocera Umbra climbed on the Capanaccio, those of KSS in Turin went on the tower of the industrial Consortium. The best known case is that, still active, of Vinyls in Porto Torres, where in 2010 the workers occupied the former prison on the sardinian island of Asinara and, emulating the TV show "The Island of the Famous", built a kind of reality show, at the same time ironic and hyper-realistic, which they called "The Island of cassintegrati". In 2011, the workers of the factory of Omsa in Faenza following the announcement of dismissals, launched a campaign to boycott the Omsa and Golden Lady products.

Such cases share three aspects: the mobilization is founded with the goal to save the workplace; it behaves in different cases risky actions for workers; the appeal to the public opinion is a key element of action. The same elements are present in the empirical case that we analyze.

2.1. The Jabil case

The garrison of the Jabil's workers is in Cassina de' Pecchi, next to Milan. This company was specialized in the production of (radio links?). It was founded in 1964 and originally owned by Marelli, a big Italian company. Since then, different properties have followed: GTE, Siemens, Italtel, Siemens again. In 2007 the company was acquired by Nokia Siemens Networks. At that time, the site employed about 1,300 people and it had the entire production chain: research and development, industrialization, production, installation and technical assistance. In 2007, Nokia Siemens reduced its organics in Italy of 2000 units. Nokia sold the production of radio links of the site in Cassina to Jabil Circuit Cassina, keeping for itself only the not productive functions. Jabil is a manufacturing company that produces for third parties. In 2008, Jabil closed the site in Mapello (next to Bergamo) which occupied 280 workers: 107 of them are shifted on the site in Cassina. Despite the change of ownership, Jabil is basically a monocommissioning of Nokia Siemens. In March 2009 the company started the procedure for 13 weeks of (unemployment benefits?) and in July an agreement was signed for the mobility of 35 workers 35. In September the company proceeded to a second cycle of 13 weeks of (unemployment benefits?). In April 2010 Jabil announces that the Italian and French sites are going to be closed and that the company which will detect the shares is for the 75% the American private equity fund Mercatech. The Jabil site in Cassina de' Pecchi becomes Competence Italy. Mercatech in the United States has never made investments of industrial type, and it is limited to the sale and purchase of shares. The information on the fund showed a history of industrial failures and criminal proceedings.

Competence highlights in a few weeks troubles in paying suppliers and service providers, stopping, de facto, the production. The wage are also at risk. In February 2011, Jabil announces that it has reacquired from Mercatech the ownership of the Italian and French, two days before the date on which the Court of Milan would have to decide about the commissionering of the company. Competence led in a few months to the accumulation of more than € 80 million in debt. In June 2011, while 50% of workers are in (cassa integrazione), there are no new orders on the horizon and Jabil try to transfer part of the machinery at its factory in Hungary, The Fiom-Cgil decided to establish a permanent garrison in front of the factory gates. In December, the letters of dismissal are sent to all the workers. The factory has been occupied the same day, in order to prevent the property can take away the machinery and delete the hypothesis of a new production project in the area.

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1Fiom is the is the mettalurgic sector organization of Cgil, the main italian trade union.
2.2. The dynamics of the conflict

The workers' permanent garrison in front of Jabil has been active for 18 months. It has been participated by dozens of workers. Its main objectives have been achieved: its presence denied the any change of the area use from industrial to real estate, as it seemed that the City council wanted to do in order to satisfy the cash needs of the property and the potential real estate interests on the area; the property has been prevented, the last time in July 2012 through the workers' physical opposition, to transfer the machinery away from the site; negotiations between Fiom-Cgil and local and national institutions to identify new investors are still active. This mobilization, therefore, is lasting, participated (although, of course, in descending proportion with the passage of months) and effective, even if its final outcome is still uncertain. The first question I will try to answer is: which conditions have allowed this struggle to achieve these goals? I will try to identify, first, the mobilization factors at the basis of collective action.

In this factory there was a tradition of solidarity and mobilization, clearly perceived by the workers who began to work in the company:

"I arrived in '85. In production we were 800 people. I immediately felt the unionis tradition communicated by colleagues. There was a lot of oral passing of this history. The factory was very unionized, in the beginning I absolutely was not unionized, I have assimilated unionism here. The first thing that I assimilated is a sense of solidarity, which came also good at the end" (OC1, 47 years).

The reality of the site in Cassina is perceived as such by the workers coming from the site in Mapello:

"At first I did not like very much (the workers in Cassina, ed): they were aggressive, strike here, strike there, they were exaggerated. Or you were with them or you had a bad life. If you did not participate their strikes you were almost afraid... We said, we have to work together with them, otherwise we go to war with one another and it becomes impossible to come to work, we had to choose a side, because here colleagues were strong" (OM1, 38 years)

The finding of a strong union, however, is to be relativized. According to a union historical delegate of the factory:

"We, compared to other companies in the area, did not have high levels of unionization, in fact we were below the area average, 120 members of about 300 workers. Many have always been inattentive to union issues and became more active only when it was clear that the factory was closing. Our protests and strikes, however, have always worked, because we were able to keep everybody out of the factory with our piquets" (OC5, 59 years)

More than a high degree of unionization, we can speak of an active minority able to mobilize and to be effective in achieving its objectives. The workers think they have worked in a factory that guaranteed, thanks to the union mobilizations, good working conditions and high collective guarantees.

Everything changes when the factory becomes Jabil:

"I did feel that you were underneath them, they were rude, full of themselves. My boss was terrifying, I immediately hated her, she spoke as if one spoke with a cockroach or a mouse. They stressed us a lot more than the further bosses, for the most trivial things, such as coffee breaks, words with colleagues, and every mistake you made was a good

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2 The analysis is based on a qualitative research carried out between May and December 2012. Nine semi-structured interviews were carried out. Among those, 7 interviewed are workers, including 4 from the factory in Cassina (identified in the text by the abbreviation OC) and 3 from the factory in Mapello (OM). Two are employees from Cassina (IC). In addition to the interviews, the analysis was also made on the basis of several informal discussions attended in the garrison.
excuse to scold you in front of everyone. They then used to produce everything, for us it was a great professional regression, to make very bad products, productions that were disqualifying for us compared to what we used to do before. Graduated people who had always been employed in the production tests, a qualified work, they had to produce staff like street lamps, whereas before in our factory there was specialization, rewarding work, high quality technology” (OC3, 51 years)

The words of this worker, which are representative of the workers interviewed workers’ thought, highlight important elements in the construction of the mobilization: between Jabil and the more experienced workers immediately arises a remarkable conflict as regards the form and the content of work. The internal climate change and the professional disqualification caused by the change in ownership are both decisive. All respondents show to be proud of the personal work skills acquired over time and of the quality of the production. The identity linked to the type of work, the professional subculture and the awareness to perform important productive functions have always been key elements in building a working-class culture, and in this mobilization these aspects have been significantly affected by the entry of Jabil.

The workers and executives from the Mapello site are perceived by the Cassina's workers as "anthropologically" other than themselves. For the Cassina's workers the Mapello's workers always say yes to bosses, they do not conflict, they do not claim their rights, and Mapello's managers, as well as being authoritarian, speak a foreign language that some workers ironically defines "Jabilian", referring to a kind of business dialect full of Anglo-Saxon neo-logisms. This creates an Us-vs.-Them opposition that reinforces the Cassina's workers identity, reinforcing their propensity to conflict.

A major clash came in 2010. The property decides a change of work shifts, which should be adapted to those applied in the site in Mapello. Fiom and ex-Nokia workers refuse the new shift program. The property then turns the request to the workers from Mapello, which are theoretically willing to accept a shift regime usual for them, but at the same time they feel that they are being used against the other workers. This error of the management for the first time make the two groups of workers become closer:

“We did not bother the company came to us because the Cassina's colleagues did not accept the new shifts. Even though we were accustomed to those shifts, and I liked them. The problem was: they wanted something, so they said “we go to them from Mapello who we always say yes”. It was there that we got closer to colleagues from Cassina and to their more conflictual approach” (OM2, 37 years).

The RSU³ declares a strike to the bitter end: the factory is blocked for two days by the workers, supported by political and social forces in the area, as long as the proposal is not withdrawn. The union is thus able to send a strong signal that communicates to the less unionized workers a feeling of effectiveness of collective action.

The shop stewards and the more expert workers soon understand that the sale of Nokia to Jabil is an encouragement to the closure of the production branch of the company. They have four years to make workers aware of this risk and to create the conditions of the mobilization. Jabil applies again layoffs and does not work to get new orders. Subsequently, the company is sold to Competence, then it returns to Jabil. This last step convinces also the less aware workers that the existence of the company is at risk, elevating the availability to collective action of a broader group of workers:

“When we realized that they wanted to cheat us, we started to raise our voice with the supervisors, what had never happened before for us from Mapello, and to participate in the union events. You see that who has been your colleague for 15 years defends the boss and deny you everything that was breathed. It is crucial to understand that the company wants to cheat you, to throw you”(OM1, 38 years).

“I was not close to the unions until the end, I've always been a bit suspicious, I enjoyed working and I also had fun, I

³Rsu, in Italy, is the ensemble of shop stewards in companies.
have always delegated the fight and the reasoning about rights, because as salary I was fine. This until recently. I have
came to the Fiom two years ago. With Jabil I felt like a tightening noose, that once everything would have been
squeezed they would have thrown it all away. There was the feeling of being trapped in a Russian doll, in a system of
empty boxes” (IC2, 49 years).

The call of the Permanent Assembly of workers and the construction of the garrison occur when
Jabil tries to transfer part of the machinery in its site in Hungary:

“The garrison starts in July 2011. Jabil said "we have to take away part of the machinery that are used to test the plates,
because in Hungary those have broken down", we said no, because the direction they were taking was clear. There
began the Permanent Assembly in the Rsu room. Shortly after we built the garrison. We used to sleep in the factory to
ensure that nothing went out. The passage to Competence and the return of Jabil had already took place, the situation
was very compromised. In September Jabil declares its intention to close the factory. The same day that the factory was
closed in December, we occupied it” (IC1, 46 years).

These, then, are the mobilization factors that have enabled the workers to undertake a lasting,
participatory and effective action: the structure of a "Fordist" factory where there is a tradition of
trade union mobilization and the presence of working identity based on skills and knowledge; the
clash between a work tradition and Jabil since the arrival of this new ownership and management,
strengthened by a sense of "anthropological diversity"; the long time between the awareness of the
risk of closure and the closure of the factory; the existence of a model as Insse; the strong presence
in support of these workers by the Fiom-CGIL, as well as by some workers who had participated in
the Insse struggle.

As regards the repertoires of action and the alternative between traditional unionism and Smu, in
this conflict the both are present. The garrison Jabil is a Fiom's garrison, it would not have been
made or would have not lasted without the contribution of this union, of which workers have great
confidence. However, the mobilization also uses techniques and repertoires typical of social
movements: the occupation, the permanent garrison, the appeal to public opinion, the attempt to
build networks with similar groups. This initiative, like others in Italy, it seems to bring near the two
models of union action. The hybridization of the two models can be considered one of the reasons
for the effectiveness of this struggle, because it allows to join the organization and stability of the
union structure and the spread of the capacity for initiative and decision-making to the basis of
workers.

2.3. A class conflict?

The reaction of the workers to the closure of the company is certainly a conflict. Its empirical stakes
is the possibility that in the area can emerge new industrial projects, so that the land may not be
used as a simple source of income by the property. The symbolic stakes concerns the property itself:
the land, the factory, the machinery, the production that in this site has been done and can be done,
the skills and professional histories identified with this place, are "goods"completely available to
property and to potential projects of a commercial or real estate nature or "belong" to a certain
extent also to workers who have spent there most of their professional lives? This seems to be the
symbolic challenge launched by workers and the basis of legitimacy of their action. It is,
therefore, a conflict. But what kind of conflict is it? The workers perceive it as a conflict that
divides the members of two social groups or as a conflict between the contingent property of that
company and those workers? They perceive it, that is, as a class conflict? Mann (1973) has
identified four basic elements of class consciousness. The identity, namely the self-definition as
working class. The opposition, namely the identification of the capitalists and their allies as their
antagonists. Totality, that is taking the first two elements as the base for defining the characteristics
of their social position. Finally, the overall design of an alternative society. At the base of a "class
culture" there is a shared feeling of social otherness, a division We/Them (Bulmer 1975) which is
built around the identification with their work and a sense of belonging to a united group. Touraine
(1969) identified three stages in the construction of this "consciousness": a principle of identity work-related, the principle of opposition, linked to the politicization of identity as antagonistic identity, the principle of totality, that is, a global vision of social relations. Let's see what brings on these points, the empirical research. As we have seen, it is present among workers a rather strong identification with their job. This element, however, rarely becomes the basis of an identification wider than the one with the garrison group. Only one interviewee has used the term "class". For the rest, the wider identification was this:

"The word metalworker is part of my identity, with a capital M, I mean all workers in the sector, who draws and who makes, it is a varied and symbiotic world. It has to do a lot with the manual work, but there is just this, it means my life, it is my identity. Metalworker to me means firmness in being, simply a term with a person and you sudden understand each other" (OC1, 47 years)

The same worker, however, adds:

"Class .. what does it mean? The metalworkers are not a class, I should invent the definition of class right now ... what do I have in common with a metalworker of another factory, such as Italsider? The fact of being metalworkers, having fought for the same contract, metalworker is synonymous with serious work. Working class instead ... it is an understatement, it's like fencing people who work to live, how can you fence all in the label working class?"

One of the Fiom stewards, whose leadership is highly recognized within the garrison, talks in this way about this subject:

"I have to make decisions for 170 members Fiom, I am responsible for concrete solutions, I have to be down-to-earth. I can hardly think of general discussions such as capitalism, class, class struggle, I cling to reality, to every little thing that happens in your favor. We are doing what we could do, I have to be proud of this, not clinging to ideologies or discourses on capitalism, I go into the concrete, here I am, all that I can bring to bear on this situation is good to me. Without the garrison so many would come into depression, instead they come here and they know that if you have any problems you can solve them, and I have to think about this "(IC1, 46 years)

This passage is very important to emphasize a central aspect in fights like this. The dismissed workers live their personal situation as potentially catastrophic, and just as catastrophic they think it is the general situation in the country. It is not a coincidence that most of the activists in the garrison have at least 45 years, that is they are part of that segment of workers for whom it will be very difficult to find a new job when the unemployment subside will be finished. Their situation regards urgent and decisive problems concerning the maintenance of themselves and their family, the possibility of having an income to live. Several workers interviewed describe their condition using expressions such as "I became zero" (OC3, 52), "I feel humiliated, what gave me confidence to face life threw me in the street" (OM1), or, on the general situation of Italy, "We are all on the brink of the ravine, it is useless to get one's mouth big of projects" (OC1). One of the acquisitions of the research on collective mobilization is that participation makes more radical the point of view of the people and defines collective identities larger than the originals. This research, however, shows that in a situation of radical emergence unlikely there is interest in political and cultural generalizations and abstractions, or that we vast identities as that of "class" are approached. Especially if these generalizations, as now, have a very low social legitimacy and a "structure of symbolic opportunities" almost non-existent. What matters for these activists is to reach the goal that unites people even far from having a common political point of view, and that is crucial for their lives. The weakness of class identity is evident where workers define their level of antagonism towards entrepreneurs and economic actors. In general, this antagonism is weak or absent. It prevails the idea of an alliance between employers and workers to try to keep open or reopen factories, consistently with the messages and normative models diffused on the crisis by the media in these years:
"Now the issue is especially to reopen factories, it is better to take just 1000 euro per month, but get the job, we have to solve one problem at a time. Marchionne\footnote{Sergio Marchionne is the Fiat Ceo. The Fiat management, in Italy, is very aggressive towards labor and trade unions.}, for example, is a skilled man, I can not see all this exploitation they talk about, I would be proud to work in Fiat and if this gives me a chance to do 10 hours of work, overtime whenever I want, blessed its employees"\textsuperscript{(OM1)}.

The feeling of non-opposition to the upper classes, however, is multifaceted, as it is exemplified by this passage:

"If the division between workers and employers would be overcome things would be better. Now I do not feel part of anything larger than this situation I'm fighting for, I live in my little way, I do not pretend who knows what, I'm linked just to people I know personally and that I see here in the garrison. This deployment "us the ordinary people-them the rich", if we were to help each other, we would go forward better. But they don't lower themselves. I do not consider entrepreneurs such as my opponents, but they are so very different from us "\textsuperscript{(OC3, 48 years)}

The workers still perceive a feeling of otherness in relation to social elites, but this attitude rarely assumes a political dimension and becomes, as defined by Touraine, a "principle of opposition". Indeed, in some cases, workers seem to have internalized the frames of business ideology:

"In this crisis situation, salaries can be lowered, and you should raise the free creativity of the people without the obsessive bureaucracy and taxes for everything. The company in the first years of life should not pay taxes. During this period there will be many conflicts, then it is hoped that these negative emotions, such as the recession, do not create the social explosion that could make things degenerate"\textsuperscript{(IC2)}.

"It is the state that has reduced we all in this way, all companies have escaped from Italy because of the excessively high taxes, if the state gave incentives... companies are not wrong, if I were an entrepreneur with the so high taxes I would go where taxes are not so high. It would also have been possible to lower wages, I would have accepted "\textsuperscript{(OC4)}

A feeling of social otherness is present as "anthropological difference", as a set of habits, lifestyles and languages and as belonging to a social world built around specific work activities. Thanks to the struggle in which workers are engaged, the sense of solidarity can be extended to workers engaged in similar disputes. However, this identity and the feeling of otherness don't become, excepted a limited component of the activists of the garrison, elements strong enough to define the social identity of the actors and a "partisan" visual on society and the conflicts that innervate it. This weakness of the identity and of the feeling of otherness is visible even when workers are asked to identify the responsible for the situation in which they are and for the recession. The unanimous response of workers is: it is the fault of politicians. Their opponent are not, in the first and often not even in second place, the economic elite at the national and supranational level, but a political class described, in line with the common sense and with the message the media spread in recent years, such as parasitic, corrupt, dedicated exclusively to pursue personal or partial interests. According to the respondents, the fundamental problem Italy faces is is corruption. However, the workers offer different statements useful to investigate the origin of the current crisis of authority of the political sphere. The policy is considered corrupt and parasitic, but it is also considered to be guilty of: 1) failing to protect workers from the effects of globalization, providing mechanisms that hamper the transfer of production abroad, 2) leaving that entire industrial sectors disappear from national industrial system 3) being subordinate to the interests of economic actors and of sharing these interests, 4) being completely unaware of the conditions of life and not interested in the needs of the lower classes. If the hardship towards politics is mainly expressed on the moral level of the cleavage between legality and illegality, the interviews bring out under this surface a background in which the criticism is substantiated by the economic and social policies of the last decades. The co-
presence of the two levels, and the fact that the second determines to a large extent the first, is exemplified by these two pieces of interview:

"The fundamental lack of politicians is cleanliness. The only things you need to change the situation are called honesty, cleanliness, ethics, good will. But be careful: if you make a cauldron in which it is said that they are all the same, I might do a recipe on ethics and honesty, but then maybe one, even if he is honest, vote for a law that would affect me as a worker. So this thought is not sufficient and can even be dangerous. "(OC1)

"Once they use to steal at least with intelligence and you did survive. These do not have the intelligence to steal making the working class. If they did it, they could go on as before stealing another 30 years. Now, however, they steal and more for their interests they have brought a whole nation ... they sunk it... we were a productive nation and they have sunk completely it just for their interests "(OC2)

It is assumed that entrepreneurs and economic actors act only to gain profits, so it is not to them that the workers' situation is imputed. Politics is blamed, instead, because it did not prevent these interests become the only criterion of social regulation. It is as if politicians occupy the place of an antagonist class, a global social opponent, which includes in itself the aspects of economic elites that are considered more dangerous to the workers' interests and needs. The criticism towards the profit's society and the commodification of labor does not disappear, but it is reabsorbed in the criticism towards the political system, which also encompasses much of the feeling of otherness and of social opposition between the "High" and "Low" that were once directed to the main economic actors.

A similar ambivalence is observed with respect to the fourth element that Mann identifies as a constituent of class consciousness, a global vision of society and of its potential transformation. This view is generally absent between these workers. Just as it is substantially absent the request of a radical social transformation. The aspirations of the workers are of course related to the fact to have again a work that can permit to live in dignity and quietly. Aspirations towards society are limited in most cases to minimum objectives, consistent with the recovery of a personal “normal” condition. However, an ambivalence emerges: this minimalism hides a tendency to more radical changes, in some cases almost "palingenetic", relating to both politics and society:

"It would be enough to make things work. Red, white, yellow, it is enough to know how to frame well, to get us work well, because everything is in shambles, all the sectors. They have to move on the country as it should be, we're muddying, layoffs will end, we will all be fired in Italy. I do not trust anyone in politics. We the citizens must do it, alone, from the bottom. I am not able because of shyness ... but I would follow you anywhere if you are a citizen who is committed to build something truly new " (OC3, 55 years)

Enunciation of the minimalist and non-partisan "it would sufficient to make us function" is followed by the statement that the representative politics has exhausted every function and it is now the citizens' turn organize directly to rebuild a country otherwise destined to collapse. There are also among the workers the idea of a global reconstruction of democratic politics, aspirations to lifestyles radically alternative to the dominant ones, hopes that the diffuse sufferings will turn into widespread extensive and significant conflicts:

"Unfortunately, sometimes to change the mind to those who manage power it takes a large mass that moves, a popular force. My idealism is a society that is more just, fair and pure. Going on like this is not sustainable economically and psychologically, they are destroying values such as friendship and family, they just teach that the big snake eats the little one, but a society that destroys itself is not a civil society. It lacks a global vision of society, of good solidarity and prosperity. There is too much consumerism, the values on TV are to make money, young people just buy a nice car, everything is based on competition, on cheating others, you see it in politics. We have few positive imagination. To me the value of the environment is fundamental, we must develop alternative energy, electric cars, hydrogen fuel-cell. We need to return to a natural life, to talk, instead of being afraid of our neighbor "(IC2)

"I have learned that we can achieve something if we are united for the same goal. If it would something in which everyone is engaged it would get a lot more, if everyone would do in total what we are doing for our workplace. Everyone in the sense: people in all sectors, workers who do not accept the closure of their factory, but also more in
general, for the situation that you are experiencing, you have to say that we are all on the ground, pushing even those who are a bit braked. It would take a general block of the lower level of the society ... a general thing of all regardless of right and left "(OM2)

"We have to get to shoot? In the Seventies we were shooting for political ideology, now we don't have anymore, we must shoot for hunger? Look, it's worse, you kill also your neighbor "(OC2)

"It must convey the message that these experiences and personal qualities that we have developed in all these years of work are "common goods" such as water, telecommunications, agriculture, a lot of other things. If you disperse these things, you can't pass to the younger generation the skills and the love to do things. This concept of common goods I'd like that can be affirmed. I share a lot with the struggles for water, for the common goods, but not as a metalworker, as myself. These struggle share this: the dismantling of both the territory and of the ability to work "(OC1)

Conclusions

The workers of Jabil do not live their conflict as a class conflict. None of the four elements identified by Mann is significantly present. The identity rarely leads to a self-definition as a class; a principle of antagonism, when present, is directed to the political elite rather than to the economic and financial ones; being weak the first two elements, one can not speak of "totality", that is the definition of social identity as class identity. It is generally absent even a shared vision of an alternative society.

However, the picture is not entirely linear. There are elements that can be related to a collective identity, regarding both the work performance, the belonging to an industrial sector and to a trade union, and a sense of belonging, if not to a social class, to a social "position", which is the lower part of society, the part of those who fill excluded - economically and politically - from wealth and privilege, within whom these workers hope that can grow the capacity to join mobilizations addressed also to significant changes in the social life. The protagonists of this story certainly feel and define themselves as workers and base upon this definition a substantial portion of their claims, but on a political level, when they trace back their own situation to wider political dynamics, they tend to refer more to the symbolical figure of the citizen than to the one of the worker. The conflict they imagine is expressed in terms of a clash people-against-power block rather than of a conflict class-against-class, and it is on the basis of this cleavage line that they imagine the features of social change. The figure of the citizen becomes more suitable, than that of the worker, to enable these actors to unify political exclusion (the distance they feel from the representative system and the parties) and exclusion from economic well-being.

There is a strong opposition against the economic policies of the last decades and the plot between politics and economics, and within the workers have emerged hopes of radical changes on both economy and politics. While these hopes do not show up in a uniform way and with a unique sign, these workers describe themselves as available to a general conflicting mobilization, if this perspective was indicated by unions and social and political actors (existing or, even more, to constitute on new basis) able to collect their trust, and if it does not appear not overly minority and ideological.

This type of conflict is closer to the polanyian paradigm than to the Marxian. Its symbolic frame seems to be, rather than the issue of exploitation, the commodification, that is the fact that the workplace, the job content, the professional stories which have lived in the factory and the factory itself can be bought, sold, devalued and consumed as commodities which are subject only to market mechanisms, rather than assume a political dimension that considers them as elements of the social contract that the state has to regulate and protect. Workers often imagine, as a reaction to the economic and social crisis, a vast movement made up of people who for various reasons are placed in the lower layers of the social scale, from those who do not participate in the dynamics of power and does not have the resources to influence it, and by the movements already existing defending goods recognized as belonging to the entire community (water, territory, etc..). Not primarily, therefore, as a class conflict. It should be added, however, that the success of the mobilization in Jabil is derived from a mixture of the polanyian and the marxian root of modern conflicts. If the
first expresses the prevailing cultural orientation within these workers, we have seen that the mobilization factors are largely due to the presence, in the factory, of a tradition of conflict internal to the production process that had in the struggle against labor exploitation its main goal, such as the mobilization against the shifts proposed by Jabil. It is therefore a weaving, in which the traditional labor conflict does not disappear, but it is encompassed in new political and cultural orientations that, like what happens with other important mobilizations in recent years, is in gestation and is to some extent “in search of an author”, but at the same time it is available for a mobilization wider than that relating to their specific case or to a merely corporate dimension.

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