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Building Momentum

Organizing and Mobilizing in the Labour Party (2015-2020)

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Table of contents

Introduction 7

1 Thesis overview 7

2 Chapters structure 14

2.1 Part one. Key drivers of political participation from the 1940s to 2010s 14

2.2 Part two. The Corbyn insurgency and the Labour Party 15

2.3 Part three. Participation in the Labour Party: mobilization and organization (2015-2020) 16

3 The research 17

1 Value change and political participation: 1945-2008 21

1.1 Declining parties 21

1.2. Cultural explanations of party decline: postmaterialism and cultural conflict 30

1.2.1. The rise of postmaterialism 30

1.2.2. Postmaterialist participation 39

1.2.3. New Social Movements 47

1.3. Conclusions 54

2 Value change and political participation: after the Great Recession 56

2.1 State, hegemony and collective action 57

2.1.1 Diminished state, atrophying parties 57

2.1.2 Returning to the “hegemony of hegemony”? 66

2.2 A second chance for materialism? 76

2.2.1 Generation Left (behind) 76

2.2.2 Materialist backlash 85

2.3 Conclusions 90

3. After the Silent Revolution: experiments in party building 92

3.1. Reforming parties: multi-speed participation and political engineering 93

3.1.1. Multi-speed strategies 93

3.1.2. The "modernisation" of the Labour Party. A paradigmatic case of participation engineering 99

3.2. New parties incorporating elite-challenging behaviours 109

3.2.1. The first wave: libertarian movement parties 115

3.2.2 The second wave: from movement parties to digital parties 119

3.3. Conclusions 131

4 Digital technologies and participation 135

4.1. Digital technologies and collective action 135

4.1.1. Lowered boundaries and costs 135

4.1.2. Organizing without organizations? 143

4.1.3. Theory 2.0: supersizing and transformative effects of digital technologies 152

4.2 Digital technologies and the Silent Revolution. 158

4.2.1. Liberation from organizations 161

4.2.2. "Liberated" organizations 163

4.2.3 The personalization of collective action 168

4.3. Conclusions 173

5 A social and political history of Corbynism: Corbyn rising 175

5.1. 2015: Jeremy Corbyn becomes leader of the Labour Party 175

5.2 Explaining the unexpected 184

6 A social and political history of Corbynism: Corbyn's Labour 202

6.1 2016: Labour's civil wars 202

6.1.1. No confidence 202

6.1.2. The bone of contention: getting to the root of intraparty conflicts under Corbyn 206

6.2. 2017 General Election: the apogee of Corbynism 219

6.3. The end of Corbynism 227

6.3.1. Brexit and GE 2019 227

6.3.2. Corbynism's social roots 229

7 The Labour left from Benn to Corbyn: embedding the Silent Revolution within the Labour Party. 237

7.1 New citizens, New Left 239

7.1.1 The extra-parliamentary expansion of Labour politics 242

7.1.2 Reforming the party 244

7.2 The Corbynist continuation of Labour's Silent Revolution 246

7.2.1 The extra-parliamentary dual strategy: between the party and the social movement 246

7.2.2 Democratization 250

7.3 Labourists and Movementists 251

7.4 Conclusions 255

8 Mobilizing: ground campaigns in the digital age 257

8.1. Ground campaigns: an historical perspective 318

8.1.1. Electoral campaigning and party organizations 318

8.1.2. The evolution of constituency campaigning 318

8.2. Citizen involvement and infrastructures in connective ground campaigning 318

8.2.1. Framing digital ground wars 318

8.2.2. Case studies 318

8.3. Conclusions 330

8.3.1. Infrastructures, affordances and management 330

8.3.2. Connective campaigning and libertarianism 330

9 Organizing for democratization: the making of Momentum 331

9.1 Delegated or individualized democracy? The birth pangs of a digital organization 333

9.2 Digital "undemocracy" 337

9.3 Forward Momentum 342

9.4 Conclusions. The failures of organizational democratization 348

Cap 10 Local organizing 351

10.1 Bureaucratized Labour sections 352

10.2 Momentum groups and the Labour Party at the local level 359

10.2.1 Patterns behind the successes and insuccesses of Momentum groups 359

10.2.2. Renewing participation and organization 365

10.3 Conclusions. Limited achievements 371

Conclusions 378

1 The Corbyn wave and the Silent Revolution 378

2 The elefant in the room: has mobilizing been more effective than organizing? 382

Appendix – List of interviews 386

References 389

Introduction

1 Thesis overview

Political parties have been, along with trade unions and social movements, the main vectors of political participation of citizens in liberal and democratic political systems from the late 19th century to the present day. Although the role of parties has changed and, according to a substantial part of the literature, gradually diminished since the 60s, these have not disappeared at all and remain central actors in responding to and structuring the preferences of citizens. Among these preferences are central those connected to citizen intervention in the political sphere, that are constituted within dynamics of interaction between demands of participation formulated by parties and the offer of their time, energies, resources and skills by citizens (Scarrow, 2015). This work has the objective of exploring how citizens' participation in political parties has evolved since the Second World War until the second decade of the new millennium with reference to the case of Momentum within the Labour party. The theoretical framework is built through the analysis of the strands of literature that analyze the main patterns describing and explaining the evolution of the phenomenon. In particular, starting from the development of the welfare and consumer society, two matrices of change emerge: the development of mass communication technologies and the change in citizens' values. Both phenomena are the effect of incipient economic development, which on the one hand produces technological innovation applied to political communication and at the same time disarticulates the class identities on which party loyalties solidified during the industrial society and produces a transition from a context marked by the dominanc of materialistic values to one in which postmaterialism becomes widespread. The combined effect of the development of mass communication technologies, especially through the TV, and the collapse of class cleavages is captured by Kirchherimer (1966) in the figure of the catch-all party: in this model of party, the mass participation of citizens tied to parties through cleavage-based loyalties as vectors of political and electoral mobilization is marginalized as it is replaced by the direct appeal of political leaders to the general electorate. With regard to the gradual transition from a model of society dominated by a set of materialistic values to the proliferation of postmaterialism, as originally theorized by Ronald Inglehart (1977), the impact on political participation and parties is twofold. On the one hand, the relaxing of pressures linked to material threats to survival reduces the prevalece of conformist and collectivist behaviours, breaking down class and cleavage

loyalties and bringing out with force the issue of individual realization as self-expression – hence the translation of political conflict into the sphere of the production of new and challenging collective identities as analyzed by Melucci (1989, 1996) – and the rejection of vertical and hierarchical authorities. Secondly, it is possible to observe the emergence of forms of elite-challenging participation, unwilling to be assimilated into the patterns of representative politics, which produces the explosion of protest in the 60s and 70s and New Social Movements.

In this framework, therefore, both the factors linked to supply and those linked to the demand for participation are put in crisis by the dynamics of technological and value modernisation. This is attested, as will be seen in chapter 1, by the progressive decline in the membership of political parties and the spread of an engaged conception of citizenship (Dalton, 2008, 2008a, 2009). But in addition to departure from parties, the new scenario produces attempts to innovate the party form to make it better suited to the new preferences of citizens; as analyzed in chapter 3, this results in "passive" adaptations attempts aimed at making participation in existing parties less demanding and more flexible, as well as ensuring a direct influence of members on decision-making (Scarrow, 2015); alongside passive adaptation attempts there are also strategies of "active" adaptation through the creation of new libertarian parties experimenting new models of informal and participatory decision making, as well as elite-challenging frames and repertoires of action (Kitschelt, 1989). A third strategy is the selective acceptance of demands produced by the Silent Revolution for example through a close attack on traditional forms of participation and party bureaucratism, as illustrated by the New Labour case study, analyzed in chapter 3.

This set of effects and relations can be summarised in the following diagram:

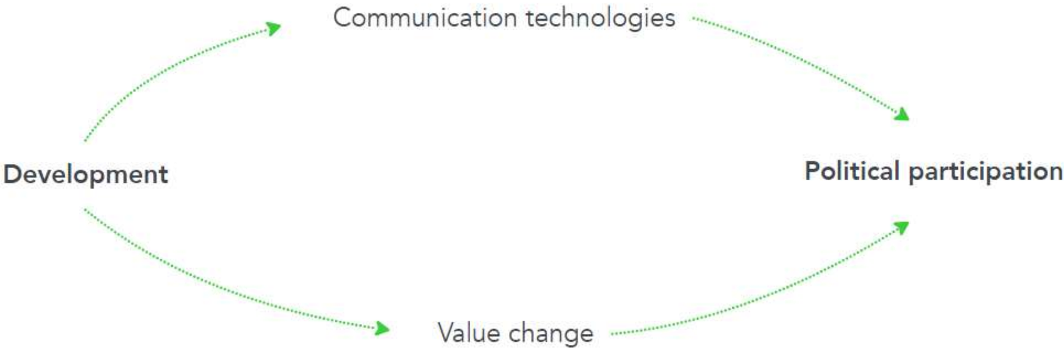

Figure 1: Socio-economic development and political participation

At the turn of the millennium, however, this relatively linear trajectory is complicated by the intervention of two new factors, each related to one of the two matrices of change identified previously. In the sphere of technological change the main development is the adoption of digital media for political communication, the collection of targeting data and the coordination of campaigning efforts based on the participation of volunteers; these technological innovations have the effect of facilitating the mobilisation and coordination of large masses of volunteers even with relatively scarce resources compared to the past, so that on the one hand it becomes easier for citizens to intervene and on the other the cost-benefit calculations of the parties with respect to the involvement of citizens are altered, in favour of a progressive return to the deployment of volunteers especially in electoral campaigns; a trend that is much more marked in the Anglo-Saxon countries, as will be seen in Chapter 8. In the domain of value change, the effects of the 2008 crisis and the response in terms of the squeeze on social protection, especially for young and most precarious citizens, contributed to complicate the trajectory of the Silent Revolution, reintroducing a series of materialist demands in the mainstream political debate. In both cases, as will be seen in chapters 2 and 4 respectively, these new trends do not erase the trends identified previously, but rather complicate them: on the one hand, the rise of libertarianism is not arrested in favor of new forms of collectivism, but rather there is the continuation of the path towards a society dominated by post-materialist and libertarian values in which some sections of the population promote demands aimed at strengthening social protections. From such demands emerges in 2011 a wave of anti-austerity movements and at a later stage the second wave of movement parties – after the libertarian parties of the 80s – which are characterized by the attempt to combine social protection demands with a strongly participatory party form, often through the adoption of digital platforms for decision-making and coordination of member/volunteer actions.

The above scheme is therefore complicated as follows:

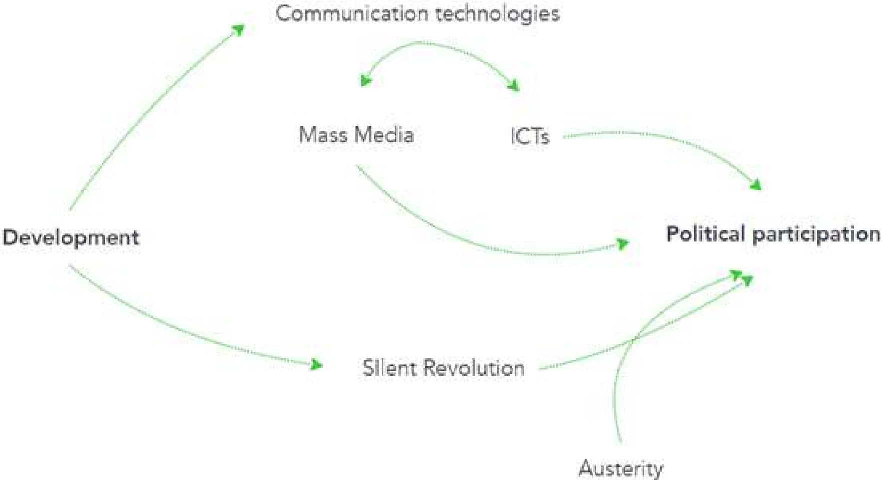

Figure 2: Political participation drivers at the beginning of 21st century

To these relations must be added another pattern of complication, which concerns the relationship between the forms of the organization of collective action and values. On the one hand, it has already been said, libertarian organizational reflexivity is a key factor in translating postmaterialist values into political organizations, to the extent that it gives life to the attempt to produce innovative, prefigurative and participatory forms of political parties. On the other hand it is also important to note that there is a relationship between values and the adoption of digital technologies in the organisation of collective action. This relationship is twofold in nature: on the one hand, as will be seen in Chapter 2, there is a mutual influence between the way digital media are used and the cognitive frameworks and objectives of the activists; these mechanisms are at the basis of the differences between the Global Justice Movement of the 00s, based on forms of organizationally brokered connective action (Bennet & Segerberg, 2013) and a neo-anarchist frame (Day, 2006) and the Movements of the Squares of 2011, characterized by crowd-enabled connective action and a frame that, alongside the persistence of neo-anarchist discourses, adds a "Rousseauvian" focus on the collective sovereignty of citizens (Gerbaudo, 2017).

Secondly, however, it should be noted that there are, regardless of the specific configurations of the use of digital media, some elective affinities between post-materialist libertarianism and the possibilities opened by digital technologies. As analyzed in chapter 4, in fact, digital technologies allow to fully realize for the first time and to amplify the anti-hierarchical and anti-

bureaucratic aspirations emerged with the Silent Revolution, in some cases through the liberation of collective action from organizations, in others whit the post-bureaucratic transformation of organizations and, finally, through the personalization of the experience of participation in line with self-expressive and individualizing tendencies. As in the case of value change, here too there is not a complete replacement of pre-existing dynamics with new ones, as there is a multiplication of patterns, whereby new forms of internet enabled organizing compound traditional organizations. As a result, the original scheme should be reconfigured as follows:

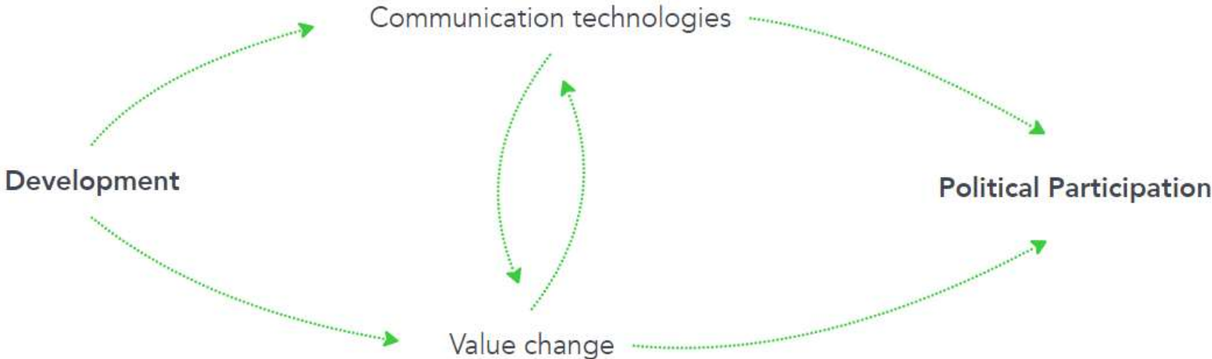

Figure 3: Communication technologies and value change

As anticipated, the analysis of such phenomena and dynamics will be complemented by a case study on the Labour Party in the period between 2015 and 2020, which is the phase in which the left held control of the party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. I will therefore observe how the phenomena identified previously, namely the adoption of digital technologies and the anti-austerity reorientation of a portion of the libertarian public opinion impact on participation in political parties. The case of the Labour Party is particularly paradigmatic in this sense, as it combines both of these aspects with a clarity that is probably unmatched: on the one hand, the phase of left leadership stems from the rise of the anti-austerity movement and the rejection of the neoliberal turn of the party in the previous thirty years; on the other hand, the pro-Corbyn insurgency has been fuelled by the use of social media for propaganda and mobilization and the party has experimented a lot in new tools for organizing and campaigning through digital technologies in this phase. To this must be added that, despite the fairly radical change of frame,

the party remains rooted in the same social sections of the past, largely prone to progressive libertarianism (Cruddas, 2019). This aspect allows therefore to see in motion the interactions and hybridizations between libertarianism and new discourses on social protections, but also the reciprocal influencing of libertarianism and digital technologies in organizing and mobilizing. In addition, it should be remembered that the Labour Party is one of the few recent cases of parties that have pursued a strategy of innovation and reform in sufficient depth strongly supported by a bottom-up insurgency, and therefore had to make significant concessions to the characteristics of the participation offer made by its base. In Europe, the only case perhaps comparable is that of Podemos, since the other major anti-austerity movement-parties (Della Porta et al., 2017) have pursued the path of organizational innovation for a shorter time, falling rather quickly in centralization dynamics that have marginalized participation from below or have pursued forms of organizational innovation in an ambiguous way - this is especially the case with the 5 Star Movement. On the contrary, the Corbyn Labour and the intra-party organization Momentum, in spite of alternating phases and results that overall are below expectations, have never deviated compared to the project of democratization and innovation of the forms of mobilization and organization, until the collapse of left-wing leadership and even beyond. The purpose of the case study therefore will not be to analyse whether and how this relative coherence can explain the successes and failures of each anti-austerity party, but rather to observe, through an exemplary case, the unfolding of certain discourses, practices and technologies and their influence on the forms of participation within parties. Finally, it is essential to recall an aspect of this research that places it in a different position compared to other studies that have analyzed libertarianism, anti-austerity demands and the adoption of digital technologies as structural elements of political parties: almost all these studies, in fact, focus on new parties, created from scratch on the basis of relatively new ideological and organizational assumptions. Instead the case of the Labour Party is the case of a party with a very long history, that at some point in its recent trajectory even becomes the party with the largest membership in Western Europe – and this without the lowered barriers to access typical of digital parties like Podemos; which makes particularly significant the issues of path dependency and intra-organisational conflict between the faction of innovators and other actors interested in maintaining the status quo or in other forms of change. As will be seen in the case study, this means that in order to understand the impact of these trends on participation in political parties, it will not be enough to look at them and their origin in society separately;

rather, I will need to see those phenomena in interaction with dynamics related to the specific history of each party and its peculiar internal conflicts. Such focus which will also allow me to show how the innovations explored in the research change the power relations between the different actors within organizations, an aspect that cannot be observed in the case of parties founded from scratch. The conflict between the different components of the party is made even more easily observable by the formalization of a significant portion of the pro-Corbyn movement into the intra-party organization Momentum.

In the case study I adopt Hahrie Han's (2014) distinction between mobilizing and organizing in order to analytically distinguish the different forms of participation management in collective action. By mobilizing, the author refers to practices focusing only on maximizing the number of people involved in a specific activity or efforts. Organizing, on the other hand, refers to the practices of organization building and activist development, with the aim of building lasting commitments and advancing long term objectives. This of course does not mean that mobilizing efforts cannot be situated within a long term strategy: but in organizing the participants are those that realize that long term strategy, while in mobilizations their contribution might be saltuary or *una tantum*. In mobilizing, lowered costs of action are key in widening the pool of participants; therefore digital technologies might play a significant role, as they do in the case of Momentum's facilitation of ground election campaigns, since their main affordance is to lower the cost of the choice of joining a collective effort (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Flanagin et al., 2012; Shirky, 2008); an alternative is that of providing selective incentives, but as will be seen in the case study this is not the case with the phenomena studied here. In organizing practices, discourses and values become more significant, insofar as they inspire the aims of leaders and activists and shape their perception of how the organizations should work and what the role of members should be within them. Also in this case, anyway, digital technologies might play a key role in constituting the backbone of the organization and in providing activists tools for organizing and decision making.

The title of this thesis, *Building Momentum,* is a reference to both organizing and mobilizing. The figurative meaning of the term "building momentum" evokes the sudden impetus that characterizes the Labour left's insurgent mobilizations in the analysed period, while making reference to Momentum, the intra-party organization on which much of the case study will focus. On the other hand the literal meaning of "building" Momentum makes reference to the

actual construction of the organization Momentum, that is to organizing practices and repertoires.

2 Chapters structure

The thesis is structured in ten chapters divided in three parts. The first part is composed of chapters 1 to 4 and is focused on the exploration of the trends explaining change in citizen participation within political parties from the post-war period to the 2010s. In the second section I will introduce the case study on the Corbyn Labour Party, analysing the rise of the left from the anti-austerity social movement and the disruption happening within the Labour Party, introducing intra-party conflict patterns and discussing the libertarian heritage caracterizing this anti-austerity insurgency.

2.1 Part one. Key drivers of political participation from the 1940s to 2010s

In this first chapter I analyse a series of medium- to long-term trends that have influenced the forms and intensity of citizen participation within party institutions in recent decades in Europe and North America. After revising evidence on party membership decline and its causes rooted in both offer and demad of participation, I will turn to explain why citizens are deserting parties. To do so I will refer mostly to Inglheart's Silent Revolution framework, aptly expanded through the debate revolving around Norris' concept of critical citizens and Melucci's analysis of the culturalization of social conflict. After that I will turn to analysing the new forms of elite-challenging, expressive and libertarian participation, with a specific focus on New Social Movements as actors articulating new demands for social change away from parties.

In chapter 2 I will turn to the observation of some counter-trends that might explain a partial return of interest of the party form for some segments of the citizenship; these counter-trends have to do with the 2008 recession and austerity, the effect of which is to put back on the agenda the issue of the conquer of state powers to produce forms of social protection, after a long phase marked by the progressives' focus on liberation from state and bureaucratic apparatuses. This fuels the rise of the movements of the squares of 2011, protesting in Europe and North America against austerity, merging libertarian discourses and repertoires with other evoking the sovereignty of the people and the reclaiming of state power and social protection against the usurpation of political and financial elites.

In chapter 3 I will analyse efforts at renewing participation in political parties as a response to lowered availability to participation produced by the effects of the Silent Revolution. As already seen, I recognize two main strategies: passive adaptation, that is the lowering of demands to members and the multiplication and personalization of affiliation patterns, captured by the concept of multi-speed participation; and the creation anew of new libertarian-participatory movement-parties, in two waves: the first in the 80s with the rise of green parties, while the second in 2010s with movement and digital parties mobilizing against austerity. I will also analyse the specific case of the modernization of the Labour Party, where two generations of party leaders worked to transform participation in the party away from the traditional collectivist modes towards new forms of plebiscitary direct participation.

Lastly, in chapter 4, I will turn to the analysis of the impact of digital technologies on participation. First I will review the literature discussing how digital technologies alter the functioning of organizations through the altering of the costs of joining and coordinating action, with a particular focus on the prototypical case of organizationless organizing and the analysis of why and how in many contexts organizations remain necessary for the mobilization of citizens. In the second part of the chapter I will discuss the "elective affinities" between postmaterial libertarianism and digital technologies, insofar as the latter allow to amplify and put to fruition the organizational demads emerging from the Silent Revolution.

2.2 Part two. The Corbyn insurgency and the Labour Party

In chapter 5 I will analyse the conquer of the party by the left-wing insurgency, identifying its roots in the alliance between the anti-austerity movement of the first years of 2010 and the veterans of the New Left of the Labour Party, among which stands Jeremy Corbyn. Alongside the rise of the movement I will discuss the factors allowing the triumph of a marginal faction, that is the rebellion of members to New Labour's organizational culture and neoliberalism, the disarticulation of the relationship between party elites and trade unions and the reform of rules electing the leader.

In chapter 6 I will turn to analyse the pattern of intraparty conflict triggered by the rise of the left, the reasons of its ultimate defeat and the social base of the insurgency. In particular, among the causes of conflicts, stands the lefts project to pull power away from the parliamentary parliament in favour of members' direct influence and the legitimation of the leadership among

the latter and against the former. As for the social base of the insurgency, the key factor is the mutation of the middle classes after the economic crisis and the advanced process of proletarianization and precarization of some of the younger and most skilled sections of it.

In chapter 7 I will then observe the continuities between the Corbyn insurgency and the New Left of the 70s-80s, stressing how, despite their clear left-wing and to some extent materialist demands, both the waves of Labour left share a deep focus on the elite-challenging transformation of the party, through the widening of the direct participation of members in decisions and the developments of form of extraparliamentary participation and linkages. While in the New Left this was the consequence of a coscious attempt to modernize the left in order to accomodate the new demands emerging from the Silent Revolution, in the case of the Corbyn phase it is both the effect of the perduring leadership of personnel coming from the New Left and of the influx of libertarians from the social movements.

2.3 Part three. Participation in the Labour Party: mobilization and organization (2015-2020)

In chapter 8 I will turn to digital based mobilization, through a case study on the electoral app MyCampaignMap, developed by Momentum. First I will discuss the evolution of local campaigning for national election, introducing the concepts of post-modern campaigning and computer aided targeting and defining how these lead to a partial return of the need to deploy large armies of volunteers for efforts to be effective. Then I will develop the concept of connective campaigning to frame ground campaign efforts marked by the use of digital tools for data storage and volunteer's coordination. Ground campaigns are defined by a dynamic of decentralization in which the leadership has many tools to control interactivity and engagement through the management of the platform; these campaings vary also in the configurations of the digital and human infrastructures supporting them. After developing this theoretical framework, I will apply it to different campaigns in the USA and then to the case of Momentum, showing the logics of such form of campaigning, the peculiarities of each campaign and the way in which different leaderships ensure their controlled interactivity and engagement.

In chapter 9 I will analyse organizing practices in the building of Momentum, looking at the values shaping it and the internal conflict that explain its final organizational form. Key is the discourse on democratization, which leads the leadership, after a trying conflicts, to opt for an organizational form based on digital platforms and individual voting rights. In the medium term

the effects of this choice contradict the aims of the founders, since the stripping of intermediary structures and of local group's costitutional role turn Momentum into an increasingly centralized – since decisions by the HQs are undisputable – and stratarchized organization – insofar as there are no linkages nor communication pattern between the different levels constituting it. In the last section of the chapter I discuss efforts to change Momentum as an organization emerging during the campaign for the re-election of the executive after the defeat of the Corbyn project.

Finally, chapter 10 is devoted to organizing in local contexts. I will therefore analyse discourses on the organizational ills of Labour in local contexts, discussing the meanings of the widely held representation of local parties as excessively bureaucratic. I will then turn to exploring the behaviour of Momentum groups in local context, the patterns lying behind their successes and failures, the innovations they develop and the relations with the local party. Lastly, I will shed light on the reasons of Momentum's overall weakness in local contexts.

3 The research

This research has undergone many changes due to the Covid-19 emergency. Initially, it was much more focused on connective campaigning and the effects of digitally enabled mobilization efforts on local party organizations. This explains the disproportion in the lenght of the chapters: chapter 8, that on mobilizing, is much longer than the others, since at the beginning it was conceived as composed of three distinct chapters – one on the history of local campaigning in the UK, the second on the theoretical framework of connective campaingning plus case studies in the USA and the third on the case study on Momentum. The thesis would have comprised one theoretical part analysing the impact of digital technologies on collective action and parties and then the research on digitally enabled mobilizing and local party change. This research program required essentially two research methods: in-depth interviews and participant observation. The first part of the research on connective campaigns required a series of exploratory interviews with Labour activists in 10 constituencies, 5 marginals and 3 non-marginals in order to starting to grasp the main aspects of organizing local mobilization efforts; the choice of dividing costituencies based on their marginality depends on the fact that the literature on constituency campaigning argues unanimously that the levels of activity during elections depend mostly on the marginality of the seat – that influences the odds of losing or winning it. After this exploratory phase I would turn to Momentum groups, analysing their role

in Labour campaigns and their use of the app MCM. Lastly, some sessions of participant observation would have completed the research; the occasion of local elections in London and Manchester, two big cities where the Momentum left is quite strong, would have been perfect for a direct participation in mobilization efforts. Morover, participant observation would have helped me develop relationships with local actors, which would have much facilitated the search for interviewees.

The second part of the research, on local groups, included a series of interviews to be carried out online in order to obtain an overview on Momentum groups in various contexts; in addition to this part of the research, it was scheduled a research stay of at least six months, divided between two cities: Manchester and London. The choice of these two localities is linkedd to the nature of the organization of the local left: in Manchester the Momentum group is very active and probably the most flourishing group of the UK. This would have been an analysis of the movement's behaviour in a relatively favourable contex, although blocked as regards access to representative positions and the effective control of the local party: it would have been therefore a case study on the action of Momentum as a partially independent actor. On the contrary, in London the left has effectively taken control of the party, dissolving Momentum within it; in this case, the research interest would have been to observe how the activists of the Corbynist left are modifying the functioning of the party when they have taken control of it. Participant observation and in-depth interviews with the different chairs in each group, as well as with the activists and other figures involved, would have allowed an intensive, in-depth analysis, to be integrated with the extensive study carried out with interviews with other groups. In addition, I hypotesized to hold a series of interviews, around 25, with Momentum activists and other activists coming from the left of the party, in order to observe the cultural and behavioural differences among them, their opinion on the new mobilization and organizational practices and of party organization. This would have helped me uncover the frames and the contradictions fuelling renewal and conflicts within the Labour left, that is the actor promoting change within the party.

Unfortunately, the pandemic overturned this research design. The lockdown starting in March 2020 prevented me from starting my research stay in the UK, initially scheduled from April to October, three months in Manchester and four in London. This led to the cancellation of local elections and of any chance for participant observation, but impacted a lot also on the number

of interviewees reached and on the quality of interviews, which had to be held entirely online. The number of exploratory interviews held fell to 3, given to difficulties in reaching enough interviewees; this proved to be not problematic at all, since interviewees more or less confirmed what was discovered through the literature review. Also the interviews with Momentum activists were quite effective in getting enough data for the analysis to be carried out. At the beginning it was quite difficult to find people to interview, since I had to contact each one of the around 150 Momentum groups through their Facebook page; only around 20 groups answered and gave their availability to participate in the interviews. It was not possible to perform any kind of sampling, since I did not have any choice on the people to interview and I had to make those answering to my call suffice. As already told, the main hypotheses of sampling revolved around the marginality of each sit and the configuration of the Labour left there – organized in a Momentum group or fully integrated within the party. Of course, the impossibility to do fieldwork deprived the research of an in-depth understanding of the micro-dinamics affecting mobilizing (Nielsen, 2012), as well as prevented me to fully grasp the activists' attribution of meaning to these activities. The interviews focused mainly on the practical/organizational aspects of campaignign, while leaving to a marginal position the ideational aspects which would have been better grasped through the comparticipation in the efforts.

For what concerns the interviews on organizing in local contexts, I could perform only those relating to the overview on different groups, that have taken place online. This means that while I have a quite extensive understanding of the patterns related to local organizing, it was not possible to study in depth any local context. Moreover, the conjucture did not help: most groups had been shut down after the defeat of 2019 and never recovered due to the lockdown. This means also that the people I got to interview were not always in positions of leadership in local groups, since these have endured various reshuffles and have suffered significant defections. This in turn impoverished the quality of data I could obtain. Finally, the part of the research on the representations and discourses held by different groups of activists had to be completely cancelled. This is because it was not possible to contact for a second interview enough of the activists I talked with about mobilizing and organizing in their area; moreover, without access to the field it has proved impossible both to sample enough clearly other groups of activists and to reach out the older among them, which usually did not manage the Facebook accounts of local groups. To perform such part of the research I would have needed a disproportionate

amount of cooperation from the activists that I managed to reach through Facebook, which would have had to provide me enough interviewees and along the sampling I developed. This was clearly too much, exspecially because the absence from the field prevented me from building relationship of friendship and mutual trust which might have led some of the intervierwees to develop some sort of commitment to my work.

All these problems led me to refocus my work. I tried to capitalize on the amount of time freed by the cancellation of the fieldwork in two ways. First, I deepened my theoretical frame and moved the focus of the research from mobilization and its effects to participation in political parties, understood as the sum of mobilizing and organizing, observed in its historical evolution; second, I had the chance to substitute interviews with activists with qualitative texts analysis, which allowed me at least in part to dig into the meanings attributed by activists to their actions and their aims by reading a significant number of blog articles and watching debates among them. I also took the opportunity of the elections of the executive of Momentum for analysing the debate within the organization, uncovering different conceptulizations of collective action and organizing. Therefore, both by widening the scope of the research and by compensating to the lack of interviews with the implementation of qualitative text analysis I have been able to complete my research from remote, even though non all the above mentioned shortcomings could be prevented from affecting the depth of the research.

1 Value change and political participation: 1945-2008

The aim of this chapter, part of a broader discussion that also includes the following chapter, is to analyze the relationship between value change and political participation between the Second World War and the present day. The main trend, in the period under review, is that of a shift of participation from large bureaucratic-voluntary organizations - parties and unions - to smaller and flexible organizations, characterized by an elite-challenging logic (Inglehart, 1977). Alongside this phenomenon, we are witnessing a shift of social conflict from economic political and demands to more complex and multifaceted cultural and identity issues. The chapter explores the dynamics of this great transformation in late 20th century politics. In the first section, I analyze the decline of political parties. In what sense can we speak of decline? What are the main stages and transformations in the history of Western political parties in the second half of the last century and the first decade of the new millenni 1.1 um? In the second section I go into more detail on a specific strand of explanations of the decline of participation in political parties, that of cultural explanations. This first by analysing the impact of the rise of post-materialism on the forms of participation and political agendas; secondly, then ,I will focus on the debate on the NSMs, to try to explain the shift of social conflict to the cultural axis and outside institutional and party channels

1.1 Declining parties

The context of this research on organization and participation in contemporary political parties is marked by the fact that we find ourselves in a phase that can be defined as "post-decline" as far as membership in parties is concerned. Decline can be understood in terms both of the falling number of members and the relatively diminishing role that they play in political parties. Even though many studies aim to analyse the impact of declining membership figures in political parties and other voluntary associations on national democracies (Schattschneider, 1975; Skocpol, 2003; Dalton et al., 2002; Norris, 2002; Dalton, 2004; Mair, 2013; Enyedi, 2014; van Biezen, 2004; Tormey, 2015; Power et al., 2020), this will not be the object of the present research. No value judgement is attached to the concept of membership decline. Here I will study how the forms of participation in political parties evolve over time under the influence of value change and technological innovation. Given this focus it becomes necessary to take into account the present trends in participation and political parties. As mentioned above, I'm defining the present phase as "post-decline". The "post" suffix does not aim to communicate

that this decline has ended, neither in the sense of the definitive vanishing of the party (van Biezen et al., 2012) nor with a generalized revival of the party form (Gerbaudo, 2019). More modestly, I use the concept to mean that a decline in members and active participants has taken place, for a long time indeed, and as a consequence it has become a component of the cognitive frames of the actors populating the sphere of institutional politics, who will try to maximize their gains given the "new" context or will try to reverse the trend through the resources at their disposal. It is evident that speaking of a decline in political parties may lead to express normative judgments or to over-generalize. The most common mistake is to assume that there has been some sort of golden age of the mass party, a time in which each and every major party corresponded to the ideal of the Duvergerian party (Duverger, 1959), with hundreds of thousands of members, a strong ideological identity, the ability to encapsulate specific social groups through a territorially ramified and pervasive system of local branches and collateral organizations, held together by strong vertical links – sustained by the stratification of party careers and more or less developed forms of delegate democracy. Duverger itself noted that this models built its fortunes mainly among socialdemocratic parties – not even all of them to be true, with the cases of the Italian PSI and the French SFIO (Panebianco, 1988) as the most significant outliers – spreading in more diluted forms among Christian-democratic parties and without influencing most liberal parties – still prevalently tied to a weakly institutionalized model of organization based on notables – and communist parties – that on the contrary opted for the hyper-institutionalized model of the Leninist revolutionary militia.

Even if one refuses to idealize the age of the mass party, brilliantly described by Duverger and other classic authors such as Neumann (1956) and, with a more critical stance, Ostrogorski (1902) and Michels (1915), it seems difficult to deny that a decline in membership has taken place. A decline that has two facets and therefore is investigated by two streams in the literature. The first facet of the decline, seemingly the easiest to assess, is that of the numbers of members. I used the adjective "seemingly" because there are examples of scholars, such as Susan Scarrow (2014), that tried to downplay the thesis of decline, invoking unreliable historical series for membership figures and the impossibility to compare figures for different kind of parties, but also the need to take into account the existence of normal fluctuations in the number of members. Even though one must not underestimate the cogency of such criticisms, the sheer amount of existing data and analysis available in the literature (Lawson & Merkl, 1988; Katz et al., 1992; Mair & van Biezen, 2001; Dalton et al., 2002; Scarrow, 2002; Billordo, 2003; Hay,

2007; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010, van Biezen et al., 2012;Whiteley, 2011) is pretty convincing on the point that a decline has taken place quite undoubtedly. Scarrow's analysis can be used to refine the way in which figures are measured and compared and raise the scholars' attention on the limits of every punctual comparison, but the overall trend is far undeniable. In this stream of literature on the decline of membership figures, the most striking analysis is that provided by van Biezen and Mair (2001), who observed the changes in the ratio between party members and electorate in different countries over time. The data show that, while at the beginning of 1960s the average size of party membership was 14% of the electorate in the ten democracies on which reliable data sources were available, at the end of 1990s that ratio fell to 5%, with only one nation – Austria – among the twenty democracies surveyed showing a ratio higher than 10%. Moving the comparison ten years in the future – 1980-2009 – the data show that the decline of membership in all the European democracies that consolidated before the 1970s has been far wider than 25% (Van Biezen et al., 2009).

The other literature stream concerning party decline may turn out to be even more unambiguous. I'm referring to those analysis that focus on organizational change inside political parties and its effects on the role of members and activists. In this sense, while in the 1950s Duverger's prediction on the generalized spread of the model of the mass party outside the ranks of the left might sound credible, within a few years an opposite representation, that remains dominant today, started to circulate after the authoritative formulations by Otto Kirchheimer (1966) and Leon Epstein (1967); I'm referring to the hypothesis of a "contagion from the right", that predicts the generalization of a thinner and more professionalized party form. The clearest and at the same time parsimonious representation of this shift from the predominance of parties based on mass participation to an era of lighter parties that took place at the end of the twentieth century is that provided by Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond (2003). In their article the two scholars classify political parties according to three general criteria: organization (thin/thick), political programs (based on the type of ideology pursued) and behavioural norms (pluralistic/hegemonic). Crossing these three dimensions the authors define five *genera* of party: elite-based parties, mass-based parties, ethnicity-based parties, electoralist parties and movement parties, each subdivided in sub-categories. The most intresting insight from this schema comes from the fact that the authors recognize a pattern of correlation between the passing time and the prevalence of a certain degree of organizational thickness among new parties. During the second half of the Ninetieth century it is possible to

observe a first phase marked by the dominance of elite-based parties, with organizations scarcely institutionalized and based on clienteles and networks centred on local notables; this in a context defined by a low degree of political integration of the masses due to restricted political rights, only partially sovereign parliaments, rudimentary communication and transport technologies and a low level of alphabetization of the population. At the turn of the century the first mass based parties start to develop, in connection with the rise of the industrial society, the widening of suffrage and a heightened literacy rate. Later, after the half of the twentieth century, an inversion of the trend is observed, with the parties becoming thinner and thinner. The next phase is marked by the predominance of the *genus* of the electoralist party, a category derived from that of "electoral-professional party" by Panebianco (1988). Electoralist parties are parties with a light structure, with an underdeveloped presence on the ground compared to mass parties. The level of activity of these parties can be relatively low in the period between two elections – even if there is an increasing trend toward permanent campaigning, which anyway has less to do with the activities of members and pertains more to mass-media – and then rise abruptly with the nearing of elections; campaigns are fought with modern techniques and a growing degree of professionalization and sophistication, a massive use of mass-media and a diminished effort toward the mobilization of members and collateral organizations. Gunther and Diamond distinguish three types of electoralist party:catch-all party (Kichheimer, 1966), marked by a scanty organization, a superficial and vague ideology, a prevalently electoral orientation and growing personalization of leadership; programmatic party (Wolinetz, 1991), more similar to the mass party due to a more clear ideological message and a stronger link with specific social groups – albeit these links might not be exclusive; personalistic or non-partisan party (Ignazi, 1996), that is a party which is built around a prominent leader and has as its only rationale his/her election in office and uses his/her charisma and power as main resources.

The mass party depended on activists and ordinary members carrying on the daily local party work, attending branch and regional meetings, passing motions, standing for elections in public office and inside the party, donating money, acting as campaign organizers and local officers, canvassing and leafleting, training recruits, selecting candidates and fundraising money for the party. Since in the third quarter of the twentieth century all of these activities were not really technology and capital intensive, they required a large pool of active citizens to be carried out. Their relatively uncomplicated nature allowed for everyone to have a chance to play her/his part. The class-based alignments of post-war society provided for a material base on which

commitment to a party could be stabilized through time. The rise of television as the main venue of political communication and the relative dealignment of traditional class cleavages with the development of a large middle class changed the picture. The massive use of mass media and the consequent competition in the field of an increasingly spectacularized public communication made campaigns more professionalized and capital intensive, with party fortunes relying more and more on telegenic leaders and on the capacity to seduce large portions of the ever more dealigned population with broad and more generic appeals. Party leaders could now speak over the heads of party members and rival factions through the use of television, making internal party democracy less significant. The dealignment of the electorate meant that returns on investment on the mobilization of a traditional *classe guardeé* have been declining, while it began to make more sense to try to appeal to the median voter, with the consequence that the ideologic content of programs tended to be diluted in favour of a general convergence on generalist issues. A scheme elaborated by Angelo Panebianco (1982) synthesizes well the distinguishing features of the mass party and the electoralist party. The first type is marked by the presence of a strong bureucracy; it is a membership party (Scarrow, 1996), integrated vertically and appealing to a specific class or social group and with party officials collectively leading it; it is largely funded through member's fees and collateral activities; ideology is key. On the other hand, professional electoral parties: bureaucrats are substituted by professionals; it is an electoral party, with weak vertical links and appealing to the opinion vote; elected representatives lead the party, often with a personalistic leadership; the party is financed through interest groups and public money; ideology matters far less than specific issues and the leader.

Of course these developments did not mean that traditional activities carried out by members such as canvassing and fundraising became redundant; members still played their role, butthey became relatively less significant and labour intensive than it was during the previous era due to technological development (Norris, 2002) and the greater effectiveness and pervasiveness of mass media in appealing to a changing and dealigned electorate (Bartolini 2000; Jun et al., 2009; Panebianco, 1988; Scarrow, 1996; von Beyme 2002). Moreover, the rise in campaigning costs required parties to enlarge their revenues, depending less and less on membership fees, with this process culminating in the development of what Katz and Mair (1995) dubbed the "cartel party", that is a type of party further removed from civil society and seeking collusion with other parties in order to secure access to public funding.

After a short honeymoon between 1940s and 1970s, then, the relationship between parties and citizens appears quite decayed ad the turn of the millennium. According to Peter Mair

> Parties are failing, in other words, as a result of a process of mutual withdrawal or abandonment, whereby citizens retreat into private life or into more specialized and often ad hoc forms of representation, while the party leaderships retreat into the institutions, drawing their terms of reference ever more readily from their roles as governors or public-office holders. (2013, pp. 11-12)

It appears that Mair is describing a consensual divorce. Parties are becoming less and less interested in involving citizens, who for their part are becoming increasingly less loyal to parties in terms of voting and rely less on them to formulate their opinions and express their wishes, entrusting these functions to various types of media and other organizations – especially social movements and NGOs. Mair's analysis, rather impressionistic indeed, addressing the issue in terms of a mutual parting between citizens and parties introduces a relational element in the decline of membership parties. Introducing this relational element allows to widen the picture of the causes of organizational change, adding to those concerning the evolution in campaigning techniques. The most common way to codify this relational aspect is to use the concepts of demand and offer of participation. The concept of demand refers to what kind and to what degree parties need citizen participation to function properly, while the concept of offer identifies the terms of the public's willingness to get involved in the activities proposed by the parties.Pippa Norris (2002) identifies with the concepts of demand and offer of participation two strands of different explanations of the decline of the role of membership in political parties. On the one hand cultural explanations, emphasizing supply and concerning how new lifestyles and values lower the interest people show for traditional forms of participation, on the other, theories that analyse demand observe how changes in campaigning connected to new communication tecnologies lower the reliance of parties on members for electoral success. The virtue of Norris' scheme is to focus clearly on the theme of value change. A theme that is absolutely central to this research work, which aims precisely at identifying the effects of value change on participation in political parties. The next sections of this chapter and chapter 2 are entrusted with the task of entering in more detail on the strand of cultural explanations.

It is necessary, however, in order to put in a wider context the explanations that focus on the issue of the offer of participation, to enter into greater detail on the mechanisms that define demand. Also because these factors interact significantly with the values and actions of citizens who offer their participation in parties. In this sense, the supply-demand model developed by Susan Scarrow (2014) is interesting and more exhaustive insofar as it adds a second factor to

the demand factor linked to the evolution of campaigns besides the two supply factors mentioned above - lifestyles and values - namely the effect of the availability of public subsidies that according to the author may allow parties to use capital intensive techniques for the management of their activities – from campaigning to fundraising –, marginalizing members as sources of free labour and sources of funding. This analysis quite explicitly recalls Katz and Mair's theoretical elaboration on cartel parties. It is necessary to dwell a little on this latter idealtype of party, both because as already mentioned it probably represents the culmination of the process of separation between party and civil society and because over time the dynamics exposed by the two scholars have been recognized by the citizens and have become part of commonsensical discourses on parties, fuelling distrust and reactions of various kinds, including reform proposals and attempts to establish new party organisations.

Insofar as it is a theory that insists on the progressive separation and autonomy of the political-institutional sphere with respect to civil society, the discussion on the cartel party differs significantly from most traditional party theories – from Duverger to Kirchheimer and Panebianco – which have seen in social change the source of organizational change (Katz & Mair, 2009). According to the authors, along with the decline of the "party on the ground", which loses progressively its linkage function to become a mere vestige, we observe at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s the strengthening in European parties of the "party in public office", which enlarges its resource pool and autonomizes itself from the base through access to public funds and the exploitations of the public positions to which its components have access. Once this process is set in motion it became self-reinforcing: the more the parties loosen their linkage with society focusing on the linkage with the state, the more they become unable to survive without resorting to public resources. The party-state symbiosis is based on the provision of five types of resources: 1) Access, regulated by national laws, to public information channels in place of the party's traditional independent information channels; 2) The increase in public funding for parliamentary staff, which expands the staff of the party in public office; 3) The increase in public funding for parties; 4) The spreading of legal regulation of the activities and functioning of parties, often as a condition for increased funding; 5) The growing practice of rewarding supporters through the distribution of public resources, in a more or less lawful way. Clearly, this transformations cannot be conceived of as if the state is an actor completely exogenous to political parties. On the contrary: parties themselves, often unanimously or at majority, implement those reforms that lead to cartelization. Therefore cartelization often

requires at least an unspoken form of collusion among the main political actors, which may decide to share the spoils and try to exclude newcomers from the fruition of public resources. Furthermore, the more the parties' sources of funding and channels of communication tend to resemble each other and the more the legal rules binding party organisations become more stringent, the more the parties themselves will tend to resemble each other, connecting with the same social groups and resorting to the same pool of professional skills (Katz & Mair., 1995). In addition to the proliferation of the party in public office, there is, so to speak, its encroachment on the territory of the third facet of the party, the party in central office, which progressively sees the number of representatives of the party on the ground and of the traditional party bureaucracy in its ranks fall in favour of parliamentarians and professionals and consultants.

This does not mean that the membership and the party on the ground become irrelevant. The members are still useful to the extent that they can be used as "warm bodies" that stand for public offices at different levels and provide a small but stable source of revenue with their fees; at the same time, maintaining local chapters active can prevent the perception of decline that might come with the abandonment of the ground structures and enhance the party's legitimacy. As a consequence we are witnessing the phenomenon of stratarchization of the party organization (Carty, 2004), with the central organization becoming independent from its peripheral branches, and with the membership that in turn tends to autonomize itself from local party networks and access to individualized affiliation schemes (Scarrow, 2014). The widespread increase in the voting rights of members with regard to the election of party leaders and internal referendums should also be seen in this context, for while it constitutes a form of democratisation and a greater incentive for citizens to sign up it tends to disrupt the role of ground organizations as the basis for intra-party democracy.

The rise of the cartel party has prepared the ground for some significant adverse reactions, insofar as the widespread normative conception of the party's role as a link between society and institution has been contradicted by the actual evolution of party organizations. On the one hand, the reaction to cartelisation has led to the spread of anti-political discourses (Schedler, 1996), among which the Italian case of the 5 Star Movement is the most remarkable – since its leaders have been insisting for years on the alleged indistinguishability between the two main Italian parties, proposing the Movimento as the only possible alternative to the cartelized status

quo[1]. On the other hand, a libertarian left-wing protest emerged, with the rise of movement parties in the 1980s showing a strong criticism towards corporatism and the absorption of parties by the state (Kitschelt, 1989; Poguntke, 1993). The theme of the disconnection and oligarchization of the parties returns once again in the years following the Great Recession in all those parties that tried to articulate a left-wing anti-austerity and participatory platform (Della Porta et al., 2017). The cartelized party is therefore suffering from a sort of autoimmune disease. It gains access to public resources and therefore allows its linkage with civil society to atrophy. And the further it moves away from society, the more it depends on the state. But its dependence on the state provokes outrage among the citizenry, the engenders a severe loss of legitimacy and, sooner or later, the birth of fierce antisystemic competitors. The cartel has then two options: try to exclude competitors or seek some form of adaptation. Although collusion between dominant parties may complicate the access to public resources for new contenders, in a democratic system it will be almost impossible to exclude them completely. It is therefore possible to observe some attempts from the components of the cartel to run for cover. Examples of this tendency are all those cases in which electoralist parties try to rebuild their linkage with society by forging more or less temporary alliances with organizations that present themselves as representatives of specific social segments – constituting what has been defined as the "post-cartel party" (Yshai, 2001).

As the reader will notice, this first roundup on the decline of membership parties focused mainly on the factors affecting the demand of participation; there will be an opportunity to further deepen the analysis on a specific aspect of demand for participation, electoral campaigning, in chapter 8 The presentation above was intended to provide a framework for the discussion of the central theme of this chapter, which more closely concerns what has been defined as supply factors or cultural explanations of the decline of membership parties. The following sections and chapter 2 are devoted to their analysis. First I will discuss the link between value change and social structure, focusing on the theories of post-materialism, cognitive mobilization and new social movements (NSMs). Then, in chapter 2, I will analyse how changing representation of state, power and social change have been reinforcing the crisis of the parties diminishing the citizens' reliance on the twentieth-century's typical conception of political representation – which has been based on involvement in parties competing for control over the sovereign power

[1] But also think of Podemos' slogan "PPSOE", equatin the Partido Popular and the social democratic PSOE.

of the nation-state. The phenomena indicated above will be analysed in their impact on political participation in political parties starting from their emergence during the decline of industrial society (Bell, 1973) and through the development of important countertrends since the years of the Great Recession. Chapter 1 and 2 must be seen as two parts of the same argument: the first part is devoted to the analysis of political participation and value change from WWII to the Great Recession, while the second looks at the countertrends set in motion by the latter.

The thesis I will propose in these two interlocked chapters runs as follows: if on the one hand the offer-side tendencies that have led to a decline of parties are all substantially still active, some countertendencies are constituting new spaces of possibility for a politics of membership-based parties. Only by combining in the analysis those tendencies that point to the dismissal of the party and the countertendencies that seem to indicate a chance for its recovery it will be possible to understand the forms that citizen participation is taking in this historical phase.

1.2. Cultural explanations of party decline: postmaterialism and cultural conflict

1.2.1. The rise of postmaterialism

1.2.1.1. The Silent Revolution framework

The formula that best sums up the process of value change taking place in highly developed countries since the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century is that synthesized in the concept of transition from a materialist society to a post-materialist one, first proposed by Ronald Inglehart in the well-known text *The Silent Revolution* (1977). According to Inglehart, since the end of WWII tumultuous economic and technological development has impacted Western societies greatly both in the forms of social organization and citizens' values, up to the point of having an effect as disruptive as that had by the great catastrophes of history (Carneiro, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel., 2005; Nolan and Lenski, 1999). From a wide prevalence of values focused on survival and material well-being there has been a transition to a phase marked by an unprecedented dissemination of post-material values and needs, with growing focus on the quality of life and defined by the author as self-expressive values.

The theoretical construction is marked by a clear Maslowian derivation. Maslow (1954) argues that people hierarchically order different needs, with the greatest importance given to the preservation of the self and other physiological needs such as reproduction under adverse

circumstances. After the need for preservation and reproduction of the species comes physical safety – which comes second because an hungry man would certainly risk its life in order not to starve or let his/her family starve. After attaining physical and economic security, that are strictly material needs, the human being might start to pursue nonmaterial needs. These are not artificial or induced needs: they are as natural as material ones; the only difference is in the priority accorded to them. After security is attained human beings start to give increasing importance to needs for love, belonging and esteem; and after those comes a set of goals defined as "self-actualization needs" related to intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction, without a clear hierarchy among them. In these terms, Maslow's model should be taken with a pinch of salt. The main problem is that it assumes the possibility of an un-socialized human being, completely devoted to survival and without cultural attributes or any tension towards social recognition. The opposite of Aristotle's social animal, a completely de-socialized animal. It is an extreme idealtype, valid only for the rare cases of human beings raised in isolation or in the most extreme situations of solitary struggle for survival. But it is difficult to imagine societies based entirely on bare material needs, not mediated by the mechanism of adherence to common values through the longing for social approval. The opposite is probably true: precisely because of the evolutionary incompleteness of the human being (Jonas, 1993; Tomasello, 2009) that means that men can only survive while associated with others, individuals subjected to the worst environmental conditions will be those showing the strictest adherence to those values that reinforce collective solidarity; on the other hand, as Marx (1867) and Polanyi (1944) recall, any kind of economic order – on which survival in a society is necessarily dependent – and exchange system that guarantees the primary needs of human beings, no matter how primitive, is embedded in a network of social relations and values.

Inglehart's analysis rests on three conceptual pillars that allow him to overcom Maslow's downfalls. First of all, he places an intermediary concept between the human being and his needs, that is, that of values or belief system; the key idea is that the human being faces needs by building a system of collective values that gives priority to some needs over others. In the second place, Inglehart thinks in terms of prevalence: in a given social context it is more likely to meet subjects that express greater urgency towards a given set of values. Last but not least, the author defines the mechanism through which value is attributed to needs: people tend to attribute higher value to those that are in short supply, that is, that have less chances to be satisfied. And they appraise this in their youth, then retaining their set of priorities mostly

invariated through the rest of their lives. This latter formulation means that the dynamics of value change are mediated by a mass learning mechanism. It is therefore not so much the present experience of living in a developed society where security and material well-being can be defined as needs whose satisfaction is relatively easy, but rather the experience of being socialized to such a society that affects an individual's set of values. Change therefore takes place gradually, through generational substitution: the older cohorts, socialized to an ethos of a materialist kind, slowly give way to the new generations, more accustomed to existential security. This has important repercussions on the speed and reversibility of value change: on the one hand, change always happens long after the beginning of the phase of mass existential security; on the other, although greater economic difficulties may affect the set of prevailing values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) – and Inglehart shows well how the inflationary crisis of the 1970s has partially reversed the upward trajectory of post-materialism – it is very likely that here too there is a lag or at least a differentiated incidence between different types of subjects. The latter dynamic will be analyzed in depth in the next paragraph which focuses the dynamics triggered by the Great Recession (Inglehart & Norris, 2019; Milburn, 2019).

But it is not only the formative experience of existential security that affects the set of valuesin fact, as Inlgheart's data show, this is only the second predictor, being the first constituted by the variable level of education (Inglehart, 1977 table 3-9). It is interesting to note that the level of education, continuously increasing among Western populations since the Second World War, is both consequence and cause of postmaterialization, in a process that is clearly self-reinforcing: on the one hand, it has an effect insofar as a more stable and secure society has a greater chance of investing in an asset that is not strictly material such as education; on the other hand, the spread of education has an impact on the set of values.

How does education increase the propensity to give emphasis to self-expressive needs? According to Inglehart and Welzel (2005), one of the main aspects of the post-materialist transition is that individuals are allowed greater freedom of choice, that consequently results in a greater focus on the development of life paths that are more respectful of individual needs. The scope of free choice is enhanced by two factors: social interaction not being bound by the need to ensure material survival and economic stability and the possession of cognitive skills that allow people to think in terms of autonomous choices. It is precisely these skills that are enhanced by education, as well as by the increased awareness produced by the dissemination

of information (Inkeles and Smith, 1975; Inkeles, 1983; Lerner, 1958) and by the increasing social interconnectedness. In turn, the increase in cognitive skills has an extremely significant political impact, as will be seen in the next part of this discussion.

The adherence to postmaterialist values is not only a consequence of social status – as education partly is, since its main predictors are economic status and level of education of the father –, and this is made clear by the fact that education is not the only factor affecting it but is accompanied by a generational dynamic, that dissolves the previously elitarian nature of expressive values – to better understand these dynamics see Inglehart, 1977, pp. 83-102. Nevertheless, it is evident that the combination of higher education and security during formative age makes postmaterialism more widespread among the wealthy; but it is possible to note that postmaterialist values are rapidly spreading also in the working class, because of the democratization of education – while income alone is a weaker predictor than education (Inglehart, 1977; Inglehart et al., 1997) – and of the general social climate of expanding social security.

In summary, it can be said that a set of values that in the past was the prerogative of the upper class, which alone could count on good levels of education and existential security, are now becoming prevalent among most individuals. But in detail, what are these values put at the forefront by the post-materialist transformation? If on the one hand we define materialist needs as security – maintenance of order, fight against crime and national defence – and survival – economic stability, growth and fight against inflation –, post-materialist needs can be divided in aesthetic-intellectual needs – beauty of cities and landscape, focus on the importance of ideas and freedom of speech – and belonging and social appreciation – the search for a more impersonal society, greater decision-making on the workplace and in political life. Moreover postmaterialists show a greater propensity towards tolerance and the issues defining social-liberalism: they are less nationalist and xenophobic, more attentive to the needs of women and to the demands of the student movement, and tend to identify with geographical units of greater radius than materialists do and are more favourable to cooperation with developing countries. Postmaterialists also tend to show less confidence in hierarchical institutions – the state, parties, the army and the police -–but they are more supportive of protests and organizations that pose challenges to elites – unions and social movements –, while not showing a greater propensity towards the classic issues brought forward by the labor movement – nationalization and

enhancement of employment (Inglehart, 1977; Inglehart et al, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel., 2005; Flanagan & Lee, 2003). In general, materialists are more concerned about security and stability, while postmaterialists have a greater focus on quality of life and therefore tend to see in activities and relationships an end in itself, more than a means by which to achieve other goals. To use a formula coined by Inglehart and Welzel, "the "quality of experience" replaces the "quantity of commodities" (2005, p. 25). Inglehart and Welzel define the trend towards a society marked by the prevalence of post-materialist values as a process of humanization of society and liberation of life that are important prerequisites for democratization.

The passage to the postmaterialist era can be inserted within a wider evolutionary trajectory, which starts with the overcoming of theism (Flanagan & Lee., 2003) and goes from the advent of industrial modernity to its decline in postmodernity (Bell, 1973; Huntington, 1974; Inglehart et al., 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Norris, 2002; Touraine, 1969). The transition to industrial modernity is marked by the secularization of authority and growing bureaucratization. On the one hand, there is the replacement of a system of beliefs and justifications based on religion and tradition with one based on rationality, success and science. The new modern rationality is embodied in large centralized bureaucratic apparatuses, organizations of a legal-rational nature operating through explicit rules and aimed at achieving publicly stated impersonal objectives. The process of technological development and industrialization takes place inside this value and organizational framework, finally allowing humanity to reach a post-scarcity condition, in which the production potential provides, at least theoretically, the satisfaction of the basic needs of human beings.

The transition to a post-scarcity phase marks the beginning of the age of post-modernity. While economic and maximizing rationality marks the modern age by virtue of the persistent scarcity that leads to the need to optimize processes and resources in order to improve the quantity of goods available to each individual, the postmodern condition focuses on new forms of value rationality, with the appreciation of the qualitative elements of human experience and the reflection on the risks associated with the effects unleashed by the forces of modernization (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim., 2001). The decrease in the pressure exercised by scarcity, combined with the increase in individual skills, translates into a rejection of hierarchical authorities and a tension towards greater autonomy for the individual; insofar as submission to authority entails considerable costs for the subject who is willing to accept them only if circumstances force him

to seek an alliance with his fellow men in order to satisfy his primary needs. The refusal of hierarchical authority carries with it the system of legitimization of bureaucratic organizations. It is not only trust in the main public institutions – the state, the army, the police, etc. – but also the modern forms of political participation that see their prestige diminished. Increasingly libertarian and skilled citizens tend to reject forms of participation in unions and mass parties favouring more unmediated and elite-challenging organizational forms. There is a transition from forms of mobilizations activated from above to forms of personalized activation (Bennet & Segerberg, 2013).

What is also declining is the predominance of industry, in favour of an organization of labour increasingly based on intangible activities and intellectual skills, as well as on the multiplication of skills and roles. Productivity is increasingly dependent on creativity and education and the work experience of millions of people becomes more autonomous and less regular than it was during the industrial age. A change of rationality takes place through the substitution of the experience of the regimentation of individual activity under the logic of economic efficiency and instrumental rationality by the experience of greater autonomy and appreciation of individual knowledge. The growing occupational specialization increases social complexity, diversifying human interactions and radically changing the foundations of social solidarity: from a society based on mechanic solidarity (Durkheim, 1988), to one marked by "organic solidarity", with interactions bridging over social circles (Granovetter, 1973) and thus allowing people greater authonomy from ascriptive or other kinds of social roles. The combination of the reduction of economic insecurity, greater cognitive skills and increasing independence from social roles enhances people's capacity for choice and human authonomy (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).Summing up the value change dynamic that leads us from traditional society to postmodern society, one can say that where modernity has led to a secularization of authority, moving its *locus* from the transcendental to the authority of science and legal-rational apparatuses, for the first time with postmodernity it is witnessed a liberation from authority. Individuals increasingly tend to reject any external authority imposing itself on individual rights and needs. Authority comes to be internalized in individuals themselves. These trends are normally thought of as strongly democratizing, but this conclusion needs to be discussed, insofar as it will become clear that postmodernization brings with it greater individualization and significant organizational change in the ways people associate to push for political change. The organizational foundations of representative democracy are crumbling together with the

bureaucratic organisations that marked its birth. Will new forms of organization, together with a more active role played by critical citizens (Norris, 1999), be enough to replace the loss? In addition, postmodernity has unequivocally produced a more open society but in a context marked by the growth of different types of inequalities. Inequalities that the mass-based organizations of the previous age were quite equipped to keep in check precisely because of the capacity of parties and trade unions, as huge bureaucratic-volunteer apparatuses (Panebianco, 1982), to organize the lower strata of society (Inglehart, 1977) counterbalancing the power of capitalists. And what more than unrestrained inequalities and unmatched elite power poses an existential threat to democracy?

1.2.1.2. Libertarianism

Another dichotomy that has been used to describe the ongoing value change is authoritarianism/libertarianism (Flanagan & Lee, 2003; Inglehart & Norris, 2019). On the one hand authoritarians tend to adhere to values that stress respect for authority, loyalty and dutifulness, obedience and resignation to one's inherited station in life, order, social control and patriotism, tend to be conformists and to give much value to the sacrifice of the individual for the well-being of the group and adherence to very strict moral codes. On the contrary, libertarians tend to give more importance to self-determination, equality and freedom to the point of justifying revolt against legitimate authorities (Adorno et al., 1950); they also tend to assume iconoclastic and non-conformist behaviours, show great tolerance towards diversity and cognitive and ethical relativism, and to devalue self-sacrifice in favour of self-expression and the pursuit of happiness and enjoyment, to the point of putting one's own ends before collective loyalties. While the centre of gravity of authoritarians' identity is the group, for libertarians it is the individual. Authoritarians can therefore be defined as collectivists and libertarians as individualists. Framing the concepts in these terms, it is clear that with the post-modern turn we observe a decrease in the number of authoritarians. First of all because the social bases of authoritarianism, that is, the conformist pressures dictated by a situation of scarcity and the full strength of ascriptive identities – of class and ethnicity – that characterized a large part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are no longer present.

It is also evident that these categories overlap largely with the materialism/postmaterialism dichotomy. The main difference lies in the fact that, while materialists can be both traditionalist and modernist – as a consequence of secularization –, the traditionalism/modernism cleavage

cannot see that aspect, risking to conflate materialism and authoritarianism. This treatment of the issue is in some respects misleading, as it does not allow the conceptualization of the social democratic political tradition and the behaviour of the traditional working class. According to the predictors used by Flanagan and Lee the greatest propensity to develop the authoritarian type is found among white men from older cohorts – although no life cycle effects are observed –, with lower levels of income and education, tendentially religious and coming from rural area. These are, more or less, the same predictors of materialism. But by defining the cleavage through the concept of authoritarianism, there is a risk to flatten the traditional working class on the category of conservatism, concealing the significant weight that modernizing, revolutionary and relatively anti-clerical ideologies such as Marxism and socialdemocracy played in the second half of the 20th century in the workers' movement and in the popular classes in general. Following the libertarian/authoritarian dichotomy to its full consequences would lead to the paradox of conflating the traditional left and conservatism. Moreover, one would not be able to understand why the first public appearances of political postmaterialism took place within an unprecedented alliance between students and the traditional working class. It is well known that between the '60s and '70s there was a welding between the post-materialist and libertarian demands of the students and the intense workers' struggles of those years. An alliance that was premised on the adherence to Marxist ideology, although interpreted by the two groups from different angles. Students – postmaterialist and middle-class – took Marx’s rejection of the established order and yearning for a community rebuilt around the values of reciprocity, participatory democracy and humanism. Conversely, the materialist workers saw in Marxism an ideology primarily aimed at material emancipation. Therefore, following Inglehart’s interpretation (1977), the adhesion to Marxism can be said to explain at the same time the success and the ultimate dissolution of that alliance. Success was based precisely on the recognition of a common enemy, capitalism, and on the development of a shared language of revolt and struggle. But if on the one hand the materialist workers, after obtaining significant wage and contractual improvements were satisfied, the students tried to bring the struggle for liberation from the existing development model to its extreme consequences. Faced with the risk of seeing the social order and these material improvements jeopardized by a revolutionary breakthrough, an important part of the working class and of lower class self-employed workers turned to conservative options in the electoral rounds of those years. This phenomenon can be

documented in almost all Western countries, from France and Germany to the United States (Inglehart, 1977).

While part of the working class moved to the defence of social order, part of the new middle classes – increasingly educated and composed of professionals in the field of personal services and creative workers – supported the proposal to overturn the capitalist order in favour of a post-materialist insurgence. In fact, this tendency to the dealignment of traditional voting patterns has only deepened ever since, especially with the development of a post-materialism-libertarianism/materialism-conservatism cleavage that restructured the political discourse of the existing parties and led to the birth of new parties (Inglehart et al., 1997; Kitschelt, 1989).

What took place is indeed a radical restructuring of the social bases of Western politics, as the post-materialists increased their number and consequently started to exert greater influence on the development of political programmes. And this happened precisely because postmaterialists cannot be brought back to the classic right/left dichotomies, or at least not in the way this was conceived in the twentieth century. If on the one hand postmaterialists tend to define themselves as left-wing and are libertarians and in favour of participatory democracy – what makes them clearly more modernists than conservatives –, trust the unions and support the right to insurrection against economic elites, on the other hand they do not show a significant propensity towards the classic issues raised by the economic left, that is collectivization and state interventionism (Inglehart, 1977; Inglehart et al., 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), except in the United States, where support for government intervention increases, starting from very low levels (Dalton, 2007). This does not make the post-materialists pro-capitalists: they recognize the alienation caused by the mode of production and the increasing social and environmental risks that come with the unfolding of its economic rationality; they tend, however, to attribute these negative aspects to the persistent hegemony of a materialistic vision marked by economic rationality and endowed with little respect for the environment and human freedoms and needs, within which the socialdemocratic tradition is at least partly incorporated. Faced with the choice between socialdemocracy and conservative liberalism, the post-materialists propose a new type of order, focused on the direct participation of the individual in the management of public affairs and the workplace, as well as on individual rights. Given its intrinsic vagueness this generic propensity to progressivism and direct participation can be co-opted by different political

projects: while the radical New Left posed the accent on economic and political self-management, centrist socio-liberalism insists on freedom and civil rights.

1.2.2. Postmaterialist participation

The rise of postmaterialism impacts on political participation in two ways. First, the diffusion of post-modern libertarian values leads to lowered acceptance of hierarchies and bureaucratic mediation and to a yearning for forms of immediate and personalized participation. Secondly, the increase in levels of education and information activates a process of cognitive mobilization, defined by Inglehart as

> the development of the skills needed to manipulate political abstractions and thereby to coordinate activities that are remote in space or time. Without such skills, one is more or less doomed to remain outside the political life of a modern nation-state. Consequently, historical changes in the distribution of these skills have been a major factor in defining the politically relevant public (Inglehart, 1977, p. 293).

The process of modernization and post-modernization has therefore the effect of progressively reducing the gap between masses and elites as far as cognitive skills are concerned. Citizens become able to think of themselves as active and potentially effective subjects in achieving their own goals, while at the same time their gaze on the world expands (Lerner, 1958; Deutsch, 1963). The increase in self-efficacy mediates between the level of education and the propensity to participate (Verba & Nie, 1978); education produces more skilled citizens and this increases their self-perception of effectiveness and political competence, which in turn makes them feel more secure in formulating political preferences and eager to express those preferences through participation. This in turn reduces the impact of economic status on the propensity to participate, because on the one hand skills are spreading between different strata of the population and on the other the importance of greater capacity to exploit social connections – that is an attribute of the elites is reduced by the growing role played by individual skills.

Thus, the increase in skills should have the effect of increasing the propensity to participate and to actively influence collective decision-making (Texeira, 1992). But the fact that in the post-modern phase it is accompanied by a strong aversion towards bureaucratic organisations and verticism means that not all types of participation tend to increase. On the contrary, elite-directed participation - unions, church and mass parties -, that is based on the mobilization of the masses through huge bureaucratic organizations tends to fall. In its place we see the rise of

forms of elite-challenging participation (Inglehart, 1977; Lawson & Merkl, 1988; Tarrow, 1994; Brody, 1978; Inglehart et al. 1997; Norris, 1999, 2002; Zukin et al. 2006; Marsh et al. 2007; Dalton 2009; Harris et al. 2010), characterized by a greater role of the individual with more loose, horizontal and ad hoc organizational forms and a greater focus on specific issues rather than on a pre-constituted social solidarity – a move from the politics of loyalties to a politics of choice (Dalton et al., 2000; Norris, 2002; Vromen, 2017). A higher level of education increases the propensity to adopt a more complex style of participation – on a scale ranging from mechanical actions such as voting to forms of participation in which the individual has greater weight and margin of choice or which challenge the elites through informal actions such as marches, boycotts, unofficial strikes, building occupations, petitions (Verba & Nie, 1978; Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaase, 1995) –, which is only possible for a very small number of people within traditional mass organizations – usually those who obtain leadership roles. This has two effects. At first, there is a shift in the population groups which show higher propensity to participate from mass organizations to social movements and the like; in a second phase, that I will discuss in chapter 3, it is observed the emergence of several attempts to reform bureaucratic organizations in a more elite-challenging direction.

Postmaterialists therefore tend to show a lower level of identification in mass organizations, such as political parties; they also tend to show lower levels of trust in political institutions and other organizations, since they tend to judge them according to their own high standards of democracy (Norris, 199, 2002). This is the mechanism that leads to the paradox of an increase in participation in more complex activities and a decrease in simpler ones such as voting (Brody, 1978; Franklin et al. 1992; Gray & Caul 2000; Mair, 2013). In general, postmaterialists and younger cohorts are harder to mobilize for traditional and routinized activities and appear to be more disenfranchised. Their higher level of skills and propensity for protest and challenge to elites makes them the perfect human material for rapid and intense eruptions of participation (Stolle & Hooge, 2009), that can exert a lot of pressure on political systems within very short time frame and then reflux as soon as the protest enters the first stages of organizational institutionalization.

To sum up, innovations are observed in three main respects: diversification of agencies – new type of collective organisations structuring political activity are emerging – repertoires and targets that participants seek to influence. The last aspect, not yet discussed, is the consequence

of the first two. Particularly during the age of the social-democratic compromise, participation has been channelled through institutionalised channels directed by parties and trade unions, that have been increasingly co-opted by the state through access to national assemblies and government and the development of corporativism; the more that model of participation comes to be challenged by the rise of post-bureaucratic and elite challenging participation, the more the arenas and targets of conflict move from officially sanctioned procedures – incardinated in the state – to more varied forms of contention and targets, which now include corporate actors and wider civil society (Vromen, 2017). Barnes and Kaase (1979) describe the transition through the dichotomy between unconventional and conventional political participation, arguing that the rise of New Social Movements (NSMs) led to a widespread diffusion of unconventional forms of action, including wildcat strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, compared with a previous prevalence of actions targeted at government institutions. Norris (2002) revisits the issue proposing the distinction between "citizen-oriented actions, relating mainly to elections and parties, and cause-oriented repertoires, which focus attention upon specific issues and policy concerns, exemplified by consumer politics, petitioning, demonstrations and protests" (Vromen, 2017, p. 36). Hay (2007) categorizes repertoires of political participation distinguishing between locus of participation, that might be formal/governmental or non-governmental, and the motivations of participation framed as response to governmental or non-governmental concerns; in this view, it is only formal participation triggered by governmental concerns that has been decreasing, while participation in all other less formalised arenas has multiplied.

It is quite clear that these developments are having a major impact on the link between citizens and institutions. The traditional representative logic on which this linkage has been based in the 21st century is clearly weakening. Teorell et al. (2007) produce in this respect an alternative classification of participation type, insisting on the distinction between representational and extrarepresantational activity and the use of voice or exit strategies. The modes of action identified are the following: voting (representational/exit); party activity (representational/voice); contacting (both representational and extra-representational/voice): consumer participation (extra-representational/exit); protest (extra-representational/ voice). The more purely representative activities appear to be in decline, in favour the extra-representative ones. Tormey (2015) predicts the end of representative politics, blending the discourse on representation with that on the rise of postmaterialist politics. The author therefore

notes that more and more citizens tend to reject forms of organization that insist on a division between politicians – representatives – and those that are to be represented and are usually used just as pawns or "warm bodies" (Scarrow, 2015), in favor of forms of self-representation, immediate and individualized forms action that are enhanced by the spread of ICTs. The citizens' tendency to participate in less and less mediated forms makes them increasingly unmanageable and their organizations more volatile; with the demise of bureaucratic organizational constraints the forms of aggregation of participation become increasingly temporary and issue-centred.

What is also striking is the huge increase in protest events (Gundelacht, 1998; Kriesi,). This happens both because of the greater diffusion of an attitude that justifies the revolt against authority and for dynamics related to cognitive mobilization. While on the one hand it is easier for postmaterialists to feel disappointed by political institutions, the possession of greater participatory skills means that the disappointment is followed by revolt rather than resignation more often than in previous ages (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Whether disappointment is due to the demanding standards adopted by critical and expert citizens (Norris, 1999; Bang, 2005), or whether it depends on actual failures of the democratic system (Hay, 2007) – such as those described in section 1 concerning the cartelisation processes – it is now easier to observe a protest outcome, which can then trigger processes leading to the formation of new political organisations that replace the old ones (Kitschelt, 1989; Della Porta et al., 2017). Individuals that are more likely to protest show the same attributes as those who tend to be the most participatory in general (Hay, 2007). This shows that protest activity is in fact becoming widespread and not attributable to particularly disadvantaged or minority groups.

Dalton (2008a, 2008b) argues that behind these changes lies a profound transformation in the normative conceptions of citizenship – defined as a web of representations on the definition of good citizen behavior. The postmodern transition appears to be accompanied by a decline – both in the diffusion and prestige – of the traditional conception of citizenship, focused on maintaining order and fulfil civic duties – voting, paying taxes, respecting the law and reporting crimes etc. – in favor of a conception defined as engaged citizenship[2], which "emphasizes a

[2] Defined as "actualizing" by Bennett & Lagos (2007). The difference with Dalton's conception is that Bennett and Lagos insists more on distrust towards media and institutions, on the preference for looser and horizontal organizing and for issue-oriented and self-actualizing participation, that is participation with the aims of self-expression and identity development.

more assertive role for the citizen and a broader definition of citizenship to include social concerns and the welfare of others" (Dalton, 2008b, p. 6). Engaged citizenship practices are more varied than those inspired by duty based citizenship, and includes norms emphasizing a wathcful and critical stance towards government and political leaders (Pew 2018) . As can be seen, the engaged conception closely reflects the positions of post-materialists/libertarians. It is interesting to note that, while on the one hand education, wealth and type of occupation predict higher levels of participation both in duty based and engaged citizenship activities, generational elements – purified from life-cycle effects – point in the direction of significantly reducing duty-based participation, with a compensation – that is only partial – due to the increase in the involvement in engaged-type activities (O'Toole, 2003). As data from Dalton (2008b) shows, in the 2000s the percentage of citizens participating in campaigns, civic groups, petitions, protests and community action is higher then ever, while it is decreasing only in voting.

Another consequence of postmaterialism and cognitive mobilization is the diffusion of more individualized and personalized forms of political action. To capture this trend, Micheletti (2003; 2010; Stolle & Micheletti 2013) coined the paradoxical expression "individualized collective action". The core idea here is that citizens that are more skilled and less trustful of bureaucratic organizations may not adapt to traditional forms of political participation based on organizationally defined allegiances, routines and careers. They might try to carve out their own specific field of action according to their very specific preferences, possibly leaving them a considerable margin for action and decision. Citizens have more information and are able to coordinate even without joining traditional organisations – for example building networks based on digital connections – and this allows them to organize themselves immediately, avoiding traditional bureaucratic-representative structures. What remains of the collective in this kind of behaviour? According to Micheletti, the fact that people are now acting as individuals and not as gears in an impersonal mechanism turns participation into a strong form of responsibilization, through which citizens take charge of themselves and the welfare of the wider society. Even the issue of collective coordination tends to fall on the individual, given the decline of the apparatuses of bureaucratic management of interactions. According to Micheletti, individualized but still collective participation – insofar as it requires coordination between individuals and taking charge of the common good – is the form of participation typical of post-modernity, where individualism replaces collectivism without the loss of collective action. A term now popular to epitomize this trend is that of DIY – Do It Yourself (Carter 1973;

Sharp 1973; Favre 1990). This reluctance to adhere to organizational logics and identities leads to what Bennett has defined as personalization (Bennett, 2002, 2012; Bennett & Segerberg, 2011) or lifestyle politics (Bennett, 1998). As long as the centre of gravity in the representations of politics and collective identities shifts from the collective to the individual, identities based on ideological macro-discourses tend to lose salience in favour of narratives focused on individual experience, under the themes of morality and life-style. The purest form of this type of participation is political consumerism, which entails the exercise of a collective action against corporate actors through the coordination of individuals acting at the intersection between civil society and market, or alternatively the production of a life-space that is untouched by the logics of commodification that characterize late capitalism. Phenomena that until a few decades ago would have assumed a clear ideological connotation – for example the opposition to economic imperialism – today tend to fall into the vocabulary of individuality and the construction of an authentic and ethical subjective space.

It is evident that the more politics involves the individual and in his way of life, the more the issue of the production of identity becomes central. And in turn identity production is transformed, to use Micheletti's concepts, from a collective-collectivist to an individualized-collective process. There is a multiplication of identities that are brought to the public arena; this means that citizens do not limit themselves to associating with others only on the basis of ascriptive or institutionally recognized identities, but tend to actively select identitary elements to mobilize in any specific context. There is therefore a multiplication of the axes of conflict and at the same time a greater freedom in joining collective alignments. One question that needs to be asked is what effect this growing individualization and personalization has on what Karpf defines as the "organizational layer of politics" (2012). Do postmaterialist and highly skilled citizens feel they can do without organisations to organise their participation? Pattie (2004) has expressed concerns of this kind, arguing that the new forms of participation risk being too fickle, "flash" and evanescent due to the great flexibility of the adhesions and the low costs of exit (Melucci, 1996), with the consequence of a progressive drying up of the traditional forms of commitment and collective action that have sustained the organized public sphere in Western democracies. Lawson and Merkl (1988) propose a persuasive argument that leads to believe that even postmodern politics may not dispense with the organizational layer. The central idea is that organizations, in addition to allowing coordination between actors, are an irreplaceable tool that provides linkage between citizens and elites; this function would not become redundant

with the increase of citizens' skills, as the higher sophistication of the latter would push elites to act with increasing sophistication in order to circumvent individuals' control – and they would be able to do so, given the persistent disproportion in non-cognitive resources. This would mean that institutional and formalised forms of linkage would continue to be necessary to ensure accountability between leaders and base, as was the case in modernity. This is demonstrated by the example of the Green Parties, the post-materialist party *par excellence*, which, although they have built lighter organizations, have stressed the issue of accountability and the control of the base over leaders in a very significant way. To summarize it is possible to assert that

> movement organizations still have significant advantages over self-mobilizing citizens in terms of resources, including not only human and financial resources but also trust and connections with stakeholders; professional knowledge about the issue at hand; experiences about how to handle the news media; and credibility as spokespersons on public affairs (Lee & Chan, 2018, 1093).

Another type of concern that has been aroused by the postmaterialist and individualizing turn in political participation relates to the relationship between mobilization and class. While it is clear that there is a strong correlation between individual resources and propensity to participate, this tendency was effectively mitigated during the industrial age by the organizational and pedagogical role played by voluntary-bureaucratic organizations which were able to mobilize the ascriptive solidarities of the lower classes (Inglehart, 1977). It is clear, however, that the more the principle of political participation moves from the collective to the individual, the more individual predispositions and skills will return to be central. It has been said that the current era has been marked by an unprecedented enlargement of the pool of skilled citizens; at the same time, however, it remains difficult to deny that this enlargement is not completely generalized, and that the link between class, formative security and education is a link that continues to exist. The main risk in this respect is that there will be a proliferation of participation by those who live in a condition of relative economic security and a progressive marginalization of the demands of those who live below the poverty line. It is therefore worth thinking about how the changing class structure and new patterns of mobilization impact on the propensity to participate; the main medium through which life experience and propensity to participate are normally connected is, as was said above, that of self-efficacy.

To higher self-efficacy corresponds a greater propensity to participate; we must therefore ask how stratification in life experiences influences individual self-efficacy. Michelson and Bedolla (2012) demonstrate that a good level of self-efficacy corresponds to the ability to adopt a

cognitive frame that allows to include in the individual identity the role of active participant. This type of frame appears to be particularly frequent among middle-class individuals, while it is much rarer among minorities and the poorest individuals; this may explain the low propensity to vote and participate of these categories. According to Pattie (2004) political efficacy can be broken down into three factors: external effectiveness – defined by citizens' beliefs towards the level of responsiveness and fairness of government; internal collective efficacy – confidence in the fact that organizing with others can make a difference; internal personal efficacy – the level of competence and effectiveness perceived by the individual. Norris (2002) argues that variables related to agency and motivational interest are better able, compared to individual structural attributes – including education and class –, to explain participation. Being part of social networks and possessing the attitudes that lead to perceive of oneself as able to exercise influence competently is therefore key. It is evident that, to the extent that we are witnessing a decline of the traditional organizational layer due to the collapse of mass bureaucratic organizations, the variables linked to self-efficacy, which as we have seen act as a mediator between social status and level of participation, tend to rise in salience along with the role played by the propensity to join the new types of organizations that develop social networks.

Even in terms of the new forms taken by the organizations that develop the social networks through which individuals are mobilized it is clear that there is a significant marginalization of the lower classes in favour of some sections of the middle classes. Take the example of social movements. Their rise is certainly linked to the spread of a postmaterialist ethos; but their proliferation would not have been possible without: a) a growing proportion of the population composed of middle-class students and professionals with greater discretionary time (Verba & Nie, 1978) and b) the expansion of those professional categories whose work ethic tends to facilitate adherence to a participatory framework – the so-called cultural and human service professionals (Burklin 1979, 1984, 1987; Dalton et al., 1990; Kitschelt, 1989 Kriesi, 1989; Rootes, 1995). All these segments come from the intermediate strata of society but class is more of a precondition than a determinant, since the real determinant is provided by the specific professional experience and the individual’s ideological positions.

We cannot therefore speak of class dynamics in the strict sense. Class is not the main predictor of the new forms of participation, just as the middle classes as a whole are not particularly inclined to adhere to the new social movements. It is equally clear, however, that social

stratification continues to have an influence, in this case to the detriment of the most disadvantaged classes, that in the new landscape of individualized and skilled participation tend to fall outside the scope of political participation. This state of affairs risks triggering a spiral that reinforces itself: as is evident from the categories proposed by Pattie, the perception of political effectiveness also depends on how responsive the government is perceived to be towards one's concerns; the less disadvantaged classes participate, the more their demands will be underrepresented and thus this will lead to a perceived decrease in efficacy which will retroactively affect the propensity to participate.

1.2.3. New Social Movements

If we want to identify the political formation that best embodies the elite-challenging turn in political participation we can't help but think to the New Social Movements (NSMs) that emerged from the late 60s. Studying the NSMs is a necessity if we want to understand in depth the link between structural and value change and the new forms of political organization typical of the post-materialist turn. NSMs also show in the purest form what is meant when it is claimed, as some of the previously presented scholars do, that political participation in the postmodern age becomes a self-actualizing practice, through which the axis of social conflict moves from the political to the cultural sphere. Since this work aims first of all to investigate how value change affects how collective participation is organized and the forms taken by social conflict it is necessary to select, among the issues raised by the wide debate on the NSMs (Ahlemeyer, 1995; Buechler, 1995; Castells 1997; Cohen, 1985; Dalton and Kuechler, 1990; D'Anieri, 1990; Day, 2006; Diani & Della Porta, 2006; Giugni, 1995; Gusfield 1994; Habermas, 1978: Johnston et al., 1994; Koopmans et al. 1992; Kriesi et al., 1995; Kriesi, 1993; Melucci, 1980; Melucci, 1989; Melucci, 1996; Mueller 1994; Offe 1985; Pakulski, 1991; Pizzorno, 1978; Proietto, 1995; Rucht 1988, 1990, 1991; Scherer-Warren & Krischke, 1987; Touraine, 1991; Turner, 1969), two strands that relate focus of the analysis. First of all, it is necessary to identify the link between new logics of formation of collective and individual identities in the public sphere and the rise of expressive participation and practices of radical democratization. Secondly, it is important to note that innovations in the processes of identity development and in the forms taken by power in the post-modern society generate new forms of conflict.

The scholar that best captured these trends within his theoretical construction is certainly Alberto Melucci, who shows clear Inglehart's influences in the analysis of the first of the two

aforementioned themes to the extent that his line of argument links change in the processes of organization of identities with the theory of cognitive mobilization. According to the Italian sociologist, individuals in advanced societies are faced with an identity deficit, since collective identities are subject to a double disruptive process. On the one hand there are homogenizing tendencies, conveyed by the rationalizing action of the state and by the streams of goods and information generated by the market and the media, which tend to destroy cultural enclaves, be they geographical, class-based or religious. On the other hand, the increase in social complexity atomizes society and multiplies the roles and identities of individuals, with the consequence that every identity necessarily becomes less totalizing. This situation constitutes an identity deficit, which leads many individuals to feel the need to build of new collective affiliations. Even Inglehart himself clearly identifies this aspect when he stresses that postmaterialists show higher levels of desire to belong and community than materialists. This is explained by the fact that the former are released from established collective identification (Inglehart, 1977).

The primary consequence of the crisis of primary affiliations is the disappearance of the rites of passage that marked the access to new forms of social identity, which in turn deeply undermines individual identity. According to Melucci:

> The fundamental question affecting individual and collective existence in today's society is given in the unrelenting interrogation directed at the self: 'Who am I?' In traditional societies the question of identity, most delicate and critical at the moment of passage from childhood to adolescence, was principally answered by others - the parents, the family, the community. […] It thus becomes less easy for individuals to forecast their progress through life: no one can confidently predict even the basic events that will shape our futures far more open to the range of possible and unforeseeable outcomes than ever before in the past (Melucci, 1996, p. 138).

In fact this is not completely new problem. As Pakulski notes (Maheu et al., 1995) the need to actively produce one's own identity characterized middle classes throughout industrial modernity. The middle strata of society tended to be defined negatively, crushed between the two great actors of their time: the working class and the capitalist bourgeoisie; this means that their positive identity was not given from the start, it had to be constructed. This quest for identity has been rooted, according to Pakulski, in two ideas that are typical of the middle classes: 1) the search for the "good life", understood as an experience of life marked by good standards of living and 2) consensual social relations, understood as a humanization of social relations through the enhancement of interpersonal communication and mutual recognition. This analysis explains very clearly why social movements have emerged at a time of unprecedented expansion of the middle classes and have found their social base in them: on the

one hand, as will be seen in a moment, social movements make up for the chronic identity deficit through the production of new cultural affiliations and codes; on the other hand, the concepts of good life and consensual social relations are clearly the ideological postmaterialist core of the NSMs.

The encounter between the identity deficit and the increased cognitive skills of individuals is what gives life to social movements. Generalized access to education and greater exposure to informational flows through the media increases, according to Melucci who follows Ingleheart's thesis, the individuals' "potential for individualization, that is their potential for autonomy and self-realization" (Melucci, 1996, p. 106). The increase in individual skills allows individuals to think of themselves as autonomous subjects, able to focus on their desires and see their identity as something that is not given, but as something that has to be developed through a distinctive life experience. This has a triple effect. On the one hand, the increase in cognitive skills tends to increase the propensity to participate in collective action. Secondly, the need to build new identities matches a vast layer of individuals who have greater ability, compared to the past, to engage in a work of identity building and collective self-actualization. Finally, new forms of inequality are created between those who, in the face of the identity deficit, possess the resources that enable the development of identity and those who do not; this may have the effect of exacerbating cultural conflicts or leading to struggles for the extension of access rights to training experiences, whether strictly educational or not.

Once the problem is expressed in these terms, it is easier to understand what is meant by self-actualizing or self-expressive participation. Through social movements, individuals come together to collectively elaborate new forms of identity capable of counterbalancing the weakening of ascriptive identities. To use an expression from Melucci, through social movements humanity produces itself[3]. Human beings, free from ascriptive identities and endowed with greater creative abilities, assume the responsibility for the reproduction and maintenance of their social landscape, in order to humanize it and make it more respectful of life and individual needs – this trend will find its peak in the mobilizations of environmentalists and pacifists of the 80s. Just like the labor movement had struggled to influence the process of material production in order to make it more equitable and respectful of human rights, the NSMs

[3] Such conceptions is clearly found also in Beck's concept of reflexive modernity.

are concerned with exercising collective power over the forms of cultural production, attempting to affect collective identities and the ultimate aims of society. It is precisely in these features that there is a central element that defines the post-utopian nature of the NSMs: this tendency to act as devices of self-production of human culture tends to lead on the one hand to a contractual vision of the social order and, on the other, to the idea that the work of cultural production and reproduction cannot simply be completed once power is seized, but that in some way it is a work of self-care that will need to be repeated incessantly.

Therefore, at the root of social movements there are two fundamental elements: a degree of indeterminacy in the identity of the postmodern subject coupled with greater capacity to actively build one's own identity. To these elements it must be added the increasing abundance of information and cultural codes that circulate in the public sphere. Within these flows of information and codes overwhelming the individual, social movements are the actors who create order out of chaos, defining new models of identity building on this symbolic overabundance. Young people are the category that is most exposed to the phenomenon of the overabundance of meanings, since they are more connected to symbolic flows and because in them the identity indefiniteness is even stronger – because of their age but also because of the erasure of rites of passage and their low adherence to class and professional identities.

But if movements are a response to this overabundance of codes, they also tend to amplify it. This is because they engage in the creative work of building new identities – and therefore new codes and meanings – and of creating new collective and individual practices. This has two consequences. On the one hand, social movements are perpetual engines of cultural innovation: they continually develop new forms of action and thought, some of which will remain confined to the context in which they arose, while others will spread and become a vector of change throughout society; it can therefore be said that social movements are a kind of laboratory in which cultural change is synthesized, experienced and proposed to the rest of society. Secondly, the fact that social movements engage with the overabundance of meanings through practices that lead both to its reorganization into new identities and to the amplification of that overabundance, is the cause of what scholars have defined as a tendency toward prefiguration and the politics of the present. Precisely because the NSMs follow a value-rationality – that is, they produce identities – they find their temporal horizon in the present and their main mode of action in the prefiguration, here and now, of the society that they desire to live in. If the NSMs

would not attempt to give life, here and now, to the identities and the way of life that they pursue, their practice would be in no way different from the work of the normative social theorist, who from his desk develops, within his thought, new models of society; social movements instead undertake the effort of building the new society with their flesh and bone, experimenting in practice the change they want to achieve. This is precisely the essence of their action in the cultural sphere, and it is precisely because of this tension towards prefiguration that the domain of activity of the new movements cannot be reduced to the political sphere.

Their prefigurative nature and their orientation toward the present largely explain the stress NSMs put on the radical democratization of their movement organizations. On the one hand this is clearly an effect of the spread of postmaterialist values and representations stressing the need for participatory democracy and the construction of social contexts in which everyone can feel valued and at ease – which in turn is a consequence of both the post-materialistic focus on the quality of experience and the individual and the need to feel part of a community (Inglehart, 1977; Melucci, 1996) – as well as leading to growing awareness that traditional representative mechanisms alone are not able to countervail the oligarchic concentration of power in organizations (Gerlach and Hine 1970; Brown 1992; Ferree and Martin 1994; Martin 1990) – and this awareness is at least partly a consequence of the increased intellectual skills of postmaterialists, but also of growing distrust towards bureaucratic organizations. On the other hand, however, there is the fact that the issue of organization is turned, through the prefigurative and experimental logic of movements, from a mean to an end; the organizational form is no longer just a tool for holding together a large number of individuals in the pursue of a collective objective, but becomes an end in itself, to the extent that a new model of alternative society and humanised and consensual social relations is developed and prefigured within the very organizations that seek to establish them.

But it would be reductive to think of social movements only by looking at their "productive" aspects, when the literature indicates that they also possess a strong antagonistic element. It is an antagonism that unfolds as a reaction to the emergence of a new logic of power and social control, that is increasingly characterized by the development of homogenizing tendencies and by the capacity to directly question the individual and his way of life. On the one hand, the expansion of the state and its agencies leads to increasing intrusion and control over the lives of individuals; on the other, the processes of commodification promoted by the capitalist

economy are no longer limited to affecting material production, but invade the sphere of symbolic production, impacting the processes of identity development and the very conditions of existence of individuals. The presence of flows and apparatuses becomes at the same time more intrusive while it is fragmented into a thousand streams and power assumes a microphysics and impersonal nature. The idea that, by conquering the state, collective sovereignty can finally be exercised, loses its salience because now the state is seen as exercising only part of the cultural power, and in any case appears as a fragmented actor, impossible to defeat just by conquering or cutting its head. It thus becomes key, from the perspective of NSMs, to act on the individual: just as microphysics power acts directly on the making of individuals, so collective action must start from the transformation of the individual, without which any attempt to conquer power is doomed.

Two images present in the literature can be useful to outline the structural changes from which this new logic and interpretation of power emerges. The first is that of “programmed society” by Touraine (1981) according to which the societal configuration emerged from the postwar period had the following characteristics:

1) The expansion of bureaucratic systems, as an ambiguous fruit of the processes of development of the welfare state, which on the one hand have ensured prosperity and social security but on the other have introduced the state into previously untouched spheres of life and subjected them to forms of bureaucratic rationalization;

2) The growing role of technology in shaping social representations and the environment in which human beings live defines the "programmed" nature of the new order, in so far as the environmental and cultural conditions of existence of humanity are increasingly the result of conscious and explicit technical self-production and manipulation.

The second image is that of the colonization of life-world, elaborated by Habermas (1975; 1984) and then adopted by Melucci. On the one hand, the increase in social complexity increases the need for the multiplication of autonomous centres of action and their mutual integration; on the other, post-industrial capitalism no longer deals solely with the production of material resources, but it unleashes the commodification of social relations, symbols and collective identities and needs, in the attempt to discover ever new areas of profit extraction. Thus the extension of the mechanisms of control and coordination and the new logic of the

capitalist market lead to the colonization of the lifeworld by systemic imperatives, so that money and power regulate not only economic and political transactions but also identity formation, normative regulation, and symbolic reproduction.

Obviously the new logics of economic development and power have an impact on the forms of social conflict. Melucci wittily proposes to re-interpret the classic themes of modern social conflict – property, inequality and exploitation – in this new context. Put under this light, the issue of private property and its class nature does not disappear, but becomes itself a postmaterialistic issue. The ownership rights of the dominant classes are no longer exercised only on the means of material production, but through the ability to play a dominant role within the cultural flows that produce collective discourses and identities; this leads to a conflict between citizens' desires for self-actualization and the structuration of social power. It also emerges the paradox of a productive system in which social work is increasingly "collectivized", to the extent that individuals are required to show growing capacity for coordination and to bring personal intellectual skills into play, without, however, this leading to the altering of the ownership structure or to a reduction in power differentials; individuals consequently reclaim their right to direct their newly acquired intellectual abilities and capacity for social coordination towards purposes determined by themselves and not by the needs of the dominant groups, while enhancing their search for self-fulfilment, fighting for the liberation of their life-time and for the exercise of democratic power on the societal environment in which they live[4].

If the concept of property is transformed, obviously also the way in which inequalities are determined and are thought of by the social actors is bound to change:

> Inequality cannot be measured solely in terms of distribution and control of economic resources (Sen 1992); analysis of structural imbalances in society should refer more to a differentiation of positions which allots to some a greater and specific control over master codes, over those powerful symbolic resources that frame the information (Melucci, 1996, p. 193).

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[4] Among the new forms of property, in addition to that on the production of cultural codes, Melucci also points to the issue of the body, the "entitlement" over which is increasingly expropriated from the individual by the progress of the institutionalization of medical science, genetic engineering, reproductive technologies and the increasing impact of environmental degradation on human health (Melucci, 1989b).

Along with the persisting power of the capitalist class, the mass media and popular culture emerge as the sites of symbolic production par excellence and increasingly tend to follow the logic of the market economy; at the same time, think-tanks and expert knowledge more directly exert their influence on collective representations and on the way elites think about their role. In this context, exploitation is defined as forced and subordinate participation within a system of cultural production marked by enormous inequalities of power (Melucci, 1996); a possible reaction is therefore that of secession, with individuals retreating in silence or seeking refuge in small marginal groups and separate subcultures.

NSMs develop as a reaction to these structural dynamics. On the one hand, they allow to create a space at least partially separated and protected from systemic intrusions, where it is possible to elaborate alternative identity codes and to avoid the dynamics of informational exploitation. On the other hand, in many cases they challenge the system, claiming greater democracy and equality and attempting to impose on a large scale the cultural experiments elaborated in the separate space of the movement. It is clear that the demands promoted by the NSMs do not adapt to the representative system of the modern state and, even more clearly, to the structures of political parties. This is because of an explicit ideological rejection of the organizational logics of the state and the party, and because the value rationality of the movements is in constant conflict with the purposive rationality of political parties that are oriented towards the conquest of power and influence on policies. This does not mean that collaboration between movements and institutionalized political actors is not possible; it is not uncommon for instances promoted by movements to become the subject of parliamentary debate and lead to new legislation. The issue here is rather that the movements, because of the logic of identity production that characterizes them, always tend to "exceed" the channels of representation and the opportunities offered by institutionalized politics; while NSMs might take part, from time to time, to institutional politics, they can never be reduced to it and sooner or later conflicts between the different operational logics tend emerge.

1.3. Conclusions

In the period that goes from the definitive affirmation of postmaterialism to the beginning of the new millennium, all the odds seem to point to the contraction of participation in political parties. The explanations of this decline are related to the diminished demand for participation formulated by parties, that is mainly the consequence of innovations in communication

technologies and responses to class dealignment, as well as to a decreased willingness of citizens to participate in bureaucratic organizations. This reduced availability to traditional forms of participation is linked to value and structural change in post-industrial societies. First of all, a new set of values and the increase in intellectual skills lead citizens to opt for a model of participation that is more active and critical, as well as more flexible and egalitarian, compared to what is traditionally offered by political parties and unions. In addition, structural changes in postmodern societies lead to the emergence of an identity deficit affecting individuals; this deficit can be filled through new forms of expressive participation, that by their very essence exhibit a value rationality that is difficult to adapt to institutional politics. Finally, the increasing intrusiveness of the state apparatuses and of the processes of commodification provoke on the one hand the rejection of the great bureaucratic institutions and, on the other, the emergence of new cultural conflicts, rooted in the resistance to homogenizing tendencies and to the imposition of cultural codes by the apparatuses.

The only opposite trend that can be assumed here is linked to inertia, that is to the fact that since the contemporary political systems have developed around the parties it is quite sure that these remain a central point in the imagination of the citizens, as well as the fact that the functioning of political institutions tends to encourage the structuring of the political options around parties. The next two chapters will identify a set of counter-trends to the decline of the parties that emerged over time, not so much from the withering of the causes of decline, but because of the intervention of new factors that, starting from the watershed of the Great Recession, induced new forms of cultural change – chap. 2 – as well as a host of adaptive reactions adopted by the parties to meet the new demands of citizens.

2 Value change and political participation: after the Great Recession

This chapter follows the path laid down by the previous one, analyzing the relationship between value change and political participation. The underlying question remains the same: how does value change affect participation in political parties? If, however, as was said at the end of the previous chapter, the previously analysed trends unequivocally point to the divorce between collective participation and parties, under the sign of the Silent Revolution and the culturalization of social conflict, in this section I will show the emergence of some countertrends. The watershed event, signalling a fundamental moment of discontinuity, is the Great Recession that began in 2008. Not because 2008 marks the beginning of a period that is totally distinct from the previous one. Rather, because, seeing the Great Recession as an "event"[5] (Mannheim, 1928) it is possible to emphasize its ability to bring to fruition some new trends that had already been developing for some time, as well as the fact that such a far-reaching phenomenon has also inaugurated new chains of causation. Moreover, we consider its relevant impact on social imaginaries, obliging individuals and groups to reorient their cognitive frames or at least to acknowledge that something important and dramatic has happened.

It must be said, as of now, that in this chapter I am not pointing to clear-cut reversals in the trends I have described previously. Rather, it is observed a multiplication of trends, compared to the past. If in fact many of the previously active trends remain active in the post-crash phase, new ones emerge, many of which run in a parallel but contrary direction to what has been said so far.

The chapter consists of two parts. The first discusses the changes in the representations of the state and the impact of these on the forms of collective action. A key theme is the comparison between the discourses and organizational logics of the Global Justice Movement and the Movement of the Squares, with particular reference to the analysis provided by Graeber, Gerbaudo and Juris – and to the rise of social media. In the second part of the chapter I will return on the Silent Revolution, observing how the Great Recession and its aftermath produced

[5] Event as an happening that has the potential to disrupt the dominant narratives that a society tells of itself, modifying the parameters through which people evaluate events and situations

extremely diversified reactions among postmaterialist generations and the older ones, at least partially in an unforeseen way, altering the trajectory of cultural change.

2.1 State, hegemony and collective action

2.1.1 Diminished state, atrophying parties

According to Schattschneider (1942), modern democracy would be unthinkable without parties. Similarly, it can be said that it is impossible to think about party politics without thinking about the state. Democracy, state and parties are bound together by institutional and symbolic ties. As far as institutional ties are concerned, the fundamental issue lies in the fact that the state owns, at least theoretically, the monopoly of legitimate force and therefore is the only actor capable of producing laws and making them operational. Institutional politics is therefore the sphere of action within which various actors cooperate and struggle in order to have access to the sovereign powers – legislative and executive – that the state possesses thanks to its monopoly of legitimate force. With regard to the symbolic links between democracy, state and parties, the reference is to the belief system which gives legitimacy to political actors and to the various procedures on which representative democracy is based.

Returning to the theme introduced in the previous chapter, namely participation in political parties, it is possible to hypothesize two ways in which the change in the link between democracy, state and parties could have negative effects on the level of participation in political parties. On the one hand, there are issues related to the legitimacy of the actors and institutions: are parties considered legitimate actors, worthy of citizens' investment in time and resources? Does representative democracy still make sense to them? Is the state a partner with which to cooperate, a playing field to conquer or an enemy to defeat? On the other hand, there are issues related to the institutional sphere and to the change of perceptions about it: the state is still a significant actor, really endowed with sovereign powers and able to be consequential in its decisions, or are there other, more influential actors that are able to contend its monopoly over sovereign powers? It is clear that, as long as parties remain focused on representative politics, the answer given to this question is absolutely central to the choice of whether or not to engage in a party; in fact, if parties compete to gain access to state power, but this power becomes less

relevant, parties will also be seen as less decisive actors, with which it makes less sense to engage emotionally and cognitively.

In the previous chapter it was seen that postmaterialists and NSMs share various forms of criticism over parties and the state. First of all, both state and parties are seen as bureaucratic, top-down actors, unable to value individuals, turning them into depersonalized gears in the organizational machine. At the same time, they are accused of promoting a particularly pernicious form of capitalism, characterized by corporatist pacts that expand bureaucratic control over the whole of society and by the logic of productivism, that is extremely adverse to the protection of the environment and individual freedoms. The new movements, therefore, while identifying with the left side of the political spectrum, abandon the statism that previously characterized that political area and show relative indifference towards redistribution and nationalizations. On the other hand, much more emphasis is placed on the direct participation of citizens and workers in production choices.

Second, in the NSMs the conception of the state changes. These reject the Marxist conception of revolution and the overthrow of the state by the party, because the state is not considered the only actor holding the power to produce subjectivities – that is what interests these movements most. Besides, its power – despite the fact that it imposes itself through vertical and centralized apparatuses – is becoming increasingly ramified and localized. But they also reject the representative version of democracy, insofar as it constrains collective actors to comply with procedures which place heavily bureaucratised actors at the forefront and undermine the direct participation of individuals. In the practice of the NSMs the state becomes on the one hand an actor to be reformed through protest or through occasional cooperation with traditional political actors, while on the other it is framed as an opponent from which individuals must find ways of protecting themselves, avoiding its cultural power vis-à-vis individuals and collective identities.

It is possible to identify two other trends leading to downplay the centrality of the state in representations concerning political participation. These tendencies, or strands of discourse, intertwine each other, simultaneously bringing into play the issue of collective representations and that of institutional change. The first of these strands insists on the reduction of political conflict within the state, by virtue of the reduction of the spaces of democratic decision in favour of technocracy and more general tendencies toward depoliticization. The second strand of

discussion concerns the perceptions of the capacity of the state – and therefore of parties once they conquer it – to exercise its sovereign power vis-à-vis transnational market operators, such as large corporations and supranational institutions.

2.1.1.1 Depoliticization

A first factor of depoliticisation – understood as a reduction of the extent to which political parties compete to promote clearly distinct political agendas and policy decisions (Katz & Mair, 2009; Mouffe, 2005) – is linked to the phenomena mentioned in the first part of the previous chapter, that is the fact that the combination of the decline of class cleavages and the development of a broad middle class that combined with developments in communication technologies gradually turn political competition into a struggle to win the median voter. Political parties, therefore, progressively renounce marked class-based ideological characterizations, in order to transform themselves into professionalized catch-all parties; the rise of cartel parties marks the apogee in this process, since precisely the disappearing of clearly partisan policy agendas and collective values is the precondition for collusion between the parties for the partition of state resources.

This view of politics as competition for the median voter is explicitly codified in Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), the foundational text of public choice theory. Downs' analysis postulates political actors as economic actors, who compete to maximize their chances of re-election just as entrepreneurs compete to maximize profit, and this in turn leads them to seek the vote of the median voter in those constituencies that are more likely to prove decisive in an election. This has two effects. The first, as was said, is that of a tendential programmatic convergence between parties. The second effect is to conceive the voter himself as a maximizing and atomized subject, interested in politics in so far as he sees a chance for personal advantage; this way of conceiving and structuring the political offer, intended as a market product to be promoted through modern marketing techniques, tends to weaken the ideological and affective investment of citizens in politics – to the extent that the political arena becomes a space dominated not by collective solidarities, but by competition between self-interested actors, that cannot be relied on anything but the fact that they will pursue

their own narrow interest –, leading in fact to an increasingly cynical and disillusioned attitude that produces distrust towards politicians and disengagement towards political participation.

But public choice theory is also at the root of another de-politicizing trend, that is, the increasing delegation of policy tasks to non-partisan institutions. This is because, starting from the late 1970s, a variant of public choice, namely the overload theory (Buchanen & Wagner, 1977, 1978; Crozier et al., 1975; King, 1975), becomes the hegemonic explanation of the collapse of the post-war settlement. According to this theory, collusion between voters, interested in expanding their welfare benefits, and politicians, interested in maximizing their share of votes, would lead to an overload of claims directed at the state, that is caught in a vortex of inflation, stagnation and social conflict. The solution public choice theorists envisage is, on the one hand, to undermine Keynesian economic policies – understood as the ideological-institutional embodiment of the collusion between voters and politicians – through severe bouts of fiscal austerity, tight monetary control, and on the other hand that by removing important branches of policy from the hands of politicians, transforming them through the creation of non-partisan institutions, populated by technicians without political affiliation (Hughes, 2003; Mclaughlin et al., 2001).

Katz and Mair (2009) indicate the 1990s as the definitive turning point towards a politics in which the programmatic-ideological differences between parties are so small that collusive phenomena can emerge more easily. Among the factors that led to such a situation the authors list the end of the ideological-military conflict between the West and socialist countries, the establishment of the Maastricht Treaty – that, on the one hand, reduces the policy discretionalities of European states and on the other hand transfers power to a supranational entity – as well as the establishment of the WTO in 1995, the pivotal institution in the regulation of globalization within what has been called the Washington Consensus. The fact that the 1980s and 1990s and globalisation – understood as the intensification of trade and communications and the liberalisation of trade and finance – marked a turning point towards a more consensual treatment of policy making on economic issues is also demonstrated by studies like those of Cusack (1999) and Boix (1998) which show that between the 70s and 90s there was an unequivocal decline of partisanship in economic choices, while Katz et al. (1991) affirm the same for monetary policies. The central issue here is that political actors have at this stage unequivocally interpreted openness to international flows as a factor which, while offering

enormous opportunities for economic development, necessarily leads to increased economic competition between nations and territories; this has meant that economic policy choices have tended to be subordinated to the ability to be competitive within the new economic framework; and this competitiveness has been defined in terms consistent with the new hegemony of the policies proposed by public choice theory: price and exchange rate stability, debt and inflation containment, reduction of corporate taxation, competition on wages and liberalisation of regulations and services.

Some authors have endeavoured to draw up synthetic formulae to define this new stage in democratic politics. Zakaria (1997), for example, by distinguishing between the popular component – self-government by the demos, through the parties – and the constitutional – the system of checks and balances – argues that the latter is decisive for the health of a democracy, while the former is disposable. The author in fact recognizes the decline in the popular component of democracy, but does not regret it, as long as Western societies remain animated by a vibrant civil society and supported by free judiciary powers. Majone (1996), resorting to the arguments of public choice theory, goes so far as to argue that the reduction of the popular component in favour of the constitutional one is a positive development, to the extent that makes it possible to isolate and protect the institutions from the "predatory inclinations of a transitory political elite" (Everson, 2000: 106).

Much less optimistic is Colin Crouch, who coined the concept of post-democracy (Crouch, 2000). According to him, politics in Western countries has been reduced to an electoral competition between elites, a spectacle firmly controlled by rival groups of professionals who compete on an extremely narrow range of issues, while the majority of the population slides into a state of political apathy due to the triviality of electoral competition and the inability to imagine redistributive policies capable of significantly impacting the lives of ordinary citizens. That same year, Mair (2000) coined the concept of "partyless democracy" or "post-partisan politics". Like Crouch, Mair reflected on Blair’s New Labour experience, emphasizing how his adoption of aggressively pro-market rhetoric marks the transition to a conception of politics in which parties no longer think of themselves as bearers of a specific point of view but as guarantors and implementors of a consensus beyond parts. Finally, Chantal Mouffe (2005) on the basis of the same considerations as Mair’s, points to the emergence of a post-political and consensual conception of democracy, where politics is no longer understood as a competitive

confrontation between different interests and identities or hegemonic projects, but it is marked by a convergence towards a post-conflictual centre and by the emergence of governance, through which political conflict declines in the consultation/creation of consensus and dissolves into technocratic rule.

2.1.1.2 Disempowered workers, ineffective states: the rise of transnational direct action

Changes in economic policy, in particular the globalisation of financial markets and commodities and the rise of transnational governance institutions, have an impact on the way people think and represent politics. The more the economy is internationalized and the more decision-making levels multiply, the more the state loses its monopoly over policy-making and the worker loses the ability to influence as such the decisions of economic operators that influence its existence. This can only put in crisis the forms of participation that are based on trade union representation and the conquest of the state. In turn, these developments are a harbinger of new experimentations and innovations in the field of social conflict.

One of the major developments in neoliberal globalization is the rise of multinational corporations that are so large and powerful that they can negotiate from an advantageous position with states, as well as constantly exercising the exit option as producers, looking for comparative advantages. This has of course created a political problem of accountability, but not only that: the constant search for ever more advantageous conditions has pushed many corporations to locate production in nations where the standards of labor rights and environmental protection are extremely poor. Faced with the inability of states to contain efficaciously the power of corporations and the increasing practice of blackmailing workers with the threat of delocalisation, the need for civil society actors to experiment with new forms of collective action against these capitalist actors has emerged. The most widespread forms of action in this regard are political consumerism (Micheletti, 2013) and logo campaigns (Bennett, 2004; Bennett & Lagos, 2007). By political consumerism are meant "actions by people who make choices among producers and products with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices" (Micheletti, 2013: 2). Political consumerism is based on a radical form of disintermediation. Assuming that governments cannot or do not want to take decisions against certain economic operators, it is up to citizens collectively to impose their will, bypassing the institutionalised arenas. It is an updated form of the logic that lies behind the strike, as a consequence of the fact that citizens now perceive themselves weak as workers

and strong as consumers: through political consumerism they strike not from workplace, but from purchase. The fundamental difference with the actions of the workers' movement is that in the case of political consumerism there is not necessarily a need to organize within traditional organizations; also thanks to digital technologies, it is possible to organize as crowds of individuals or within flexible and short-lived networks. It is precisely the case of political consumerism that induces Micheletti to formulate the concept of individualised collective action. The logic of logo campaigns is similar to that of political consumerism – to directly hit corporations bypassing the channels of institutional politics – but the modes of action are different. Logo campaigns in fact do not boycott products but brands, promoting campaigns in the media that aim at uncovering in the public sphere certain unfair practices adopted by specific corporations. The idea is to turn the popularity of a certain brand against itself; precisely because of the decline of ideologies and the rise of self-representations of citizens as consumers, the creators of logo campaigns consider it wiser to capture the attention of citizens through the call of a well-known brand, then proceeding to associate to it a host of negative meanings, rather than starting from ideological appeals.

But transnational protest did not just hit corporations, nor did it avoid more disruptive forms of action. Precisely the rise of globalization, organized under the banner of the Washington Consensus, sparked the rise of the Global Justice Movement – also referred to as the Alter-globalization Movement or Movement of Movements – a transnational movement for global justice which strongly criticised the supranational institutions responsible for the liberalization of world trade. Between the 1990s and the first years of the new millennium, more or less aggressive protests struck all G8, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank meetings, culminating in the urban guerrilla in Seattle (1999), the tragic events in Genoa (2001) and the establishment of the World Social Forum (della Porta et al. 2006). With the Global Justice Movement (GJM) some of the trends emerging from the NSMs came to full maturity and at the same time new ones emerged that will mark the subsequent global wave of protest, originated by the Great Recession. In particular, the GJM radicalized the rejection of state institutions and the libertarian tendencies already showed by NSMs. On the one hand, in fact, the state is explicitly rejected, together with the idea of revolutionary power and that of reform, in favour of the action of obstruction and direct attack of the institutions and social forces of neoliberal globalization and nation-state (Day, 2006). On the other hand, precisely this preference for direct and "negative" action, combined with the deepening of tendencies to

prefiguration and a radically egalitarian and libertarian ethos lead some authors to define these rebellions no longer as vaguely libertarian, but as the actual manifestation of an anarchist revival (Graeber, 2002; Jordan, 2002; Antliff, 2003). The words of David Graeber can help understand in what sense the practices of GJM are configured as at the same time a development and a qualitative leap compared to the NSMs:

> […] this is a movement about reinventing democracy. It is not opposed to organization. It is about creating new forms of organization. It is not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization *are* its ideology. It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures like states, parties or corporations; networks based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy. Ultimately, it aspires to be much more than that, because ultimately it aspires to reinvent daily life as whole. (Graeber, 2002[6]).

On the one hand, the GJM showed continuity with the tendency to adopt prefigurative action and participatory and anti-hierarchical democracy and the disruption of the boundary separating public and private life. On the other hand there was a clear qualitative leap in the ability to think and implement the role of participatory democracy and self-organization; this is because while the NSMs hold a conception of the organization as ideology, this discourse was not brought to the extreme consequences of the abolition of the state and national borders, as it happens instead in the 'neo-anarchist' GJM, both in the thought and practices of global struggle.

Day (2006) agrees with Graeber in pointing out that the GJM develops on the NSMs' path, but constitutes a qualitative leap in the direction of a more marked neo-anarchism. According to Day, both the NSMs and the GJM diverge sharply from the hegemonic logic of the labor movement, defined by a revolutionary conception within which the conquest of the state is central. The logic of hegemony is replaced by the anarchist logic of affinity, understood as a logic of conflict oriented not to the conquest of the state, but to hinder, here and now, the unfolding of "sovereign" state power and international organizations and corporations, while at the same time prefiguring the new radically democratic society, through the adoption of an autopoietic logic (Luhmann, 1990) – that means the voluntary self-reproduction of social structures through conflictual action. This represents the transition from a politics of "demand" – which forms the core of the workers' movement and is partly transmitted to the NSMs – to a politics of the act – which is also practiced by the NSMs, but not exclusively. While demand politics aims at ameliorating the practices of states, corporations and the structure of everyday life the politics of the act plots to make the power of the state redundant through direct action

[6] Retrieved at: https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii13/articles/david-graeber-the-new-anarchists

and social self-organization. Although Day (2006) recognizes that the NSMs have shown significantly many practices and forms of thought attributable to the logic of affinity and the politics of the act, they have not been able to detach themselves radically enough from the idea of using the state as a means of reforming themselves and society. This inability appears to lead to a contradictory outcome, namely to a further expansion of the welfare state and, as a result, of its apparatuses and intrusion into the individual's life, which is precisely the perverse phenomenon in opposition to which the NSMs emerged in the first place. According to Day, the GJM grasps this element of contradiction and proposes to break the loop by radically rejecting the politics of demand.

The GJM therefore acts, like the NSMs, outside from voluntary bureaucratic organizations. The movement is configured as a horizontal network (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001; Castells, 1997, 2004; Cleaver, 1995), without vertex, based on the alliance between a wide range of associative realities scattered all over the globe, each with full autonomy. The greatest innovation brought by the movement, heralding significant developments in the following decade, is the adoption of the World Wide Web as a tool of communication and coordination between the different nodes of the global network; and it is precisely this digital infrastructure, conceived, in full continuity with the spirit of the NSMs, as a countercultural instrument prefiguring new, more democratic ways of organising society, that allows the existence of a network capable of connecting organizations as different as the Mexican Zapatistas, European Catholic organizations and the various formations of the Western radical left (della Porta et al. 2006).

But precisely the fact that the GJM resumes and deepens the tendency of the NSMS to put the question of the organization in prefigurative terms and its adherence to the logic of affinity makes it impossible to separate the use of digital technology and the form taken by the network from the anarchist tendencies of the movement. In this sense Juris (2004) speaks of a "cultural logic of networking", meaning to underlie with this expression the affinities that exist between the internet and the libertarian logic of movements, insofar as the network allows high-speed, flexible and decentralized coordination, at a scale unthinkable until a few decades earlier (Diani, 1995). In fact, therefore, the qualitative leap in the neo-anarchist direction of the GJM is the result of both an ideological development and new technologies allowing to take to a higher level the predispositions already shown by the social movements of previous decades. Finally, we must not forget the enormous influence on the GJM of the nascent "hacker ethic" (Himanen,

2001) which is rooted in the values of free information, decentralized coordination, collaborative learning, peer recognition, and social service, and its pioneering role in experimenting and proposing new action repertoires linked to new technologies.

2.1.2 Returning to the “hegemony of hegemony”?

2.1.2.1 From neo-anarchism to citizenism

On August 2, 2011 David Graeber is at it again. After being fascinated by the "anarchism with a small “a”" (Graeber, 2011a) of the GJM and becoming its intellectual spokesman, he tried to contaminate the nascent Occupy Wall Street (OWS) in New York with the ethics and methods of anarcho-horizontalism. The hijacking attempt took place at a meeting held at Bowling Green with the declared aim to organize the actions to be undertaken to respond to Adbuster’s call to arms against Wall Street September 17 (Adbusters, 2011), where the protest group Worker’s World Party (WWP), already distinguished for having organized the anti-war coalition in 2003, tried to get a grip over the movement, proposing its own agenda, symbols and a pre-packaged action plan. Graeber perceived the lack of enthusiasm in the participants: if everything has already been decided, why call this thing an assembly? To the anthropologist it was immediately evident the fracture between the verticist methods of the WWP and the bystanders’ horizonalist ethos:

> To adopt activist parlance: this wasn’t really a crowds of verticals—that is, the sort of people whose idea of political action is to march around with signs under the control of one or another top-down protest movement. They were mostly pretty obviously horizontals: people more sympathetic with anarchist principles of organization, non-hierarchical forms of direct democracy, and direct action.” (Graeber, 2011a: 1).

Noticing the discrepancy between the methods used to lead the assembly by the WWP and the mood of the audience, Graeber and other like-minded participants decide to take action: they try to set up a counter-assembly, attracting the wrath of the organizers of the event and the enthusiasm of a large part of the participants. Subcommittees were created, a consensus-based decision-making process was established and then all convened again in a general assembly. At one of the meetings of the Outreach Group, which together with the other committees began to meet regularly in Tompinks Square Park, Graeber invented the motto that will become the symbol of the movement:

> Adbusters’ idea had been that we focus on “one key demand.” This was a brilliant idea from a marketing perspective, but from an organizing perspective, it made no sense at all. We put that one aside almost immediately. There were much more fundamental questions to be hashed out. Like: who were we? Who

> did want to appeal to? Who did we represent? Someone—this time I remember quite clearly it was me, but I wouldn't be surprised if a half dozen others had equally strong memories of being the first to come up with it—suggested, "well, why not call ourselves 'the 99%'? If 1% of the population have ended up with all the benefits of the last 10 years of economic growth, control the wealth, own the politicians… why not just say we're everybody else?" (Graeber, 2011a: 2).

Inspired by the recent events in Athens, Barcelona, Madrid and Tunis, the September 17 protest quickly turned into an abusive camp occupying Zuccotti Park. It is here that, according to Graeber, the anarchist nature of the movement unfolded, just as happened in the GJM. In an article for Al-Jazeera of 30 November 2011 (Graeber, 2011b) Graeber listed extremely concisely and effectively the anarchist principles transmitted by the GJM to OWS.

First of all, according to Graeber it is necessary to distinguish between Anarchism and Marxism. Both, apparently, have the same objective:

> to bring about a genuinely free society – that is, one where humans only enter those kinds of relations with one another that would not have to be enforced by the constant threat of violence. […] wish to see human relations that would not have to be backed up by armies, prisons and police. […] envision a society based on equality and solidarity, which could exist solely on the free consent of participants (Graeber, 2011b[7]).

But while Marxists insist on the need to organize into a party, seize state power to use its bureaucratic apparatuses to transform society, anarchists, as already seen, believe that these tools are useless, since by itself the use of certain means constrains the ends that are pursued. Marxists are convinced that, once society is changed through the state and the party, these institutions would become redundant; anarchists, while sharing the same desire, believe that these institutions should be rejected voluntarily, and even before starting the revolutionary struggle, which must be configured not as a conquest of the state but as an unrestrained opposition to it and as the prefiguration of post-revolutionary society. Graeber then goes on to list the four anarchist principles of OWS and GJM: 1) the refusal to recognise the legitimacy of existing political institutions; 2) the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order; 3) the refusal to create an internal hierarchy, replacing it with a form of consensus-based direct democracy; 4) the embrace of prefigurative politics through the setting up of camps that become places where participants experience direct democracy and the communitarian society that they want to build. This aspect is particularly significant from the point of view of the anarchists, since how Tufecki (2017) shows, in the camps protesters set up a parallel de-monetized economy, based on peer cooperation and reciprocity; it goes without saying that this is exactly the idea of prefiguration and solidarity that the anarchists want to achieve. While

[7] Retrieved at: https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2011/11/30/occupy-wall-streets-anarchist-roots

Graeber recognizes the ideological-methodological continuity, Lee and Chan (2018) stress the centrality of digital tools in the organization of both GJM and OWS protests. The authors still refer to OWS as a "network of networks" and as mostly countercultural phenomenon – as opposed to the mainstream media; on the other hand, however, the authors fully recognise the impact of the massive use of personal communication devices connected to the internet, as well as the more individualised nature of the 2011 protests.

Graeber is amazed at the success of the New York protests, implicitly admitting a significant difference with the GJM: OWS gathers mostly ordinary people, with little political experience and rarely belonging to organized groups, where the GJM had mainly engaged "professional idealists". What is the reason for the great success of the protests and the methodologies proposed by the New York anarchists? According to Graeber, the 2008 crisis and the response given to it – the rescue of bankrupt banks but not of indebted citizens – has definitively disqualified the dominant institutions and discourses in the capitalist West, opening space for new ways of thinking about society and new methods of action and organization. The analysis is indeed self-evident; what is surprising, however, is that in the face of such an epochal change Graeber emphasizes above all the continuity between what came before – the GJM – and what is the consequence – OWS – of the Great Recession. In addition, it is widely underestimated that in the GJM the digital technologies worked in an extremely different way from the social media that constituted one of the fulcrums of the 2011 protests. In summary, it can be argued that the mobilizations of the GJM were produced by the concomitant presence of three ingredients: the long wave of post-materialist libertarianism, the rise of neoliberal globalization and the emergence of adverse reactions to it and, finally, the development of the internet and the related hacker counterculture. The basic ingredients of OWS are partially but significantly different: if the libertarian wave does not seem to have dried up, the protests are triggered by the Great Recession, an event that in the short term is much more disruptive for the First World compared to the globalization of the 90s; finally, as already mentioned, we must take into account the enormous impact of social media, which is also recognised by the mainstream press. Is it realistic, in the face of such enormous changes, to focus, as Graeber does, only on the similarities between the movements of the 90s-2000s and the great wave of protest of 2011?

It is first of all evident that the wave of protest that shakes not only the United States, but the whole West and the Arab world, especially Spain, Greece, Tunisia and Egypt, is constituted by

events that are decidedly more "localized" than the protests of the alter global movement. It is no longer a question of gathering the forces in a global node and from there launching an assault on the institutions bearing the neoliberal hegemony; rather, although discourses and demands have a common matrix and participants rely on the awareness of the global nature of insurrections, reference to national causes and phenomena prevails, as well as the clash with the powers that govern individual states rather than global society.

The recurring themes of the Movements of Squares (MS – Gerbaudo, 2017) are essentially three:

1) In the protest, the theme of economic degradation for the masses is firmly linked with that of collusion between political and economic-financial elites, seen as the actors who rigged the game that would otherwise give chances of material emancipation to all. In the United States this theme takes the form of the attack on Wall Street, the beating heart of the global financial system that caused the upheavals of 2008, and the collusion between the political elite and finance. In Europe, the theme is that of the cartelization of politics and its alliance with local crony capitalists, interested in building rent positions through the dismantling and privatization of welfare and wage compression, with heavy outcomes for economic development and the well-being of most citizens. Finally, in the Middle East, the protests strike authoritarian governments and the military-industrial complexes that support them while the masses decline into a state of economic stagnation made even more evident by the growing ability to connect, through social networks, to the images of relative affluence from the Global North.

2) The rise of social media, which, as will be seen, are key in triggering the outburst of protests which have arisen removed from any pre-existent organisation. Citizens remain extremely atomized from beginning to end of the protest cycle, and are able to converge on certain places of confrontation mostly thanks to the "focusing" affordance of social media (Gerbaudo, 2012).

3) Last but not least, as mentioned, the occupation of public spaces as the main repertoire of action. As will be seen soon, this option is due both to organizational and symbolic reasons – the former being mostly connected with the use of social media as means of organizing, while the latter regard the will to establish a counter-sovereign body of the people.

Looking more closely at the protests, it can be affirmed that Graeber's expectations are quite excessive in that he argues that wide participation to a protest organized according to the

principles of anarchism means that broad slices of the citizenship are ready to adopt anarchist principles to reorganize capitalist society. In fact, when they imagine the society they want to build protesters draw more from what Gerbaudo (2017) defines as the “civic-republican tradition” than from anticapitalist ideologies. In the protests there remains an enormous focus on the individual, understood as the constitutive unit of society, which is however compensated by the idea of the united citizens rising against the oligarchy and the illegitimate power of the un-elected – meaning by that both unaccountable economic powers and the actors of the party cartels, impossible to replace if not through mass insurrection. The aim is to restore, through the strength of sheer number and the legitimacy of their motivations, a truly democratic order. Clearly, to the extent that these movements insist on the long wave of the libertarian and post-materialist Silent Revolution, the new democratic order will have some participatory and disintermediated features that appear also in anarchist thought. But it is really reductive to define these mobilizations as anarchist or anti-capitalist. It is clear that protesters define themselves in a populist vein as citizens fighting against oligarcs rather than capitalists, while the conception of society and political organization revolves around an individualism mitigated by the reference to the civic community. In this sense, Gerbaudo speaks of "citizenism" (Gerbaudo, 2017), while it is also possible to use the concept of "libertarian populism" (Inglehart & Norris, 2019) that will be further discussed later.

The citizenist rhetoric clearly marks a step away from the concerns of the NSMs on the "programmed society", while retaining their libertarian inspiration and attention to the individual. In this process, the liberation of the subject from the fangs of the powers that be is redefined in economic and civic-constitutional terms. In short, citizenism recovers and at the same time innovates postmaterial libertarianism, reintroducing the issue of economic redistribution and of the reference to the institutional political arena, without however flattening its positions on a return to materialism:

> The labour movement focused on the material conflict between capital and labour, and the post-industrial new social movements instead drew attention to the emerging confrontation between the technocratic power of a “programmed society,” and an emerging class of cultural and social workers, but also to the generational conflict between the free-minded baby boomers and their conservative parents. The opposition between citizens and the oligarchy does not focus on the materialist question of exploitation, nor upon the post-materialist question of cultural alienation, but on the decline of citizenship and popular sovereignty, wrought by the rise of oligarchic power. It thus frames the extreme inequality that has emerged in neoliberal societies not just as an economic but chiefly a political question, seeing economic inequality as resulting from the violation of the principle of political equality that is inherent in the notion of citizenship (Gerbaudo, 2017: 78).

Adherence to the populist dichotomy of people vs. elite vision redefines the struggle for material and political emancipation at least partly outside the right/left or socialism/capitalism dichotomies. At the same time, the focus on collusion between bankers, capitalists and local political actors redefines the conflict in different terms from the GJM: the point is no longer the global order, but the here and now, the way in which the oligarchic capture of national political institutions affects the lives of ordinary citizens. Criticism assumes an anti-plutocratic rather than anti-capitalist nature; it does not reject capitalism per se, but the capture of democratic institutions by capitalists and unaccountable powers. Consequently, it is not a matter of overthrowing the state or overcoming capitalism, but of strengthening the institutions so that they will once again be able, as they had been in the Thirty Glorious Years, to act as a counterweight to the power of capital and to be an effective medium for the expression of the will of the people, as well as a truly public and open arena. It is obvious the legacy of the resistant conception of conflict that characterized the NSMs, but turned from the opposition of the individual to the interference of the state and market apparatuses into the resistance of the citizens to market powers through the state.

A good summary is provided by Gerbaudo (2017), according to whom the Movement of the Squares is, as already reported by Graeber, neo-anarchistic in organizational structures, communicative practices and tactics of protest, but populist/citizenist in the meanings, demands and claims that are conveyed through such practices. It is precisely the ability to be more "hybrid" than the GJM to make the MS a movement that is majoritarian rather than countercultural: on the one hand, the use of neo-anarchist methods favours the libertarian tendencies and respects the individualism of postmaterialists, while redefining such practices as performative acts of protest against the oligarchic capture of democracy. Secondly, however, the populist imaginary is more appealing to common citizens than a markedly anti-capitalist or anarchist discourse, insofar as it provides a platform for opposition while not entirely calling into question the assumptions and discourses on which commonsensical conceptions of politics are based. The adoption of the imaginary of popular sovereignty is therefore partial, since it is mediated by the horizontalism and the focus on autonomy typical of neo-anarchism. On the one hand the focus on popular sovereignty leads the MS to put at the centre no longer politicized minorities and countercultures, but the "99%" – ordinary people suffering from the crisis – who is targeting the state not to overthrow it but to make it work as a tool to improve society and restore greater balance between the power of elites and that of citizens. This stance configures,

to use a term borrowed from Day, the return of "hegemony of hegemony" (Day, 2006), in the sense that the appropriation of the state by a political majority returns to be the main focus of emancipatory politics. But, as already said, anarchist autonomism and horizontalism moderate this tendency, preventing an abrupt return to a political practice based on the conquest of the state by the party, since there remains a strong scepticism towards large vertical organisations and in particular towards the passivization and bureaucratization typical to social democracy.

2011 can be seen as a fresh start for a new form of politics, a sort of reset after 50 years of deployment of post-materialist libertarianism. The persistence of a strong libertarianism and anti-bureaucratism, as well as the deepening of the anti-party mentality, prevents the return to classical party models. Yet the logic of the movements of 2011 contains the idea of the march through the institutions, which was absolutely inconceivable for the GJM. It can perhaps be drawn a parallel between this moment and that of the end of apogee of the NSMs era, with particular reference to the fate of the environmentalist movement, some sections of which decided to devote themselves to institutional politics trying not to compromise the libertarian principles that had animated the mobilizations, thus arriving to innovate deeply the party form. Similarly, the epigones of the MS have crossed two different paths: some have continued in the direction of civic campaigns, others – a few years later – have tried to launch new political parties, trying to innovate them as the Greens did in the 1980s, and in some ways not too dissimilarly from them – except for the massive use of digital technologies. In many cases, for example in Spain and in particular with the case of *Barcelona en Comù*, born from the alliance of the new party Podemos and the anti-eviction movement, the two trajectories were destined to meet and separate again more than once.

2.1.2.2 The new netroots

Apart from the majoritarian/citizenist twist away from libertarian neo-anarchism, the movements of 2011 showed another fundamental difference from the GJM, that is the fact that, while both movements "outsourced" to digital networks the function of organizational coordination, the type of instruments used and their organizational and symbolic implications differ widely. As mentioned above, the use of the web by the GJM has allowed to radicalize some neo-anarchist tendencies and to achieve a good degree of coordination between actors located in different areas of the world. In the same way, it can be said that the massive use of social media in the MS, in addition to having impacted on the organizational modalities of the

movement has also led to a deepening of some ideological-symbolic trends, deepening the differences with the GJM.

In this regard, Juris builds on his idealtype of the "logic of networking" (Juris, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2012), already used to describe the practices of digital organization of the GJM, proposing a new idealtype, ie. the "logic of aggregation":

> I propose a distinction between a "logic of networking" (Juris 2008a), a cultural framework that helps give rise to practices of communication and coordination across diversity and difference on the part of collective actors, and a "logic of aggregation," which involves the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces. I argue that, whereas the use of listservs and websites in the movements for global justice during the late 1990s and 2000s helped to generate and diffuse distributed networking logics, in the #Occupymovements social media have contributed to powerful logics of aggregation, which have continued to exist alongside rather than entirely displacing logics of networking (Juris, 2012: 260).

Juris defines cultural logics as frameworks through which people make sense of the world and of the interactions among them, based on common assumptions about each other's behaviour and motivations. Understanding the use of digital technologies through the concept of cultural logic means that the use of such technologies is shaped, and in turn retroactively shapes, by the meanings collectively attributed to such practice and by representations on the way these instruments are to be used. At the same time, the admission that the rise of social networks *per sè* produce a modification of cultural logics means that also the way specific digital instruments work – that is, their sociocultural affordances – tends to constrain the logics of their usage.

The cultural logic of networking entailed four main characteristics: 1) the development of horizontal ties among diverse and autonomous elements; 2) open circulation of information; 3) cooperation through decentralized coordination and direct democracy; 4) self-directed networking. The logic of aggregation is based on a different mechanism, which insists on social media as generators of viral information flows, able to quickly produce enormous aggregations of individuals in specific physical spaces, bypassing any form of coordination between existing organizations. If the logic of networking allowed groups to coordinate without necessarily using a top-down or federative mechanism, the logic of aggregation allows to do away with the organizations themselves. Social media allow individuals to pour into the squares as such, without pre-existing solidarity; this means that it is the struggle itself that creates a previously absent collective solidarity, and that the encampments in the squares assume a fundamental "anchoring" function (Gerbaudo, 2017), maintaining the cohesion of movements leading them to focus on a specific place. This is fundamental, since those are constantly running the risk of splitting into their fundamental units, that is atomized individuals.

GJM listservs brought together individuals committed to common goals and sharing some elements of a worldview, which turned them into a relatively coherent counterculture. Listservs led to the construction of discrete communities inasmuch as they allowed relatively complex communicative exchanges and selective coordination. On the contrary, the fact that the MS is organized using social networks, means that there is not, for example, a single mailing list for participants in the movement. Social networks are particularly effective in microbroadcasting, allowing information to spread cheaply and quickly from important activists through ego-centred networks. Also, the combination of social networks and smartphones allows individuals to continuously post and receive updates, which in turn gives a sensation of connectedness and compresence that can by itself led to powerful feelings of solidarity among strangers. While in Web 2.0 interaction is greatly enhanced, not every actor has the same power. Those holding the passwords of influential accounts are clearly central in the fluxes of information and communications. As a consequence, the use of social networking technologies as tools for the coordination of protests tends to generate crowds of individuals (Juris, 2012; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013) rather than networks of organizations. This has two consequences on the demographics of the protests, which in turn are at the root of the majoritarian nature of these protests – that is the most striking difference with the GJM. The use of social medias leads to mobilization patterns that: a) make use of websites that are accessed by millions of peoples rather than only activists and b) leverage people’s everyday connections. This means that, on the one hand, these protests are composed much more of common people than activists – as was the case, on the contrary, for the GJM –, while on the other very different demographical strata are reached, leading to a mobilization that extends outside the reflexive middle classes. All these developments have also an impact on the demands and moods of participants: while participant in the GJM were more idealistic, the MS tends to be far more “bread and butter” (Draege et al., 2016; Zamponi & Bosi, 2015).

The logic of aggregation has two powerful advantages over the logic of networking. Firstly, it makes it possible to aggregate atomized individuals, which is crucial at a time when confidence in mainstream political organisations is at historical lows and there are mounting anti-political and anti-party sentiments. This feature also allows movements to scale very quickly, skipping the stage of organizational development. At the same time, however, their organizational inconsistency has the effect of making these protest events particularly evanescent. It becomes difficult, for example, once an encampment has been eliminated by the police, to reorganize the

protest. Social media allow to evoke the brute force of numbers, hurling a mass against a certain target; but they do not allow for particularly refined strategic planning and coordination. Thus the movements born in this way tend to disperse quickly and struggle to recover, since they do not possess abeyance structures (Taylor, 1989). At the same time, however, the experience of the camps can contributes to the construction of new forms of solidarity, both as organizational networks and in terms of a common feelings and interpretations of politics. This, while failing to guarantee the MS a sufficient resilience, helps to create a fertile ground for the future regrouping of activists and instances raised by the movement, as it happened in an extremely exemplary way in the rise of the civic campaigns and the birth of Podemos in Spain and with the development of Black Lives Matter and the Bernie Sanders campaign in 2016.

Also Gerbaudo (2012) tries to build on the concept of logic of networking, proposing that the MS substitutes it with a "logic of centring", that is the consequence of the fact that social medias function as the "choreographers" of the protests; so, the concept of choreography serves Gerbaudo to show how social media, in their role of pointing to focal points for protests, break down the distinction between cyberspace and "real" life, allowing participants to experience moments of intense aggregation and marked emotional involvement even in the absence of pre-existing solidarities. Secondly, it is evident that in Gerbaudo's discourse the theme of power implicitly emerges: if one speaks of choreography it is evident that there is one or more choreographers. As seen above, the logic of social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, while providing high levels of interactivity, is particularly suitable for microbrodcasting. Which means that the work of producing choreography is not something in which every online actor has the same weight, but on the contrary a small set of users and pages take on a prominent role. If, on the one hand, the protests in the squares take on an extremely democratic and horizontal form, because of the lack of pre-existing organizations capable of hegemonizing the protest, the same cannot be said for what happens on social media, where the power to produce choreography is shared between a few extremely popular accounts. The conception of power implicated by this phenomena therefore changes, as well as the nature of the conflicts between the actors that aim to exert an influence over the protests: conflicts over the control and the access to key accounts are far from rare, as well as dynamics of competition between several aspiring choreographers.

It is possible to conclude with a reflection that gives the sense of epochal change marked by the discourses and practices developed by the MS. The reader will certainly remember Melucci's discourse on postmodern society as a society without a centre, where state power becomes too ramified to be captured through revolution and social conflict shifts from political and redistributive issues to the cultural sphere and the defence/affirmation of difference and specific identities. Well, it seems plausible to affirm that with the MS' radical reconfiguration of the collective imaginary – the return to the civic-republican tradition – and of practices of protest, the centre that disappeared with the end of modernity returns to be thinkable. This has deep consequences, since any politics of political parties is based on the idea of the capture of the sovereign power of the state. It appears then that, paradoxically, the radical disintermediation of the MS gives a second life to hegemonic politics and a new chance for the politics of representation, for which the politics of demands is a necessary – but not sufficient – prerequisite.

2.2 A second chance for materialism?

2.2.1 Generation Left (behind)

According to the data from the OWS website (Occupy Wall Street, 2011) the best predictors of participation in protests are race (81% of protesters are white), age (65% under 35), high level of education (65% has a college degree) and middle-low earning (72% earns less than 50,000 dollars per year). Gerbaudo (2017), while focusing on the ability of the 2011 movements to gain consensus and attract participation from extremely diverse social groups, underlines the strongly generational character of the protests. He identifies, among the protesters from the Middle East to North America, three idealtypes of participants: those coming from "the lost generation", "the squeezed middle" and "the new poor".

The "lost generation" is a term used to indicate millennials, a generation hit hard by the economic crisis. This is the most educated, skilled and libertarian generation in history, but for the first time in a century it has to come to terms with the fact that its life chances are dimmer than those of its parents. The "squeezed middle" is used to describe middle-aged or older people from the middle class who are in hardships and are suffering a process of "proletarianisation" and precarisation, due to the Great Recession and the cuts in social spending that ensued. This group also includes small entrepreneurs and shopkeepers who are falling into disgrace. Finally,

the "new poor" are the people who lost everything because of the crisis, including the long-term unemployed and the homeless alongside the so-called working poors – these sections are proportionately more significant in developing countries. According to Gerbaudo, while the MS involved all these different segments, it is possible to affirm that the lost generation constituted the hegemonic force. The same demographic pattern can be found analysing support for the political projects that have been inspired by the legacy and demands of the movements of 2011. Comparing Bernie Sanders' voters with Hillary Clinton's in the 2016 primary, it clearly emerges that the generational factor is extremely significant: if, on the one hand, 72% of voters between 17 and 29 years has chosen Sanders, 70% of the over-65s chose Clinton; in the same way, Sanders has counted on the vote of self-defined independents – the reader will remember that the MS strongly attracted people without political experience and strong party affiliation (Fertik, 2016). Sanders also triumphed among the middle classes, being defeated instead among the poor – in this counts a lot the black vote, that is strongly tied to the democratic establishment and, above all, Obama's political legacy – and among the wealthy. According to Fertik, these voting patterns mark a profound political change:

> Sanders' ability to unite the young and political independents around a robust, emphatically left-wing program is the most significant feature of his candidacy. Neither group is an immediately obvious constituency for such a program. […]
> Traditionally, the collegebound have been the upwardly mobile in American society. For decades, they were the obvious base for the Clintonite Third Way. Winning large numbers of them over to an insurgent, class-based politics is potentially a profound development, not least because in addition to being the most left-wing generation in the post-war era, the millennials are also the largest birth cohort in American history (Fertik, 2016: 45).

More than this, according to pollsters, half of the Democratic Millennials and 31% of all the American Millennials appear to have been persuaded by Sanders, to the point of defining themselves as "socialist" (Milburn, 2019). The same patterns can be found in the European continent, where the political projects heirs of the MS and the anti-austerity protests – in particular Syriza, Podemos and Corbyn's Labour – show very high levels of support among the very young (Milburn, 2019). Particularly marked is the case of Corbyn's Labour, which between 18-24 years olds has a 54-point advantage over the Conservatives, going down by 35 points among the over 65.

Again Gerbaudo, in his work on digital parties (2019) underlines how movement parties and digital parties that picked up the heritage of the protests of 2011 – I will return on those in the

next chapter – lean on support from “connected outsiders” [8], that are those Millennials caught in a condition of dissonance between their cultural skills – they are highly educated, have high levels of internet access and political and individual skills – and their increasingly frail economic condition and perception of exclusion from the political process.

From these data it would seem possible to derive a line of continuity, which sees in generation Y – Millennials – and in the jump from the MS to electoral politics the cornerstones of the political legacy of the 2011 protests. Keir Milburn’s text *Generation Left* (2019) is dedicated to the analysis of this connection. The author begins from the interpretation of the Great Recession of 2008 through the Mannheimian concept of “event” (Mannheim, 1928), understood as an happening that has the potential to disrupt the dominant narratives that a society tells of itself, modifying the parameters through which people evaluate events and situations. Since young people are more able than old ones to adjust their cognitive frames as a consequence of new events, the former will be most affected by the phenomenon of cognitive reorientation that necessarily follows the event that puts into crisis the previously hegemonic conception. An event gives life to a shared generational location, that is, the fact that an entire generation has to think through such an event; which, of course, is not a guarantee that some interpretation of the event imposes itself as hegemonic and, as a result, a new "political generation" capable of leaving its mark on society emerges. In other words, events produce a potential, the raw material for the creation of a coherent political generation.

However, while the occurrence of an event is not sufficient to ensure the emergence of a new political generation, the nature of the event itself is not neutral with respect to the type of political generation that might emerge. According to Milburn (2019), political generations may – depending on the event from which they originate and the type of political elaboration that takes place after that event – overlap with conservative, liberal or socialist movements. For example, the rise of neoliberal globalization and its apogee in the phase between the 80s and the 90s gave rise to a political generation that held progressive values but was deeply convinced that society had moved irretrievably to the right on economic issues. This fact explains at the same time the emergence of the Third Way and the antagonistic phenomena of which the GJM is the most emblematic case: both phenomena are in fact consequence of the dichotomy typical of that period, that is, the choice between taking power by moving to the right or moving into

[8] He uses also the term “networked youth” (Gerbaudo, 2012).

minoritarian antagonism. The Great Recession disrupts this picture, showing on the one hand, through the squares of 2011, that the project of reclaiming the state as a tool for social protection can be the base for a wide mobilization.

From the point of view of the type of event that the Great Recession has been, there is a fairly significant problem for Milburn's theoretical scheme. According to the author, in fact, the "passive" events – those events that are "suffered" by human beings without them being able to play an active role and result in a contraction in the standards of life and social power for some social categories – naturally lend themselves to a regressive solution. According to Milburn conservative generations stem from the perception of having lost power following a traumatic event and the consequent vengeful desire to regain it. On the contrary, for a progressive generation to emerge it is necessary that the event lends itself to an active interpretation, in the sense of opening up to new and creative solutions in which the actors involved can have a primary role. For example, this is the interpretation that Milburn gives of the movements of the 60s-70s, where the alliance between the excluded from the postwar settlement – gays, women and minorities –, students and workers has been based on the conviction that the material security provided by Keynesianism was a guaranteed fact, and that it would have been possible to aim higher towards a more inclusive, participatory and rich new society. It is not by chance, therefore, that that alliance has broken down at the very moment when a part of the movement, that is, the working class component, began to fear that a revolutionary resolution might call into question the foundations of that taken for granted well-being (Inglehart, 1977).

But what event was the Great Recession? First of all, it is an event that destroys the credibility of the neoliberal compromise. Such a compromise was based on an exchange between wages and downward social protections for a reduction in the cost of goods due to the globalization of markets and easy credit access for large sections of the population. The new generations, first of all, make their debut on the scene during a phase of the neoliberal conjuncture in which social protections are gradually decreasing and certainly inferior to those enjoyed by the previous generation, which supposedly managed to accept the neoliberal pact taking for granted at least some of the protections it enjoyed as a legacy of the post-war settlement; as of 2008, these trends were only getting worse, splitting the labour market between a more stable and protected older people and a mass of young people who struggled to obtain stable and well-paid contracts. In addition, austerity – a consequence of both the contraction of public budgets due to the

recession and the cost of rescuing the banking system – gives a fatal blow to social protections in many countries. Milburn shows how in the UK, for example, wealth has fallen of 10 percent among 16-34, while all the increase of 2.7 trillion in aggregate wealth went to over-45, with two-thirds of it filling the pockets of over-65. At the same time, property – of real estate, businesses and assets of any kind – remains firmly in the hands of older generations, and the lack of decrease in prices has conjured up the further expulsion of young people from access to ownership of physical and financial assets. In fact, for many young people, age has become one of the key modalities through which class is experienced; in other words, age is how young people become aware of their class position and their reduced chances. But it is precisely because of the fact that class is articulated through age – continues Milburn – that it becomes difficult to think of an intergenerational solidarity between young and the adults and elderly that have been impoverished by the crisis. Meanwhile, even the "lost generation" is segmented by different class positions, which necessarily reduce its cohesion.

The collapse of the neoliberal pact, in addition to bringing with it a worsening in living conditions hitting particularly hard younger generations, has also a powerful effect on social representations. In fact, the Great Recession carries with it two pillars of neoliberal hegemony, that is the idea that adapting to market mechanisms would lead to a continuous improvement in living standards and the idea that investment in human capital – through training and work experience – is the key to success in the competition between individuals. Faced with the decline in the returns of education, the work on the self becomes a form of self-management of unemployment and nothing more. At the same time, the older population, which accesses ownership through the mechanism of indebtment (Streeck, 2014) continues to be fundamentally aligned with financial capital and its stability, that is another pillar of the neoliberal pact; on the contrary, young people are so impoverished that they often even struggle to access debt, not to mention property, and this makes them potentially "nihilistic" towards the shocks in asset values and in the level of interest rates.

The fundamental problem with Milburn's analysis is that, after accurately describing the nature of the Great Recession event and foreshadowing its possible regressive outcomes, he does not explain why it should or might have led to a progressive generation. Rather, he limits himself to describing the Generation Left's political style: first showing the connections between the 2011 protests and subsequent anti-austerity electoral projects, and then returning to the origin,

the M S. The fundamental characteristic of this political generation is not, according to Milburn, the libertarian and consensualist anarchism of the squares. It was certainly possible to think that this was the distinctive feature of the generation, as Graeber does, at the time of the occupations of the squares; but as the anti-austerity electoral wave lead the way, it becomes obvious as those squares, far from being the full manifestation of a new political style, have been formative moments where that movement has first come together from an atomized crowd and began to recognize itself and its demands. The distinctive feature of the new generation, according to Milburn, is in fact the attempt to bring the repertoires of action and demands typical of libertarian movements and of the squares within institutional politics, pursuing a dual strategy of conquering the institutions and reforming them from a movementist, participatory, communitarian and libertarian perspective. The continuum established between movement and party, between square and institutions, clearly shows how, far from rejecting the issue of conflictual action within the lifeworld raised by the NSMs, the Left Generation tries to put that perspective at the heart of institutions. Emblematic of this is the conclusive passage of Milburn's essay, where he states that the new politics of Generation Left should not only reform the institutions or alleviate the effects of the crisis, but provide a model for a new society based on participatory socialism and new communitarian institutions, giving an alternative safety-net to individuals that use private property and debt as a means of achieving material security. The idea is to reform the lifeworld, starting from the movementized party, in order to break the alignment between individuals and financial capital and to counterpose a new participatory social model to the atomization engendered by neoliberal capitalism.

So Milburn stops at the description of the Generation Left's reaction to the Great Recession, without clearly explaining to what extent the event in question may have paved the way for this kind of generational politics. On the contrary, he seems to suggest that the type of event could have facilitated a regressive turn. Three hypotheses can be developed to fill the gap left by the author. The first hypothesis is related to the characteristics of Millennials. As mentioned above, Milburn states that the prerequisite for the emergence of a Generation Left is that the central generational event opens up to new possibilities and opportunities, rather than leading those affected to fall from a position of privilege or well-being. Well, is it not true that postmaterialists possess intellectual skills that make them more inclined, compared to previous generations, to think in terms of possibilities, projects and voluntary constructions? If the consequences of an event do not depend only on the characteristics of the event itself, but on the combination of its

characteristics and how these are reinterpreted by social actors, it is clear that a greater ability on the part of the subjects to think creatively and in terms of possibilities can change the effects of the event. Moreover, in a way, it is the very nature of such an event that leads to the necessity for a reconstruction of common sense from scratch, to the extent that some of the key tenets of neoliberal hegemony are fatally disrupted. And it is also true that – precisely because of the nature of the ideas that are brought down by the crisis and the problems posed by it – it is quite clear that more market and less social protection is not a feasible option to escape the dire social consequences of the crisis. Finally, the high level of libertarianism achieved in the post-materialist transition provides an effective check against the emergence of conservative tendencies, at least among young people.

Stepping back from Milburn's analysis, it is possible to try to reread the relationship between generation and support for the 2011 protests and anti-austerity parties through Melucci's interpretations of the theories binding together expectations and mobilization (1989, 1996), with particular reference to expectations related to the intellectual skills possessed and position – unfavorable – in political and economic hierarchies. Gerbaudo's concept of "connected outsiders", as well as Milburn's discourse on the decreasing returns of education and work on the self, seem to point in this direction. Not dissimilarly, Graeber (2011a) reports that among OWS protester it was quite recurrent to find young people saying they thought they had been "playing by the rules" of American society convinced to obtain in return a dignified life, and then felt deluded after being hit very hard by the recession.

Melucci identifies four variants of the expectations-mobilization theory. The first variant is the expectation-reward model (Geschwender, 1968; Davies, 1969; Gurr, 1970; Oberschall, 1973; Klandermans, 1984, 1989a), which posits that the discrepancy between "anticipated gratifications" and the actual result of an action leads to the activation of collective mobilization. The model is normally applied to analyses of the relationship between macroeconomic conjunctures and protest cycles, therefore it is possible a) that a phase of growth triggers unrealistic expectations and b) that a phase of contractions leads to a shock in the expectations previously formulated. The second variant is relative deprivation, according to which collective action is triggered by the comparison between one's own condition and that of a reference group, in respect to which one feels disadvantaged. The third model is downward mobility, which combines relative deprivation and socio-economic decline. Finally, the status

inconsistency model postulates that mobilizations are generated by a mismatch in some element of a group's status not matching expectations.

According to Melucci, the problem with these theories lies in the assumption that a gap between expectations and rewards generates frustration, and that by itself frustration is capable of leading to mobilization. In fact, in the face of a status frustration there are several possible reactions, of which aggression is only one among many – the others being restructuring of the ends, different forms of exit from the public arena and taking refuge in pseudo-political sects (Melucci, 1996: 71-72). For the aggressive response to take place, there need to be three preconditions. The first condition is the temporal continuity of the actor, which allows to compare between two different conditions using the same yardstick, assessing whether the expectation formed in time T has been realized or not in time T+n. The second condition is that the criticism is constructed in such a way as not to be directed towards a mythological adversary or one that is external to the actor's social world; it is therefore necessary to be able to identify a recognizable and tangible adversary. Finally, the actor must feel to be entitled to the possession of the social object of which he is deprived; without this sense of entitlement, the very idea of frustration loses its meaning. There is therefore a paradox: if for Melucci entitlement is a precondition to collective action, for Milburn it is again entitlement that configures the possibility of a regressive outcome of the mobilization.

Melucci's analysis can be summarized in a single formula: frustration turns into aggression through collective identity. This is extremely evident in the first and third point: to be able to perceive frustration the subjects must think of themselves as part of a group, and for a sufficient period of time. Moreover, to consider themselves as entitled to a certain social object, subjects must have a theory about their identity. In order to lead to a mobilization, moreover, this identity must be collectively felt; in other words, aggrieved individuals must believe that their frustration is shared by others, with whom it is possible to associate. Of course, collective identities can develop in different ways; formative experiences, the sharing of certain social environments, media discourses and images and political conjunctures are certainly fundamental. As for the Generation Left, it is extremely clear that the protests of 2011 are a fundamental step for the construction of a collective identity. First of all, as we have seen, the squares have been important for those who have joined, performing a function that is both therapeutic and consciousness-raising (Gerbaudo, 2017; Milburn, 2019), insofar as the protests

allowed the subjects to understand that they were not isolated in their grievances, which had rather systemic causes. In the same way, the squares of 2011 were also decisive for those who did not take part in the mobilization. On the one hand, protesters have developed a repertoire of discourses and practices that have been taken up by the movements of the following years. In addition, the protests played a "signalling" function (Kriesi, 2014; Kriesi et al., 2018; McAdam & Tarrow, 2010, 2013; Vliegenthart et al., 2016; Walgrave & Wvliegenthart, 2013), that is they allowed to

> (a) […] draw attention to the public's grievances and may unleash a controversy (attention function); (b) […] attribute political responsibility for (economic) disparities (attribution function) […] (Kriesi, 2014: 304).

The protests therefore played a role in politicising the destructive effects of the recession, making them a central element of the political landscape and forcing citizens to collectively deal with them. Secondly, the process of attribution of blame fulfils the second condition raised by Melucci, namely the fact that the movement establishes a tangible and recognizable opponent – in this case, bankers and politicians.

Therefore, the conditions for the development of a collective identity, or at least of a collective framing of the actors and problems at stake are met. But is this enough to allow us to define the framing developed by Generation Left to become truly hegemonic among the younger cohorts? Milburn's interpretation of the Great Recession as an event and of the Generation Left as a generational unit that has been able to hegemonize a whole political generation, rests on the assumption that young people, in addition to being more affected by the crisis than the elderly, are able to rework their interpretative frames in the light of new events. But is it really true? Inglehart argues, as already seen, that the individual's set of values is influenced by the experiences in the formative phase of life, and that once that phase comes to an end individuals stiffen their mental schema, so that conjunctural economic fluctuations do not every time twist the balance between the numbers of materialists and post-materialists. The issue here is that most of the young people of 2011 lived their formative experiences in a context of economic affluence and substantial support for the ideological cornerstones of neoliberal market economy; if it was not the case, there could not be the case for talking about frustration of expectations. But if the cognitive frameworks built up in the formative ages are rigid, then it is plausible that an important portion of young people suffering from the effects of the Great Recession would not be able to reorient their point of view in the light of the new event. That

is exactly what Lewis Goodall (2018) affirms, showing that, despite the economic upheavals of recent years, young people in the late 10s are not too different in terms of economic ethics from their parents, to the extent that they continue to strongly believe in the values of meritocracy and value the "self-made man". According to Goodall, in fact, the Great Recession might have generated in many young people a reaction that is the opposite to that foreshadowed by Milburn, that is an exasperated focus on resilience and the ability to survive without support of any kind, as a response to the experience of having to grow up in a context of reduced social protections. Such an attitude, which is precisely identical to the conservative reaction feared by Milburm, is strongly in contradiction with the idea of collective solidarity and reclaiming of the state for social protection purposes that presides over the formation of the Generation Left.

If Goodall's reasoning holds up, the possibility of defining the Generation Left as hegemonic among the Millennials is lost. Rather, it makes sense to look to Generation Left as a specific generational unit, which did not have the ability to hegemonize a whole political generation, but which no less found a sufficient number of adherents and supporters to allow for the creation of new practices and political projects inspired by the values and imagination of the MS.

2.2.2 Materialist backlash

Post-materialist, self-expressive values emerge, according to Inglehart, only in post-scarcity societies where most individuals do not perceive a direct threat to their own survival. In advanced societies, this state is a consequence of economic growth spreading among large sections of the population. But is it possible that the opposite happens? Is it possible that a phase of economic contraction, which undermines material security or the perception of it for many people, could reverse the trend?

Inglehart's answer is, basically, yes. The following graph can help clarify the issue:

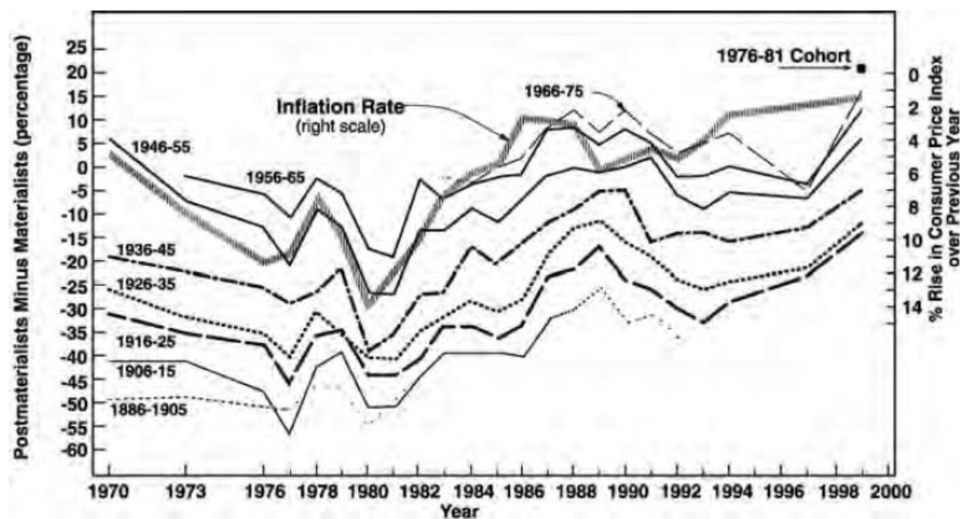

Figure 4: Cohort analysis with inflation rate superimposed (using inverted scale on right): percent postmaterialists minus percent materialists in six West European societies, 1970–99. Source: Based on combined weighted sample of Eurobarometer surveys carried out in West Germany, France, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium, in given years, using the four-item materialist/postmaterialist values index. (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005: 101)

The picture shows that an increase in the inflation rate – which endangers the economic prosperity of large sections of the population – corresponds to a decrease in the proportion of post-materialists compared to materialists. The point is that so far these purely cyclical dynamics have not succeeded in reversing the trend towards the seemingly inexorable increase in the number of postmaterialist individuals. This is for two reasons. The first is connected with Inglehart's theory, which places as a residual case – and critically does not theorize it – the change in preferences during adulthood: values and expectations are formed during formative age, therefore a change of economic conditions in adulthood can only have a secondary impact, unable to counterbalance this sort of individual path dependency. The second reason concerns the very definition of the problem: although the equalizing trend of the post-war period has eroded long ago (Goesling, 2001), the phases of overt decline have been so far recurrent but part of cycles of growth and contraction. There has not yet been the case of generations born and raised entirely in a phase of economic contraction after WWII; even Millennials and a most part of generation Z have lived, at least in the early stages of childhood, in an context marked by economic expansion.

The authors who theorize the connection between economic conjuncture and set of values (Flanagan & Lee, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Inglehart & Norris, 2019) are not so much worried by a possible return of struggles for material emancipation, but rather by the possible spread of authoritarian positions. The basic theoretical assumption here is one derived from

Maslow (1954): the more individuals perceive a threat to their material well-being and therefore to their survival, the more they will tend to tighten in-group solidarity, encouraging conformist behaviour, authoritarianism and refusal of diversity. The question then is: does the Great Recession have the effect of producing a large-scale return to authoritarian values? Events such as Brexit, the national-populist metamorphosis of the British Conservatives, the rise of Le Pen, Salvini, AfD and Trump, as well as the dominance of conservative populists in many countries of Eastern Europe, would seem to confirm this hypothesis. Yet, as stated in the previous section, it cannot be denied that the Great Recession also sparked the rise of movements and parties which, though less electorally successful than conservative populism, have been able to hold together the long wave of the Silent Revolution with a renewed attention to social protections – a purely materialistic theme. How to solve the puzzle?

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart try, with their opera *Cultural Backlash* (2019) to give an articulated and flexible answer to this question. The fundamental hypothesis is that, although the Recession may have altered the balance between conservatives and libertarians, its main effect is to influence conservatives and libertarians in a differentiated manner. If, on the one hand, the bearers of conservative values show a tendency to slide towards openly authoritarian and populist positions because of the economic crisis, libertarians are hardly questioning their own set of values; more usually, they articulate postmaterialist values within a populist discourse on economy, politics and society. At the same time, it is important to recognise that the economic crisis is not the only factor at stake. Beyond and above specific short-term conjunctures, the Silent Revolution seems to advance almost undisputed, leading to a profound transformation of society and its institutions. This fact, according to Inglehart and Norris, produces anger and resentment and activates an antagonistic reaction in conservative individuals who see the gradual decline in prestige of their worldview and perceive of themselves as increasingly besieged and marginalized in a growingly liberal society. This situation activates the typical conservative reflex, already emphasized by Milburn, namely the vengeful desire of a previously dominant group to get back the power and prestige lost after a seismic change. At the basis of the triumph of right-wing populism, therefore, there isn't so much an increase in the number of conservatives and authoritarians as a hardening of the conservatives' positions. But how is it possible that this resentment leads to an electoral triumph of a vision of society that is in grave decline? According to Inglehart and Norri the answer lies in the different propensity to vote showed by older and younger cohorts. As already discussed

by Dalton (2008a, 2008b) electoral participation is part of a "duty-based" conception of citizenship, particularly common among the materialists, the poorly educated and authoritarians; on the contrary, the "engaged" conception of citizenship that is particularly popular among educated and libertarian young people, focuses much more on direct participation in protest movements, rather than voting. According to this interpretation, therefore, there is a distortion of social preferences due to different turnout rates. Thus, the term "backlash" is used by the authors not to point to a suppose inversion of the Silent Revolution, but rather as a reference to a strictly electoral phenomenon, that is the rise for support for some parties or electoral options. Clearly, the rise of these political options has in turn its own effects, which consist in the spread of opposition and protest among libertarians. In summary, therefore, what happens after the Great Recession is the exacerbation of conflict on the cultural axis.

Alongside with the rising tide of cultural confrontation, it is possible to observe a development that hits both conservatives and libertarians, and that is a direct consequence of the breakdown of neoliberal order: the riese of populism. Populism defined by the authors as a discursive style,

> about the first-order principles of governance, delegitimizing established power structures and the role of elected representatives in liberal democracy while claiming that the people should rule. The antithesis is pluralism, where legitimate authority is understood to rest with elected representatives and liberal democratic institutions providing checks and balances on executive power. Populism reflects a powerful appeal in an era of cynicism but it is silent about second-order ideological values about what governments should do. The discourse is therefore chameleonic in adapting to many colorings. What matters for public policy is the rock not the lizard (Inglehart & Norris, 2019: 65).

In this sense, populism is the antithesis of pluralism, understood as support for the division of powers and for political and social institutions. If populism, as a discursive style focused on distrust of elites and institutions is a "chameleon", it is the set of values that appears to be "rock". In other words, the populist twist, a consequence of the Great Recession – but also of the Silent Revolution, as shown by the fact that libertarians are more critical of institutions than conservatives – is expressed through the pre-existing set of values. Therefore conservatives will shift towards highly conservative, xenophobic options, that not infrequently are extremely pro-market and adverse to the expansion of the welfare state, seen as misused by minorities and various scoundrels (Hochschild, 2016). Conversely, postmaterialists tend to shift to a form of libertarian populism direct heir of the elite-challenging tradition:

> [A] populist discourse railing against corruption, mainstream parties, and multinational corporations but this is blended with the endorsement of socially liberal attitudes, progressive social policies, and participatory styles of political engagement. (Inglehart & Norris, 2019: 12).

Thus, the outcomes of the Great Recession, combined with the authoritarian backlash, are extremely ambiguous if one wants to read them through the lens of the return of materialistic

issues in the political agenda. This is because it is as if materialistic values tend to split in two, along the fractures opened by the Silent Revolution. On the one hand, cohort and level of education remain strong predictors of authoritarian values, as well as of a regressive if not xenophobic interpretation of the demands for protection emerged after the crash. On the other hand, it is relatively young and educated people who give life to libertarian populism and to those movements and parties that reintegrate into the public debate the issue of social protections and welfare. This state of affairs makes it extremely difficult to trace directly to economic grievances phenomena such as the election of Trump or Brexit. Despite the progressive theorizations on left populism and the ability of neo-socialism to break down the progressivism/conservatism categories in favor of the high/low dichotomy (Errejon & Mouffe, 2016; Mouffe, 2018; Day, 2019), the truth is that economic grievances and the protest against elites appear in the political agenda as filtered through the culturalist lenses introduced by the Silent Revolution. This makes particularly complicated the prospect of the welfarist instances introduced by the Squares of 2011: despite the initial ability to attract wide participation in protest movements, the electoral turn has showed that there are only two ways to affirm that agenda through the ballot box. The first way is to convince all libertarians to become supporters of increased social protections; this is complicated to the extent that, in principle, libertarianism is neutral to the issue of state intervention in economics and welfare – despite Dalton (2009) shows how an engaged conception of citizenship is associated, at least in the US, to greater propensity to support increases in public spending. The second option is that of a hybrid alliance between libertarian populists and disadvantaged conservatives; but the possibility of implementing such a project rests on the ability to discount the culturalist lenses created by the Silent Revolution, which so far has not seemed plausible. What is doubtless getting out of hand is the typical 90s and 2000s interpretation of right-wing populism as the ideology of the losers of globalization and postmaterialist libertarianism as the value set of the "winners" (Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008, 2012; Kriesi, 2015).

But we should be careful not to fall into some sort of cultural determinism. The very concept of backlash, aiming to emphasize the discrepancy between the diffusion of values and political offer, allows us to think in dynamic terms about the effects of value change. In this sense it is clear that the impact of values on political choices is mediated by institutional factors and voter behaviour. Furthermore, moving from the analysis of the backlash dynamics that occurred in the past, it is possible to say that alliances, albeit fragile and localized, between materialists and

postmaterialists may take place. An example among many is that, already mentioned, of the French elections of 1968, where a part of the workers' vote moves on conservative options in an anti-revolutionary and anti-students function; but the workers themselves had, until short before, strongly supported the protests of students and minorities, identifying that social alliance as an innovative and powerful tool of emancipation. The point, yesterday as today, is the ability to propose ambitious and innovative social alliances.

2.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, the time has come to ask what remains, after the Great Recession, of the trends described in the previous chapter. As was anticipated at the beginning of this chapter, in fact much remains: although many phenomena described here run clearly in the opposite direction, these do not seem to have the strength to completely reverse the previously active trends. Rather, the trajectory of value, cultural change and political participation is made more complex: alongside major trends, that are assuming a secular character, begin to flow parallel and opposite trends. This aspect is extremely clear from what has been said about Generation Left: with the Great Recession a new generational unit emerges, one that is capable to put parties, elections and the welfare state at the centre of political discourse. Anyway, this generational unit does not seem to have the strength to hegemonize an entire political generation. A fact that probably explains the success of the authoritarian backlash: while post-materialist generations are now more divided than ever in their interpretation of the aftermath of 2008, the same cannot be said of the more conservative generations.

In short, two fundamental aspects remain unchanged after the Great Recession. First of all, the processes of subjectivation remain identical to those analyzed by Melucci; the post-crash phase in no way reduces the identity deficits typical of post-modernity and, on the contrary, perhaps exacerbates it because of an increased social fragmentation. So we will continue to observe collective participation to be undertaken with the aim of actively producing identities and cultural codes, with the consequent spread of radical democratic prefiguration and culturalization of conflict. Secondly, albeit perhaps at a slower pace, the advance of libertarian and post-materialist values continues, only apparently arrested by an authoritarian backlash that at the moment appears to be “just” an electoral phenomenon.

What changes, at least in part, is the representation of the apparatuses against which the NSMs have fought for long time. The state is rehabilitated: after being put under the crossfire of neoliberal hegemony, NSMs and transnational movements, the Great Recession brings many citizens to rediscover the need of the state as a protector of citizens from the accidents of life and as a regulator, even intrusive, of market flows. The market, on the other hand, comes out with its prestige severely diminished, as criticisms of capitalism and market economy go from being concerns of a politicized niche to becoming a mainstream political issue. Of course, the more these criticisms becomes mainstream, the more they lose their original radicality. It is not the case of a radical rejection of capitalism, as much as a critique of capitalism in its inability to realize its own promises of a meritocratic and equitable order to be realized through the market (Gerbaudo, 2017, 2019). This, continue the mainstream discourse, happens because of the oligarchic capture of the institutions and the market itself. Rather than a new system of beliefs, therefore, it would seem that we are witnessing a decline of neoliberal hegemony, without any other hegemony ready to take over. Finally, another emerging phenomenon, which summarizes what has been said so far, is the recently celebrated wedding between postmaterialism and some materialistic instances, as well as the fragmentation of the materialistic and protectionist demands between a sort of neo-Welfarism and a series of authoritarian and xenophobic impulses.

From what has been said so far, it is therefore possible to take for granted the emergence, in the phase following the Great Recession, of new political projects that

1) are marked by post-materialist – that is libertarian, prefigurative and elite-challenging – ethos and forms of organization and participation;

2) aim at the conquest of the sovereign power of the state through a strategy that holds together electoral competition and the active, bottom-up, mobilization of civil society and citizens;

3) desire to increase the social protections provided by the welfare state, generate a more participatory and democratic society and impose severe restraints to the market, ensuring better standards of living both in material and post-material terms.

3. After the Silent Revolution: experiments in party building

As mentioned in the first chapter, the reduction in participation in political parties can be analysed by observing both the decline in the demand for participation by the parties and lowered supply by citizens[9]. After a first brief overview of the reasons for the decline in the demand for participation – on which I will return Chapter 5 - the focus shifted to the factors that affect supply, with particular attention to cultural explanations – through Inglehart and Melucci theories on the Silent Revolution and the postmodern transition. The second chapter analyses the ambiguous impact of the Great Recession on the cultural factors underlying the reduction of participation in mainstream politics.

In this chapter the aim is to analyse the strategies adopted by political parties reacting to lowered propensity to participate in political parties. The first part will analyse what I define, building on Garland (2017), "passive" strategies of adaptation; that is strategies that do not intend to reverse the trend in lowered propensity to participate, but rather to allow parties to cope with a context in which affiliations are increasingly short term and flexible. The parties in question therefore do not introject the libertarian orientations of the Silent Revolution, but respond by loosening membership and reducing what they ask for to current and potential members. This is done by lowering the costs of participation for the individual or by allowing to personalize the experience of participation – with the development of what Scarrow defines as "multispeed membership" (2015). The habit of trying to influence the level of engagement through the manipulation of costs and incentives to participate opens to innovative forms of political engineering; some parties, and in particular the Labour Party under the "modernizers" of the 80s-90s, have exploited the new context of discredit of voluntary-bureaucratic organizations and intra-organizational mediation to deeply reshape their organizations, encouraging the influx of a new "massive but passive" membership (Les Gales & Faucher-King, 2010); the opening up of parties to new members uninterested in traditional forms of participation but united by support for the modernisation project and in the rejection of traditional activism and internal bureaucracies, is completed by the plebiscitary transformation of internal decision-making procedures, through the introduction of individual voting rights - following a trend already identified by Katz and Mair among cartel parties (1994).

[9] Here I follow Scarrow's (2015) partition. It is the opposite of usual accounts that frame demands as formulated by citizens and supply by parties.

In the second part of the chapter I will turn to strategies of active adaptation to the Silent Revolution, that is, all those cases in which parties have tried to restructure themselves in a radically participatory and democratic way responding to new libertarian demands and criticisms of political elites. In particular, I will turn to the two waves of European movement parties: the left-libertarian parties of the 70s-80s and the anti-austerity digital parties of the 2010s. These new parties have have tried to make the elite-challenging and non-conventional modes of action of the libertarian social movements of the 70s and 10s fit in formal politics. The elite-challenging nature of the new movement-parties is identified in three aspects: 1) the strong criticism towards political and bureaucratic elites; 2) extensive linkages – be they programmatic, organizational, symbolic - with social movements, the elite challenging actors *par excellence*; 3) the attempts of the participatory reform of parties. As will be seen later, the heritage of movement parties is extremely ambiguous: while, on the one hand, they are deeply innovative actors in that they allow the irruption of neglected social demands into institutional politics in a period marked by the growing separation between the party arena and society, on the other hand their ability to propose new forms of participatory democracy that are genuinely effective and inclusive is indeed very limited.

3.1. Reforming parties: multi-speed participation and political engineering

3.1.1. Multi-speed strategies

The first set of strategies points to the objective of stemming the haemorrhage of members occurred since the last decades of the twentieth century. Strategies among which figure prominently the transformation of traditional mass parties into what Susan Scarrow has called "multi-speed membership parties" (Scarrow, 2015; Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016; Garland, 2017, 2019). In a nutshell, this strategy is based on the effort by parties to tailor the experience of participation on the preferences of individuals, who are believed to be increasingly individualistic and to have specific preferences on the one hand, and to be increasingly less willing to pay high costs for party participation on the other. This state of things means that parties must seek strategies to ensure sufficient levels of participation in a more fluid and individualised environment, not being able to count on solid membership bases and lifelong commitment by many tens of thousands of activists (Garland, 2019). Three paths of action follow from these considerations. The first option is to multiply affiliation schemes, to adapt the experience of participation on the changing and specific needs of individuals; the

second option is instead based on the reduction of the costs of becoming a member; and finally, new members can be attracted by enhancing the provision of certain types of incentives.

The phenomenon must be seen in a dynamic perspective, according to the usual demand and supply model. From the point of view of demand, it has already been shown in the first chapter that the request of traditional forms of participation by the parties is declining due to technological development and the professionalization of parties; this decreases the perceived return on investment in membership incentives, but it does not erase it: proof of this is the fact that there are still scholars that develop schemes of analysis on the benefits that membership provides to parties, as seen in the previous paragraph, among which stand out legitimation benefits - a wide and active party membership might make the party appear more "healthy" and its decisions more democratic and representative of a wide community -, factional benefits and the ability of members to act as repeaters of the party's message within their personal networks - performing a microtargeting function, free of charge -, and the function of warm bodies for public offices and more practical work related to electoral campaigning. On the other hand, as mentioned above, there are very important supply-side cultural factors that lead to the contraction of participation in parties. In particular, it is important to note that among cultural explanations recur: a) the presence of alternative forms of participation, considered more in line with the preferences of citizens - increasingly elite-challenging and engagement-oriented; b) the growing distrust towards institutionalized politics and state institutions; c) the change in lifestyles and the presence of more attractive forms of socialization and leisure; d) the complication of individual preferences, the reduced docility to authority and the reduced willingness to make long-term investments in mainstream organisations. Of course, the implications of demand and offer side factors are different: while the former point to an irreversible trend, as long as parties don't lose access to other resources, the latter points to the need to reform the experience of participation offered to citizens, in order to compete with more engaging free-time and associational options. Parties usually are not willing to intervene in factors affecting demand, insofar as these simply lead to a reduction in the benefits of investing in membership. Conversely, to the extent that an increase in membership is desired, parties may try to adapt to changes in supply.

The first strategy is, as already said, to try to model the experience of participation on individual needs. Increasingly, parties tend not to see a clear-cut distinction between members and non-

members, but to conceive a nebula of individuals moving between different levels of interest and activism. Scarrow identifies six ways of affiliation to contemporary parties:

1) Traditional individual membership: identical to the Duvergerian category of membership, it is the type of membership that offers the fullest range of rights possible, but also carries the highest obligations – i.e. dues payment and declarations of compliance with party principles, as well as prohibition to join other parties; often there are probative periods and expulsions are possible.

2) Light membership: a sort of second level membership, with fewer obligations but also fewer rights. Light members may not be accepted as possible candidates for elective offices, but sometimes they may vote in intra-party decisions. It can be constructed as a form of trial membership limited time.

3) Cyber-members: Party supporters registered through an online party portal. The category may include traditional members who join a cyber branch rather than a physical branch or light members. Cyber-membership can provide access to online materials to build websites or campaign for the party.

These first three categories can be seen as an update of traditional membership, being often exclusive and based on the payment of mandatory fees. The last three categories do not possess these characteristics, resembling more Duverger's category of sustainers:

4) Sustainers: supporters who make financial donations to parties, occasionally or repeatedly. In general these contributions, even if small, are important for the parties that through them gain access to the supporters' data and can insert them in party databases.

5) Social media followers and friends: these individuals do not pay fees, but voluntarily decide to expose themselves to party messages. This type of membership often involves actions of support that come at an extremely low cost, such as sharing a post or inviting other friends to events or to follow the party's page.

6) News audience: the lightest and most passive form of relationship, in which individuals are exposed to one-way information flows through the party's communication channels.

In general, active supporters might be interested in party news and, more or less occasionally, are willing to contribute actively - though the bulk of activity is still carried out by members; what they cannot do, however, is influencing party decisions (Fisher et al., 2014). An increase in the number of active supporters in relation to the number of members can have important impacts on how parties work. More specifically the more leaders can count on supporters that are stripped of rights of influence, the less they will be incentivized to accommodate to intraparty democracy. A large increase of supporters without influence rights leads, according to Fisher, to a reduction of the May's law of curvilinear disparity: if leaders rely on activists that have no voice and whose exit might not be directly perceived through a fall in membership figures, it becomes easier for them to address the electorate directly without the disturbance of having to deal with recalcitrant members holding decision making rights. At the same time, however, intraorganizational linkages and democratic accountability might be severely damaged, as well as traditional membership can be devalued. And of course, on the other hand, parties have to contend with the fact that supporters might be less tightly bound to the party than members are and that their contribution could be more volatile and subject to the enthusiasms of the moment. Another way to tailor the experience of participation on the preferences of individuals is to change how parties organize the free work of members and supporters (Lees-Marshment & Pettitt, 2014 Lees-Marshment and Quayle 2001, Granik 2005, 2009; Bannon 2005). More and more the focus is placed not so much on the attribution of standard roles to activists, but on the development of tasks and levels of activity that reflect the preferences and availability of individuals.

With regard to strategies aimed at combating the haemorrhage of members based on the reduction of costs for joining, it is possible to identify three possible areas of intervention for the parties. The first possibility is to reduce the financial costs of membership by reducing fees, making them voluntary or by developing temporary schemes, light membership schemes or targeting specific categories - such as young people or other categories that strategists want to attract. The second possibility is to reduce the procedural costs of joining; this necessarily involves the centralisation of recruitment procedures and the use of digital technologies. As regards the centralisation of procedures, from the 1960s on many large parties gradually began to supplant procedures of membership recruitment mediated by local apparatuses through the construction of centralized databases and the establishment of formalized procedures. As far as the use of digital technologies is concerned, the main innovation concerns the fact that these,

combined with the centralisation of procedures, allow prospective members to join easily without even having any contact with other members and through highly automated and immediate fee collection procedures. Other ways of reducing costs concern the elimination of probatory periods and the explicit and exclusive endorsement to the party ideology. Finally, the third type of costs that members may encounter in the accession process is reputational cost: the more parties become unpopular, the more likely it is that the individual may perceive peer pressure not to register; on this aspect, however, parties can do very little, if not attempting to completely transform their public image - as will be seen in the next paragraph.

The third macro-strategy to reduce the decline in membership by acting on costs and incentives is finally to raise certain incentives to participation. It is important to recognize how the ability to attract participation and enhance enrolment figures through the provision of certain incentives needs to be historicized. For example, the possibility of attracting individuals through social benefits is increasingly scarce; both because the local structures of the parties have become very weak and therefore are not able to develop a vibrant social life, but also because unlike in the mid-900s, the possibilities of recreation and socialization offered by the market are today very varied and far more competitive than those offered by parties. At the same time, incentives linked to identity are increasingly difficult to produce: the more parties converge in the struggle to contend for the median voter, the less the support for a specific project can have a collective meaning. Even though one of the main reasons cited for joining a party remains support for a certain worldview (Garland, 2017, 2019; Scarrow, 2015), the possibility that this kind of identity incentives can be really effective in relaunching participation requires very drastic choices for the parties, which can potentially also involve negative trade-offs at the electoral level.

So multi-speed parties have rarely attempted to relaunch membership through incentives related to socialization and collective identity. What they have most often done, however, is to broaden the possibilities of individual influence in the choices of the party. This is mainly done in two ways. The first mode is to enhance the chances for members to discuss party policies, through the creation of online and offline forums, disconnected from the local branches system; the lack of participation in these forms of debate suggests that they are not very appealing for newcomers and members alike (Gauja, 2014, 2015; Scarrow, 2015). The second option is the extension of individual voting rights (OMOV, One Man One Vote) on crucial decisions for

parties, namely internal referendums and leadership contests. Especially the direct election of leaders tends to attract broad participation, and is therefore rightly considered an important instrument by the parties to maintain an active relationship with members and sustainers (Kenig, 2009a; Leduc, 2001; Scarrow, 1999; Schumacher & Giger, 2017). The key issue here is to whom to distribute the invaluable good of influence on the decisions of the party: is it wiser to extend it as much as possible, establishing a more direct relationship with supporters and the electorate, reducing the barriers to participation in a fully multispeed perspective; or is it more useful to distribute rights of influence as a reward to members that accepted to pay higher costs involved in joining the party on an more permanent basis?

It is clear that the choice to extend the individual right to vote to non-members - typically required to pay a small fee, for example £3 for the Labour leadership elections in 2015/16 and 1 euro for the primaries of the Italian centre-left in 2012 - reduces the exclusive benefits that come with traditional membership schemes, discouraging it. Not only that: the growing tendency to assign individual voting rights, to members and not, has the effect of radically changing the internal processes and self-representations of the parties themselves (Garland, 2017, 2019). First, extending the right to vote to non-members can be problematic for parties based cleavage representation, since it opens to the influence of the generalist electorate, undermining the self-representation of parties as partisan representatives of a specific group (Mair, 2004). Secondly, individual vote by members and non-members allows to bypass other internal democracy procedures, which are generally based on representation and delegation - for example, any form of delegate democracy and party assemblies; the more individual votes are used at the national level, the more the internal representation system becomes weak and partially redundant - an extreme case of this trend, as will be seen in the next paragraph, is that of digital parties, where individual vote almost completely replaces the intermediate structures of the parties (Gerbaudo, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Mosca, 2020). If the increase in membership is achieved through this type of incentives, it is also likely that it will not be effective in increasing the level of participation in the forms of free work for the party (Garland, 2017; Seyd & Whiteley, 2002; Webb et al., 2017).

In the literature it is widely recognized, starting from Peter Mair (1994), that the extension of individual voting rights is at the basis of a paradox dubbed "democratisation as emasculation" (Dalton et al., 2000), often used by leaders in recent decades to counter the most dangerous side

effects of May's law of curvilinear disparity. Originally, the paradox was recognized as typical of cartel parties, which simultaneously show higher levels of democratization of individual voting rights – that extended to all members and often even to non-members - with increasing levels of domination by the leadership over internal decisions (Deseriis, 2020; Katz & Mair, 2009; Mair, 2004; Schumacher & Giger, 2017). The reason for this paradox is easily explained: the attribution of greater powers to common members and supporters has the effect of diluting the influence of the most seasoned activists, who are more expert in party machinations and know how to orient themselves between party procedures and bureaucracies but numerically cannot compete with the large mass of inactive members and supporters. The choice to opt for a form of democratization based on the individualization of rights of influence lays on the assumption that regular members and supporters tend to have less knowledge of the party and to be less radical and therefore more favorable to moderate leaderships compared to activists (Zielonka-Goei, 1992). The extension of voting rights might therefore signal a turn towards a form of plebiscitary democracy (Seyd & Whiteley, 2002), in which leaders in direct contact with members and the electorate bypass intermediate structures and intraparty participation patterns (Kitschelt, 1994; Kogan & Kogan, 1982). At the same time, the granting of new rights is counterbalanced by the persistence of some veto powers by the leaderships (Katz, 2001; Scarrow, 2002), for example through the complication of the procedures for prospective candidates to positions selected through OMOV.

3.1.2. The "modernisation" of the Labour Party. A paradigmatic case of participation engineering

To fully understand the implications of what has been said so far, it may be useful to use the analysis of a specific case of party transformation. The history of New Labour, in particular, lends itself extremely well to be observed through the categories introduced in this chapter, namely multi-speed participation, political engineering through incentives and the ambiguities of individualized democratization as a strategy to enhance membership. The analysis of this specific case also has the function of starting to locate the Labour Party, which will be the subject of the case study, within the phenomena discussed here.

The main strand of literature on the Labour Party discussing its recent history (Russel, 2005; Seyd e Whiteley, 2002; Les Gales e Faucher- King, 2010; Faucher-King, 2005, 2008; Mair 2000; Perryman et al., 2017) reads the political events taking place inside the party from 1983

to the end of the Brown government in 2010 as shaped by a project of modernization characterized by: 1) at the national political level, a move to the centerground of Labour's political agenda, 2) the increase in individual members 3) the dismantling of delegate-democracy procedures and the diminishing of the role of unions through the individualization of partisan relations (Faucher-King, 2008) and 4) the centralization of power in the hands of the leadership. The project aimed at the restructuring of the public image of the party, in order to increase its pull over a "moving right" (Hall, 1979) public opinion and at the marginalization of activists and unionists, identified as too radical or not docile enough towards the will of the leadership.

The age of modernization begins with the election of Neil Kinnock as leader, following the disastrous defeat of 1983, when the party risked being surpassed by the alliance between the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party - the enterprise failed by just two percentage points. The 1983 election is a central element in the discourses promoted by the two generations of party modernizers, as it has been presented as the signal of an excessive shift to the left, such as to make the party "unelectable". Indeed, the 1983 programme, under the leadership of Michael Foot and the growing pressure of Tony Benn's New Left, was a radical response to the rise of Tatcherism; the electoral manifesto, *The New Hope for Britain,* called for unilateral nuclear disarmament, higher personal taxation for the rich, withdrawal from the European Community, abolition of the House of Lords and the re-nationalisation of some recently privatised industries. Right after the defeat, the then MP Gerald Kaufam iconically dubbed the manifesto as "the longest suicide note in history".

In addition to contributing, according to the modernizers, to the defeat of the party in 1983, the left turn of the early '80s was the unequivocal cause of the Social Democratic Party splitting from Labour in 1981 and joining the Liberal Party in a dangerous coalition. Alongside electoral failure, however, the modernizers were looking with growing concern at a series of medium to long-term trends that appeared very worrying for Labour's electoral fortunes. First, the demographic and occupational composition of the United Kingdom was undergoing changes which were eroding the party's electoral base; among these, the decline of manufacturing industries and in the number of trade unionists and the growth of the middle classes with the displacement of populations from urban areas to suburbs (Crewe, 1987, 1991). In addition, the spread of a "culture of contentment" (Galbraith, 1992), meaning the spread of wealth and values

linked to the market and individualism, made the classic collective identities and left-wing policies of Labour less appealing. Finally, international factors such as the rise of globalization, the failure of the Mitterand experiment and his (in)famous U-turn reverting to a pro-market agend after facing opposition from capitalists and investors, as well as the end of the Cold War strengthened over time the modernizers' conviction of the need to overcome socialist programs and to move to the centre ground.

The central aspect concerning the focus of this chapter is that the modernizers felt that these policy changes were possible only through a deep internal transformation of the party. Their project rested on two cornerstones: 1) the relaxation of relations with trade unions, in favour of the individualization of party membership and 2) the marginalization of left-wing activists through the transformation of decision-making procedures and the influx of new, more moderate members. This dual strategy had symbolic and balance of power motivations. From a symbolic point of view, Kinnock and the other modernizers believed that the party could return to electability only if the leadership had been successful to provide it with a more modern image, reducing the link with trade unions and the role of leftist activists – who during the 1970s and early 1980s, had multiplied and become more troublesome and influential. From the standpoint of the balance of power, diminishing the influence of trade unions and of the most radical activists through the establishment of forms of democracy based on individual voting and the influx of new, more moderate members, giving intraparty democratization a plebiscitary spin (Kogan & Kogan, 2019). In this respect, it should be recalled that the nature of the Labour Party is extremely different from that of the other European socialdemocratic parties. Labour was born as a second-level party, that is an organization composed of workers' organizations, aiming to present itself as the parliamentary arm of the unions, which from the beginning appeared as the key power holders in the party; so much so that individual membership was envisaged only from 1918. The relationship between party and unions has always been close but ambivalent. On the one hand, the unions have long provided a stable source of funding for the party, mainly through the automatic registration of their membership in Labour and donations; on the other hand, this relationship has had as a counterpart the enormous influence of the unions on the party, which still in the 80s could express 90% of the votes in the annual congress and retained enormous influence over the election of leaders and in the choice of parliamentary candidates. This has meant that, for most of Labour’s history, all policy decisions and leaders have had to seek trade union support.

By the time Kinnock became leader, Labour's membership had already been declining for about thirty years (Garland, 2017), but the organizational and financial support of the trade unions had allowed the party not to worry about it. Enrolment figures began to attract the attention of the leadership only when the reduction of the influence of unions and activists of the left started to be seen as a necessary step to revive the image of Labour as a stable and modern party. Even though recruitment efforts undertaken during the Kinnock era actually went little further than the mere claim of the aim to bring membership to a million individual affiliates - starting from just over 250,000 members – the overall modernizing strategy started to take shape during those years. This strategy, namely the individualization of participation in the party and the progressive weakening of the forms of delegate democracy and the marginalization of unions, would be deepened during the second wave of modernization in the 90s. Paradoxically, this strategy has long been supported by the trade unions themselves, which tended to converge on the analysis of modernizers and sought access to government at any cost (Leys & Panitch, 2020).

Kinnock introduced two particularly significant changes to intraparty democracy. The first concerns the adoption of postal OMOV for the election of party leaders, the selection of candidates to the House of Commons, of members of the National Executive Committee and delegates to the National Conference – although a veto power in the hands of a local "electoral college" composed by trade unionist for the 40% was maintained. Previously, voting took place during party meetings, with the result that inactive members were under-represented while leftist activists, better integrated in local networks and more skilled in party manoeuvres ended up being over-represented. Kinnock's bet was that he believed that, on the one hand, giving more power to members would work as an incentive to enrolment and, on the other, that the more inactive members tend to be more moderate, deferent to the leadership and more representative of the electorate and therefore less prone to orient the party towards vote-losing policies. The second innovation introduced by Kinnock concerns the trade unions, namely the reduction of the weight of their block vote at the annual conference from 90 to 70%, with the promise to reduce it to 50% as soon as the party had reached 300,000 members.

Even though Kinnock's politics of modernization failed to attract a large number of new members, they nonetheless began to have a significant impact on intraparty participation and culture:

> But dropping the need for members to attend any meetings in order to vote on policies, combined with the leadership's espousal of policies beamed at 'middle England', gave the change a specific political meaning. By 1991, when membership had very slightly recovered, a survey by Seyd and Whiteley revealed that 'four in every ten members felt themselves to be less active … than they were five years [earlier]'. What the changes really portended was a North American– style party of professional politicians, supported by a membership that was treated as consisting of donors and election helpers, not participants in party policy formation, or mobilisers of local opinion (Panitch & Leys, 2020: 8).

However, Kinnock's partial reforms did not result in the improvement of the party's electoral performances, resulted in repeated defeated 1987 and 1992. The electoral defeat, however, did not diminish the modernizers' confidence in the path taken. Rather, the defeat radicalized a group of young MPs, who became convinced of the need to take Kinnock's strategy to the next level; these included Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and all the other leading figures of what would become New Labour two years later. Before reaching the final stage of the modernization process, however, the party had to pass through John Smith's interregnum, which ended with his premature death in 1994.

With Smith's death, power passes into the hands of a group of young and extremely ambitious MPs, who constitute the second generation of modernizers: Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Peter Mandelson and Philip Gould. With the election of Tony Blair as leader in 1994 begins the New Labour experiment, marked by the attempt to overcome what the new leaders defined as the "dogmatic, activist driven culture" (Mandelson & Little, 1996: 55) of the party, still too deeply rooted in the classic social-democratic policies of tax and spend, centralism, public ownership and trade unionism. In the eyes of the second generation of modernizers Kinnock and Smith had only begun an "Unfinished Revolution" (Gould, 1998), which was to be radicalized in later years in order to return to power. Once again, the change in the image and policies of the party required the plebiscitary reshaping of intraparty democracy and patterns of participation, through the reduction of the role of militants and unions. Blair's negative opinion on intraparty participation is emblematically described by Lewis Goodall:

> Blair and his tribe had always been extremely suspicious of the organised element of the Labour Party, constituency Labour parties, their chairmen and chairwomen and the 'activists'. The word activist made them shudder. It conjured images of long, late-night sittings of constituency meetings, debating subsection 3 of composite 1 of the CLP motion condemning the situation in the Wallis and Futuna Islands. They thought that CLP meetings attracted a certain type of person, the unrepresentative crank. By contrast, they had had enormous faith in the 'member'. Perhaps the husband and wife who had paid their dues for years, might turn out for the Christmas raffle, hadn't had much truck with the preoccupations and vicissitudes of the far left, and, indeed, would vote against them: in other words, the internal Labour Party version of the 'real people' about whom Blair was so fond of talking during his time in government. The Blairites and the right assumed that the 'members' would always guard them against the incursions of the left (as they largely were in the 1980s), rather than be the footsoldiers of their enemy (Goodall, 2018: 1102).

A first manifestation of the change of pace occurred with the amendment of Clause IV of the constitution of the party in 1995, with the cancellation of any reference to the "common ownership of the means of production" in order to demonstrate to the nation the full commitment of Labour to the market economy. The ratification of the constitutional amendment took place through a direct consultation, OMOV, of all membership, in a plebiscite bypassing activists and demonstrating the iconoclastic strength of the new leadership - methodology used again for the approval of the 1997 election manifesto. The amendments to Clause IV were part of a broader project of restyling of the image and cultures of the party, which was not limited to the modification of formal rules and the constitution, but aimed to strike down all the symbols of Labour culture deemed too archaic and unattractive to the electorate: therefore the hymn Red Flag is replaced by pop songs, the reference to "colleagues" replaces "comrade" etc.

The leadership, through the restyling of the party, intended to expand its appeal to the middle and the so-called "aspirational classes" (Gould, 1998). This effort was not limited to the search for electoral support, but translated into significant recruitment efforts, to which unprecedented resources have been devoted. The recruitment effort was guided by three motivations, namely the will to expand the army of footsoldiers loyal to the leadership, to demonstrate to the public the renewed vital impetus of the party, and the radical transformation of party participatory styles and cultures. Within the new rush to recruitment, the model of Blair's Sedgefield constituency became the new gold standard (Lays & Panitch, 2020;). At Sedgefield, Blair managed to increase the local party membership significantly through an extremely simple method: each new member would not have to pay the full membership fee, but only a free donation; the difference between donation and registration fee would be paid by the local party. Not too bad that, because of this policy, the local party had to turn into a club dealing with fundraising and social activities rather than politics; on the contrary, this change in activities provided the double advantage of redefining the new public image of Labour against the much-deprecated "activist culture" and of providing large numbers of new members and local leaders attached to the party much by social as political ties, and therefore showing little interest in questioning the leadership.

The recruitment effort immediately shows its fruits: only by mid-1995 membership had already increased by almost 50%, from 237,000 units to 350,000, up to a peak of 500,000 in 1997, and

then began to slowly decline. The profiles of the recruited responded to the wishes of the leadership: a "massive but passive" membership (Faucher-King, 2008), with a significant increase of middle-class individuals and professionals, generally recruited through centralized procedures preventing any contact with local branches; where contact between recruits and local offices persists, it is frequently inspired by the Sedgefield model, that is, completely depoliticized. The influx of new members, obtained also through modern marketing techniques, provides the modernizers with a membership all in all less active (Faucher-King, 2005, 2008; Les Gales & Faucher-King, 2010; Russel, 2005; Seyd & Whiteley, 2002), disconnected from the party's cultures and networks, less politicised and therefore more prone to a plebiscitary relationship with the leadership.

Blair also started to target the annual conference in order to radically transform its function. The annual conference, the sovereign body in the party's decision-making, has never been a particularly democratic institution, insofar as it has always been more or less dominated by corporate agreements between leadership and trade unions; in addition, constituency delegates were often part of a self-selecting group, endowed with time and resources way above the average member. And yet, despite all the limitations, the conference for almost a century had carried out at least two fundamental functions: that of "thermometer" of the opinions of members and activists and that of collective ritual celebrating the party and its collective culture (Faucher-King, 2005; Leys & Panitch, 2020; Seyd & Whiteley, 2002). Blair tried to eradicate all this, turning the annual conference into a mere parade for the leadership, aimed at showing to the press and the nation the unity of the party and its abandonment of the activist-driven culture. This has been pursued in three ways. First, the opening up of the conference not just to delegates but to common members, so that new members closer to the leadership could drown out the less docile activists. Secondly, the leadership tried to inculcate by every possible means the importance of discipline and to show unity more and repress dissent during the conference. Finally the replacement, at least in part, of the conference as a body of policy-making through the establishment of a series of forums within the project Partnership in Power (Labour Party, 1997).

Through *Partnership in Power* are instituted a National Policy Forum, a joint policy committee and eight policy commission to replace the National Executive Committee and the conference as the sources of official policies. At the same time, while the conference retained the power to

ratify the new policies, participants are prevented from proposing resolutions on issues already covered by the official policy development process - which makes it difficult for minority positions on these issues to emerge. The declared aim is to make the process more open to common members, through their direct involvement in the forums – that by the end of 1999 already involved around 40,000 participants - and produce qualitatively better decisions given the wider and longer consultation process. Seyd and Whiteley (2002) argue that, on the contrary, discussion forums turned into yet another instrument of consolidation of the leadership's grip on the party. First, the forums meet in private: this, on the one hand, facilitates manipulations by leaders and bureaucrats, while on the other reduces the sense of collective identification with party policies that has long been one of the outcomes sought through the collective ritual of the public conference. Secondly, even when membership is included in consultation processes, resources such as expertise, time and information are very unevenly distributed. It is difficult to assume that common members can contradict ministerial teams and their advisors; this fact turns the forums into spaces for consensus-building, rather than open discussion and debate. In addition, some participants (Beecham, 2000) report that thematic forum meetings are dominated by the leadership's willingness to reach a consensus, thus minimizing the opportunity for confrontation and constructive conflict. Finally, it should be remembered that, in the absence of block votes, the forums result in a further weakening of the role of trade unions, apparently in favour of individual members but which in fact results in greater centralisation.

These organizational changes are compounded by the introduction of a managerial mentality, focusing on the obsessive evaluation of performances at all levels and the use of incentives and punishments in the vein of private companies (Cowley, 2005; Leys & Panitch, 2020). The desire shared by most of the membership and the trade unions to return to win elections has been used as a blackmail by the leadership, which managed to instil the idea that electoral victory required conformism and unity (Shaw, 1994); internal conflicts with those who did not accept the new course have been used by Blair and the modernizers as occasions to show the nation their iron fist against the left-wing activist culture (Faucher-King, 2008). Finally, the growing deployment of communication professionals and marketing techniques aimed at reducing the dependence on activists for campaigning - already reduced by the influx of new members; of course, this option increased dependence on large donors.

So the modernization process has been successful in changing the culture of the party and its perception among the public; but at a cost. The more explicit cost is, to use a formula from Paul Hirst, that only minimum participation is maximized (Les Gales & Faucher-King, 2010). A few years after the onset of New Labour, almost all the commentators affirm that the party is more centralised and that new members have been, overall, less active then the pre-existing ones (Fairclough, 2000; Faucher-King, 2003, 2005, 2008; Faucher-King & Les Gales, 2010; Mair, 2004; Perryman et al., 2017; Russell, 2005; Seyd & Whiteley, 2002). The project of democratization of the party has translated into the individualization and plebiscitarization of partisan relations (Faucher-King, 2008). Partisan solidarities and party cultures, local rootedness, the value and the meaning of participation have been deteriorated (Faucher-King, 2005). The new membership, massive but passive, proves, as well as little active outside the opportunities for plebiscitary mobilization by the leadership, very unfaithful: after 1997 begins a downward trajectory that will leave, in 2010, the party with fewer members than in 1994.

How can these processes framed within Scarrow's model, based on the manipulation of costs and incentives to participation? As for the increase in membership, the leadership has attempted strategies based on lowering entry costs, both financially - following the Sedgefield model - and reputationally - changing the image of the party. They then attempted to provide collective incentives, linked to the party's mission to innovate its own culture and image and espouse the market economy, as well as to the self-proclaimed greater ability to win elections. Finally, individual members are offered low cost rights of influence over party decisions. The leadership of New Labour has shown to be capable of an effective participation engineering, managing to voluntarily select the type of recruits desired - relatively passive, alien to activist cultures and supportive of the modernizing program; in other words, it has succeeded in maximizing the factional benefits of recruitment, as well as legitimacy benefits, by communicating to the public the image of a vital and modern party. This process has been carried out along the lines of the paradox of "democratization as emasculation" discussed previously.

As mentioned above, however, the increase in membership figures has been followed by a long period of decline. Seyd and Whiteley already state in 2002 that such decline is linked to a generalized decrease in incentives for participation:

> All the incentives measures in the theory, whether they relate to policy goals, private incentives, expressive attachments, group loyalties or social norms, have contributed to the decline.

> Compared with 1990 members are currently less likely to feel that they influence politics, less likely to enjoy politics for its own sake, less likely to be politically ambitious, less likely to think of themselves as participants in a great social movement, and, above all, less likely to be strongly attached to the party. Part of the reason for these developments is that the party recruited a lot of new members after 1994 and these people were different from its earlier recruits in a number of key respects. But this is not the whole story, since it is apparent that a decline has taken place in the incentives for activism among long-standing party members as well as the relative newcomers. (Seyd & Whiteley, 2002: 109).

It is therefore clear that New Labour's strategy, seen in perspective, has led to important electoral results at the cost of accelerating some trends, that indeed had been already active for some time, such as individualization and eradication of forms of participation from local activist networks, partisan demobilization and plebiscitary emptying out of parties, as well as the dealignment of the working class consequent to the promotion of pro-market reforms and an anti-welfare rhetoric (Nunns, 2016). But it also must not be underestimated the impact that the use of private management techniques, alongside with the constant focus on internal cohesion, the repression of dissent and the obsession with media spin have produced a certain wariness in to membership. Wariness to which political choices and events such as Blair's support for wars in the Middle East and the beginning of the Great Recession have done nothing but make a final contribution. The combination of these factors means that, after the electoral defeat in 2010 and the end of the New Labour project, the party is left exhausted, both financially and in terms of participation and public support.

It is not difficult to argue that New Labour has been a peculiar form of reaction aimed at accommodating some trends originating from the Silent Revolution. First, it has responded to the decline of the traditional participation based on involvement in unions and local networks, delegate democracy, collective representation and strong partisan identifications. This decline has been countered by proposing individualised and low-cost forms of participation. Second, New Labour has long indulged in discrediting, in line with postmaterialist ethics, collectivism and the rigid forms of participation typical of twentieth-century organizations. What has been answered only partially is the growing demand for direct participation: on the one hand, the increase in individual voting rights certainly goes in such direction; on the other hand, new forms of participation have been restricted to plebiscitary or leadership-directed procedures, with little room for self-expression and creativity. In a nutshell, New Labour was able to exploit the "dark side" of the Silent Revolution; this experiment demonstrated how demands for greater individual influence, merged with the desire of liberation from collective solidarities and bureaucratic apparatuses of participation, can be channelled into projects of organizational centralization and ideological and practical demobilization of the activists.

Peter Hain shows very clearly the trade-off between collective solidarity and individualization of participation resulting from the strategy of modernization pursued by New Labour:

> One-member±one-vote can't replace the feeling of being directly involved in the party in a collective way. It's all right to be involved in an individualistic way, which is what one-member one-vote is all about, but being involved in a collective way is what being a member of the party should be all about. It shouldn't feel like being a member of the AA or RAC (Hain, 1999).

Thus, New Labour has complied with the individualizing and anti-collectivist tendencies inherent in the Silent Revolution, but without being able to satisfy new and old demands for effective and meaningful participation. Before New Labour, the party conformed to a participatory model, even though this was based more on collective solidarity than on the effective power of the membership to directly affect party decisions. To this, the modernizers subtracted the element of solidarity without succeeding - or even attempting - to complete the transition to a new type of party capable of combining individualization, accountability and the sense of a collective purpose. And it is precisely these weaknesses, that are common to many "modernised" traditional parties, that are addressed by the new party models that emerged from the 1980s on and especially in the aftermath of the Great Recession. These parties, which go under the labels of movement parties and digital parties, have tried to combine tensions towards individual participation with the introduction of accountability mechanisms and the sense of a collective challenge - in these cases obtained through the strongly anti-establishment posture of these parties.

3.2. New parties incorporating elite-challenging behaviours

In the first chapter I discussed the concept of elite-challenging participation as a central aspect of the Silent Revolution (Inglehart, 1977). The concept encompasses two facets, both fundamental to the understanding of the forms of political participation typical of post-modernity. The first of these, summarized in the figure of the "critical citizen" (Norris, 1999), reflects the fact that increasingly educated and libertarian citizens tend to show increasing distrust of the elites, politics and top-down institutions. In addition to this trend toward heightened distrust that is "endogenous" to postmaterialist citizens, other exogenous causes for lowered trust have emerged in recent decades, some of which have been mentioned in the previous chapters: first, cartelisation and collusion between political parties (Mair & Katz, 1994, 2009); the rise of new public management as an interpretative framework for the action of public actors (Hay, 2005); and finally, the inability of political elites to revert oligarchic

concentration processes in financial capitalism and the tremendous outcome of the Great Recession of 2008.

The rise of critical citizens can also be seen through the lenses of the cognitive mobilization (Inglehart, 1977); according to this theory, the existence of mass organizations is the legacy of an era in which individuals possessed relatively low skills, such that autonomous coordination and particular forms of creativity were ruled out. Participation therefore spread within large depersonalizing apparatuses, able to organize tens of thousands of individuals entrusting them with relatively simple tasks. With the increase in citizens' skills has become possible to imagine the development of new forms of organization that are less hierarchical, rigid and more open to individual inputs, provided that a more skilful population could at least partially bridge with the leaders of organizations and thus be able to reject a strictly subordinated position.

The concept of cognitive mobilization leads us to the second facet of elite-challenging participation, concerning the rise of what Dalton (2008a, 2008b, 2009) dubs as engaged citizenship, that is a new conception of citizen's participation and duties, partly alternative to the previously dominant model of duty-based citizenship. Engaged citizenship, as seen in the first chapter, entails a greater propensity for direct and immediate forms of participation, which are generally carried out outside the representative system. Whether it is a matter of street protests, civism or political consumerism, the engaged conception of citizenship focuses on the expression of individual preferences and demands - and therefore is oriented to creativity and self-expression -, the rejection of representative politics and of political intermediation, with an important focus on social change and the challenge to power elites at any level and especially inside the organizations themselves. On the contrary, the duty-based conception insists on notions of social order and respect for institutional procedures and hierarchies; in Dalton's theoretical frame, it is mainly identified with voting.

Traditional parties have reacted to the rise of elite challenging participation mainly in two ways, both analyzed in the previous section. The first path is that of multispeed membership that is, on the one hand, the multiplication of the modalities of engagement, trying to adapt them to individual preferences in terms of commitment, type of activity and duration of involvement; on the other hand, barriers to entry have been reduced, reducing the costs of party membership or allowing broad levels of involvement and rights even for non-members or those who are extraneous to party networks. The multi-speed strategy can be understood as a sort of passive

adaptation to the Silent Revolution, since through it parties try to adapt and survive in a context of increasingly fluid and temporary affiliations and decreasing investment by citizens in traditional forms of participation (Garland, 2017). In short, parties take for granted that the present context is in many ways less favourable to mass participation in institutionalized politics, but instead of trying to reverse the trend by radically modifying their operational logic, they try to find some less traumatic ways to cope with the new context. The second strategy is that of the selective reception of new participatory demands. This usually takes place through the promotion of highly anti-bureaucratic discourses and practices and opposition to the collectivist activism typical of social-democratic and communist parties, in favour of forms of democratisation based on the individualisation of partisan relations (Faucher-King, 2008). This strategy is widespread among European parties but is particularly ambiguous and paradoxically potentially capable of weakening democratic quality in the parties, as seen earlier in the analysis of the case of New Labour.

The next two sections aim instead at analysing the birth of new parties whose peculiarity is to pursue an, so to speak, active adaptation to the consequences of the Silent Revolution, promoting the integration of an elite-challenging logic within electoral politics. This happens in three ways, that is through the reception of anti-elite discourses, the development of organizational linkages with social movements – that figure as the elite-challenging actors *par excellence* - and through the introduction of forms of participatory democracy within political parties. Parties that have pursued this organizational strategy are known in the literature as movement parties (Kitschelt, 2006); in addition to this more general idealtype, it is also possible to refer to the concept of digital party (Gerbaudo, 2019), as a specific case of movement party that bases its organizational infrastructure on the use of digital platforms (Kavada, 2019).

The concept of movement party was first introduced by Kitschelt (2006). The author, bearing in mind the case of the Green parties he studied extensively (Kitschelt, 1989, 1990) defines the movement parties "coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition" (Kitschelt, 2006: 280). It is important to underline a fundamental aspect inherent to this definition: not only does Kitschelt say that movement parties take inspiration from social movements, but that their birth is always subsequent to the emergence of a specific movement of which the party is more or less direct heir. Consequently, Kitschelt's definition is more

specific than that provided by Della Porta and colleagues, according to whom it is a movement party any party "that have particularly strong organizational and external links with social movements" (2017: 4-5). Such a definition might be better suited to include both different patterns of relationship between movement parties and movements - for example, there can be party hegemony over the movement, temporary cooperation over specific objectives, fusion etc. – and phenomena occurred in different historical contexts; and in fact the authors also develop a history of movement parties, including not only the most recent waves but also the semi-clandestine left-wing cadre parties of the late nineteenth-century and the mass parties stemming from the working-class movements.

Kitschelt identifies three fundamental characteristics of movement parties. The first: in the wake of the NSMs, movement parties make little investments in formal organizational party structures, developing often very light organizational forms, endowed with few resources in the intermediate layers and with weak internal linkage mechanisms. In addition, movement parties are very open parties: they often do not formally define the role of members, entrusting responsibility and rights of influence on decisions to anyone who attends meetings or wants to contribute. It is important to note that, if for Kitschelt this aspect configures a radical difference between movement parties and traditional parties, from what was said above with respect to the concept of multispeed participation is clear that some elements of fluidity typical of movement parties have now been incorporated into mainstream parties. In this regard, Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) speak of "party-as-movement mentality", indicating the growing tendency of individuals to perceive themselves as acting in a blurred frontier area between party and civil society; which means that investment in organisations is temporary, linked to specific objectives and economic circumstances and often unrelated to formal membership. Movement parties are also light-weight parties, that is deficient in terms of paid and professionalized staff, as well as almost completely lacking material resources.

The second characteristic of movement parties is low investment in the resolution of problems of social choice, also here differentiating considerably from traditional parties. Movement parties usually lack formalised systems of aggregation of interests and demands. To this deficiency these parties make up in different ways, among which the two extreme possibilities are charismatic leadership and participatory grassroot democracy. Both of these modes risk leading to contradictory or particularly volatile decisions: in the case of grassroots democracy,

precisely because of the refusal to establish hierarchic authorities and processes capable of establishing a clear order in priorities; as for the case of charismatic leadership, the potential factor of instability is related to the absence of counterweights to the leadership's will.

Finally, movement parties are marked by the attempt to act on two levels, that is, both within the arenas of institutionalized politics – alongside other parties - and in the field of social mobilization and extra-parliamentary protest - as social movements. This feature closely recalls what Milburn (2019) says about the political style of Generation Left, which the author describes as rooted in a dual strategy: electoral competition in order to gain access to the sovereign power of the state to implement the desired change in policies accompanied by the awareness that this may not be enough. Conquering the institutions might result to be insufficient to achieve the desired social change, and this is because, on the one hand, it is also necessary to act on the cultural sphere and, on the other, it is believed that not all social power is concentrated in the sovereignty of the state and therefore political strategy must be adapted to the multifaceted and microphysics nature of power. As clearly appears, this conception echoes the analysis of social power developed by the NSMs.

According to Hilary Wainwright (2008) the peculiarity of the dual strategy of movement parties lies in the attempt to abandon the typically representative conception of politics, that is the government of society by the parliamentary elite that receives the mandate by the citizens. According to the author, these new parties - her thought goes mainly to South America - must be seen as experiments aimed at creating coalitions capable of acting at different levels, without a clear hierarchy between the parliamentary arm and action in civil society. Only by abolishing the predominance of parliamentarianism it is possible to enable a conception of democracy capable of dealing with the different forms of social power, only some of which can be handled through the electoral conquest of legislative and executive bodies. According to Wainwright, the dual strategy allows to mobilize the "non-state sources of democratic power", that is, all forms of collective organization, more or less formalized, that exist outside the institutional political arena and that, together, can manage to provide a broader and more inclusive representation of the different demands spread in society - insofar as they are not subject to the logic of limited social choice typical of traditional parties. Only a party rooted in society can carry on a mandate of radical democratic and participatory transformation of state institutions; at the same time, the alliance with social movements and the partial adoption of their strategies

can provide new sources of legitimacy, especially in times when the arenas and repertoires of action of institutional politics are highly delegitimized. Movement parties' dual strategy therefore identifies both a style of participation and a relatively radical approach to social and political change, according to which it is not enough to introduce new policies but it is necessary to promote a wider change of policies, cultures and institutions. The definition of movement party offered by Kavada (2019) insists on this aspect: according to the author, these parties are organized around contradictory objectives, as they compete to win elections at the very same time as they try to promote social transformations that go far beyond electoral victory; to the point of conceiving, as will be seen later, the radically democratic reform of parties and, in some cases, of representative institutions themselves. Movement parties are therefore anti-system actors who enter the arena of institutionalized politics; in this sense, Kriesi (2015) speaks of "anti-party" parties. Almeida (2010), building on the experience of South American anti-neoliberal politics, recognizes this intrinsic element of opposition capturing it in the concept of "social movement partyism", to define the cases in which 1) opposition electoral parties make their own the demands of radical social movements and 2) use "movement-type" strategies to mobilize party members and other groups in order to achieve the objectives defined by the movements.

In Europe it is possible to identify two distinct waves of movement parties, both associated with those that Kriesi, Hutter and Lorenzini (2018) define as crisis of representation, referring to historical phases marked by the emergence of widely held demands or even the development of new cleavages to which political elites are not able or do not intend to give representation (Mainwaring, 2003). It is important to note that the presence of unrepresented demands and cleavages is not in itself sufficient to explain the emergence of new parties; structures of political opportunities and institutional arrangements typical of each political system cannot be superseded. The crisis of representation does not explain by itself the rise of movement parties, and in fact movement parties have not appeared in all the countries affected by a crisis of representation; but it can nevertheless be said that in the absence of a crisis of representation it is hard to imagine the emergence of actors so disruptive and critical towards the political system.

For this reason, movement parties find themselves promoting two types of general demands. First, obviously, they promote the new demands and subjectivities that have been left

unrepresented. In the second place, however, precisely because these actors are outsiders carrying demands rejected by mainstream parties, it is intrinsic to movement parties a critique of the party systems that precede them. This is not without objective reasons, given that the two waves of movement parties have taken place in a political context marked by the increasing cartelisation of party actors, whereas, as we have seen in the first chapter, these have progressively reduced their linkage with society while taking refuge in a consociative pact within public institutions; and of course the weakening of linkage mechanisms easily leads to repercussions on the ability by the parties to capture and represent new emerging social demands (Della Porta et al., 2017; Melucci, 1989). In addition, some authors have expressed doubts about the ability of traditional parties to adapt to new demands even if they were able to fully grasp their scope. Among others, Samuel Huntington states that

> The core participant institution, the political party, appears to be verging on a state of institutional and political decay […]. Unless there is a clear-cut reversal of current trends, however, parties do not appear to be likely mechanisms for structuring the higher levels of participation which should characterize postindustrial society (Huntington, 1974: 175).

Kitschelt (1990) shares the same view, contrasting the implementation of decentralized decision-making proposed by movement parties and the strongly centralised nature of bargaining and decision-making mechanisms in traditional parties, especially in a context of growing corporatism and integration with state institutions. Therefore when movement parties promote the representation of new demands also play a more general function by signalling both the closure and rigidity of the political system to libertarian instances and the progressive withering of linkage mechanisms between parties and society.

3.2.1. The first wave: libertarian movement parties

The first wave of movement parties takes shape between the late 70s and 80s, with the birth of Green parties developing from the ecologist movement. Despite the issue specific origin of the denomination of these parties, most of the authors interpret their rise as a consequence of the emergence of a materialism/postmaterialism cleavage (Inglehart et al., 1997; Kitschelt, 1989; Kriesi et al., 2018; Della Porta et al., 2017; Poguntke, 1993, Schoonmaker, 1988). The ecological issue is easily attributable to the emergence of postmaterialism, in so far as it can be linked to postmaterialist criticisms towards corporatism and productivism typical of post-war settlement, as well as to the demands related to the quality of life and a reflexive attitude toward societal development. At the same time, however, precisely because Green parties have gained

momentum because of the emergence of such new cleavage, they have also been carrying libertarians demands that emerged within the NSMs and have tried to transplant their elite-challenging logic within the arena of institutional politics. Indeed, according to Schoonmaker, the real central theme of the ecologist movement parties is not so much ecology as the participatory and libertarian reform of political institutions:

> The central issues for the Greens are not the despoliation of nature, the pursuit of growth at all costs, or the consequences of increasing industrialization. Those are ends, and the lever that must be grasped relates to means. The crucial problem is the concentration of power in the economic, political, and cultural spheres of life in the Federal Republic. And sense of deconcentration and decentralization. The Greens may have a label that denotes environmental concern and respect for nature, but their central focus lies in liberal attitudes against accumulations of power (Schoonmaker, 1988: 58).

The fact that the ecologist parties are something more than political organizations promoting environmental protection is signalled by the widespread use of defining these parties as "left-libertarians" (Dalton & Kuechler, 1990; Inglehart et al, 1997; Kitschelt, 1989; Melucci, 1996; Schoonmaker, 1988). In Kitschelt's definition they are "left" because they distrust the market and private investment and achievement ethic, with a commitment to redistribution; but they are also "libertarian" because they reject the authority of bureaucracies and because opt for organizational models based on participatory democracy and autonomy. Thus the ecologist parties of the first wave embody the left flank of postmaterialism. As stated in the first chapter, postmaterialism itself is neutral with respect to the distinctions between right and left, in so far as it is linked to a scepticism towards the statist solutions of the social-democratic left but is animated by libertarian, participatory and progressive orientations that struggle to find expression on the filo-capitalist right. Ecological parties interpret precisely a leftist variant of postmaterialism, merging participatory demands and the critique of bureaucracy with a strong egalitarian orientation and a strong scepticism towards the market and capitalism.

So far, two elite-challenging elements emerge. First, as has just been said, ecologist movement parties embody the typically post-materialist scepticism towards bureaucratic and top-down institutions, connected to a forceful critique of the representative system: (Berger, 1979; Schoonmaker, 1988). Secondly, it is evident that the emergence of ecologist movement parties is intrinsically linked to a critique of political elites; this is to the extent that these left-libertarian parties criticize the corporatist drifts of the social-democratic compromise, inasmuch as they denounce the closure of party elites to the new demands put forward both by environmentalism and libertarianism. In addition to the aspects just outlined, the elite-challenging nature of environmentalist parties is recognizable in the peculiar forms of organization and participation

promoted by these parties; their ambition is to stem oligarchic drifts within parties themselves and promote a participatory model, but also to develop a new form of relationship between representative institutions and citizenship, through the innovation of representation practices with the establishment of the binding mandate and the rotation of offices. In short, the reform of the party is conceptualized as the starting point for reforming the political system in a participatory key, as pointed out by Wainwright (2008). As left-libertarians are particularly aware and concerned about political parties developing tendencies associated to what Robert Michels called "the iron law of oligarchy" (Michels, 1913), they tend to line up against the creation of formalized roles and hierarchies (Inglehart, 1977) and the formalization of procedures and roles, but also of mechanisms reducing the autonomy of local grups, thus reducing internal linkage mechanisms.

This objective of containment of oligarchic concentration has many paradoxical effects, wich lead to dynamics recalling what has been above referred to as the paradox of "democratization as emasculation". In particular, it is interesting to note that the attempt to establish forms of intra-party participatory democracy and to strongly contain the power of party elites and bureaucracies leads to the paradoxical result of building weak mechanisms of internal accountability as well as of promoting particularly light and stratarchized party forms, in line with some of the trends that characterize the much despised cartel parties. It is not uncommon for militants to show ambivalence and cynicism towards party life, precisely because, according to what Kitschelt defines as a position of anarchist radicalism, the formal organization is seen as prodromic to the submission of the individual to collectivism and to bureaucracy. Left-libertarian party organizations end up being treated as disposable and despicable means, and almost never as ends in themselves (Kruszewska, 2016). This state of affairs leads to under-investment in the formalization of roles and the distribution of material incentives within the party, that has two perverse effects. The first is that only those who possess sufficient resources - money, time, individual resources and skills - are able to participate effectively. Thus, paradoxically, the focus on a hyper-participatory and egalitarian model ends up transposing, within the party, the inequalities that exist in the wider society. Exactly the opposite of what happens within Duverger's mass parties: in this case, a remarkable organizational structuration is aimed at creating a system of incentives and rewards that can facilitate the participation of those who otherwise may not have the opportunity - although, obviously, this is the case only for a small number of individuals and according to the logic and priorities of each party. Of the

same opinion is Panebianco (1982): only a strongly institutionalized party can be able to significantly reduce the effect of social inequalities within the party, replacing them with a system of internal inequalities and formal hierarchies defined according to the objectives and needs of the organization.

The second paradox effect of participatory constitutions, which insist on the individual powers of members, on collective decision making and the rotation of positions, is to greatly weaken the prestige and power of formal officers of the party. The weakening of formal officers results in a relaxation of the links between the various organizational levels of the party precisely because participatory mechanisms are not able to compensate for the deficit in official positions. This leads to strong tendencies towards stratarchization, which constitutes the second type of paradoxical convergence with the trends captured by the discussion on cartel parties (Katz & Mair, 2009; Mair, 1994). Indeed it can be said that left-libertarian parties are the first to bring the tendencies to stratarchization to their extreme consequences: given the extraordinary weakness of the mechanisms of internal cohesion, even the parliamentary elite reflects the high level of organizational dispersion, with each parliamentarian tending to be representing and legitimizing himself among different strata and areas of the party. Linkages mechanisms are so weak that members find it almost impossible to influence decision makers, which can count on the power granted by their public position to further their agenda without many organizational restraints.

It can be noted that left libertarian parties show some intresting continuities with the logic of the NSMs, using the categories proposed by Melucci (1989). First, the self-reflexive nature of the organization, which results from the attempt to build an organizational model capable of containing the "natural" tendencies to the concentration of power - evident in the Michelsian nightmares of left-libertarians. Secondly, the possibility of distinguishing between expressive and instrumental goals. As was said a few pages ago, it is possible to argue that the protection of the environment is the end - the instrumental objective - of movement parties, but not their central issue, which is to be identified in the proposal of libertarian democratization. Now, Melucci sees in the libertarianism of social movements a demand for self-expression, linked to the identitary and psychological needs of the members; movement parties start from here to get to the next step, that is proposing the participatory model as a model for the reform of political institutions. Finally, left-libertarian parties share with the NSMs what Melucci calls qualitative

pluralism, or the general openness to different individual needs, which in this case results in the lack of formalisation of roles and the refusal to create a clear distinction between members and non-members, opening up to forms of partial and differentiated involvement.

3.2.2 The second wave: from movement parties to digital parties

3.2.2.1. The second crisis of representation: anti-austerity movements and parties

The second generation of movement parties emerges in the years following the protests of the Movement of the Squares, already mentioned in chapter 2. As in the case of the left-libertarian movement parties, the elite-challenging nature of the new parties is evident from three main characteristics: 1) the denunciation of the oligarchic and corporative nature of power management by the political elites - connected to a crisis of representation; 2) the existence of linkage mechanisms, more or less developed, with the most influential libertarian social movements of the period – which, as already discussed, can be defined as the elite-challenging actors par excellence, because of their peculiar organizational form and their structurally oppositive nature; 3) the participatory innovation of the parties, partly understood as prodromic with respect to the transformation of national politics.

With regard to the first aspect, it is clear that after the Great Recession trust in the political elites is much more compromised than in the 1980s. While the Greens denounced the corporatism of the main parties, namely their tendency to gradually move towards state institutions while pulling the other actors of organised civil society with them, the new movements communicate a widely spread popular perception of complete convergence between the dominant parties. This perception is the result of two phenomena: the first is undoubtedly the advanced stage reached in the processes of cartelization and collusion between political parties, whose reciprocal differences in modes of action and political proposals have gradually become too subtle and almost impalpable. The second, more specific, phenomenon is linked to how dominant actors responded to the Great Recession: not only did centre-left and centre-right governments substantially provide the same policy response, at first implementing bailouts of the banking system and then introducing extremely harsh forms of austerity as soon as the financial crisis turned into a crisis of public finances. These measures were often implemented within coalition governments, in which actors who had spent a long time delegitimizing each other in the media arena participated neck to neck - the most spectacular case is probably the

Italian one, where the Democratic Party supported the Monti government along with the much criticised Berlusconi's party. Finally, especially in the Mediterranean countries, political corruption and crony capitalist practices have been widespread throughout the 90s and 2000s, increasingly tend to instil in citizens the perception of oligarchic collusion between the elites of power and money - reinforced by the massive bailouts carried out in the early years of the Recession.

While it can be difficult to recognize the emergence of a cleavage – as deep as the materialism/postmaterialism cleavage connected to the rise of the left-libertarians - nevertheless it is clear that the dominant political actors have so far not been able to give an answer, even partial, to the main social demands that coagulated in the Movement of the Squares. As seen in Chapter 2, these demands revolve around two fundamental themes: the call for decisive responses against the growing oligarchic collusion among political actors and between politics and national capitalism and policies marked by the reintroduction of strong social protections for the lower and middle classes. On both fronts, the response of political elites has been outright disastrous: on the one hand, there has been a programmatic convergence on the policies to implement, which often has led to coalition governments; on the other, the instauration of austerity and the contraction of social protections. The refusals of the political classes to respond positively to the new popular instances has produced the conviction that a radical change is the only way to induce a release of the political stalemate; to the point that some actors have come to assume the necessity of the reform of the national political institutions themselves. It is the case of the area orbiting around the Five Star Movement, which in addition to calling for a complete reset of the political class promotes demands such as the reform of parliament and public funding to parties, and the introduction of more extensive forms of direct democracy and more or less binding forms of imperative mandate; institutional proposals that are often prefigured in the party's organizational practices, according to the logic, already seen in the Greens and widespread among the elite-challenging parties, to develop organizational change within parties as a precursor to institutional change. But it is also the case of Podemos in Spain, whose proposal is nothing less than a new Constitution, in order to rebuild the pact between politics, economy and society that came to dissolve during the age of neoliberalism. The wave of protest that began in 2011 stroke powerfully in Mediterranean Europe, where the main new movement parties have originated, while it took weaker forms in the rest of the continent - with the exception of the United Kingdom, whereas will be seen in chapter 5 the

protests have been relatively intense and widespread but did not lead to the rise of new movement parties. Della Porta et al. (2017) define these new Mediterranean movement parties of the 10s as "movement parties against austerity", referring with this expression both to the programs of these parties and to the links these have built with the anti-Austerity mobilizations post.

As the case of the Greens shows, there are many possible linkage mechanisms between parties and movements. Kitschelt (1989) distinguishes between individual linkages - essentially overlapping membership - and collective linkages created through the interaction between party representatives and movement spokespeople. To these organizational linkages Kitschelt adds "cultural interpenetration" as another model of relationship between movement parties and movements, that is the development of an informal cultural area of discoursive and symbolic exchange between parties and movements. As for left libertarian movement parties the most common forms of linkage are individual or cultural. As will be seen below, even in the case of the movement parties of the 2010s, these forms of "weak" linkage prevail (Prentoulis & Thomassen, 2020). A unifying explanation might be based on the observation of social movements' natural tendency to avoid formalized agreements – both because of their "unofficial" nature and their reluctance to forge alliances with institutional actors -, which on the other hand could be perceived by the parties as tying their hands. In the specific case of the Greens, however, it can be assumed that the prevalence of weak and informal linkages is a consequence of the peculiar structure of these parties and their preference for organizational relations of a fluid and non-hierarchical nature; in fact, except for the perennial linkage constituted by cultural interpenetration, the contacts between movement parties and movements are discontinuous and feeble. It can be argued, as does Kitschelt (1990), that ecologist movement parties are exponents of the ecologist movement, but not its leaders: this is because of the lack of forms of hierarchical linkage, and because, at the level of individual participation, if almost all the members of the green parties have taken part to the insurgencies of the ecological movements, the opposite is not true. Movement parties are only a specific section of the ecological movement.

Turning to recent movement parties, the most successful ones have flourished in Greece, Spain and Italy. In the case of the Greek Syriza, the linkage mechanisms between movements and party mainly programmatic ones and overlapping membership; that is, the party has never

assumed the role of initiator of the protests, but has been able to welcome and promote the demands of the squares within the parliamentary arena - and this already in the 2000s, with support to the Global Justice Movements and to youth insurrections against police violence. Also for this reason, activists of social movements have looked at Syriza with attention and interest anytime they happened to consider to adopt a parliamentary strategy. Therefore, rather than having formalized links with the movements, Syriza can be understood as the parliamentary arm of a wider nebula of anti-austerity movements; the boundaries between movements and party remain blurred, because there are no formal connections and because the weak structuration of the party leads to a radical openness favouring overlapping membership.

As for Podemos, the picture is in some ways similar to Syriza, but there is a greater proactivity in the attempt to become an actor able to initiate and lead the action of social movements. Unlike Syriza, Podemos does not just welcome the demands of the anti-austerity movements favouring their transition to electoral politics; the party was born a few years after the movement, and sees itself as the continuation of the struggles inaugurated by the occupations of 2011 by the 15M movement and continued in local struggles for public goods and housing (Flesher-Fominaya, 2014). This continuity is recognizable both in the themes and in the overlapping membership - both its base and its leaders are widely recognized as members of the 15M movement (Calvo & Alvarez, 2015). Indeed, many of the local circles of the party are direct emanations of local sections of the anti-austerity movements; the most striking case is certainly that of Barcelona, where the mayor Ada Colau, supported by Podemos, was the leading figure of the anti-eviction movement. In spite of this, even in Podemos there is no official investiture of the party by the anti-austerity movements; the opposite happens, with the new party trying to accredit itself as the heir of the movement. However, it is clear that Podemos assumes a more active posture than Syriza in incorporating the logic of movements; this is evident, for example, in events such as "The March of Change" in 2015, a large mass parade intended as way to physically show the strength of the party and its continuity with the 15M, as well as other initiatives such as the campaign against the TTIP and active participation in LGBT Prides and pro-refugee protests. Secondly, this active commitment is visible in the efforts to promote a participatory party model, based on the attempt to keep together a high level of participation in local struggles through local circles - spread extremely quickly after the birth of the party in 2014 - with national consultation practices based on digital technologies and

As for the last case, the M5S, its origins are more heterogeneous and the influence of anti-austerity movements relatively reduced compared to the previous cases. Starting from the early 2010s, the newborn Movimento 5 Stelle teams up with different movements opposing oil drilling in southern Italy, the construction of high-speed railway in Val di Susa, the installation of new carbon plants, incinerators and garbage dumps (Mosca, 2015); together with this strategy of alliance and mobilization of various forms of localized protest, which the Movement manages to take to parliament, the party tries to innovate the practices of institutional politics, bringing its repertoire of occupations, sit-ins and protests directly into parliament through its elected deputies and senators since the 2013 elections. The mobilization practices enacted by the Movement take often celebratory and spectacular forms, capable, on the one hand, of reinforcing collective solidarity (Macaluso, 2015), while on the other adapting to capture the attention of mass media (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013; Mazzoleni & Schultz, 1999). However, the M5S has never formalized its relationship with social movements; this has made it extremely easy, during the progressive parliamentarization and institutionalization of the party (Musella & Vercesi, 2019), the almost complete erasure of connections and programmatic convergences with movements (Della Porta et al., 2017; Mosca, 2020).

3.2.2.2. Digital participatory innovations

So far I have identified the ways in which, through the transposition of an elite-challenging logic into the party arena, the movement parties of the 2010s have been able to innovate institutional politics, which has previously been subjected to processes of separation from civil society (Della Porta et al 2017; Katz & Mair 2009; Mair 1994). Movement parties reintroduce social mobilization in the repertoires of institutional politics and bring social critic back into the mainstream arena; finally, they innovate by trying to promote new participatory models. With regard to the latter aspect, the greatest element of innovation is the incorporation of digital technologies within the organizational and participatory infrastructure of the party. Among anti-austerity movement parties, only Syriza has not based its organization on digital platforms; the other two cases, Podemos and M5S, have been studied by Paolo Gerbaudo in his work on digital parties (2019b).

Digital parties are defined as parties that incorporate digital platforms as their sovereign decision making body and/or main organizational instrument and discussion forum. Gerbaudo describes digital parties as “agile but fragile”, able to quickly impose their presence in the public

debate and at the ballots thanks to the great flexibility and virality that the mastery of digital technologies provides them, but also fragile in maintaining themselves over time and bringing about significant changes in society outside the strictly electoral sphere. Their agility derives from the remarkable lightening of the organizational structure confronted to the model of the mass-membership party. By concentrating decision-making, discussions and coordination on the online platform, the digital party effectively erases the intermediate strata of the party hierarchy and bureaucracy, leading to a polarization between base and leadership. As far as the role and position of membership is concerned, there is a twofold movement: on the one hand, it gains a decision-making power which was not present in previous kind of parties, such as the neoliberal populist parties (Della Porta et al., 2017). On the other hand, however, this power is strongly individualized; contrary to more traditional membership-mass parties – which are on course of disappearing, anyway - there is not a hierarchical representational structure based on the sovereign role of local branches and the Conference.

A radical "distributed centralization" takes place. The decision-making powers with respect to the overall strategy are concentrated on the platform and in the hands of the leadership, which also exerts a significant control over the functioning of the platform itself, while the local branches, when they still exist, change their role radically. They are not the basic cells of the party's sovereign organization, but rather become spaces of action, where thematic campaigns and specific actions are planned and debates are promoted. It is important to note that here can be found a trace of the widespread tendencies to stratarchization, common even to libertarian movement parties. In particular, the fact that local offices tend not to play any role in the decision making procedures of the party constitutes a source of clear separation between the various "strata" of the organization. It should be acknowledged that digital parties take this trend to its extreme consequences, even more than Green parties. In the latter, in fact, the local organization is understood as the *locus* of decision and radically participatory practices, but the lack of resources and sufficient structuration do not allow for an adequate linkage between the different levels of the party; digital parties, instead, do not even formally recognize the role of local sections in the decision making procedures of the party. Local groups become franchises (Carty, 2004): the party offers its brand as a resource for groups to obtain local recognition, while local groups offer the party their mobilizing capacities; no more and no less. But even as spaces for action, local groups have been lacking. So far the social life of these "territorialized nodes" of the party has been decidedly uneven and feeble, for the sheer fact that the existence

of local branches is no longer the *sine qua non* condition for the functioning of the party; in other words, the party seems to lack organizational incentives to develop a decentralized organizational life. But as the case of the left-libertarian parties has shown, the absence of intra-organizational incentives increases the effect of incentives from outside the organization. Consequently, an intense and relatively stable local associative life develops only in contexts particularly endowed with resources or in which there are real chances to influence local politics; emblematic of this is the development of Podemos, an organisation in which extremely active and relevant local circles in large cities coexist with an almost total absence of activity in rural areas or smaller towns (Caruso & Campolongo, 2021).

The substitution of the intermediate strata of the party with the intermediation of the platform and the diminishing of local sections are certainly the consequences of a lack of economic resources. These parties are quite young, starting from nothing with the aim to articulate the new demands that emerge in late capitalist societies – in particular, social protection after the Great Recession, digital rights against hyper-surveillance, and the recovery of democracy from cartelization. Yet, combined with these economic considerations, one also finds ideological ones that stem from the "participationist" ideology that characterizes the "connected outsiders"[10] that form the bulk of the digital party's constituency. Gerbaudo defines participationism as a

> radical democratic creed which considers participation rather than representation the ultimate source of political legitimacy. Participation framed as the normative criteria of a good politics, making legitimate only those processes that actively engage ordinary citizens while being suspicious of top-down interventions. Cracking open the old husk of the political party, making it responsive to the public and allowing for a more direct involvement of citizens in the political process. Desire for a more authentic and undistorted intervention of the citizenry in the political process, beyond the disappointments of the neoliberal era and the television party (Gerbaudo, 2018b, p.65).

Correlated to this participationist ethos is a general appetite for disintermediation, fuelled by a deep suspicion toward party bureaucracies and oligarchic tendencies; the use of platforms for individualized decision making is valued especially because it is thought – rightly – to lead to the disappearing of intermediate bodies and – wrongly, as will be soon seen – to prevent oligarchic tendencies.

In the light of the concepts discussed in this chapter and in the previous ones, it may surprise Gerbaudo's choice to use a neologism to define such phenomena. It is evident that the two

[10] See chapter 2.

nuances of the concept of participationism are fully attributable to already existing categories. First, the great focus on participation and rejection of top-down interventions and party bureaucracies is a typical theme of elite-challenging postmaterialism. Moreover, the idea that the organizational form is key to attract participation, to the point of becoming a central element in the discourse and identity of a party, is easily traceable to the conception present in Melucci (1989, 1996) of the organization as "field of investment". Nothing too different from what happened with ecologist parties; and indeed elsewhere Deseriis (2020) signals the commonalities between the ethos of digital parties and left-libertarian parties - though referring to a tendency to the amateurization of politics, rather than to the Silent Revolution.

This normative focus on the decision-making process and the correlated distrust towards party structuring and hierarchy have two main consequences. The first is the accentuation of the "data-driven" nature of the digital party as far as it devalues ideology in favour of an ever-changing popular will, potentially leading the party to programmatic incoherence – but only potentially: patterns of leadership domination prevent this outcome, as will be seen later. The second is that new forms of *resistance a l'encadrement*, using Duverger's (1954) notorious expression, tend to emerge; the forms of participation typical to the digital party and the participationist ideology shared by its members enhance the recalcitrance to accept party discipline and make participation increasingly episodical and individualized. The structuration of relatively formalized roles inside the party and the connected emergence of hierarchies is perceived as a limitation of liberty of expression by the militants. Participationists tend to prefer expressive and outward oriented forms of participation, through fickle and horizontal forms of organization because they believe that this is the only possible way to preserve their individualities and to eliminate hierarchies and power relations.

As in the case of the Greens, even in digital parties democratization and elite-challenging tendencies go hand in hand with charismatic leadership. This is because in these cases the models of democratization pursued tends to deconstruct and disarticulate the organization. But while in left-libertarian parties charisma acts as a substitute for linkage mechanisms at the intermediate levels of the party, also on this aspect digital parties go further in the emptying out the party form. The charismatic leadership in digital parties is in fact a leadership that is at the top of the organization; it is not multiple and dispersed at different levels of the party, but it is unique and concentrated. The "hyperleader" thus makes up for the weakness of intraparty

linkage mechanisms in creating organizational cohesion, but contributes to further emptying out the party, establishing an ambiguous plebiscitary relationship with the base. On the one hand, the leader can act as guardian and representative of a certain ideological line, protecting organizational and programmatic coherence; in addition, the figure of the strong leader can be extremely functional in the arena of hyper-mediatized politics. On the other hand, entrusting such an important role of guarantee and preservation of cohesion to a single person is extremely risky, since it conjures ups an extremely important concentration of power, which is hard for the atomized base to counterbalance, but also because it becomes complicated to ensure the continuity of parties following the demise of the leader.

This democratisation model adopted by digital parties has the effect - and, in part, the intention - of emptying out the middle strata of the party. The bet that underlies these projects is to replace the mechanisms of intra-organizational linkage produced by bureaucracies and internal representation through the creation of participatory channels based on the direct involvement of individuals. The problem is that, even in the case of digital parties, these participatory mechanisms are extremely lacking. Gerbaudo (2019a) proposes to evaluate the practices of internal democracy using the categories proposed by Susan Scarrow (2005) concerning the analysis of intra-party Democracy (IPD) models. According to Scarrow, three variables describe different models of IPD: 1) inclusiveness: how wide is the group making decisions?; 2) centralization: decisions are taken by a single decision making body?; 3) Istitutionalization: the level of formalization of decision making procedure. According to Gerbaudo, in a context of generalized disintermediation - characteristic of digital parties - two idealtypes of decision making can be hypothesized. The first type is deliberative decision making, based on discussion among peers and the possibility of making bottom-up proposals. The second model is the plebiscite, in which the role entrusted to membership is essentially to choose between a limited set of options the content, framework and timing of which is unquestionably decided by the leadership. According to the author, the dominant model of decision making in digital parties is the referendum, which can be broadly assimilated to the plebiscitary model, due to the poor formalization of procedures and the wide discretion that the leadership has with regard to the formulation of questions and timing. Not infrequently, internal referendums are formulated in such a way as to confront activists with obliged choices or false dichotomies, as it is often with the ratification of decisions already taken or questions concerning the role and actions of the

leadership – all cases in which failure on the part of the base to endorse the leadership could create electoral trouble and damage the image to the party.

Mosca (2020) analyzes the internal democratic processes of digital parties bearing in mind the debate on the extension of individual voting rights in traditional parties. In this sense, addressing the unambiguous trend of decreasing participation in internal referendums in the M5S, the author assumes that, as already reported by Strömbäck and Johansson (2007), individual participation in intraparty ballots reaches high levels only during dramatized turning points and leadership contests. If this hypothesis holds, then it can easily be argued that OMOV procedures - digital or not - can lead to challenging the leadership only in highly politicized and dramatized situations, while they are ineffective in maintaining ongoing linkage mechanisms over time. The naturally low level of participation is also confirmed with regard to internal procedures inspired by forms of deliberative democracy. It is the case, for example, of the Iniciativas Ciudadanas in Podemos (Gerbaudo, 2018b). The problem here is that, since the party founding, not even a proposal has been able to pass the entire approval process. This fact confirms what has already been said in the previous sections with respect to the general ineffectiveness of intra-party policy-making forums. As for the 5 Star Movement, in fact there is no possibility of horizontal interaction within the Rousseau forum (Deseriis, 2017; Mosca, 2020). As for the explanation of the decreasing participation trend, Mosca assumes that it is mainly caused by the perception that the leadership is not really listening to the membership, being more interested in showing off internal democracy as an instrument of legitimization than in guaranteeing genuine chances of influence on the choices of the party. It is therefore possible to suppose that behind the decreasing participation there is a mechanism of self-selection: the most critical activists, those who perceive more clearly the attempt of manipulation by the leadership, tend to exercise exit because they perceive that they have no chance of voicing their concerns; only more docile activists continue to be involved, reproducing the patterns of leadership domination. With the result that, especially in the case of Movimento 5 Stelle, there are too few cases in which the leadership has been defeated in a referendum – and anytime the membership has contradicted the leadership Beppe Grillo himself has intervened to water down the effects of the vote.

In the conclusive chapter of his book, Gerbaudo points to the intrinsic fragility the digital party model. It is hard to prove him wrong: without structures fostering social cohesion inside its

ranks and without a capillary system of branches and party bureaucracies, these parties are necessarily very volatile and risk experiencing high mortality rates after the first difficulties. Although according to the author the birth of the Digital Party is good news for bottom-up politics, for it masters the use of new and old medias system without the same amounts of money and professionals as those employed by neoliberal parties, the whole mechanism is based on the free-work of "super-volunteers", since party official positions exist only at the central level. This means that the Digital Party can be effective only as long as it can mobilize its militants' enthusiasm – hence the centrality, as in left-libertarian parties, of purposive incentives; but with the passing of time this becomes a problem, for digital parties severely lack the capacity to provide selective incentives: militants have no real powers over the party line – since decisions are taken by OMOV with low entry barriers -, there is not a clear *cursus honorum* that can counterbalance the enormous costs in terms of time and psychological resources and even casual members can feel let down by the lack of chances for real influence – which has been one of the main promises of these parties; both of this facts flow from the utter destructuration of the party. It follows that participation is very episodic and unstable over time – as far as it depends only on member's moods and good will. It is also possible that the most critical and participationist individuals might frequently choose the exit option in response to the incipient patterns of domination by the leaders, leaving the parties in the hands of the most loyal and disciplined members – which might explain the trend toward lowered participation in party decision making procedures (Mosca, 2020) and persisting leadership domination.

From what has been said so far, it is possible to identify some continuities between the dynamics characterizing digital parties and the main trends of change in the party arena. The first of these, more evident, is the adoption of digital technologies. In this sense, it is important to recognize that, despite the use of the platforms takes place according to well-oiled patterns - OMOV and internal referendums - digital parties are the first membership parties (Scarrow, 2015) to use digital technologies as a tool through which to largely replace the organizational structure of the party. At the same time, while it is undeniable that there has been a qualitative leap, digital parties are not the first to use digital technologies. Margretts talks about cyber parties as early as 2001, to the extent that she identifies a tendency by parties to move online in order to respond to the growing competition from interest groups and social movements on such terrain. Digital tools are particularly promising for smaller parties, that are more interested in low-cost forms

of organizing and less institutionalized actors and therefore better able to try innovative ways without fearing major organizational backlashes. At this early stage, the internet is primarily used as a tool to provide and publicize information about the party and how to join it - for example providing toolkits to organize local groups in uncovered areas and to campaign, following the franchise model - and as fundraising tools. Scarrow (2015) recognises that the adoption of digital technologies has been key in the centralization of admission procedures and donations, contributing to establish a direct relationship between central parties and individual members/supporters, bypassing local structures. In addition, the early rudimentary and sporadic experimentations of online decision making have been taken as an opportunity to greatly lower the costs of participation, potentially opening up IPD decisions to a plethora of unaffiliated voters and supporters.

A further line of continuity with the widespread tendencies among mainstream political parties is the transformation of the party's local units from inward-oriented into outward-oriented spaces of action. According to Scarrow (1996), mainstream parties have been doing this since the late eighties; since then, the regular activities of local parties - campaigning, recruitment and dues collection - have become less labour-intensive, which has freed energies for other, more proactive, community engagement efforts. To this is added the growing adoption of micro-targeting approaches, derived from modern marketing techniques, which leads local groups to be seen as outposts qualified to reach into specific segments of the electorate – in its geographically and socio-demographical segmentations. So, while IPD and organizational linkages are individualized and autonomized by local groups, these tend to be transformed into spaces for community outreach and personalized engagement. In addition, the more local structures become autonomous from the rest of the party, the more they assume "entrepreneurial" characteristics (Flanagin et al., 2012): the proactive role and the specific capabilities and resources available present in the specific contexts become central, while the standardized input coming from the central structures loses its relative importance. This has the effect of significantly increasing the quantitative and qualitative inequalities in the modalities of participation between the different areas.

These lines of continuity, however, must not lead to forget the important discontinuities that digital parties mark. First of all, as already mentioned, it is useful to remember that digital parties are first and foremost movement parties (Kavada, 2019), actors who do not limit

themselves to electoral competition, but adopt objectives of more or less radical social and institutional transformation. Also because of the possibility, guaranteed by digital tools, to organize parties quickly and with relatively little resources, digital movement parties have the ability to represent critic demands that are usually avoided by the cartelized actors. With regard to the weakness of the mechanisms of internal democracy, it is important to remember that this is not a novelty: as far as mass parties are concerned, at the beginning of 20th century Michels had already formulated the most corrosive criticisms; this does not mean that the fundamental contribution these parties have made to the creation and support of modern democracies is overrated. We must not risk falling into the very logic of "participationism", according to which the democratic quality of political projects resides primarily in decision-making processes; the main contribution given by digital parties, as for the mass socialist parties of the last century, is first of all to articulate unexpressed social demands and to provide a horizon of hope to disadvantaged or oppressed groups. Certainly on the issue of democratization, digital movement parties may be more ambiguous than other actors, in so far as they take it on as their key concern and then achieve extremely modest results.

Finally, a potentially surprising outcome of the adoption of digital platforms is the strengthening of the party in central office vis a vis the parliamentary elite (Deseriis, 2020). It can therefore be said that there has been an increase in the importance of the party as an organizational machine, although there has not properly been a revolution in the internal logics of the organizations. Of course, the strengthening of the party in central office is not necessarily a good - nor bad - news: the judgment depends on mechanisms presiding over the selection of leaders and on their accountability. In the case of M5S the main problem here is related to the corporate and patrimonial nature of the management of power by Casaleggio Associati; as for Podemos, the problematic factor is related to the dominance of the charisma of Pablo Iglesias - though in a context definitely more formalized and structured than the 5 Stars.

3.3. Conclusions

> The criticisms show a remarkable fit with the postmaterial critique discussed by Inglehart in his generational analysis, while the solutions offered by the Greens reflect the sketch of a creative and imaginative architect rather than that of an experienced engineer: the vision is there but the mechanics are lacking (Schoonmaker, 1988: 50).

In this chapter I have analysed how parties have responded to the reduction in the offer of participation. Every time parties have tried to embrace the democratising and libertarian

mandate of the Silent Revolution, the results have been ambiguous. In the first part of the chapter it was argued that the project of New Labour was a form of selective accommodation to libertarian demands, which once deprived of their participatory dimension have been enforced by granting greater power for individuals and indulging in widespread criticism of the intermediate structures of the parties. The main consequence of this strategy has been the transition from a collectivist-participatory party model - with all the limitations of the case - to a plebiscitary party model, ending quite far from the ideals of the post-materialists. But even the efforts to rebuild the parties from the ground up in the image of post-materialist libertarianism, the results have been unsatisfactory and lead to organizational dynamics not too dissimilar from those taking place in mainstream parties: erasure of the intermediate layers, weakening of the mechanisms of internal linkages that the extension of individual voting rights has only been partially able to compensate, new forms of charismatic domination and plebiscitarianism. As Schoonmaker argues in an iconic way, in libertarian parties "the vision is there but mechanics are lacking". Post-materialist parties fail to supplant a democratic-bureaucratic hierarchy with a form of bottom-up and post-bureaucratic inverse hierarchy, eventually accelerating the tendencies to stratarchising party disarticulation.

Anyway, leaving now aside the judgment on the effectiveness and the effects of the various projects of libertarian democratization of parties it is important to point out once again that the two waves of movement parties are supported by a relatively new conception of the relationship between society and political institutions. As rightly stated by Kavada (2019), movement parties are an innovative model because they try to hold together electoral competition and social change. This statement must be broken down into its two layers of meaning. First, it is stated that the movement parties do not intend only to gain power through elections, but that they want to use that power to obtain social and institutional change. Secondly, however, it is important to note the hybrid nature of these operations, which frequently cross the frontier between the arena of social conflict and electoral competition, or between movement and party politics. This is connected to what Milburn (2019) calls the "dual strategy": the idea that it is not enough to act either in the social nor in institutional sphere alone to achieve substantial change; this conception is the consequence of a twofold cultural movement, that first has led the NSMs to the discovery of the multifaceted and microphysics nature of power, from which have stemmed forms of conflict that have long ignored the struggle for the conquest of the hegemonic power held by state institutions (Day, 2006). After an initial phase of

experimentation, critical sections of the social movements have noted,- for various reasons, including the ineffectiveness of movements and the traumatic impact of the 2008 crisis - that public powers remain extremely central in governing society and formulating key social policies even if they cannot be conceived as the omnipotent Leviathan of old. After such realization the conquest of institutions turns to be seen as insufficient but necessary condition to the realization of the desired social change.

One of the central aspects of the dual strategy is the deepening of interpenetration between movements and parties, through the development of what Chadwick defines as "party-as-movement mentality" (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016). That is, some discourses and logics typical of libertarian social movements are transposed into political parties. As we have seen, among these stands out the fact that the organizational form becomes a field of investment (Melucci, 1989, 1996). In other words, the way groups are organized becomes a central element of their identity and of the message promoted through collective action: organization turns from a simple medium to a specific demand and a message directed at society; no longer an instrument to reach an end, but an end in itself. With the transmission of the logic of movements within the institutional political arena, however, there is a significant change in this respect. If in fact in the anarchist voluntarism of social movements, masterfully described by Day, the organization prefigures the arrangements of the libertarian society, in movement parties this mentality is specified as a discourse on political-institutional change. That is, the transformation in a democratic-participatory sense of political organizations is not so much a foreshadowing of the radically democratic society of the future, but an attempt to introduce, from the ground up, a participatory reform of parties and institutions as necessary but not sufficient pre-condition to the participatory transformation of society - according to the logic of the dual strategy. At the same time, the organizational discourse loses at least in part its connotation of value rationality, returning to the field of instrumental reason: as seen in Wainwright (2008), the alliance with social movements and the adoption of an open and democratic organizational form are functional to the mobilization of enough bottom-up social power to counterbalance the power of political and economic elites and to restore a linkage between society and the institutional sphere. As I will show in Chapter 7 this conceptualization is at the basis of the Labour reform project introduced by Tony Benn’s New Left and taken up by Jeremy Corbyn: the participatory and democratic reform of the party as an answer to the demands for societal

democratization, individualization and social contestation emerged from the post-materialist transition and social movements and as a precondition for the reform of political institutions.

4 Digital technologies and participation

In chapter 1 I introduced the main trajectory of change in political participation after the Second World War, namely the organizational and cultural transformation that has been captured by the concept of Silent Revolution. In the second chapter I discussed a relevant phenomenon intervening on that trajectory, namely the Great Recession, which is the first lasting case of regression of mass economic condition in the Western world after WWII and therefore affects one of the basic social premises of the Silent Revolution. As we have seen, this critical juncture does not have the effect of reversing the tendencies to individualization and post-materialization of values, but rather it broke these tendencies into a set of more differentiated trends. This has important implications on the sphere of collective action, as the change in values has a direct impact on organizational repertoires and topics of mobilization.

In this chapter I intend to address another phenomenon intervening on the trajectory of collective action transformation during the Silent Revolution. This is the advent of digital technologies for collective organizing. Digital development is linked to the topics covered so far, as the generalized adoption of digital tools has profoundly altered collective action and therefore has led to important discussions on Olson's theoretical paradigm. The first part of the chapter is therefore concerned with analyzing how digital technologies have changed the paradigm of collective action and how this reflects on the nature – and, sometimes, the very existence – of organizations. Clearly, if digital technologies succeed in impacting on the organisation of collective action, the way in which citizens participate will also change. In the second part of the chapter I deal with this argument, showing how the organizational consequences of the generalized adoption of digital technologies for collective action has the primary effect of supporting and amplifying the individualizing and elite-challenging trends inaugurated by the post-modern transition of the Silent Revolution.

4.1. Digital technologies and collective action

4.1.1. Lowered boundaries and costs

In the theory of collective action (Olson, 1965) organizations have the task of solving the problem of free riding and providing public goods. Given the nature of such goods, which are nonrival and nonexcludable, individuals have no incentives to act to obtain them, as they could equally benefit from them even if others acted in their place. Every time action entails nontrivial

costs, individuals will always tend to wait for others to produce the desired collective goods. It is precisely here that organizations come into play, altering the individual's costs/benefits ratio through the provision of different types of incentives to action. Organizations also have a second task, that is to perform the function of coordination and intra-organizational communication. Paraphrasing Shirky (2008: 124), an organization has essentially two goals: to produce some kind of good – private or public, material or intangible – and being an organization. For a long time this theoretical frame has been taken for granted; that is scholars have assumed that organizations are the only possible effective response to the dilemmas of collective action. This is because in a context where the costs of the choice to act as well as those of intra-organisational coordination and communication are stable and relatively high, organisations capable of gathering sufficient resources to distribute incentives for action and to ensure intra-organizational coordination are a necessity.

But what if the costs of action and intra-organizational communication fall considerably? According to Flanagin, Bimber and Stohl (2005, 2007, 2012) and Lupia and Sin (2003) the primary effect of the adoption of digital technologies in collective action has exactly this effect. Accordingly, the adoption of ICTs affects both cost structures analysed in the theory of collective action. On the one hand they reduce the costs of the choice to act, insofar as the action taken online is on average less expensive than offline action; this is because it becomes possible to act comfortably from home without the need for co-presence, without being part of a network of relationships and often without even the explicit intention to coordinate with other individuals and the acceptance of forms of hierarchical organization. On the other hand, digital technologies greatly facilitate direct communication between individuals and thus the capacity for autonomous coordination, because, thanks to their end-to-end structure and the ability to ensure instantaneous ubiquity, it becomes easier to communicate at a distance and informally, as well as to find information about potential joiners and transmit requests and priorities. Cost reduction has the effect of making the barriers between the interior and exterior of the organization – which the authors define as the boundary between private and public, a boundary that is crossed every time the individual takes part in a collective action – and intra-organizational barriers extremely porous.Thus the focus shifts from organizations to organizing: to the extent that the costs of communication and coordination are greatly reduced, it can be imagined that these functions can be carried out even without the involvement of formal organizations capable of concentrating large amounts of resources. Similarly, if the free-riding

dilemma is eliminated by the lowering of the costs of the choice to participate in action, the distribution of incentives by an organization becomes less important. Through these conceptual innovations it is therefore possible to adapt the theory of collective action to the cases of organizationless organizing (Benkler, 2006; Buechler, 2011; Gurak, 1997, 1999; Gurak & Logie, 2003; Earl, Kimport, Prieto, Rush, and Reynoso 2010; Eschenfelder & Desai, 2004; Eschenfelder, Howard, & Desai, 2005; Flanagin et al., 2012; Rainie & Wellman. 2012; Shirky, 2008; Tormey, 2014). In this perspective, Olson's theory is not anymore to be understood as an explanation valid for any kind of collective action; rather, it becomes the description of a specific way of dealing with the dilemmas of collective action, in contexts defined by high coordination costs and the relatively costly and discrete choice between participation and inaction:

> We argue that traditional collective action theory represents an important subset of a broader range of theoretical possibilities—a subset that applies under certain conditions that were ubiquitous historically but that are no longer universally present when collective action occurs (Flanagin et al., 2005: 366).

This reformulation of the theory of collective action is able to encompass most of the increasingly widespread forms of collective action that take place even without centralized and hierarchical organizational coordination.

The removal of barriers between public and private by reducing the costs of action has important implications for organisations. On the one hand, as mentioned above, many authors acknowledge that the cost-benefit calculation tends to become irrelevant in the choice to act (Fulk et al., 2004; Yuan et al., 2005). The idea of a clearcut distinction between who is a member and who is not also loses significance. If the boundaries between the organization and the rest of society are easily crossed, the concept of membership becomes extremely fuzzy:

> What does "membership" mean for those who contribute to communal information repositories, whether they are entries in Wikipedia or posts to AARP's online communities? Does participating in online "credentialing" activities of various forms or revealing the identities of networks of friends and common interests in social-networking environments make one a member? (Flanagin et al., 2012: 62)

Instead of using the concept of member, here it might be more appropriate to refer to participants (Vromen, 2017) or users (Earl & Schussman, 2002). Discriminating between members and users means assuming that members are more strongly connected to the organization than simple users; such connection is not linked so much to stronger identification (Flanagin et al., 2012), but rather to the existence of a bidirectional relationship: members usually have duties towards the organization, while users do not.

However, it is important to remember that the process of "fuzzing" of the concept of membership is not entirely new. Before the advent of digital technologies, the lowering of public/private barriers in collective action occurred first with the rise of libertarian New Social Movements with their radically open organizational structures, and then migrated into the party arena with the emergence of new elite-challenging parties and the adoption by traditional parties of multi-speed membership schemes. It is clear that the member-user distinction is easily compatible with the categories used by Scarrow (2015) to classify the different modes of multi-speed membership - for example, supporters of parties on social media, whether they play a passive role or use the platforms to disseminate party material fall into the category of users or "communication recipients" (Karpf, 2012). More generally, the idea of reducing the costs of participation for joining as a way to make the distinction between internal and external organization more fuzzy is a key aspect of the concept of multispeed membership; and it is an openly recognized phenomenon also among the wider public, for example whenever parties decide to grant voting rights to non-members in order to "reconnect with the electorate". A little more complicated is to use this distinction in the specific case of platform parties: although in the debate they are referred to as members, those who join party platforms are in fact users who do not have to bear any entry costs, except in those cases where the signature of a declaration of support is compulsory - as in the case of the Non Statuto of the M5S. In any case, it is clear that the existence of a clearcut distinction between members and non-members is not so much a given as a phenomenon that has to be historicized. This distinction has as a prerequisite the capacity of organizational formalization typical of the bureaucratic organizations emerged during industrial modernity, which have been questioned by the anti-bureaucratic criticisms emerged with the process of post-modernization and the possibilities of post-bureaucratic organization opened up by the adoption of digital communication and information technologies.

What are the consequences of this new patterns of affiliation and participation introduced by digital technologies? In the literature there are essentially two schools of thought. In the first interpretation, which could be described as pessimistic, it is considered that the reduction of costs and the lowering of public/private barriers has the effect of devaluing participation - a point of view that is reminiscent of Faucher-King and Whiteley and Seyd’s analysis on New Labour. First, if an action is less expensive it is less functional in signaling the real interest and willingness to participate by individuals (Lupia & Sin, 2003). In fact, if an action is expensive, it indicates the presence of a strong will and a significant demand for the production of a given

public good. The presence of weak barriers to action can lead to misunderstandings: for example, the scope of a protest action can be overstated by the mere fact that many people take part in it; or, on the contrary, it is possible that the organizers of the protest underestimate the real effort needed to achieve a lasting mobilization. Digital organizing allows for mobilization of collective action even without prior organization building; this means that mobilizations might be quite effective and vast, but relatively fragile in that they lack structured organizational foundations (Tufecki, 2017). It is also possible that the actors realize the dynamics in play and simply stop taking into account the signals coming from collective action, so that an important source of information for action and bargaining is lost.

According to Vromen (2017) the absence of strong organizational ties makes the forms of collective action facilitated by digital technologies extremely short term and unpredictable to the extent that these allow a more fluid and temporary involvement of participants. These are not required to take part in offline meetings and therefore can easily participate even if they are not socialized to organizations. In addition, the overall organisational de-bureaucratization results in a clear lack of hierarchies, while the lack of provision of incentives to action in the case of organizationless organizing or flash mobilizations means that the effectiveness of mobilizations depends almost completely on the spontaneous enthusiasm of the participants, which might be a very unstable source of commitment. Easier communication allows organizations and groups to quickly mobilize via sudden calls to action, but mobilizers may lack the ability to control the action and maintain momentum for the necessary time span as well as to establish forms of collective bargaining on behalf of protestors (Lee & Chan, 2018); in this sense, Earl and colleagues speak of "ephemeral mobilizations" (Earl, Hunt, Garrett & Dal, 2015). Another concern frequently expressed by scholars regards the potential decline of forms of stable and substantive involvement in favor of forms of low-cost "slacktivism" (Morozov, 2010), unable to effectively impact the political arena (van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010; Harp, Bachmann & Guo, 2012). Malcolm Gladwell (2010), building on McAdam's research on Freedom Summer participants (1986), states that participation in high-risk activities is unthinkable in the absence of strong ties, that are impossible to reproduce online; consequently, participation facilitated by digital technologies would necessarily result in low-cost actions of online activism or in widespread but extremely fragile mobilizations, that is, unable to resist even modest repression. According to Gladwell and the other theorists of slacktivism, therefore, in the transition from strong face to face ties to weak online ties there is an insurmountable

trade-off between the ability to develop lasting mobilizations and the ease of large-scale communication. Those who claim such criticisms, however, have to demonstrate that individuals who opt for low-cost actions would be equally willing to choose high-cost action options – which is a theoretical nonsense. According to Karpf instead

> Digital activism is not a replacement for the Freedom Riders of the 1960s; it is a replacement for the "armchair activism" that arose from the 1970s interest group explosion (Karpf, 2012: 8).

So the first part of the slacktivism theorists' criticism is in part correct: low-cost actions that are implemented online may in some cases be less impactful than other activities that come with higher costs – insofar as the latter might be more risky, more time consuming, requiring long-term commitments, continuous relational work and organizational mediations etc. But effectiveness has to be assessed in each specific case; in some cases short-term massive action is preferable to longer efforts undertaken by closely knit groups, that can endure pressure for longer periods but are necessarily smaller in numbers. Also, sometimes disruptive street action might be less useful than online communication-based campaigns, for example when the objective is to expose some brand exploiting environmental and labour regulations.

At the same time, it is necessary to clarify that digital technologies in themselves do not discourage participation in high cost activities, but allow greater participation in low cost activities. Another thing would be to say, as Morozov does, that there might be a trade-off for organizations between investing in mobilizing and organizing: while the former is made more convenient by lowered communication costs, organization building activities are not greatly affected by digital technologies. This could propel many organizations towards the choice of investing their scarce resources in mobilizing efforts since these might grant higher return on investment thanks to digital "doping", and that differently from the past would not have as pre-requisite the construction of strong organizational infrastructures (Tufecki, 2017). This could potentially lead to an abandonment of organizing practices, with important repercussions regarding the organizational solidity of the movements and their ability to have a transformative impact on the militants (Han, 2014). Of the same opinion are Doug Mcadam and Sidney Tarrow:

> The cost of the greater extension of Internet-based diffusion may be to lose the sustaining quality that social trust offers to more direct diffusion among people who know each other. If true, the Internet may produce more easily triggered episodes of contentious politics—for example, in the electoral arena—at the cost of sustained social movements (McAdam & Tarrow, 2010: 83).

An alternative and more optimistic approach is that proposed by Earl and Kimport (2011), according to whom the fact that online action entails lower costs allows organizers to draw from

a larger potential pool of participants. This means that it can be easier for those who leverage digital tools to reach a sufficient number of participants. Moreover, given the flexibility of online involvement, it is possible to provide users with forms of intermediate involvement, able to prevent the complete exit. The logic of this reasoning can remind of Garland's argument about multi-speed membership parties (2017, 2018): in a context of great volatility of participation and of reduced availability on the part of individuals to formulate long term commitments, organisations can ensure a suitable number of participants by lowering the costs of participation and making it more flexible and adaptable to individual needs.

While decreased costs of action for the individual greatly impacts the public/private boundary, the potential by digital technologies to reduce information and communication costs impacts the second type of barriers taken into account by the theory of collective action, namely intra-organisational barriers. According to Flanagin, Bimber and Stohl (2012) four types of intra-organisational barriers that are affected by the adoption of digital technologies can be identified. First of all, it becomes easier for members - or participants - to interact directly with each other, without necessarily taking part in official meetings or in some way sanctioned by the organization; this can multiply the number of interactions, which can easily escape organizational control. The second type of barrier regards the increased ability to disseminate information about organizations and actions being planned; thanks to digital tools organizers gain wider noticeability (Lupia & Sin, 2003) and for individuals it becomes easier to discover information about the organization, its objectives, successes and failures as well as opportunities for involvement. Third, digital media weaken the hierarchical control of information by organizations:

> The evolution of data sharing, processing, and storage from centralized to largely decentralized peer-to-peer technologies empowers individuals to utilize and easily process information across multiple contexts in ways never before possible. As people have the ability on their own to access readily and interpret complex and diverse information about their organization and its goals, successes, or failures, their individual sense making becomes personalized across a greater number of contexts, and some people will become less reliant on established organizational authorities (Flanagin et al., 2012: 66).

Finally, digital technologies potentially reduce barriers to the participation of individuals in the agenda-setting and decision-making of organisations and groups. Traditional bureaucratic-voluntary organisations lay down precise rules defining the bodies, procedures, actors deputed to decision-making, often by structuring in hierarchical layers. The more formalized and hierarchical the procedures, the higher the barriers to individual influence over collective

choices. As seen in the previous chapter, digital technologies can be extremely effective in breaking down this hierarchical and formalized structure, providing users with the chance to: 1) be directly consulted by the leadership, bypassing internal hierarchies and leading to a significant de-institutionalisation of procedures (Musella e Vercesi, 2019) – this is the case with platform parties; or 2) self-organize in collaborative and horizontal co-decision processes, that is the case of network parties (Deseriis, 2020). According to the authors these processes of elimination of intra-organizational barriers converge in putting the tools necessary for organizing right in the hands of individuals and informal groups. The removal of informational barriers allows individuals to be more autonomous from organisations in all the four steps of the collective action implementation process: people making their preferences and desires known to others, locating others with shared interests, connecting with them, and facilitating coordination and communication. Humphreys (2007) argues that the reduction of transaction costs in communication leads to the phenomenon of "microcoordination", that is the continuous relational adjustment between individuals aside from bureaucratic-organizational dynamics. It is also possible that the greater capacity of individuals to organize autonomously increases their bargaining power vis-à-vis organisations. Why would an individual accept to lose its independence joining an organisation when he or she has the opportunity to act more autonomously? Such a dynamic could potentially force organizations to raise their offer of incentives to action to ensure a sufficiently large pool of activists (Lupia & Sin, 2003).

But one could also propose the opposite argument: if digital technologies break down informational barriers, this can be exploited not only by individuals but also by the organizations themselves. For example, one of the typical problems that organizations face to prevent free riding and non-cooperative behaviours by individuals is the difficulty to access accurate information about their members' behavior. In those cases in which digital technologies improve the circulation of this kind of information, it is clear that organisations could potentially use them to exercise greater control over individuals (Lupia & Sin, 2003). In general, organizations may use the larger amount of information available to distribute incentives and punishments in a vein that is more consonant with the objectives of those who hold the levers of organizational resources, preventing calculation mistakes and marginalizing organizational intermediation and related costs. The reduction of transaction costs on information and communication, insofar as this results in a reduction of coordination and management costs, can lead to staff reductions and therefore lower monetary costs for the organization (Earl &

Schussman, 2003; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Earl, 2015); this phenomenon has already been observed in the case of digital parties, that, being able to count on an organizational infrastructure that is almost completely digital, are able to greatly reduce party staffs. The choice to exploit the ability of digital infrastructures to reduce costs is in some cases a deliberate decision, aimed at reducing personnel costs but not only. For example, as seen in the case of digital parties, the digital-based organization allows to reduce if not to completely eliminate the peripheral ramifications of organizations; this responds to a primarily political will for centralisation and elimination of intermediate power groups that stand between the central staff and the membership/users:

> If there are no offices, there's no water cooler talk. Offices create satellite offices. MoveOn wants to keep the organization flat, with no hub offices and no organizers stuck on the periphery (Karpf, 2012: 30).

Finally, as seen in the case of the Global Justice Movement, digital technologies cut the costs of information and coordination not only within organizations, but also between different organizations, potentially allowing transnational coordination of collective action (Chadwick, 2007; Della Porta, 2004; Diani, 2000; Garrett & Edwards, 2007); normally these mobilizations exploit the combined power of digital coordination and "ideologically thin" appeals (Bennett 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b) to ensure high levels of participation even in the presence of significant physical distances and low ideological homogeneity. The greater ease of coordination also allows for unprecedented opportunities for temporary resource pooling, a particularly central aspect for resource-poor actors.

4.1.2. Organizing without organizations?

The combination of lowered public/private and intra-organisational barriers has the effect of making social action considerably easier:

> In any given public or quasi-public setting, from a city sidewalk to a pair of adjacent seats on an airplane, one of the chief obstacles to human interaction is informational: the discovery of shared interests, shared desires, or common experiences and acquaintances. Technologies that help people identify and overcome these information and communication obstacles can readily facilitate the beginnings of social behavior. (Bimber et al., 2005: 382).

Shirky (2008) argues that the type of social action that is most impacted by the fall in costs of participation and communication is the creation of groups:

> There are many small reasons for this, both technological and social, but they all add up to one big change: forming groups has gotten a lot easier. To put it lin economic terms, the costs incurred by creating a new group or joining an existing one have fallen in recent years, and not just by a little bit. They have collapsed. (Shirky, 2008: 24).

To the extent that digital technologies facilitate the formation of groups[11], which potentially require less and less hierarchical management due to the capacity of digital tools to allow constant microcoordination, the traditional limitations of size, complexity, and organizational autonomy - all key issues in Olson's theory - are altered. As long as cost reduction is relatively small, it is possible to expect mainly quantitative organizational changes: larger organisations expand - because they have fewer size-related coordination limits and thus can manage more interactions with the same staff and costs - and smaller ones become more efficient. Yet, according to Shirky, with digital technologies the situation becomes much more radical, because transaction costs do not fall moderately but collapse; if transaction costs reach a sufficiently low level, it is possible that the investment of resources aimed at building and maintaining the organisation - the aim of which is to adopt economies of scale such as to make the coordination of a multitude of individuals feasible - becomes superfluous:

> So long as the absolute cost of organizing a group is high, unmanaged groups will be limited to undertaking small efforts-a night out at the movies, a camping trip. Even something as simple as a potluck dinner typically requires some hosting institution. Now that it is possible to achieve large-scale coordination at low cost, a third category has emerged: serious, complex work, taken on without institutional direction. Loosely coordinated groups can now achieve things that were previously out of reach for any other organizational structure […]. (Shirky, 2008: 52)

The fall in information and communication costs, which translates into reduced intra-organizational transaction costs, therefore opens the door to organizing without organizations. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) in this respect refer to "communication as organization": since communication requires less resources, in can take place effectively without organizations; therefore, communication takes the place of organizations in organizing. According to Shirky, this outcome is particularly significant, because it configures the possibility of freeing human passions and energies from the burdens and complexities of organizations; formal organization that here is seen as problematic but inevitable in contexts marked by high transaction and communication costs. Organizations show a significant number of collateral effects, such as the presence of hierarchies and the tendency to bureaucratic overload, which stymie the creativity and expressive freedom of individuals. It is not always possible to do without them, but when this becomes possible, why not? It is also possible that motivations for action may change

[11] It is important to note that not only the creation of online groups is facilitated, but also of those that operate mostly offline (Karpf, 2012). This to the extent that the reduction of information costs related to digital tools impacts on the ability of individuals with specific demands and preferences to make them publicly known, as well as on the ease for organizers to make known their own mobilization efforts and their own agenda and to recruit.

radically: in a context where the incentives to action provided by organisations are reduced but the costs of action become extremely low, it might be that the mere desire for free and creative self-expression becomes the main motivation to action among the individuals who take part in collective action.

As I mentioned above, one effect of the collapse of costs due to digital technologies is the increased ability to manage collective action with tiny staffs. In the wake of Shirky's argument on cases where organizational structuration becomes superfluous, Earl and Kimport (2011) argue that it has become possible to conceive of organizations made up of just one person. In these cases, organizational costs would turn to zero while proficiency in digital tools could ensure excellent noticeability and communication. This is particularly significant and visible in the context of social movements, as it allows the emergence of influential mobilizers that are completely disconnected from the existing social movement organizations (SMOs). In the case of the mobilizations that are initiated by a SMO, leaders are subjected to a long process of socialization and training; this certainly provides important skills to individual organizers, but overall tends to limit the variety in the themes of the mobilizations and in collective action practices (Earl & Schussman, 2004). When the mobilization is initiated by individuals or small groups that act outside dominant organizations, it is likely that these are people who are not socialized to any social movement in particular or even to the arena of collective protest. These new organizers will tend to break the dynamics of path dependency that characterize the most important SMOs - in terms of ideology, history and impact of the organizational structure - introducing concerns and ways of thinking coming from other social domains. This leads, according to the authors, to two main consequences. The first is the rapid increase in the variety of themes being mobilized: given the low costs, it is possible to mobilize for any issue, even with a relatively small amount of participants; given the break with the world of organized movements, many ideological and cognitive foreclosures disappear. The second consequence is that the organisers' priorities change. Earl (2007) and Earl and Schussman (2004) show that these new organizers are not interested in the classic priorities of social movements - fund-raising, media and knowledge of adversaries and allies. In addition, it is possible that new organizers might not think of themselves as activists or as members of a wider movement, simply perceiving themselves as individual actors moved by more or less public concerns.

Should we assume that organisations are destined to disappear from the scene of collective action? Absolutely not. This is primarily because, to the extent that organizationless organizing is possible only in cases where costs suffer a collapse, asserting that organizations are becoming completely superfluous requires that all the costs of collective action are equally collapsing. It is difficult to say that digital technologies are capable of lowering all kinds of costs of action and coordination and in any context. Where costs remain relatively high, organisations remain of the essence. This is the case, according to Earl and Kimport (2011), for most collective actions implemented offline, which structurally require higher communication and coordination costs compared to online actions – starting from the necessity to ensure physical co-presence - that can only in some cases and partially be reduced by the use of digital tools. It is possible to hypothesize also cases in which the organizers are not able to leverage the cost-reducing affordances provided by the internet and this pushes them to opt for more traditional organization modes:

> When organizers leverage the affordances of Internet-enabled technologies, they reduce the advantages that SMOs confer, but when they choose not to, or fail to, leverage those affordances, SMOs still confer significant returns on investment (Earl, 2015: 45).

According to Karpf (2012), organizers must not only face communication costs, but need also to be credible in asserting their power and exerting influence. In order to pose a credible challenge to established powers or to obtain social recognition at national level, organisations must act on a large scale. To do this it is in many cases impossible to think of leaving too much discretion to the spontaneity of individual users, but on the contrary it necessitates some form of hierarchical organization - and this applies, according to the author, even for open source efforts like Wikipedia and Linux. It must also be taken into account the fact that, if the internet allows more individuals to be heard, it does not guarantee that all voices get that chance; to have greater visibility organizers may need more resources and often greater dimensions, things that can almost always be guaranteed only by the organization.

In addition, many forms of collective action continue to require types of expertise that cannot be entirely outsourced to the collective intelligence of volunteers or that is not easy to find in the small staff of digital organizations. To use external advice whenever trainers are needed for new activists and leaders (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004), collective bargaining experts, lobbyists, policy experts etc., is extremely expensive and potentially risky in any case in which there isn’t enough trust among actors. In these cases, there are three possibilities. The first is

that lean organizations can find, through fundraising or other sources, the resources necessary to pay in surcharge external consultancy whenever it is necessary; hypothesis of improbable realization, according to Karpf, who observes that online fundraising is particularly effective in generating revenues on issues able to mobilize the enthusiasm of supporters, among which the costs of the organization can hardly figure:

> The concern here is that targeted online fundraising appears to work much better for funding television advertisements than volunteer trainings. It is much easier to fundraise for a specific, time-limited issue outcome than it is for field offices (Karpf, 2012: 168).

The alternative to reliance on supporters is to establish close relations with donors and fundraisers, tipping on them the costs of outsourced professionals. This, however, at the price of renouncing the independence granted by low cost organizing; in this scenario there would be some of the typical drawbacks of the organizations – namely, hierarchical influences over decisions - without having a comparable ability to control the flow of resources. Another possibility, probably the closest to reality, is that of specialization: organizations remain dominant in all areas where skills are needed that are too specific and complex to be contracted out to users or internalised by the central staff. The third possibility, finally, is that of the impoverishment of collective action: should there be a generalized shift towards mainly digital forms of mobilization led by tiny organizations or even by individuals, there is the concrete possibility that there will be an overall reduction in the capacity to influence politically through collective action; that is, the effects of the beneficial inefficiencies typical of traditional organisations would be lost; in the presence of high coordination and transaction costs after all organizations are forced to provide themselves with a solid base if skills and management able to cope with almost all possible situations and needs.

This said without taking into account that not all forms of action mediated by digital tools are really low cost: one thing is, for example, to use social networks to mobilize for a street protest action; quite another is to organize a ground campaign for an election, building databases of voters and supporters without which it is impossible to organize even low-cost actions such as phone banking (Nielsen, 2012; Piazzo, 2021). Technology very often requires enormous costs and expertise, which reintroduce the issue of finding and managing resources.

A final set of considerations relates to the greater capacity of organizations to ensure longer duration and stability over time to collective action. According to Earl & Schussman (2001, 2003), the presence of an organization is necessary in order to mantain relational networks

whenever waves of protest are followed by a phase of decline in the intensity of action. The presence of the organization might produce what Taylor (1989) defines "abeyance", that is the ability to maintain the movement at a level of activity that is reduced but not null, preventing the total dispersion of the resources and relational networks on which the mobilization phase was based and which could be useful in the event of new waves of collective action. This necessity might disappear in the case of low-cost online organizing, because the data storage capacity and the speed of communication and therefore of mobilization guaranteed by the internet may in some cases allow to keep resources and networks intact without formal organizations. In these cases, it may be enough that there are forms of "digital abeyance", that is storage of data on participants and tools to activate the mobilization later on. In short, the more the collective action is founded on a consistent network of relationships and professionalism, the more likely it is that digital abeyance, alone, will not be enough:

> Finally, when stable networks are important to a movement, SMOs may offer moderate support. For instance, stable networks might be important to recruiting and retaining participants engaged in high-risk activism (McAdam, 1986) or in situations where the legal consequences of action are ambiguous. Stable relationships with the media might also be important for generating media coverage of a specific issue or viewpoint. SMOs tend to facilitate these kinds of stable relationships. (Earl, 2015: 46.

Provided that digital abeyance is necessary. While Tarrow (1994) states that the power of social movements develops and is asserted only slowly through lasting mobilizations, the forms of collective action promoted through digital media very often take the form of "flash" actions, that is short-term online campaigns that emerge quickly, have wide participation and then disappear just as quickly (Bennet & Fielding, 1999; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Earl & Schussman, 2003, 2004; Gurak, 1997, 1999; Gurak & Logie, 2003). It is important to note, however, that the successes of some of these mobilizations show that there is no necessary relationship between the duration and impact of the movements. As evident in the case of the Arab Spring, street protests facilitated by digital technologies can force in a few weeks the collapse of major political leaders (Gerbaudo, 2012; 2017). Therefore the point is not so much to assert the absolute superiority of a specific form of action - entirely online, online facilitation of offline actions, entirely offline - or organizational form - SMOs or organizing without organizations – but to assess in which situations a model of collective action organisation is more effective than others:

> It is one thing to challenge a time specific zoning decision, or the design decisions of your gaming console manufacturer (Earl & Kimport, 2009; Earl & Schussman, 2008), and it is quite another to try to end racism. A time-focused goal does not require an enduring movement, and thus returns to investments in creating

> SMOs might be minimal or negative. Time-focused goals also fit well with a flash activism model of power. But, if one requires long-term, persistent action to achieve a goal—a goal for which flash activism is unlikely to be successful— then SMOs provide a more durable infrastructure for the challenge. It is also likely that these long-term struggles require significant strategic decision making by trusted and long-standing actors, a role uniquely well suited for SMOs. These long term efforts also likely substantially increase coordination costs, which Karpf (2012) argues replaces the free rider dilemma as a central rationale for the centrality and importance of SMOs. (Earl, 2015: 46)

Online movements can also easily allow for forms of diffused, episodic or task-oriented leadership - as evident in cases of organizationless movements such as Anonymous (Beyer, 2011) or forms of liquid and network-based organization as in Pirate Parties (Gerbaudo, 2019; Deseriis, 2020). These forms of collective action are based on the spontaneous aggregation of individuals who temporarily gather to coordinate their predominantly online actions, without consolidated and ongoing leadership structures, exploiting the collective intelligence of the participants and the connective potential of digital technologies. Yet, the effectiveness of these ways of managing leadership and tasks has been attested only within short-lived campaigns (Earl, 2015). In any case, following the considerations already elaborated above, it is therefore possible to assume that, where collective action is episodic and localized, diffused and informal leadership can function, while this is much more problematic in the case of the leadership of wider movements. It all depends on the type of collective action promoted and the arenas involved. For example, in the specific case of political parties that use digital technologies for their organization, Deseriis (2020) shows how platform parties are best suited to compete and gain recognition in the mainstream political arena, that is those among the digital parties that have opted for greater organizational centralization and more traditional leadership schemes - unlike the aforementioned networked parties. Organizational formalization can also be pursued voluntarily by the activists, in so far as it can ensure greater visibility and routinization of power relations inside the movements (Toepfl, 2018).

Finally, Earl and Kimport (2011) hypothesize two further areas in which organizations could be more functional than organizing without organizations. The first of these is when collective action could be subject to changes in its cost structure before its completion. The most emblematic case is that of police repression, capable of raising in a few minutes the risks and therefore the cost of action; but this is also true for all cases where there are sudden scenario transformations or where new bargaining options emerge that are not contemplated at the beginning of the mobilization. The second case concerns logistical operations:

> **[…]**, our foregoing discussion has focused on costs that are accrued in order to create an event. But what if those costs go away while the costs of cleaning up from an event remain? A frivolous day of partying in Santa Barbara illustrates this concern. In 2009, over twelve thousand mostly college-aged people met up at the beach for a day dubbed " Floatopia. " Organized entirely online and allegedly largely through Facebook, the day drew unexpectedly large crowds. With no organization sponsoring the event or in charge, some key details were overlooked. There were no extra bathrooms for twelve thousand people, nor was there emergency water. No special law enforcement, paramedic, or life guard details were arranged in advance (although all showed up once people started swimming while drunk and falling from the bluffs abutting the ocean). There was no cleanup crew for all of the trash that was created and not taken away. Summed up, there were many costs during and after the event that public entities had to assume liability for because there were no organizers to hold responsible. Applied to protest, it will be critical to examine not just the up-front costs of organizing but also the follow-up costs, and how those are spread across different actors (Earl & Kimport, 2011: 120).

The case of the Movements of the Squares of 2011 and the protests of Gezi Park of 2013 would seem to be able to refute these claims. In those cases, in fact, the activists managed to organize the logistics aimed at supporting physical encampments enduring for weeks only through coordination through social networks and in particular the use of public posts on Twitter to communicate the organizational priorities and requests (Gerbaudo, 2012; Tufecki, 2017). Also in this case, we must take the counterevidence with a pinch of salt: those protests were able to base their logistics on the dissemination of online appeals because they gained enormous visibility and mobilized huge participation, and it is precisely because of the extraordinariness of the situation that they were able to inspire emotional transport and therefore the desire to concretely cooperate in a sufficiently wide audience. It is difficult to assume the same level of momentous and enthusiastic support in the case of smaller or more routinized forms of action. Whenever organisers cannot rely on mass support and highly visible social media accounts, traditional logistics is probably the best choice.

From what has been said, therefore, it is clear that digital technologies will not make organization as such superfluous; there are too many costs that are not cut by the internet and too many benefits of organization that cannot be supplanted. Anyway, in any case that the organization exists to cope with costs that are significantly decreased by digital technologies or where the initial resources are so scarce that do not allow organizers to reason in terms of professionalism, digital technologies can lead to the emergence of extremely small organizations or even organizers without organizations. The most likely outcome of the rise of digital technologies in the field of collective action is therefore that of organizational diversification: in some cases, organizers decide or are forced to establish traditional or relatively formalized organizations; in other cases, organizing can take place in a different way. The emergence of cases of organizing without organizations means that traditional modes of

organization become less dominant, but does not by itself lead to the end of the modern organization as we know it. Rather than the transition from one model of collective action to another, digital technologies lead to a growing mixture of different forms of action and to organizational hybridization (Chadwick, 2007; Lee & Chan, 2018).

The transition to a context marked by greater variety in the organization of collective action doesn't always take place gradually and incruently. Karpf (2012) refers to the disruptive effects of digital technologies. Such effects occur whenever organizations fail to exploit the cost-reducing affordances of the internet and are therefore supplanted by more innovative organizations or, if costs become sufficiently low, by organizationless organizers. Vromen (2017) lists six areas of activity where organizations are challenged by the emergence of digital organizing:

> 1. Nimble organisational and staffing structures 2. Passive to active membership 3. Use of both online and offline engagement strategies 4. Approach to small donations and fundraising 5. Using narratives and storytelling 6. Having well-integrated use of social media in their communications (Vromen, 2017: 194).

This process does not necessarily have a negative impact only on decaying organization. A generalized reduction in the number of traditional organisations can in fact lead to a reduction in the level of political experience, professionalism and political incisiveness in some types of collective action. The use of digital technologies is likely to make mobilizations easier, multiplying the number of causes, approaches and participants, but could subject some of the most democratically valuable organisations[12] to unequal competition, that could push some of them to abandon long-term projects to turn to cheaper and less risky flash-mobilizing (Han, 2014; Karpf, 2012).

A final possible outcome is the emergence of new models of organisations. According to Flanagin, Bimber and Stohl (2012) the very amount of organisations in the years from 2000 has increased, not decreased. And with their number, variety has also increased. At the turn of the century Castells (1996) assumed that the organizational form of the network would soon supplant vertical-hierarchical organizations, whose ratio lied in the well-known organizational imperatives posed by high costs of communication and coordination. On the contrary, once these costs would have disappeared, the network could fully reveal its superiority in terms of

[12] Valuable because of their ability to produce leadership, political culture, effective pressure and institutional durability.

flexibility, adaptability and spontaneous reconfiguration capacity; from this insight Castells deduces that the digital era would be the era of organizational decentralization. This prediction has been only partially correct. Let's take Gerbaudo's digital parties as an example: on the one hand, these develop an effective decentralization of tasks and roles, especially in election campaigns (Gerbaudo, 2018; Bond & Exley, 2016); on the other hand, strong centralisation patterns are evident due to the capacity of leadership-controlled platforms to extract data and constrain interactions (Piazzo, 2021). Digital technologies have therefore given rise to different forms of organization, among which the most extreme cases are undoubtedly the relatively egalitarian networks of the Global Justice Movement and the case of platformized companies able to extract data for free and infiltrate deeply into individual lives (Van Dijk et al. 2018; Srnicek, 2017).

In addition, in digital organizing are possible extremely varied organizational arrangements. Karpf (2012) shows it very clearly in his roundup on US digital organizations. Among these can be found cases of "passive" adaptation to the digital revolution: this is the aforementioned case of MoveOn, an organisation that exploits the internet's coordination advantages and low costs to rely on a very large number of participants, in which the absence of obligations to participation is key in allowing continuous involvement with relatively weak commitment mechanisms and an approach that is issue oriented rather than organization oriented. In other cases, the new digital organizations more radically exploit the possibilities opened up by the internet. The author names the example of Living Liberally and Townhouse, organizations that deal with linking with each other, respectively, activists and leaders of the progressive world, without worrying about orienting the forms of emerging cooperation among them. These organizations take full advantage of the internet's potential to promote communication and encounter, without asking anything else of participants. There are also cases in which the digital infrastructure is designed in such a way as to facilitate coordination between different face to face local groups. The question that needs to be asked, therefore, is how sociological theory is used to explain this multiplicity in digital-based organizational forms.

4.1.3. Theory 2.0: supersizing and transformative effects of digital technologies

In the previous paragraph I've showed that digital technologies do not have a uniform impact on all forms of collective action and in all contexts. I focused mainly on the fact that collective action in many cases is based on organizational dynamics that are not directly impacted by

digital technologies. This considerably reduces the scope of organizing without organizations, but without diminishing its salience; on the contrary, what is signaled is that some distinctions are required in order to understand in depth the new organizational dynamics. Two other aspects have also been mentioned: on the one hand, the fact that organizers are not necessarily able or willing to exploit the opportunities offered by digital technologies; on the other hand, that there are different types of collective action facilitated by digital technologies. Both of these aspects can be effectively analyzed through the "leveraged affordances approach" (Earl & Kimport, 2011) which also allows a deeper understanding of how and why digital technologies can have a heavily transformative impact on collective action and therefore on organizations. According to the authors

> An affordance is the type of action or a characteristic of actions that a technology enables through its design (Earl & Kimport, 2011: 10).

It is important to note that the concept of affordances is in a certain sense a comparative one: the internet isn't the only instrument allowing to do such things, but rather, compared with the closest comparable technologies, stands out because it allows to do these things better or faster or at a wider scale. This also means that there are other technologies that allow to do the same things - in terms of ubiquity, even if only for one-to-one interactions, there is the phone - but these are less preferable.

According to Earl & Kimport, the internet has two main affordances. The first is the reduction of the costs of creation, organization and participation in protest actions; this has been widely discussed in the previous paragraph. This first affordance is redefined by Tufecki (2011) as the greater capacity of digital technologies to involve people from a social, political and intellectual point of view. The second affordance is the transformation of co-presence from an essential element of collective action into a variable: thanks to the Internet, it is possible to act collectively both in co-presence and in the absence of the same. Earl and Kimport's approach adopts the concept of affordances to focus on their multiple uses. The fact that a technology possesses certain affordances, in fact, does not determine its use as much as its potential (Lee & Chan, 2018); then it is the actors, that is the organizers, who decide consciously or not how to use such affordances:

> Technologies don't change societies or social processes through their mere existence but rather impact social processes through their mundane or innovative uses, and the ways in which the affordances of the technology are leveraged by those mundane or innovative uses (Earl & Kimport, 2011: 14).

In other words, organizers leverage the affordances provided by the internet according to their organizational goals and expertise, as well as the resources available. The implication of this observation is not only to allow differentiation between different types of online action, but it has a marked theoretical relevance. The less the affordances of the web are leveraged, the more their impact is purely additive: that is, to allow to do exactly the same things that would have been done without the internet, but on a larger scale, at a higher speed and reduced costs (Vegh, 2003). These additive or "supersizing" (Earl & Kimport, 2011) effects are consequences of the greater capacity of the internet to allow an effective and targeted diffusion of the information and consequently the identification of constituencies on the one hand and of the occasions of participation provided by the organizers on the other (Ayres, 1999; Hajek & Kabele, 2010; Hara & Huang, 2011; Lebert, 2003; Myers, 1994; Schulz, 1998; Stein, 2009; Van Aelst and Walgrave 2002, 2004; van de Donk et al., 2004).

On the contrary a more intensive leveraging of the affordances leads to effects that can be fully grasped only if the theory of collective action is significantly revised, following the arguments presented in the previous sections. A greater or lesser leverage of affordances, therefore, marks the gap between merely supersizing effects and transformative effects, to account for which it is necessary to elaborate what Earl and Kimport define as "theory 2.0". A theory that, posing as its cornerstone the dramatic reduction in communication and coordination costs and the definition of co-presence as a variable and no longer as a datum, can account for innovative phenomena such as

> the rise in five-minute activism, the declining necessity of organizations and even cooperative organizing, and the new kinds of causes that people choose to organize around (Earl & Kimport, 2011: 24).

In all of these cases, the definition of collective action shifts from co-present action to coordinated action, with co-present action becoming only one of the possible ways of ensuring effective coordination.

The distinction proposed by Earl and Kimport between supersizing and transformative effects is taken up by other authors, although with slightly different meanings and terminology and without a direct reference to the concept of affordances. Micò and Casero-Ripolles (2014) speak alternatively of reinforcement and innovation. Reinforcement means exactly the same kind of effect defined by the concept of supersizing; the concept of innovation instead refers more specifically to the rise of new extra-representative and institutionally disruptive forms of

collective action facilitated by the internet. Bennett (2004) distinguishes between dynamics of amplification and expansion of organizational routines, especially in the cases when the internet is adopted by established organizations for traditional purposes such as the organization of electoral campaigns and the dissemination of information. On the contrary, more innovative and fluid organisations would be better able to exploit the decentralised coordination potential offered by digital tools, promoting not only an amplification of the usual organisational capabilities and functions, but a real innovation in the structures and forms of coordination. Only Tufecki (2011) seems to question this dual approach, according to the idea that "faster is different", affirming supersizing effects effect can by themselves in some cases radically modify the impact and logic of collective action; the example to which the author refers is that of the protests against political regimes: the acceleration and multiplication of patterns of mobilization makes the traditional strategies of control and repression almost impossible, forcing the regimes to drastic choices between repression and inaction - since it becomes impossible to stop the protests hitting the leaders of the mobilizations, which often do not exist or are otherwise disposable.

How to distinguish between actions that leverage more or less these affordances and, consequently, between which theory of collective action - supersizing or transformative - must be used in the analysis? A first criterion can be to distinguish between actions that take place entirely online and those that retain at least a partial offline component. The ratio is the following: the more the action takes place online, the less it will have to take into account the costs of the action typical of offline action and the need to ensure co-presence. For example, a campaign to boycott a large corporation, tactical voting platforms and e-mail bombing campaigns can be defined as tactics that take place only online; on the contrary, the 2011 street protests were indeed facilitated and partly coordinated via social media, but in fact required the simultaneous participation of thousands of people in the same physical space - resulting in a significant rise in costs, for purely organizational-logistic reasons but also for a different perception of risk and therefore of the individual choice to participate.

On this basis, the authors distinguish between three forms of online activism. The first form, the one that takes place entirely online and is therefore the most leveraging, are the e-movements - for example the already mentioned cases of strategic voting in the United States. The second form, which includes actions taking place both online and offline that however

entail only low cost actions and do not require co-presence for organisers and participants, are defined as e-tactics, such as hybrid campaigns that include both petitions or boycotts organized online and some sort of offline protest action, often in the form of flash-mobs, enacted by some sections of the movements. Finally, e-mobilizations, that is all those tactics that include more traditional collective actions that require co-presence - marches, occupations etc. - but are organized online; in this case, the internet is used to reduce the costs of organising and disseminating information, but fails to impact the costs of the action itself. With a somewhat similar argumentation, Laer and Aelst (2010) distinguish between internet-supported and internet-based tactics; the former are tactics that are "augmented" through the use of digital technologies, while the latter could not exist in the absence of the internet.

Systematizing the argument, Earl and Kimport affirm that with new technologies we observe the emergence of a new repertoire of contention, which adds to the traditional and modern repertoires already identified by Charles Tilly (1978, 1979). For the reasons already discussed, the digital repertoire is not simply an evolution within the paradigm of collective action, but marks the birth of what has been defined as a 2.0 paradigm of collective action, since for the first time it is possible to act collectively with relatively low costs and without co-presence. From this point of view, the modern and traditional repertoires of action resemble each other more than Tilly could ever have imagined, insofar as they share the same structural pre-conditions – co-presence and high costs. On the contrary, the traditional repertoire differs from the modern one mainly for the lack of long-term mobilizations; a characteristic that is at least partially recovered in the digital repertory, which most "pure" forms – that are those leveraging the most out of digital affordances - often take sporadic, flash and issue-oriented forms.

Put in these terms, the differences between different forms of online action appear to be merely quantitative, or rather: the qualitative differences between the different forms of online activism appear to be the result of the choice/ability to leverage more or less the two affordances of the internet. It becomes a matter of more or less, to the point that to classify the different tactics Earl and Kimport use the quantification of online vs offline action time for each tactic. Yet there are cases of online or digitally enabled action that are difficult to distinguish on the basis of a purely quantitative reasoning - how much are the affordances leveraged - and that by their nature force us to reintroduce the question of qualitative differences- that is, the analysis of how to the potential of the web is leveraged. A closer observation shows that, although in general terms the affordances identified by Earl and Kimport can appropriately describe the

revolutionary effects of the world wide web, the internet is not a flat space; the typical affordances of the network are in turn leveraged differently by different websites and applications; and users experience the internet not as such, but through the mediation of specific applications, which in a sense develop second-level affordances. With each application it is possible to do different things by making different tools available to the user; these tools are in turn derived from the two macro-affordances described by Earl and Kimport. One can easily find confirmation of this argument in the different uses of the web made by the Global Justice Movement and the Movement of Squares of 2011 - in the first case through the use of listservs, while in the second mainly through social media. Jefferey Juris (2012) expresses this very clearly: in the case of the Global Justice Movement, the use of listservs is functional to speed up and facilitate coordination between organizations, in order to integrate them into a flexible global network able to self-reconfigure, reflect on strategies and gather physically when necessary; at the same time, the mechanism of the listserv rests on the separation between society and networks of protest: to access to the listserv one must be part of a given network, and this has the effect of enhancing and reproducing the countercultural and post-hegemonic orientations of the actors forming it (Day, 2006). On the contrary, social networks allow mechanisms of communication that are less reciprocal, favoring a form of one-to-many communication where the one is the actor with higher recognition and therefore more virtual power. Social media thus become functional to hurling large masses of atomized individuals against targets set by those who hold greater online communicative power. At the same time, social media is an extremely open and accessible tool compared to listservs; it takes just a "like" or "follow" to connect to an important organizational node, and this has important implications for the mainstream and majoritarian transformation of protests (Gerbaudo 2012, 2017).

The theoretical framework proposed by Bennett and Segerberg (2013) allows to systematize this kind of "qualitative" differences in the uses of different types of digital tools. First, the authors distinguish between collective and connective action: action becomes connective whenever digital communication tools replace formal organizations in the organization of collective action. To use the authors' terms, communication becomes organization. From this distinction three subcategories of collective/connective actions emerge. The first case is that of traditional collective action through formal organizations, which the authors define as organizationally brokered collective action: organisations are responsible for defining the discoursive framework of the action, setting priorities and a chain of command and eventually

officially represent participants in bargaining. Two forms of connective action are then defined. The first of these, organizationally enabled connective action, closely recalls the organizational forms experimented by the Global Justice Movement: organizations use the internet to set up networks through which they coordinate and establish very broad and often generic frames and objectives; alongside this modes of affiliation mediated by the organisations, there is almost always the possibility for individuals to join the actions promoted by the network without necessarily joining the organisations that are part of it, thanks to the fact that the flexibility and openness of the digital instruments and the vagueness of the appeals allow a certain possibility to personalize the individual's involvement and the meaning that is attributed to the mobilization. The frontier between supersizing theory and 2.0 theory lies somewhere between these two idealtypes; in fact, Bennett and Segerberg state that traditional collective organizations use the internet in its function of supersizing communication, especially to facilitate the diffusion of information about the organization. With organizationally enabled connective action instead there is a switch to a "faster is different" type dynamics (Tufecki, 2011): if on the one hand organizations use the internet to do things that they could also have done without it - share resources and coordinate -, the mere ease and repetition of the actions enhanced by the affordances of the internet leads to a radical transformation of the organizational form, with the network becoming the source of collective action at the expense of individual organizations. Finally, the last idealtype is the crowd enabled connective action: that is what happened in 2011, when communication technologies completely replaced formal organizations and mobilized atomized individuals. Involvement and action frames become customizable by the individual to an ever increasing extent, since the only power of the organizers is to initiate the protest and decide its targets, but there are no instruments at all to force coherence and discipline in the individuals who are free to seek involvement at their own conditions and without any hierarchical pressure.

4.2 Digital technologies and the Silent Revolution.

In 1977 Ronald Inglehart hypothesized that the deepening of the Silent Revolution would have important effects on the organizations responsible for collective action in the public sphere. In particular, the libertarian and self-expressive orientations of postmaterialists would led to a generalized discredit of top-down and bureaucratic organizations, while the increasing diffusion

of cognitive skills related to the process of cognitive mobilisation would made individuals more capable of coordinating themselves outside of superimposed organizational schemes:

> As the process of Cognitive Mobilization progresses, the relative importance of these organizations is likely to decline, giving way to less hierarchical, more issue-oriented *ad hoc* organizations in which the individual has a greater opportunity to articulate his or her preferences on given decisions. Political participation remained relatively dependent on permanently established organizations as long as most of the people with bureaucratic skills held positions within these institutions. Today *ad hoc* organizations can be brought into being more or less at will because the public has an unprecedentedly large leavening of non-elites possessing high levels of political skills. A balance between elites and mass that was upset centuries ago has been partially redressed (Inglehart, 1977: 302).

One of the key elements of these new forms of elite-challenging participation is, according to Melucci (1996), the blurring of the boundaries between the organizations and the rest of society, that is in turn a consequence of the tendency toward de-formalization and de-bureaucratization. Rather than a clear distinction between the space of private and collective action, it has been observed the tendency to produce a

> […] continuity between leisure and commitment, by presupposing a close connection between self-fulfillment and participation, [that] enhances the so-called 'expressive' resources and their utilizability in collective action (Melucci, 1996: 325).

The lower the barriers between the private domain and collective action, the less expensive the choice to participate - or to stop doing so. This has the effect of making it extremely easy for individuals to become rapidly involved in collective action, but in increasingly short-term and issue-specific forms.

Following the discussion undertaken in the previous paragraphs these phenomena might sound quite familiar; indeed, many of the effects of the Silent Revolution on organizations are identical to those produced by the adoption of digital technologies: de-bureaucratization, collapse of hierarchies, weakening of intraorganizational and public/private barriers, low-cost entry and short term commitment are all consequences of the adoption of digital tools for organizing; yet, it appears that these have been around for quite long before the massification of the internet. We can therefore easily refer to the elective affinities (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016) between elite-challenging participation introduced by the Silent Revolution and the organizational options inaugurated by digital technologies:

> The desire of modern protesters to operate without formal organizations, leaders, and extensive infrastructure can be traced at least back to the movements that flourished in the 1960s. New digital technology did not create this but allows protesters to better fulfill pre-existing political desires. Without a tool similar to Twitter with its hashtags, and without all this digital connectivity, it would be quite difficult to call up or sustain spontaneous protests of this size (Tufecki, 2017: 52).

A further effect of digital technologies that seems to reinforce the trends highlighted by the literature on the Silent Revolution is the leveling of power relations between citizens and elites. The reader might recall that the increase in the intellectual skills of individuals is associated in this theory with a greater capacity for autonomous horizontal coordination, as well as greater ability to question elites - this latter aspect is identified in the figure of the "critical citizen" elaborated by Norris (1999). According to Tufecki (2017), in fact, digital technologies for the first time allow ordinary citizens to coordinate quickly and effectively even in the absence of co-presence and often without the traditional burden of mediation and organizational manipulation. In the past, only state institutions and citizens belonging to the wealthiest and most powerful classes had sufficient material, informational and human resources to ensure a constant monitoring of collective action and a rapid capacity to act. According to the author, therefore, digital technologies have the effect of leveling the ground in conflicts between citizens and elites or public institutions, ensuring unprecedented capacity for action with logistics and planning reduced to the bone.

Moreover, Clay Shirky (2008) emphasizes the liberating effects of digital organization related to the increased ability and desire for self-expression typical of post-modernity. On the one hand, in fact, the internet allows more and more individuals to aggregate on the basis of their interests and to form groups with "ridiculously" low costs. On the other hand, the smaller amount of energy and resources that need to be devoted to the maintenance of organizations and to coordination efforts can allow individuals and groups to focus more freely and with less burdens on individual and collective ends:

> For most of modern life, our strong talents and desires for group effort have been filtered through relatively rigid institutional structures because of the complexity of managing groups. We haven't had all the groups we've wanted, we've simply had all the groups we could afford. The old limits of what unmanaged and unpaid groups can do are no longer in operation; the difficulties that kept self-assembled groups from working together are shrinking, meaning that the number and kinds of things groups can get done without financial motivation or managerial oversight are growing. The current change, in one sentence, is this: most of the barriers to group action have collapsed, and without those barriers, we are free to explore new ways of gathering together and getting things done (Shirky, 2008: 28).

4.2.1. Liberation from organizations

How does this elective affinity between the internet and anti-institutional elite-challenging participation translate at the organizational level? First, through the overcoming of organizations. This can be done in two ways: through what has been called organizing without organizations (Shirky, 2008) or through the complete or partial replacement of organizations through networked communication structures - "communication as organization" as in Bennett and Segerberg (2013). As seen in the previous sections, the fall in the costs of action and coordination/communication due to the emergence of digital technologies in collective action makes the existence of organisations unnecessary in several cases, directly placing in the hands of individuals the tools and resources necessary to manage collective action (Bimber, Flanagin, and Stohl 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012). With the disappearance of organizations, all the constraints that these have usually placed on individuals disappear too, such as top-dow discipline, bureaucracy and lack of recognition of individual preferences. The constant and spontaneous sharing of ideas, connections and interests is routinized, getting more and more people to do by themselves without institutional mediations.

Digital technologies have also, as already seen, made it possible to achieve a convergence between libertarian ideals and the organizational form of the network. The idea of decentralized coordination without vertical hierarchies has always been a central tenet for libertarian movements, at least since the 1960s; especially in libertarian anarchist thinking the idea of the network as a superior form of organization was already widely diffused in the 70s:

> "The principle of organization must not issue from a center created in advance to capture the whole and impose itself upon it but, on the contrary, it must come from all sides to create nodes of coordination, natural centers to serve all these points" (Guerin, 1970: 43).

Only with the rise of digital technologies could these cultural trends go to fruition, for the first time in the Global Justice Movement - which, not surprisingly, has been defined by some authors as "neo-anarchist" (Day, 2006; Gerbaudo, 2017). According to Juris (2012) the network as an organizational form becomes a symbol of an entire culture of protest and a way of

understanding the relations of power that opposes the vertical/authoritarian logic of the state and the market. Castells (1997, 2001) comes to define the society of the beginning of the millennium as a "network society", in which digital technologies have become part of the social infrastructure and daily life of billions of people, revolutionising the way information is disseminated and thus leading to a more general redistribution of power. A new civil society is born, finally able to promote an "informational politics" through horizontal and fluid networks where communication becomes many-to-many and therefore not subject to vertical commands (Diani 2000; Jenkins 2006; Kollock & Smith 1999; Pliskin & Romm 1997; Van Aelst and Walgrave 2003). The internet is seen in these accounts as the venue of power from below in the form of an antiauthoritarian network.

As already seen during the previous discussion, horizontal networks are only one of the possible morphologies that can be assumed by online organizational communication. Over time, the egalitarian networks described by Castells have been replaced by the hegemony of large and private social networking platforms, equipped with very different affordances. In particular, these platforms are distinguished by the fact that they are normally owned by private organisations, which have unquestionable control over the design of the space of interaction and user data (Gerlitz and Helmond 2013; Helmond 2015; Zuboff 2019). Despite this, at least at their debut, digital platforms have partly embodied in public debate the cultural heritage of anti-authoritarian networks - although in a way more bent to the market - essentially because of their disruptive ability to generate organisational disintermediation:

> Individual citizens or consumers organize themselves through online networks, so they are less dependent on legacy institutions or companies such as publishers, news organizations, hospitals, unions, brokers, and so on. The Internet-based utopian marketplace would allow individuals to offer products or services “directly” without having to rely on “offline” intermediaries, whether state or corporate (Van Dijck et al., 2018: 1-2).

At the same time, it is the very architecture of social networks that might generate the perception of an extremely egalitarian space. Each user can have their say, on their own page and commenting on others’. There are no limits in principle to the possibility of expressing oneself and of making one’s own network of knowledge and communication grow. Apparently, the many-to-many orientation of the internet is magnified by social networks. I say apparently because in fact the very nature of social networks as well as the algorithms defined by the owners tend to converge the interactions and to concentrate the communicative power in the hands of a few nodes with more followers and communicative resources. This aspect becomes

extremely central in the case of the Movement of the Squares of 2011, when a few accounts succeeded in effectively monopolizing the direction of the protests or at least their "choreography" (Gerbaudo, 2012); these new patterns of centralization of power are evidenced by the fact that often some key accounts become the subject of harsh power clashes by cliques of protest organizers competing with each other for their control (Gerbaudo, 2012, 2017). Again Van Dijck and colleagues effectively summarize the contradictory nature of digital platforms:

> The platform ecosystem, as we will argue, is moored in paradoxes: it looks egalitarian yet is hierarchical; it is almost entirely corporate, but it appears to serve public value; it seems neutral and agnostic, but its architecture carries a particular set of ideological values; its effects appear local, while its scope and impact are global; it appears to replace "top- down" "big government" with "bottom- up" "customer empowerment," yet it is doing so by means of a highly centralized structure which remains opaque to its users (Van Dijck et al., 2018: 12).

4.2.2. "Liberated" organizations

Not all organizations are doomed to be replaced by organizationless organizing or by networks and platforms. In many other cases, organisations remain the engine of collective action, but have to deal with the more or less disruptive innovations brought by the widespread adoption of digital technologies. These innovations generally have the effect of making organisations lighter and less bureaucratized, encouraging greater frequency and pervasiveness of interactions among individual members or participants (Carty 2010; Bennett et al. 2009; Best and Krueger 2006; Bimber 2003). Flanagin, Bimber and Stohl (2012) develop an extremely detailed picture of this range of effects of digital technologies on organizations, analysing how these lead to the fall of intraorganisational barriers which in traditional organisations stand to prevent communication and circulation of information between members and between base and top management, significantly decreasing the hierarchical control of information and interactions.

The first type of communication barrier that wanes is that dividing the inside and the outside of the organization. On the one hand, this means that digital technologies allow organisations to mobilise the participation of those who are not formally members, thanks to the increased capacity to disseminate information and to match demand and offer of participation. On the other hand, however, this means that non-members can also have a greater influence on organisations than in the past. This can be done deliberately, whenever multispeed participation schemes are introduced or influence or information rights are granted to non-members; but it also usually happens automatically, simply because the new modes of communication prevent information from remaining segregated within organizations and allow citizens to organize

outside of them to influence them. At the same time, it is often organizations themselves that provide their members and users with new tools to self-organize or start campaigns autonomously on their key issues; in this case, the organizational logic shifts from centralized control of collective action to the attempt to exploit the enthusiasm, resources and private networks of activists for the purposes of the organization, mobilizing them at almost zero cost - if not the cost of making publicly available information in the past jealously guarded by organizations - but with less ability to control[13]. At the same time, digital technologies can allow more unmediated individual influence in collective decision-making, whether through traditional or atypical individual voting mechanisms such as Liquid Feedback in Pirate Parties. This marks a great transformation with respect to the bureaucratic-hierarchical organizations that dominated the twentieth century, whether they were made up of elected personnel or not; traditional organisations are based on strong and durable inter-organisational mediation mechanisms, up and down the various levels of the organization through a chain of command and communication focused on large staffs with clearly defined tasks. Even in the programmaticaly more democratic organisations, such as the membership associations iconically described by Skocpol (1999) and mass parties, individuals never intervened as such in collective decision-making, unless they were very influential members – whose authority was anyway often legitimized by standardized procedures and roles; individuals could have influence only through collective mechanisms mediated by forms of representative delegation and hierarchical mediation.

In other words, digital technologies allow to increase the interactivity of collective action to an unprecedented extent (Stromer-Galley, 2019), as they allow to shift from the paradigm of intraorganizational communication centered predominantly on one-to-many and many-to-one patterns within hierarchical chains of command to hybrid interactive schemes in which traditional forms of communications are often outflanked by many-to-many and one-to-one informal communication patterns. This increases the chances for bottom-up self-organization of members and participants, often in a conflictual and anti-elite vein. In fact, the increase in the possibilities of communication and autonomous interaction leads to a multiplication of interaction that continuously "bypass" formal organizational information networks. The observation of this increased possibility of decentralized and self-organized interaction is

[13] Often the only instrument for enforcing discipline is the threat to disown turbulent citizen groups. Removing the right to use the organization’s brand might be deadly harmful for franchised groups.

normally key in techno-optimistic discourses that see in the internet the venue for the generalized increase of expressive and organizational freedom for individuals (Stromer-Galley, 2019).

The proliferation of interactivity outside official channels also explains why in many cases organizations decide to relax their control over the activities of members and participants. This does not happen out of pure interest for experimentation. More often, organizations are forced to innovate precisely because the increased capacity of communication and autonomous coordination by individuals poses them a strong evolutionary pressure and a challenge to survival:

> In our terms, an environment in which individuals at the periphery of a large network are able to share ideas, coordinate, and communicate with one another nearly seamlessly suggests changes to collective action and membership in collective action organizations. […] The end-user enterprise inherent in contemporary technological tools, coupled with their increasingly ubiquitous nature, might at first appear to be detrimental, and even destructive, to formal organizations (Flanagin et al., 2012: 60).

To survive these pressures, organisations may be forced to adopt innovative forms of collective coordination. This may in certain cases lead to cede control and grant more freedom of initiative and influence to participants and members; in other cases, such as in platform parties (Gerbaudo, 2018; Deseriis, 2020), it is simply a matter of eliminating the intermediate hierarchies and exerting influence over members in a less directly visible but equally determinant venue through the control of platforms themselves.

These pressures lead to the development of forms of hybrid organization (Chadwick, 2007), in which traditional organizational logics coexist with those typical of platforms and networks. More generally, rather than a transition between organizational models belonging to different social eras, there is a multiplication of forms of collective action, both because of the survival of traditional organizations in all those sectors and contexts in which the impact of digital technologies is not sufficiently disruptive, and because the forms taken by digital-based organizations are extremely diverse. It is in fact possible to find cases of hierarchical organizations that contract out some areas of activity to networks that may be more or less formalized and more or less integrated in the organization; there are “liquid" organizations based on the continuous morphological refiguration that fully exploit the autopoietic potential of networks (Luhmann, 1990); there are organisations that exploit digital platforms for their effectiveness in constraining interactions at the same time as they facilitate them; there are

organizations that delegate collective action completely to the spontaneous aggregations of users etc.

If, therefore, the collapse of the barriers to communication between individuals creates strong evolutionary pressures on organizations, the same can be said for the decline of the barriers between organizations and society. To the extent that citizens show a growing readiness to take part in ad hoc, issue-oriented and short-term forms of participation, digital technologies provide an effective tool for doing so, lowering the cost of choosing to cross the public/private border and making this choice less permanent (Flanagin et al., 2012), disconnecting it from formal membership and participation in face-to-face relational networks. This means that organizations must learn to do without routinized commitments and forms of involvement and vertical and stable chains of command, adapting to mobilize citizens from time to time not on the basis of long-term membership or selective incentives, but tickling their enthusiasm and their desires for self-expression. Vertical chains of command and routinized organizational practices tend to be replaced by lean organizational forms, often centered on small staffs calling for mobilization - Vromen (2017) speaks of "sudden internet alerts" - to activate a broad and loosely committed base. Bennett and Fielding (1999) coined the term "flash activism" to define these new forms of participation based on short term allegiances and low-cost mobilizing that grants high levels of instant participation.

Simon Tormey, in his book *The end of representative politics* (2015) shows in an extremely clear way the political and organizational consequences of this state of affairs. According to the author, digital technologies are facilitating the transition from a representative paradigm, based on delegation and separation between representatives and represented, to a paradigm based on resonance, that is the ability of organisations and leaders to function as activators and facilitators of direct action by citizens. This is due to a combined effect of the two types of evolutionary pressure to which I have referred in the previous pages: on the one hand, citizens are endowed with both greater cognitive skills and digital tools that greatly increase their ability to coordinate autonomously without hierarchical organizations; on the other hand, the connective potential of the internet meets the growing tendency to prefer *ad hoc* and issue-oriented forms of commitment. In this extremely fluid context, it becomes hard for organizations to build formalized linkages of representation, as well as to establish their primacy over collective action at the expense of the active role of citizens. Organizations and

leaders are therefore in a situation in which, if they want to retain their role, they must find ways to "resonate" with the spontaneous activity and interests that emerge in certain circumstances among the citizens; which forces organizations to become lighter and more flexible, activating a process of continuous creative destruction in the public sphere. According to Tormey, the resonance politics differs from representative politics of traditional organisations along four main axes:

1) Impetus creation: if in the past mobilizations took place under the perspective of the advancement of a group, more or less closely connected to one or more organizations, the spark that activates resonance politics is injustice; injustice that can reside in a specific event or in a widespread sentiment of anger and dissatisfaction, and that in a context of low communication costs can work as a quick and effective trigger mechanism.

2) Creating resonance: organizations become lighter and "connective", they need less resources than in the past but they must be much more able to grasp and indulge the moods of their target audience, exploiting or even amplifying momentary polarizations of opinion.

3) Creating clamour: if the feeling of injustice becomes the sufficient spark to activate action, one of the primary objectives of organizers is to create clamor and instill indignation, anger and dismay in one or more sections of public opinion. The communicative operation of framing and amplifying certain events and feelings becomes much more important than the organizational structures for mobilization.

4) Creating turbulence: resonant politics is likened to extra-institutional politics even when it takes place inside institutions; this is because it is based on the creation of turbolence, or the generation of mobilizations capable of stirring up important social forces in the wake of a perceived injustice. Such mobilizations easily assume the anti-establishment frames of protest and denunciation.

Tormey doesn’t seem particularly critical of resonance politics. He treats the issue as part of a controversy with that part of the politological literature that sees the decline of traditional participation and organizations as the symptom of a decline in the interest of citizens in politics. In this sense, the emergence of resonance politics is taken as proof that we are not witnessing a

straightforward decline as much as a reshaping of the relationship between citizens and politics. This polemic orientation probably prevents the author from admitting that in fact only a small gap separates resonance politics from the transformation of participation into pure political marketing, where increasingly opaque and chamaleonic organizations foment and take advantage of the momentary passions of public debate, exacerbating polarizations on popular issues and jeopardizing any effort at long-term planning and involvement.

4.2.3 The personalization of collective action

The effects of the Silent Revolution on political action can be briefly summarized in a word: individualization. Individuals become the cornerstones of society and of collective action, which is entrusted with the task of filling their identity deficit (Melucci, 1989, 1996) and expressing their values and orientations. More and more, with the advance of postmaterialism, libertarian individualists opt for liberation from traditional and organizational constraints as a mean to pursue more informal, de-burocratized and personalized social relationships. As seen in the first chapter, this change is effectively captured by Dalton's formula (2008a, 2008b) that synthesizes it as a transition from a duty-oriented conception of citizenship to an engagement-based conception: citizens are increasingly claiming for themselves a more active and expressive role, which is often inserted in the framework of self-affirmation against the elites of power. Another formula already presented is that proposed by Micheletti (2013), namely individualized collective action:

> Individual citizens do not seek a prefabricated political home for expression of their interests to be represented by organizational leaders. They do not need someone else or an outside structure to take care of their interests for them. Rather, they create their own political home by framing their own aims and channels for political action. (Micheletti, 2010: 28).

Citizens are therefore increasingly inclined to act on their own, seeking personalised involvement in collective action according to their individual preferences. This can take place both within organizations, accordingly transformed, and through organizationless organizing. However, the differences with the "collectivist collective action" paradigm are clear:

> An important difference between this logic and the traditional one is that individual citizens do not need to join and show loyalty toward interest articulating structures to become involved in what they deem are urgent issues of politics and society. They can become involved outside these structures by showing commitment to causes and assuming responsibility in a more hands-on way. *The physical and territorially based structures* of the earlier part of the twentieth century with their *grand or semi-grand ideological narratives* (first modernity and collectivist collective action) are not necessary for citizens to achieve strength in numbers in the twenty-first century or what is labeled late modernity […]. Sufficient knowledge

about problems can be achieved outside traditional political channels and on a more individualized basis (Micheletti, 2010: 29).

From this last passage it can be deduced that the individualization of collective action has affected two crucial aspects of participation, underlined by the author's italics: on the one hand, growing individualization affects the forms of the organization of action; on the other hand, individualization is connected to a change in the nature of ideological-discursive patterns of collective action. In the debate on digital technologies, this passage is framed through the concept of personalization, with which scholars mean to emphasize the growing possibility to personalize involvement in collective action along individual preferences and participatory styles. Once again, Flanagin, Bimber and Stohl (2006, 2012) shed light on the organizational implications of the personalization of collective action, while Bennett and Segerberg (2013) focus on aspects related to change in the processes of collective framing.

In Flanagin and colleagues' framework, personalization is a consequence of the weakening of intra-organizational communication barriers. In particular, in a communicative ecosystem in which end-to-end communication centered on individuals becomes widespread both within formal and/or informal channels, the possibility for participants to be able to customize at will the ways of their involvement with other participants and with the organization itself increases. In other words, the weakening of intraorganizational communication barriers places collective action more directly in the hands of individuals, leaving them greater freedom of choice and thus elevating individual preferences - and differences between them - to a pivotal element of collective action. As in the case of types of organization, digital technologies do not lead to the total substitution of one paradigm with another, but rather to the multiplication of modes of action. The adoption of digital organizing tools cannot in any way force individuals to change their engagement patterns and preferences; on the contrary, the weakening of intra-organisational boundaries weakens the ability of organisations to impose a certain style of interaction on their members, with the consequence that there is a multiplication of the modalities of involvement along the preferences expressed by individuals:

> The affordances of technology hardly compel people to act personally, but they do provide opportunities to do so regardless of the structure of the organization, just as they provide people opportunities to find like-minded others at a distance and to aggregate their resources in impersonal ways. In the organizations from two decades ago, whether members' experiences were personal or impersonal may have been largely a function of boundaries created by the organization and reinforced by their explicit structural features. Today, whether they do so reflects the nature of the organization as well as the personal choices, interests, and styles of members – that is, how they communicatively construct their roles in the organization (Flanagin et al., 2012: 88).

The analysis of the modes of interaction in organizations is developed along two axes that constitute a Cartesian plan. The first axis is that of engagement, which concerns the interaction between individual and organization and is affected by variations in communication barriers between these; their lowering allows a greater variety of engagement modes, on a continuum that goes from entrepreneurial - high responsibility and opportunity - to institutional - low responsibility and opportunity. The second axis is the mode of interaction, which concerns interactions between individuals within organizations: it goes from a personal[14] style of interaction when direct interactions are allowed to an impersonal style in case there is no direct interaction. It is important to note that this scheme allows to distinguish between different digital organizations and at the same time blurring the contrast between digital and traditional organizing. Not all digital organizations relax in the same way the barriers to interaction between individuals, for example; in this sense, the case of MoveOn is very clear, to the extent that this is an organization that through its own digital interface severely limits interactions among individuals. Thus, the issue can be summarized as follows: digital technologies give greater opportunities to develop forms of entrepreneurial engagement and personal interaction; organizations choose whether to lower barriers to interaction between members and organization and between members, opening to the possibility of entrepreneurialization and personalization; but only organizations that maintain high communication barriers can impose a specific style of participation - tendentially impersonal and/or institutional -, while their relaxation has the consequence of multiplying the modalities of organizational involvement within each organization. To this can be added another level, which is that of the diversification of the management of communication barriers between the different sectors of organizations. Think of the case of digital parties: when it comes to kickstarting local groups, the barriers are very low and it is possible - and indeed, necessary - an entrepreneurial and personal approach by activists who are literally left to themselves in organizing; while instead participation on voting platforms is much more constrained, that is essentially impersonal and at an average level of engagement - because individuals interact immediately with the organization but in a very narrow fashion.

[14] It is important to keep in mind that personal mode of interaction and personalization are two different concepts: while the first concerns a specific mode of interaction, made more frequent by digital technologies, the second concept refers to the widening of the possibilities of choice regarding the modalities of involvement.

At this point is quite clear that there is a set of elective affinities between digital technologies and libertarianism. On the one hand, the trend towards personalisation associated with digital technologies means an extension of the possibilities of choice and self-expression for citizens, who have greater margins to determine how they are to be involved in collective action in a context marked by reduced communicative barriers; as already seen in the first chapter, the greater desire to make autonomous choices, and to widen the range of possible choices and to freely express one's own orientations is a central aspect of the postmaterialist transition as it is treated by Inglehart. Similarly, it is easy to recognize that organizations that allow entrepreneurial engagement and personal interaction are on average less bureaucratized and formalized than those that don't; and also this aspect, that is, the opposition of postmaterialists to bureaucracy and organizational formalization, normally associated with collectivism and the reduction of individual room for manoeuvre, is one of the great themes in Inglehart's discussion. At the same time, it is easy to notice some correspondence in the contrast between entrepreneurialism and institutionalism with that between engaged and duty citizenship in Dalton. The activities identified in chapter 2 as pertaining to an engaged conception of citizenship largely require an active and proactive attitude on the part of the citizen, while the more traditional activities related to duty citizenship such as voting are at the same time less responsibilizing and more demarcated within institutional channels, with little room for the expression of individual differences if not in extremely narrow terms.

The conceptual scope of the analysis developed by Flanagin and colleagues is very broad since it allows to question some assumptions on the tendencies to bureaucratization of organizations that are widespread both among structural-functional theories (Aldrich, 1979; Barnard 1980; Hage, 1980; Hickson et al., 1979) and neo-institutionalists (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Scott, 1995). All these mainstream theories of organization in fact foresee that as organizations get older and grow tend to become more formalized, bureaucratized, constrained by the relationships developed with other organizations and subject to social expectations. This is contradicted by the fact that organisations may decide to lower some intraorganisational barriers through digital technologies, with the result that there is an increase in the number of less bureaucratized organisations and a possible way out from the prophecy of bureaucratization for any organization that decides so. Trajectories are multiplying and this is also reflected on the choices available to organizations with respect to the model of development that they might pursue.

Finally, Flanagin and colleagues' model allows to further specify what has been said in the previous chapter around the engineering of participation. Traditionally it has been assumed that, since different types of incentives tend to attract people with different interests and therefore different styles of participation, organizations that wish to alter the composition and style of their membership have to distribute the appropriate incentives. If intraorganizational barriers and their effect on personal participatory styles are taken into account, the discourse can be specified and the use of incentives by organizers becomes more articulate. If the desire is to have a formal and/or impersonal membership, it would be sufficient to erect sufficient intraorganizational communication barriers; in this context, the aim of distributing selective incentives is not to alter the composition of membership, but to increase the number of members. If, on the other hand, organisations decide to opt for a more entrepreneurial and/or personal membership, the removal of barriers would not be sufficient to guarantee the outcome, as this would simply leave individuals more degrees of self-expression; in this case, selective incentives could become essential as a complementary mechanism in stimulating certain modes of involvement and engagement.

Bennett and Segerberg (2013) use the concept of personalization differently. With the term the authors intend to refer to the different functioning of frames in connective action compared to what normally happens in the collective action. Peculiar to the forms of connective action, the personalized frames are extremely open, generic and inclusive. The clearest example of this is the slogan "We Are the 99%" in Occupy Wall Street, but also the equally generic formulations in the Global Justice Movement - "Another World is Possible". To the extent that connective action aims to attract mass participation through the lowering of costs, this is complemented by the lowering of the ideological costs of action: it is not necessary, in the case of personalized frames, to adhere to a collective ideology; on the contrary, the vagueness of the appeals allows such messages to be carved out on the specificity of the experience of each individual. One example of this is the campaign launched in 2011 on the social network Flickr that asked adherents to post photos of explaining themselves what it meant to them being part of the 99%.

According to Lance Bennett, personalized politics has three preconditions:

> An ethos of diversity and inclusiveness defined by tolerance for different viewpoints and even different issues linked across loosely bounded political networks. The rise of crowd-sourced inclusive personal action frames (e.g., "We are the 99%") that lower the barriers to identification. These easily personalized frames contrast with more conventional collective action frames (e.g., "Eat the rich") that may require more socialization and brokerage to propagate in large numbers. Participation is

> importantly channeled through often dense social networks over which people can share their own stories and concerns—the pervasive use of social technology enables individuals to become important catalysts of collective action processes as they activate their own social networks (Bennett, 2011: 3).

The emergence of personalized politics cannot be separated from the more general trend towards the individualization of social relations. Personalized politics is based on an increasingly atomized citizenship that is also more and more attentive to individual differences, in which decreased willingness to adhere to collective narratives is compensated in part by the greater ease of communication guaranteed by digital media. The solution to generate the minimum level of cohesion necessary to produce collective mobilizations in this context is to develop frames that are highly customizable and easily manipulated and circulable to be spread through the internet, reaching in a short time loads of people. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) summarize these characteristics in two formulas: symbolic inclusiveness and technological openness. The affordances of the internet are in fact functional to the easy and rapid diffusion of the contents and to their reappropriation through their recondivision and manipulation, which are rendered particularly easy in social networks in the 2.0 internet, as well as the spread of personal devices that individuals always carry with them and that are increasingly embedded in everyday life. Castells summarized these trends in the concept of "mass self-communication", with which the author intends to refer to the massive dissemination of digital content through personal dispositive that are

> self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many (Castells, 2000:11).

In turn, the personalizability of the frames goes to match with self-expressive tendencies, as it allows to reverse the relationship between ideology and individuals: the collective discourse in fact is not imposed on individuals; on the contrary, individual experiences and interpretations of the frames become the cornerstones in the mobilization of collective action:

> a large people may still join in action (and themes may remain quite the same), but identification stems from personal expression (which entails a level of freedom) and not from ideological affiliation. (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013: 25).

4.3. Conclusions

After the analysis of the elective affinities between postmaterialism and digital technologies the theoretical part of this work, which I have dedicated to the analysis of the great trends and organizational transformations that have accompanied political participation in the last fifty years, reaches its conclusion. On a path marked by the Silent Revolution, that is, by the increase

of individualization of collective action and the emergence of self-expressive tendencies, by organization becoming organizational ideology, the increase in individual skills and the rejection of elites - especially vertical and bureaucratic ones - digital technologies intervene amplifying these trends or allowing them to unfold to an unprecedented extent. All this obliges us to revise the theoretical presuppositions through which collective action is usually analysed; moreover, the change that has occurred requires the scholar to train her sight to discern the intertwining of different dynamics within a more complicated and hybrid context.

As we have seen, digital technologies strongly affect the link between organization and action. The change in mode of action is the most evident aspect, which immediately strikes the observer; it is no coincidence that Earl and Kimport (2011) start their analysis from affordances, that is what technology allows to do; yet those actions are capable of having important effects precisely because they significantly alter organizational dynamics, as pointed out by Flanagin and colleagues (2007, 2012). So the most important lesson that this analysis can offer tis that behind collective action always lies organization; or rather, there lies organizational action, which can take place within a formalized organization or not. While in the past the link between action and organization could be taken for granted, risking to be left on the background, running such a risk today, in a contest of radical organizational diversification, would be more dangerous. It is therefore necessary to learn to look at action in order to always take into account organization and to recognize its specificities from time to time.

5 A social and political history of Corbynism: Corbyn rising

The next two chapters are to be understood as a whole. They are separated only because the phases they narrate are clearly distinct, but the logic is the same, that is: starting from some salient facts in the history of Labour under Corbyn to ask more general questions regarding the social and political foundations of the discussed phenomena. In this chapter I focus on Corbyn's surprising rise as leader of the Labour Party, first by making an history of the insurgency and then analyzing the roots of Corbynism in the anti-austerity movement, the rebellion of unions and members against New Labour and the organisational reforms that change the way leaders are elected. In the next chapter instead I will focus on the crucial nodes of Corbyn's Labour during his time as leader. First, I analyze the main drivers of the marked internal conflictuality, starting from the "coup" attempted in 2016 by the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) to unseat Corbyn; here, too, I identify three sources of conflict: the anti-establishment nature of the figure of Corbyn, his primarily discursive attempt to overthrow neoliberalism and finally the threat posed by the new leadership to the party's traditional parliamentarianism. The second crucial issue concerns the analysis of the apogee of Corbynism, that is the surprising election of 2017. Finally, I will analyze the reasons for the decline and the ultimate failure of the project; an issue that is partly linked to the demographic structure of the pro-Corbyn base. Finally, I will reconnect the aspects emerged from the case study with the theorization provided in the first part of this work.

5.1. 2015: Jeremy Corbyn becomes leader of the Labour Party

On September 15, 2015, Jeremy Corbyn is elected leader of the Labour Party, with an astonishing 59.5 percent of the votes cast. Early runner Andy Burnham and Yvette Cooper stop below 20 percent. Liz Kendall, the heir to the New Labour tradition, stops just under 5 percent. What is amazing is both the distance between the candidates as well as the name of the winner. Following the resignation of Ed Miliband in the aftermath of the devastating election defeat of 2015, no one would ever bet on the election as leader of an obscure backbencher from the party's hard left. The consensus among the main players within the party considered absolutely unlikely the triumph of a figure so close to the anti-austerity social movements and with a marked anti-establishment rethoric. Corbyn had been an MP since 1983, but in fact he has always been a stubborn opponent to the party' s main course. Tony Benn' s pupil and part of the left-wing group Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) protagonist in previous

years of important intra-party conflicts, Corbyn enters Parliament just as the New Left of which he was part concludes its rise and is permanently marginalized by the new modernizing course led by Neil Kinnock. In the years of Blair Corbyn stands out for the frequent habit of voting against the leadership of the party on issues of social and international politicy. In the 2000s he became particularly well known due to his membership and subsequent leadership of the pacifist movement opposing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, notably through the Stop the War Coalition, of which he becomes chair in 2011 – a position already held previously by Tony Benn. In the 1910s, his closeness to the social movements brought him in contact with the nascent anti-austerity wave, of which he would be one of the very few institutional referents within the party, along with figures such as Diane Abbott and John Mcdonnell. Of course, it is no coincidence that figures that are so alien to the party establishment decided to stay and fight and did not found other parties. This has systematically happened in other European countries: consider, for example, the cases of the defectors from the socialist parties, Jean Luc Melenchon and Oskar Lafontaine. The peculiarity of the British left is due to the majoritarian electoral system, which makes the path of electoral survival particularly difficult for small parties. The most striking case is that of the split from Labour of Militant Labour in 1991 - then renamed Socialist Party since 1997 - which immediately resulted in a complete failure. But even for centrist splits the story is not too different: this is the case, for example, of the Social Democratic Party, a party founded by moderate opponents of the left-wing leadership of Michael Foot in 1981; in order to survive the party is immediately pushed to forge an alliance, which will later result in a merger, with the Liberal Party. In short, it is evident that the British electoral system is the key element to explain the paradoxical permanence of the radical left within an increasingly moderate Labour Party.

In fact, Corbyn's bid for the leadership did not aim at victory, at least at the beginning. Rather, the CLPD group that brings together most of the members of the internal hard left and heir of the New Left emerged in the party in the early '70s - see chapter 7 - decides to identify a candidate just for the sake of the contest. The aim is to widen the internal debate within the party, beyond the traditionally moderate and centrist options dominating the scene since the 1980s; the idea stems both from the desire to honor the debate within the party and to try to get a small advertising space for the ideas of the left. Within CLPD Corbyn is not even the most prestigious potential candidate; he is chosen because he is considered to be perceived as unthreatening by the adversaries of the left, and therefore less capable of generating open

opposition from the party establishment (Nunns, 2018). The decision to nominate Corbyn takes place in a very peculiar conjuncture for the party. After the electoral defeat of May 2015 the right of the party led by the Blairites tries to seize the opportunity to blame it on the leftward turn in the Manifesto under Ed Miliband – a member of the party soft-left - and to fully reaffirm the moderate and pro-market formula developed in the New Labour years. Despite the growing marginality of former New Labour leaders, this narrative breaks through the party, with the result that the main candidates are about to compete from extremely moderate positions. Observing such conformism and risk aversion the CLPD sees the opportunity to gain some visibility by widening the debate. But the New Leftists are not the only ones to perceive such need: they are supported by some of the newly elected MPs – members of parliament - in a letter to the Guardian launch a petition for a more radical candidate (Labour, 2015). These will provide the bulk of those who allow Corbyn to pass the threshold of the investiture by 15% MPs to get on the ballots, since the hard left is too weak to make it on its own; the rest of the nominations come from right-wing and centrist MPs, who opt for Corbyn both out of a genuine desire to widen the debate or to try to ridiculize the left by empowering a *demodè* radical as its spokesperson.

Thus Corbyn manages to get on the ballot mostly thanks to his adversaries, but expectations are set low. And yet, it turns out, Corbyn holds some enormous advantages over his competitors. These advantages can be summed up precisely in its ability to stand out, broadening the debate and presenting himself as the only candidate who does not chase the party's establishment in the race towards centrist politics. First of all, Corbyn is the only candidate to unequivocally reject the post-Tatcher, pro-market consensus cemented in the country since the 1980s. This allows him to tune in with the rising wave of anti-austerity and anti-elite feelings, not only in the UK - let's not forget that 2015 is the year of the explosion of both Syriza and Podemos. His clearly anti-austerity stance makes him the only figure capable of credibly proposing to overcome the New Labour era and of effective and principled opposition to the anti-popular policies developed by the Tory government. These characteristics, which initially attract scorn from opponents and the media, are extremely welcomed by many members (Ali, 2016). Corbyn's ability to innovate the party's internal debate also manages to break through among some of his opponents, who, while believing his project to be dangerously antagonistic and incapable of winning on a national scale, nevertheless recognize in it an important evolutionary

stimulus for the party, updating its discourses and political offer to the post-recession context (Lawson, 2015).

As noted in Lewis Goodall's (2018) compelling work, the key element of the Corbyn project is not the radicality of the policy platform. From the point of view of the proposed policies, Corbyn initially did not deviate much from Miliband's positions, who already led to a significant shift to the left of New Labour. The point is that Corbyn completely changes the way those policy proposals are communicated and framed. Miliband, obsessed with fear of not appearing credible enough to the media and the public has always had a tendency to downplay policy proposals. On the contrary, Corbyn is not afraid and indeed wants to be considered a revolutionary; he completely disregards the traditional canons of political debate, using his own political proposals weapons to denounce the moderation and the tendency to compromise characterizing the other leading figures of the party. Therefore, the strength of Corbynism lies not so much in a revolutionary political proposal as in the explicit desire to break down a consensus stratified in the decades of modernization, according to which even the few radical political proposals have to conform to a moderate and reassuring narrative. This way of communicating works as a reassurance to those who oppose Labour's not so recent path toward mainstream modernization; everything in Corbyn's demeanor is functional to communicating the idea that there is no room for the downward compromise and triangulation that, according to a large slice of the membership, has characterized the recent history of the party. To the positions expressed by Corbyn it must be added that part of his ability to present himself as an unconventional figure is due to his total rejection of the traditional canons of mainstream political communication; a rejection that is clearly embodied in his very person:

> More important than Corbyn's appearance was his demeanour: relaxed, approachable, honest. "The guy is just so bloody decent and nice and genuine," says Martin Mayer, a Unite delegate on Labour's NEC. "He talks without sound bites and rhetoric… He cut through all that disillusionment and even hatred of conventional politicians who are seen to be such a betrayal of people's interests—and that was particularly true of New Labour." (Nunns, 2018: 130).

Added to this is Corbyn's irrefutable commitment to broadening the internal debate. For the members of the CLPD, as will be seen more clearly in the next chapter, internal debate is not only intended as a tool to obtain support, but is part of a broader discourse on the need to democratize the party. In Corbyn's speeches it is clear from the outset that the enlargement of the internal debate has not only the function of bringing visibility to a set of ideas, but also that of increasing the margins of choice and, therefore, democracy in internal procedures.

The Corbyn campaign, despite the total lack of organization and resources, begins to quickly collect the first successes, obtaining a significant influx of volunteers and a first series of official investitures by local branches. This reflects a subterranean as powerful trend, namely the shift to the left of local groups during Ed Miliband' leadership. The combination of Tory austerity, the influx of new members because of the more leftist leader and the desire to overcome the discredited New Labour project lead to the invisible awakening of the left in local party structures, which have very soon proved receptive to Corbyn's proposals. In a few weeks, paralleling with the growing enthusiasm in the Labour base for the campaign, a broad opinion movement mobilizes in support of Corbyn and lead him from the last to the first position in opinion polls. With respect to the emergence of this movement, two factors are key. The first is the explicit attempt, by the campaign staff, to connect with the various fringes of the anti-austerity, libertarian and anti-militarist left, in which Corbyn and Mcdonnell are indeed perfectly integrated - having the future leader long chaired the Stop The War Coalition, the movement born in opposition to British intervention in the Middle East. The campaign has been forced to try to build such alliance for two reasons. First of all, given the weakness of the Corbynists within the party, the attempt to expand the campaign beyond the party's borders is in some ways an obligated choice, made easier by their customary relationship with such movements. Secondly, the new rules for the election of the leader, which since 2015 is elected by OMOV (One Member, One Vote) of all members plus temporary registered supporters who can vote for only £3 without being members, might give an advantage to those candidates that are able to mobilize also from outside the party. The strategy is clearly successful: especially thanks to Corbyn's campaign, Labour grants the right to vote to more than 500000 among members and supporters - the latter amount to 260,000 and the 84% of them votes for Corbyn; moreover, of those voting for Corbyn, 70,000 didn't vote for Labour in 2015 and more than the 60% of these voted Greens (YouGov, 2015a).

But this voluntaristic interpretation, although it is certainly able to describe the point of view of Corbyn's allies, does not do justice to the astonishing difference of scale between the resources available to them and the actual breadth of the Corbynist movement. The Corbynists could count on the more or less direct control of the Stop The War Coalition, but again the resources available to such movement are not sufficient to explain the insurgency. The most plausible explanation is that Corbyn's campaign managed insert itself into an opinion movement that was already widely developed but lacked any political leadership, managing to boost the campaign

precisely thanks to the ability to resonate with the mood of an important part of British progressive public opinion (Tormey, 2015). To put it in the comedian Mark Steel's words, "There was a movement looking for a home" (2015). Corbyn's skill here lies in the ability to propose himself as the leader of an anti-Austerity movement reframed as the continuation of the struggles waged by the CLPD left against the Tatcherist turn and the modernizers in the 1980s. At the same time, the fact that Corbyn himself has been one of the pivotal figures of the pacifist and alter-globalist movements of the early 2000s made him an extremely credible candidate to attract the activists coming from radical leftist and libertarian extra-parliamentary movements.

Over the course of a summer, the vast and disarticulated anti-Austerity movement finds in Corbyn its leading figure and completes its transmutation in the movement to support his leadership bid. The fact that the Corbyn campaign manages to attract participation from the sphere of social movements marks a very important reversal in the secular trend to the flight of libertarian leftists from parties to movements (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016; Seymour, 2017). This trend reached its peak in the years of modernization, during which the leaders of the party tried in every way to eliminate the representation of Labour as a militant party to transform it into a completely normalized mainstream party. The rejection of any form of militant politics by the party is mirrored by the rejection of Labour by movement activists. Before Corbyn it was totally inconceivable that a substantial part of that world might adhere to Labour's electoral strategy:

> As Young Labour national committee member Max Shanly admits, "A lot of these people have grown up despising the Labour Party." The journalist Owen Jones remembers addressing People's Assembly meetings around the country in the Miliband years: "If I'd stood up and said, 'And that is why you must join the Labour Party because the only way we're going to build a left movement in this country that has any chance of taking power is through the Labour leadership,' there's no question I would have been heckled vociferously and aggressively." (Nunns, 2018: 151).

Corbyn's candidacy opens an unexpected window of opportunity for anti-austerity movements, which find in the Labour politician a leader and a megaphone. In the wake of the successes of Syriza and Podemos, this state of affairs alters the perception of the opportunities and of strategy among movement leaders and their members. This is reinforced by the fact that, in a strictly majoritarian system as the British system is, success through the creation of a new party as in Spain is almost impossible (Skogan, 2020; Hannah, 2018; Leys, 2018); thus movements wanting to try the electoral strategy are almost forced to try to infiltrate one of the existing parties. If to this picture is added the new attitude of the Labour base, moved to the left under

Miliband, towards the anti-austerity demands, it is easier to understand that the summer 2015 has produced the perfect conjuncture for the transmigration of the anti-austerity movement into the Corbynist movement; a movement coming from the streets but converted to the dual strategy (Milburn, 2019), both in and out of institutions:

> The potential advantages were immense: Labour not only had the infrastructure, name recognition, and deep-rooted support to benefit from the first-past-the-post electoral system, but its residual links to the trade unions were the reason why it had always been seen by many socialists as the vehicle for progressive change. (Nunns, 2018: 166-7).

Behind Corbyn begins to condensate a nebula of Labour activists, pro-Palestine groups, NGOs and charities, sympathizers and activists of libertarian, anti-austerity and alteglobalist movements. But beyond the circle of activists, the campaign manages to resonate with widespread sentiments in the country and to mobilize many people who never took part in political activities and protest actions. Corbyn's project does not therefore take the form of a radical left-wing project, but follows the path opened by the Movement of the Squares and the electoral turn of anti-austerity movement-parties (della Porta et al., 2017); that is, movements that are rooted in discourses and moods widely spread among the population that has been increasingly concerned about austerity measures and disgusted by the apparent lack of interest in popular demands and courage on the part of political elites, and especially Labour (Ali, 2016).

Moreover, like the Movement of the Squares and the parties that emerged from it, the Corbynist movement also makes extensive use of digital technologies. This takes place, on the one hand, with the invasion of cyberspace by official and unofficial digital content in support of Corbyn, which gives widespread dissemination and a bottom-up and genuine flavor to the campaign and its contents. Secondly, it is precisely the leaders of the campaign, essentially the figure of Jon Lansman, who realize the opportunity opened by digital technologies for such a wide and vibrant movement (Kogan & Kogan, 2019); the campaign thus decides to develop its Canvassing App that is a website that allowed volunteers to set up a phone bank anywhere with an internet connection, so long as they were signed up to the Corbyn campaign, contaigning the details of every Labour party member (Barker, 2015). The extensive use of digital technologies for the organization of events and political communication amplifies the already enormous capacity of the Corbynist movement to get in touch with a very large slice of civil society and to mobilize well beyond the usual networks of party and social movement activism. The result is the huge pro-Corbyn rallies of summer 2015 and the massive influx of registered supporters

through the temporary voting scheme for £3, as well as the doubling of the party membership. As a consequence, once he becomes leader, Corbyn can count on a broad base of activists and supporters both within and outside the party, consisting essentially of two areas that have been mostly absent from Labour in the previous two decades: on the one hand, the veterans of the hard-left campaigns of the 1980s, who in part had remained in the party but had been marginalised long since, in part had given up and then returned when the call to arms of the CLPD for Corbyn became credible to them; on the other hand, a new generation of activists, almost always new to party politics, which has had its first experiences of collective action in libertarian and anti-austerity movements and is therefore accustomed to extremely horizontal and loose movements (Pickard, 2019).

The exciting Corbyn campaign has the effect of causing an incredible increase in membership, which goes from 187,000 units in April 2015 to reach 550,000 in late 2016, making Labour the largest party in the West, surpassing the peak of membership reached at the beginning of New Labour – 405,000 in 1997. As Seyd (2020) shows, the fact that a new leader can lead to an increase in membership is nothing new; what is surprising, in this case, is the scale of the phenomenon, that is a consequence of the campaign's ability to tune in with the mood of an important part of the British progressive world that was asking for a clear signal of change after the end of New Labour. The most obvious advantage of this huge increase in membership is the improvement of party finances, as membership fees rise from £9 million in 2015 to £15 million in 2017, an increase of 72% (Seyd, 2020). The increase in membership results in a substantial rise in revenue for the party, which translates into the ability to increase its staff in the medium term by about a sixth, as well as getting to the snap election of 2017 with an immediate availability of £3.5 million that allowed the party to launch the campaign before its rivals (Cowley & Kanavagh, 2018). In fact, Corbyn saved the party from insolvency (Goodall, 2018). Bale and colleagues' survey (Bale et al., 2018) shows also that the increase in membership translates, unlike what happened under Blair, with an increase in the number of active members - for example, in 1999 35% of members canvassed for the party, while that percentage increases to 59% in 2017. This means that Corbyn has a membership that is potentially more likely to act and therefore to weigh in the internal struggles and activities of campaigning and reorganization of the party.

Corbyn's victory therefore revitalizes the party and especially the hard-left, which gets a position of power never reached before in its history. And yet, Corbyn and the CLPD realize that victory is very fragile and that much work needs to be done within the party to consolidate it. The new leadership focuses on two facts: on the one hand, it was made possible by the fact that the PLP had voluntarily, but incautiously, abdicated its role as gatekeeper in the selections; this is because of the large underestimation of the electoral appeal of the left, a very implausible error to be repeated. Secondly, the victory was achieved thanks to the opening to individual vote and registered supporters; this suggests that the Corbyn project must find a way to leverage the large support it holds among the base and to strengthen the link with those who, from outside the party, are willing to support the new leadership. This set of factors leads the Corbynist left to develop a plan to gain control of the party that basically follows the strategy pursued by the CLPD in the 70s and 80s (Panitch & Leys, 2020): on the one hand, the attempt to conquer the extra-parliamentary structures of the party, relying on the excellent capacities of the left to arouse activism at the local level and not only; on the other, to democratize the party, amending the internal rules in favour of a model of democracy that reduces the role of the PLP in favour of individual members (Seyd, 2020). As far as the first part of the strategy is concerned, there are two elements, one institutional and the other more informal. The first focuses on conquering what Katz and Mair would call the "party in central office", through elections for the NEC - National Executive Committee -, with good results; in addition, there has been a reform of the NEC, with the increase of three seats for the representatives of the constituencies, where the left has wide support (Kogan & Kogan, 2019). The second part of the strategy of conquest of the extra-parliamentary party, defined by Corbyn as an attempt to transform the party into a social movement, is in fact configured in the desire to stimulate local activism, proposing innovative ways of involvement and opening to alliances with social movements and other forces emerging from society (Nunns, 2018); the apical phase of this strategy is marked by the inauguration of a Community Organizing Unit in early 2019, which goal is to strengthen the party in areas where it is weaker by adopting professional methods to create campaigns and alliances with local actors on issues of their interest.

As for the change of procedural rules, the most pressing issues are the revision of the veto power of the PLP on the selection of candidate leaders and the proposal of mandatory reselection, that is the establishment of an automatic vote by the members of each constituency to select their MP candidate before every general election. In particular, the mandatory reselection, a reform

already obtained by the CLPD in the 80s but soon abolished, would give local members the ability to keep under constant check the MPs, under the threat of deselection in case of unwelcome behavior; this would change the balance of power relations in favour of the members and of those who are able to interpret their mood. The reform, strongly supported by Momentum, the organization developed from Corbyn's 2015 campaign, is in truth sunk by the Unions, since these see in the privileged relationship with the PLP the only way to maintain a significant influence over the party; in fact, a compromise position is reached, with the simplification of procedures for triggering local reselection excluding mandatory reselection, at the party conference in 2018. As for the gatekeeping power of the PLP, here too there is only a compromise solution, with the lowering of the threshold for nominations from 15 to 10% of the MPs, after a failed attempt to pass the so-called "Mcdonnel Amendment" which would have lowered the threshold to 5 (Seymour, 2017b). Thus, despite broad membership support for these reforms, the constitutional changes achieved are few and not particularly significant (Basset, 2020); this is due to the opposition of the Unions and to a general shyness as well as lack of compactness among the Corbyn's supporters, especially in the NEC, often more concerned to quell the recurring fronds of the right of the party.

5.2 Explaining the unexpected

To understand how the seemingly improbable election of a leader like Corbyn at the top of the Labour Party was possible, it is necessary to dwell in more detail on the different components of the movement that made his fortunes. Only by going to the roots of this movement, in fact, it is possible to understand how the election of Corbyn was not simply an isolated and unexpected incident, but rather represents the joint effect of different medium-long term tendencies. So here I will analyze the three main components of the pro-Corbyn movement: the anti-austerity movement and both unions and members of the party rebelling against the project of modernization identified with the legacy of New Labour. Finally, I will analyze the factor that made possible the direct influence of these streams of public opinion on the choice of the leader of the party, that is the change of the rules of election of the leader. The latter is undoubtedly a decisive factor, as for the first time the leader of Labour is elected by individual vote of all the members plus registered supporters; among the latter, 84% sign up temporarily to vote Corbyn (Kellner, 2015).

5.2.1. Anti-Austerity insurgencies in the UK

In the United Kingdom, Austerity has been less disruptive compared to what happened on the continent and especially in Southern Europe (Nunns, 2018). Even though cuts in public budgets, have no doubt taken place, these have been carried out to a lesser extent and have been at least in part compensated by the rapid return to growth following the implementation of quantitative easing in the wake of the policy implemented by the Federal Reserve in the USA (Gilbert, 2016a). This did not prevent austerity from being politicised and entering fully into the public debate, taking on a far greater significance than what happened in many countries that were much more affected by budget cuts. A first reason for this is that since 2008, and more significantly from the 2010 election campaign, the Conservatives led by David Cameron have tried to blame the recession on the Brown government, arguing that the increase in the deficit was due not so much to the financial crisis as to Labour's inability to control public spending (Basset, 2019a; Gilbert, 2016a). This interpretation, the onject of a relentless campaign by the party and the pro-Tory press, is enforced particularly ruthlessly once Cameron wins the election and becomes prime minister; in order to demonstrate his determination to contain debt[16], the government spectacularizes the implementation of butget cuts by forcing the hand on vulnerable groups that, for various reasons, were suspected by the Conservative public of holding unjustified privileges:

> Tory policy tended to single out particular groups for punishment: millions of public sector workers who had their pay frozen; disabled people whose essential benefits were cut and made harder to access; those living in social housing with a spare room that qualified for the bedroom tax; and so on. (Nunns, 2018: 161).

A second reason why austerity has been politicised so much is the special meaning the 2008 crisis has had for the UK. British politics has begun before and has completed in more depth thant the rest of the continent the development of a neoliberal consensus (Mouffe, 2005), based on financial liberalization, marketization of services, rising private debt, the suppression of trade union rights and social protections. The turning point that marks the transition from the social democratic compromise to the neoliberal era is currently associated with the name of Margaret Thatcher, not by chance. Similarly, it is difficult to refer to New Public Management (NPM) - already mentioned in chapter 2 - without thinking of New Labour, which this doctrine has implemented better than anyone else. Often, neoliberal policies, especially when oriented

[16] As the new Prime Minister put it: "The age of irresponsibility is giving way to the age of Austerity" (Cameron, 2009).

to the compression of social protections or to the marketization of public services, have not enjoyed great popularity in the country; the fundamental pillar for the implementation of such policies has been the ability of the British political elites to sell them as the only possible choice: "There Is No Alternative", the iconic and laconic expression by Margaret Thatcher has since been adopted by a large part of government elites in the thirty years preceding the crash of 2008. For a long time there has been no conceivable alternative to the maketization of ever more spheres of social life; even when governments wanted to implement policies to strengthen welfare, as happened in the years of New Labour, this took place according to the grammar and dictates of NPM, means-testing and conditional workfare. It goes without saying that in such a context, in which neoliberalism is perfectly embodied in the public's consciousness and institutions, the arrival of a global crisis due to the increasing deregulation of the financial market strikes at the heart of the credibility of the hegemonic discourse: not only have market-friendly policies not been able to protect the country from the crash, but on the contrary have largely favoured it, and in the post-crash they have proved unable to cope with the dramatic social consequences of the crisis (Gilbert, 2016a).

The first to mobilize against austerity measures is one of the groups most affected by the aggressive campaign of spectacularized implementation of restrictive policies. At the end of 2010 students take part in massive demonstrations against the proposal to triple tuition fees from £3,000 to 9,000; the increase in tuition fees would impose a grave burden on a generation already hit by falling wages, skirocketing rent prices and unemployment even before 2008. The first event, on November 10 in London, sees the participation of 50,000 students; few, among them, think of Labour as a possible political referent. On the contrary, many are disappointed Libdem voters, who in the previous elections had promised to eliminate tuition fees, but then accepted to triple them once entered in coalition with the Tories (Jones, 2020). Despite the widespread spread of protests - 80 universities are occupied by students (Jones, 2020) - culminating in violent clashes with the police and the occupation of the headquarters of the Conservative Party, the bill is implemented, thanks to the government partner. Despite the failure, the student movement attracts the attention of political figures such as John Mcdonnell and the general secretary of the union United Len Mccluskey, who happily caught unawares by the tide of protests decides to ride the anti-Austerity wave, promoting the year after the largest general strike since 1926 and the March For Alternative of 26 March 2011 in London, attended by half a million people. The mobilization campaign launched by the unions converges, along

with other single issue groups, in the creation of People's Assembly Against Austerity with large rallies and protests against the government across the nation, which aim is

> to bring together campaigns against cuts and privatisation with trade unionists in a movement for social justice […] (and to) provide a national forum for anti-austerity views which, while increasingly popular, are barely represented in parliament' (People's Assembly Against Austerity, 2013[17])

The People's Assembly is the first to pose the problem of translating anti-austerity demands into electoral politics. Shortly after the launch of the group, two of the founders, Ken Loach and Kate Hudson - both will become supporters of Corbyn -, declare that the time has come for the creation of a new party to the left of Labour, to fill the empty space left by the latter's embrace of neoliberalism (Loach & Hudson, 2013).

At the same time as the student protests, another key component of the British anti-austerity movement emerges, namely the UK Uncut campaign. The aim of the mobilization is to denounce that "cuts are a political choice, not an economic necessity" (UK Uncut, 2011). Again, the protesters do not seem particularly intrested in Labour, preferring to use the forms of direct and elite-challenging action typical of protest movements:

> They wanted to organise action that engaged people in a way that the habitual demonstrations of the 'traditional left' failed to do. They decided to focus on corporate tax avoidance and occupy Vodafone and Topshop, the shopfronts of companies avoiding billions of pounds of tax. (Wainwright, 2013: 58)

Despite such particularly provocatory actions, activists note that unlike previous mobilizations this time there is a broad popular support for the demands of the movements:

> 'Having done climate change stuff, we were used to getting reactions from the public of "Fuck off! Get a job!",' says Costello. This was totally different. Shoppers would come up to the activists, start conversations, shower them with support. After all, people had to pay their taxes, and they resented big corporations for whom different rules apparently applied, especially in this new age of economic winter, with the effects of Conservative cuts beginning to bite. Suddenly tax avoidance was all over the news and a hot political issue. The protesters had devised an accessible, easily comprehensible message for their cause, one with which large swathes of the public could readily identify. (Jones, 2020: 13).

Finally, in 2011, in the wake of protests in the United States and Southern Europe, the Occupy Wall Street movement comes to life, with the large encampment outside St Paul's Cathedral – attended once again by John Mcdonnell. Despite smaller numbers of participants compared to the protests in the Mediterranean countries, Occupy and Uncut manage to vividly impress the British public. Evidence of this is the fact that, even after the peak phase of the 2011 mobilizations, hundreds of single issue groups focused on fighting cuts in specific sectors and

[17] Retrieved at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/feb/05/people-assembly-against-austerity

localities continue to flourish throughout the nation for a long time, often supported by local union branches (Nunns, 2018). Especially in 2014, the year before the election of Corbyn, there is a significant intensification and dissemination of this type of activity, thanks to the direction of the People's Assembly, which assumes the task of unifying these extremely fragmented struggles, all characterized by opposition to Austerity.

British anti-austerity protests are in many ways comparable to the Movement of the Squares, except for the greater ability of the unions to take part in the movement and lead some of its sections, as demonstrated by the experience of People's Assembly, and the Labour Left's more receptive stance toward the movement compared to its continental counterparts. But for the rest, the British movement is almost identical to the rest of the Movement of the Squares. First of all, like the other cases already analyzed, the protests are

> generally more class-focused than class-rooted. While it places issues of social inequality and global economic power front and centre, it neither emerges from the organic institutions of the class-in-itself nor advances the socialist perspective of the class-for-itself'. (Murray, 2016[18])

The mobilizations promote demands related to social class, but do not develop from a clear class consciousness or from organizations devoted to the representation of a specific class. This means that even the unions first and then Corbyn, when they decide to take part in the anti-Austerity movement to try to guide it, must find a way to hybridize their class-oriented discourses and their modes of action with those of the movement:

> It has done so by synthesizing what remains of the traditional labor movement with the new movements of the last twenty years, channelling the mobilizing strengths, and many of the people, associated with twenty-first century "movement" politics through the embedded structures of the country's traditional left. (Murray, 2016)

As in the case of the Movement of the Squares, anti-austerity protests in the UK, especially those not led by the unions - for example the students' demonstrations - have been the first political experience for many neophytes. And a particularly intense one indeed, given the aggressiveness of the police and the media in responding to the the protesters' demands. For the first time with student protests, a cross section of impoverished and middle class urban youth makes an experience of common militancy and feel on their own skin the violent reaction of the establishment to their demands and their cry for help. Only a few political figures show solidarity with the demonstrators, and among these, as already mentioned, stands out Jeremy

[18] Retrieved at: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/corbyn-socialism-labour-left-tony-benn-miliband/

Corbyn (Earle, 2018). The events of 2010 are therefore a very important step, as a new generation is socialized to protest politics. For the first time many young citizens, grown up with the feeling of living in a system where there is little room for them – a feeling exacerbated by the imposition of a huge debt for studies through the proposed reform - come together to protest and realize that the reaction of the powerful is one of violent rejection. In addition, the neophytes of the protest are socialized to a style of collective action, which will have some influence in informing their expectations even once made the leap to electoral politics; a style composed of creative, direct and irreverent mass street action organized without the mediation of organizations, exactly as happened in the rest of the Movement of Squares.

So, with the anti-austerity protests, another generation stratifies, after that of the Stop The War Coalition, united by deep disgust for the political system and the feeling of not being in any way taken into account in the decisions of political leaders. Another generation that finds in Jeremy Corbyn his ally and fellow traveler (Jones, 2020: 37). But while it is clear that the anti-austerity movement has been essential to the successes of the Labour left, it must also be remembered that before merging with the Corbyn campaign, such movement of opinion has fuelled the rise in members and electoral support for other parties, namely the Greens, rebranded as anti-austerity party, and the Scottish National Party, whose leaders have cultivated among the public the idea that Scottish secession would first of all mean to escape from Tory austerity. While Labour was still cautious on the anti-austerity movements, it is the independentist leader Nicola Sturgeon who attracts the attention of the British left, including the English:

> In the early leaders' debates in this year's general election (2015), millions were introduced to the country's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and asked: 'Why can't we have a leader like this, who is smart, credible and opposes austerity!' She paved the way for Corbyn. (Barnett, 2015[19])

Between 2010 and 2015 there is a generalised increase in the number of members of political parties - except for the Conservatives -, especially young people (Pickard, 2018) essentially driven by the reaction to austerity and the campaign for Scottish independence. The SNP and the Greens see their membership increase between 2010 and 2015, while Labour and LibDems - although the latter in an extremely marginal measure - after the 2015 elections. This picture shows that British citizens have responded proactively to the new critical juncture, expressing interest in first-person involvement in the construction of the post-crash society. Given structure

[19] Retrieved at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/corbyns-golden-opportunity-0/

of the British electoral system, these energies tend to converge on existing parties, as attempting the chances of succes of new parties are very dim (Dennis, 2020).

These developments are part of the general restructuring of the British political landscape, in which Labour's resurgence is not the only major phenomenon. Added to it, as already mentioned, is the rise of the SNP which, on the wings of an intense and participated pro-independence campaign in 2013-14, wipes out Labour from Scotland at the 2015 elections - there will be a recovery, but only partial, in 2017, and a new collapse in 2019. At the same time the rise of UKIP, a xenophobic and pro-Brexit party, manages to break through the working class and petit-bourgeoisie protesting against the political class. UKIP reaches 12.5% in the 2015 elections, and is probably the pressure that the party begins to exert on the Tories that convinces Cameron to hold a referendum on EU membership in 2016.

5.2.2. New Labour's antagonizing legacy

5.2.2.1 Antagonized members

Despite the great enthusiasm among members achieved in the mid-1990s, the New Labour project begins to show the first cracks already at the end of the decade. At first, it is not a matter of explicit internal opposition, but rather of an upright and vague sense of dissatisfaction. All this is quite natural, given the iconoclastic nature of the project; if before the electoral victory the membership has generally been willing to many symbolic sacrifices in order to return to government, once the Labour is returned to government within the party inevitably begins a reflection on what has been sacrificed of the party culture for the cause of modernization. The leaders of New Labour have actively chosen to cultivate the representation of themselves as the overcomers of the "Old Labour", helping to build a myth that, once the momentum of the modernization project is lost, has had the function to turn dissatisfaction into nostalgia and in the desire for a return to the past, to the "real Labour" that existed before New Labour.

To this mood of partial reconsideration must be added to the frictions between leadership and Labour membership, which in the first decade of the 21st century will lead to the complete collapse of the project. The first reason of discontent are the reforms of 1998, which make it more difficult the deselection of the MPs by their constituencies - a move that, in due time, will provoke as a reaction the return in vogue of the mandatory reselection already proposed by the CLPD in the 80s. More generally, there is a progressive strengthening of the control of the

leadership and frontbenchers of the Parliamentary Group over the rest of the party. One of the most disturbing facets of this trend is the rising intrusiveness of "professional bullies" (Minkin, 2014, p. 138), new recruits directly loyal to the leadership, often in roles of power, whose task is to ensure that the behaviour of party members and staffs at various levels conform to the wishes of the leadership, even with opaque and aggressive means. These often young party staffers, who are not really devoted to the party as much as to its leaders and the chances of carreer this devotion provides, replace to some extents the traditional Labour bureaucracy. A bureaucracy that has often leaned to the right of the party, but generally endowed with an attachment to the party as a whole and rooted in a working-class background that to some extent prevented its transformation into a caste completely alienated from large part of the membership. The new officers are recruited precisely because of their cultural and professional differences from the traditional base and the party culture and their blind adherence to the dictates of the new leadership. This new form of management, combined with the Blairites' obsession for shows of unity and credibility in front of the media, creates a particularly asphyxial environment, in which the party is subjected at all levels to a constant spin and "control freakery" (Faucher-King, 2008; Panitch & Leys, 2020). Paradoxically, it will be precisely the general degradation of internal democratic procedures and informal linkages pursued during New Labour that will push the left to adopt the strategy of proposing candidate leaders in order to gain visibility. Since the space for dissent and internal debate is strongly compressed in favor of plebiscitarization and corporate-style communication, the only way for the minoritarian currents to gain recognition and hope to be heard is to try to fit into leadership contests, that are the only instances of internal democracy that in this context still matter something. So in 2007, John Mcdonnell tries to run, failing to secure enough nominations. In 2010 it is the turn of Diane Abbott, who gets 12.3% of trade unionists' votes. Finally in 2015, Corbyn.

The Blair leadership also stands out for a blatant disregard for the "militant culture" within the party. The ideal membership, according to Blair, should resemble as much as possible the electorate, which in the idea of the leader of New Labour is relatively passive and all in all little politicized:

> Blair and his tribe had always been extremely suspicious of the organised element of the Labour Party[…].The word activist made them shudder. It conjured images of long, late-night sittings of constituency meetings, debating subsection 3 of composite 1 of the CLP motion condemning the situation in the Wallis and Futuna Islands. They thought that CLP meetings attracted a certain type of person, the

> unrepresentative crank. By contrast, they had had enormous faith in the 'member'. Perhaps the husband and wife who had paid their dues for years, might turn out for the Christmas raffle, hadn't had much truck with the preoccupations and vicissitudes of the far left, and, indeed, would vote against them: in other words, the internal Labour Party version of the 'real people' about whom Blair was so fond of talking during his time in government (Goodall, 2018: 77).

The phase of great popularity among the electorate convinces Blair that it is always possible to leverage membership loyalty to the progressive leadership, against the militants and the internal left. As the Corbyn affair shows, this is a resounding miscalculation.

However, it is not just a matter of management style changes, but also of the policies promoted by Blair. As anticipated during the election campaign, the new leadership refuses to loosen the anti-union laws promoted by the conservatives since Tatcher, as well as promotes a general liberalisation and marketization of welfare. In general Blair works for improving life conditions of the working and middle classe but refuses to do so by implementing traditional redistributive policies aimed at reducing inequalities, preferring to follow a trickle-down approach, as liberalization leads to growth and more tax revenues; an approach that works well before the 2008 crisis, with the budgets of many services and social protections that increase significantly (Goodall, 2018) - although within the new framework of market-like management -, but frustrates the desires for social equality held by an important part of the base.

But the first real blow to Blair's leadership comes after the choice to participate in the American intervention in Iraq, against the will of very large swathes of the membership and progressive public opinion. The decision to participate in an illegal and imperialist war will become the emblem of New Labour's undemocratic style of party management, leading to the first major demonstrations of internal opposition to the new course. Finally, the 2008 crisis and its devastating consequences hit a worn out New Labour and show all the weaknesses of its macroeconomic approach. With the defeat of 2010 - the party sees its vote share collapse to 29%, getting worringly to the Libdems - coming after a long phase of disenchantment, the members and unions choose to turn left electing Ed Miliband.The newly elected leader promises a substantial discontinuity with respect to New Labour, an experience that he does not repudiate but which he believes to be over. The promise of a breakthrough attracts 50,000 new members only in 2010, reversing for the first time, though for a short period, the negative trend. Even more than the change in the political proposal, which will be discussed later, what strikes of Miliband is the attempt to change the relationship with the party base. This effort begins with the internal investigation "Refounding Labour", which interrogates thousands of members and

whose explicit objective is to transform the Labour into a "genuine movement where the connection between the party and the public is strong" (Labour Party, 2011: 3). This is presented as a sharp break with the past:

> "Old Labour forgot about the public. New Labour forgot about the party. And, by the time we left office, we had lost touch with both." (Miliband quoted in Bale, 2015: 68).

As a matter of fact, the consultation has no great effect other than to launch the registered supporters scheme, though always in the context of the electoral college where these would have weighed for the 25% of the votes. A much more radical reform proposal, namely the abolition of the electoral college and the transition to the OMOV vote for the election of the leader by members only, proposed by the unions, is first shelved and then resumed following the Falkirk scandal which will be discussed in the next section.

However, and despite the innovations in the political platform and the attempts to make concessions to a disaffected base, Miliband remains very tentative on austerity. Although important parts of the program show a clear shift to the left, the leader and the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Ed Balls never publicly succeed in conclusively reject austerity. Probably for fear of being swallowed up by the fierce pro-Tory press campaign against lavish Labour, in fact the leadership ends up arguing that austerity is an inevitable choice; the only possibility is to reduce as much as possible the impact of budget restrictions on popular classes and shift the burden a bit more on those who are less in difficulty, but the overall vision is not rejected. Because of this attitude Miliband and its program will go down in history as "austerity-lite"; a nickname that in fact communicates the inability of the new leadership to propose an easily recognizable alternative to the Cameron governemnt's restrictive public budgets. So, after the further defeat of May 2015, in which Labour increases by very little its vote share despite the collapse of the LibDems, an important part of the membership is in fact ready to archive the timid Miliband in favor of a project capable of affirming a clearer vision. This lack of clarity and courage is an absolutely significant element in explaining Labour's meagre performance, since the leadership struggles to motivate its potential supporters and to be recognized by the electorate: after the election, 55% of voters said Labour's agenda and priorities were not clear, while only 33% affirmed they were, compared to 68% of voters that deemed to know what the Tories stood for (YouGov, 2015). At the end of the day, Miliband and Balls' decision to keep a low profile turns out to be a serious strategic error. A more proactively anti-austerity stance would have probably led to a better result, for three reasons:

first, the growing support among the public for anti-austerity discourses and measures; second, Labour's share among cathegories hit by austerity was quite low and likely to increase following a stronger stance; finally, Labour could have gained much by involving abstensionists' demands, and expecially those from 18-24 years old, a section growingly politicized by cuts and let down by the LibDem insurcengy (Nunns, 2018). With regard to the latter among the mentioned trends, namely the voting differential between young and old, the problem is not confined to Labour and has been extensively described by Inglehart and Norris (2019): in the West, the left is on the rise among some numerically expanding social groups, among which stand out new generations; on the contrary, the right is in advantage among some shrinking sectors of the population, epitomized by the figure of the white, over-60 man. The problem is that these categories tend to show very different propensions to vote; thus the only way for the left to triumph at the polls is to fully exploit its advantage among young people, finding ways to mobilize them to vote massively. This phenomenon is also explained by Dalton (2008a, 2008b) who, as already seen, distinguishes between an engaged vision of citizenship, widespread among young people, and a duty-based conception, dominant among the elderly. So it is clear that parties that want to mobilize young people should find ways to integrate forms of engaged participation. Other data support the contention that a more clearly placed Labour to the left could have achieved better results. 41% of voters think that Labour has been too soft on business in 2015, against 19% (TUC, 2015). On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 stands for left and 10 stands for right, respondents to the British Election Study place the Labour at 3 and the Conservatives at 8 (Fieldhouse, 2015). Therefore, the victory had not gone to the party considered the most moderate; on the contrary, according to the same study, the probability that a voter voted Labour increases the more that voter considers the Labour to be positioned on the left (Green & Prossner, 2015).

In this context, Corbyn provides some answers to the anguished questions of a party hard hit by repeated defeat and by an epochal transition in the economic and social configuration of the country. Corbyn is given credit in his bid to overcome both New Labour and Miliband's triangulations, managing to set up a "political and moral" response to the post-recession transition (Goodall, 2018). Once again, as in the 80s, the Labour left rises to the fore in a phase of profound capitalist transformation and crisis, in which the Tory right manages to impose on the country particularly aggressive economic policy reforms hitting hard on the party's constituency. The ability of the hard-left of the CLPD to present itself as the intransigent

bulwark against the marketization and compression of social protections perpetrated by the Tatcher and Cameron governments is functional to provide a clear and recognizable direction to a party prostrate from the defeat and the decay of the convictions of previous decades.

In summary, Corbyn's election can be interpreted as a revolt of the party base against New Labour, boosted by the rise of the anti-austerity movement (Seymour, 2017; Wainwright, 2017). The balance of powers typical to the New Labour season, with the right of the party and the soft-left united under the leadership of the modernizers, is completely disrupted at a time when an important section of the soft-left base, disappointed by Miliband's moderation, begins to prove more open towards the hard-left (Gilbert, 2016a), which is ready to take the opportunity and launches a great insurgency. One of the causes of the uprising is certainly the discredit of Blair's pro-market recipes following the 2008 crisis; but it is probably even more decisive the widespread feeling among members that they have been treated as mere electoral assets and that the leadership has shown little interest in their positions and little respect for their values. This fact shows that, even without the radicalisation processes triggered by the effects of the recession, Blair's efforts to change party culture have worked very well at the organisational level but has been much less able to penetrate at the heart of the members. In fact, the self representation of Labour as a party rooted in the working-class, with internal democracy as an essential element of its identity, redistribution as its goal and the state as its main tool has not been eradicated, and it found its own revenge through the election of an unlikely leader.

5.2.2.2. Unions shifting to the left?

After the anti-austerity movement and the insurgent membership, the unions are the third component of the Corbynist movement. Without the support of the main unions, Corbyn's victory would have been much more difficult. The endorsment by the unions, and in particular the two giants Unison and Unite, provides the campaign much needed material resources, namely staff and funds. But even more important than material resources, is the legitimacy that is conferred to the campaign: once obtained the support of the main unions, it is no longer possible to brand Corbyn as a hopeless outsider.

All this might seem obvious: after all, Corbyn is definitely the most pro-unions candidate among the participants in the leadership contest. But in reality the massive support of the unions

to Corbyn, a candidate of secondary importance, is an unprecedented fact. Since the founding of the party, to which they have actively contributed, the unions have always been very cautious in associating with minority groups and in particular the left. As extremely pragmatic actors mainly interested in improving the material conditions of their members, the unions have almost always chosen to associate with the right of the party, in so far as this has been for a long time the dominant faction. This is definitely true until the mid-90s, with the brief exception of the alliance with the New Left in the 1980s following the election of left-wing leaders in some unions; an alliance that lasts very little, as soon as it becomes clear that the modernizers are able to relegate the left to an extremely marginal position. With the arrival of Tony Blair the story changes, as the new leader launches an extremely aggressive attempt to impose the power of the parliamentary leadership on the unions, well beyond the traditional balance of power that governed the party - in which the unions gained influence over the policies in exchange for the exercise of restraint over their affiliates. Taking advantage of the general weakening of unions due to deindustrialisation and changes in the labour market[20], Blair often takes an openly hostile attitude towards them:

> it was a bold and extraordinary attempt to manage the relationship in such a way as to make the unions outsider lobbyists in the party they had created (Minkin, 2014: 272).

When it becomes clear that Blair will not cancel the anti-unions laws enacted by Tatcher, and the closer New Labour gets to business while Blair's supporters openly talk about the strict link with the unions, re-election becomes increasingly difficult for union leaders who had accepted the unfair pact with Blair, aware of their own weakness. In fact, many unions had accepted the repeated public humiliations inflicted by Blair in his attempt to break away from the traditional image of the party, convinced that access to government would benefit them as always did before; but this time it is not and the anti-unions rhetoric is matched by the absence support in policy-making by the party. This means that gradually, starting from the 2000s, there's a gradual shift to the left among trade unionist and the election of leaders increasingly radical and opposed to the leadership of the party. From the mid-2000s, the TULO, the body coordinating the main unions affiliated to the party, begings to build an alliance with the CLPD, managing to snatch some concessions in the election manifesto of 2005, including the block of the privatisation of Royal Mail (Panitch & Leys, 2020). Despite this, after the resignation of Blair the unions are not yet ready to support the leftist candidate John Mcdonnel, and give their

[20] From the peak of 13 million members in 1979 to 8 millions in the 90s.

support to the favorite Gordon Brown; still in 2010, they prefer to the radical Diane Abbott the favorite among the non-Blairites, Ed Miliband.

Despite Miliband's closeness to the unions, the relationship soon precipitates, as will be seen in the next section, with the Falkirk scandal. At the base of this scandal, linked to the interference of the unions in the selection of MP candidates, is the growing tendency of the unions to do by themselves, trying to achieve their objectives in the party without explicit agreements with the leadership. In its turn, this is a form of adaptation to Blair's extremely harsh policy, which has broken every consociational pact with the unions, forcing them to take an extremely defensive when not pre-emptively aggressive attitude. At this point it is clear that any leader who is not completely determined to disown the legacy of the Blairian season is to be seen as an opponent of the unions. This progressive alienation of the unions from the party leadership is reinforced by the generalized turn left among their members. When Corbyn runs, almost immediately a large part of the members of the unions began to put pressure on their leaders to appoint him as their official canidate. Of course, this situation is not entirely new; what is new is the fact that, having no long-term agreement with the majoritarian currents in the PLP, the unions have relatively little to lose in endorsing a rather obscure candidate and therefore less interest in suppressing grassroot demands. Added to this is the fact that the soft-left candidate, Andy Burnham, first favored by the unions eschews any alliance with these in order not to be accused of being too far on the left (Kogan & Kogan, 2019). Thus after a 15-year slow leftward shift, the unions, once pillars of the party, land on the same political terrain as the weak Labour left. This is primarily a consequence of the establishment's rejection of them and their progressive marginalisation, but also of the growing involvement in the anti-austerity movement which, as has been seen in the previous sections, ends up in the creation of People's Assembly and in the support to local anti-cuts campaigns.

The leftward shift of trade unions shows how Blair's party changes had been only partially effective. The strategy undertaken to transform the party into a mainstream organisation, dominated by the parliamentary leadership and without interference from trade unions is totally incomplete if, as it happened, the century-long link between party and workers' organizations is not completely erased. And this link is not only made up by the financial support of the unions to the party, but also the fact that the unions are actors that are intimately integrated and

recognized in the party and that, even in the absence of explicitly formalised rights of influence, know how and are able to exert their power on the organization at different levels.

5.2.3. From the Falkirk scandal to OMOV

Corbyn's triumph would have been unthinkable without the reform of the leader's election rules and the widening of the selectorate. The electoral system of the party, in force since the 1980s, when the CLPD managed to snatch from the PLP the exclusive on the right to elect the leader, is based on the electoral college: the vote of the MPs is worth a third of the total, as well as the vote of the members of the unions and of the party each. In such a context, a candidate like Corbyn, strong among the members and among the unions but opposed by the totality of the parliamentary Group would have very little chance in front of a candidate supported en masse by the PLP. 2015 is the first election in which all the members vote OMOV, with the elimination of the electoral college and the disproportionate weight of MPs. In addition, the 2015 elections are the first in which registered supporters are allowed to vote, temporarily registering for only £3. This, against all expectations, allows Corbyn to cash in the huge consensus obtained by the anti-austerity movement of opinion, allowing his supporters to take part in the vote by paying a negligible fee; an estimated 90% of registered supporters voted for Corbyn (Goodall, 2018). It is worth telling the story of how these reforms and their unexpected outcome came about, because it is a story that says a lot about the profound changes in internal balances of power and the collapse of a political consensus within Labour that allowed the Corbyn insurgency.

The story begins in 2012, when the MP for the constituency of Falkirk is arrested for aggression, which makes it necessary to select a new MP. The candidates are the Blairite Jim Murphy and Kairie Murphy, a figure extraordinarily close to Unite's secretary Len McCluskey. Unite controls, in the figure of the local secretary, the section in charge of selecting the new MP through the vote of membership. In this context, the union manages to convince a large number of workers at a local refinery to join the party section by anticipating for them the membership fee, leading to a doubling of the local party membership. This triggers harsh accusations from the rival candidate: although unions are allowed to anticipate the fees for their members, opponents begin to say that many people were enrolled in the section without being aware of it. The issue becomes burning, both because the right of the party blows on the case in order to press for the disaffiliation of trade unions to the party, but also because, as already mentioned above, the unions that are increasingly marginalized in the relationship with the party

establishment have long started acting on their own, trying to influence selections at the local level. In 2013, Ed Miliband decides to send the report on the case to the Scottish police, who closes the investigation for lack of evidence. At this point, Ed Miliband decides to go for political solution; the leader uses the opportunity of the scandal to encourage the approval of some measures to deepen individual participation in the election of leaders, in line with the promises made after his election and the recommendations made by the *Refunding Labour to Win* report (Labour Party, 2011). In the mind of the new leader, giving more rights to members and temporary supporters in the election of the leader could be the only way to revitalize a party that has long lost activists and members, turning it into a vibrant and modern "movement".

Having been elected three years earlier with broad support from the unions, the leader is constantly targeted by the right of the party and the press that accuse him of being a trade union puppet. Miliband feels the pressure of these claims, which increases after Falkirk, with the Blairites insistently demanding the disaffiliation of the unions. Ray Collins is commissioned to draft a report on organizational changes to be discussed at a special conference in 2014, in order to rebalance the relationship between the unions and the party. Miliband is opposed to severe the formal link with the unions, but nonetheless believes he is forced to act, proposing the cancellation of automatic affiliation to the party of union members; to become party members and consequently vote in the leadership contests, trade union members would not what to opt in explicitly. This means that union funding to the party is greatly reduced, since through the automatic affiliation mechanism the unions imposed the Labour membership fee on all their members. In this way, the influence of the unions, both in local selections but also through the provision of funds to the party, is also reduced.

But Miliband does not stop there. In order to symbolically distance itself from what happened in Falkirk, it promotes further reforms, the aim of which is to create a party

> where everyone plays their part and a politics in which they can, a politics that is open, transparent and trusted – exactly the opposite of the politics we saw in Falkirk. That was a politics closed, a politics of the machine, a politics hated – and rightly so. What we saw in Falkirk is part of the death throes of the old politics. (Miliband, 2013[21])

This results in the proposal to eliminate the electoral college, bulwark of the power of unions and MPs on the selection of the leader, in favor of an OMOV of the whole membership. It also introduces the possibility for supporters and members of trade unions opting in temporarily for

[21] Retrieved at: https://labourlist.org/2013/07/ed-miliband-speech-on-the-union-link-full-text/

£3 to vote. The MPs could still veto over the selection of the candidate leaders, each of whom must get the nomination of 15% of the Parliamentary Group.

Paradoxically the unions, and in particular Len Mccluskey's Unite, find themselves favoring this new mode of leadership election. This is because, despite the elimination of the vote of its affiliates in the electoral college, the trade union leadership believes it has ample opportunity to influence the vote of the party members, who in large part are also members of the unions, as well as that of registered unionists. In general, the great unions believe - rightly - that they are still powerful machines of mobilization within the party; certainly, they are much more so than the Parliamentary Group, which paradoxically is the great loser of this reform, not being able to compensate, unlike the unions, the loss of formal voting rights through their mass mobilization capabilities. For the time being, the Parliamentary Group and the right of the party are content to retain the right of veto over the selection of candidates; furthermore, the general belief among the moderate candidates is that, as in the days of Blair, facilitating the access to the vote by registered supporters would favour the influx of moderates more prone to support the leadership that to take part in party disputes. In this climate marked by lack of open opposition, tThe amendments are ratified with 86% of the votes in favour.

The story has many paradoxical aspects. As already mentioned, ther reform is largely favored by the right of the party. Even Blair himself looks out for reform:

> It is a long overdue reform… something I should have done myself. It puts individual people in touch with the party and is a great way of showing how Labour can reconnect with the people of Britain (Blair, 2014).

This judgment shows the inability of the old leadership and the parliamentary group in general to understand the new phase and the new mood of the public opinion, much less pacified and market-supportive than in the 90s. In fact, Miliband persists on the modernizer's logic of reforming to its extreme consequences, completing the individualization of leadership selection. The fact that the outcome of this reform is to bring to power a member of the CLPD, that is the faction most opposed to the modernisers, demonstrates that in fact procedural reforms of leadership selection rules do not have the effect of determining the outcome of votes. On the contrary, as Flanagin and colleagues (2012) have already pointed out, only by raising intraorganizational barriers can the leadership boost its grip over the organization; each time these barriers are lowered - which is what happens with the widening of the selectorare, as already mentioned in chapter 4 - the possibilities multiply, since individual preferences come

into play. Labour parliamentarians misunderstood a particularly favorable situation for modernizers, the 90s, for a given; but once the social climate changed, the individuals' preferences inevitably shifted. This has a particular relevance since the trend of extension of selectorates for the election of party leaders is now generalized in Western parties (Garland, 2015).

Paradoxical is also the fact that, among the few dissatisfied with the reform, is Jon Lansman, one of the leaders of the CLPD, who in a fiery editorial for Left Futures affirms that the new changes will mean a substantial downsizing of the role of unions in the party, to the detriment of the new alliance that has been formed between these and the hard-left. But it was precisely the CLPD that first proposed, in the 70s, the attribution of the right to vote to individuals, in the context of the creation of the electoral college. At that time, the proposal had the threefold function of removing the monopoly of selections from the PLP, democratize the procedure by guaranteeing the right to vote directly to individuals and finally make it possible to stipulate agreements between representatives of members and unions in order to cut off parliamentarians. In fact, the last condition has not been fulfilled for a long time and the unions have preferred to ally with the leadership, as long as the relationship has not deteriorated too much. Conceivably, Lansman once again shows to support this strategy of cooperation with unions that has been repeatedly defeated precisely because in the early 2010s the unions seems finally be available to ally with CLPD, following the historic transformation described in the previous section; at the same time he is scared of the possible influence of incoming moderate voters, recalling what happened in the 90s. The history of the process of individualization of voting in the Labour Party is therefore a complex and controversial one: first invoked by the left as an instrument against the monopoly of the PLP, OMOV and lowered barriers to perspective members become bulwarks of the modernizers, who believe they can use an individualized and moderate membership to defeat activists and disempower trade unions; this interpretation is still alive in 2014, but it is now flanked by the support of the unions, who, probably better able than parliamentarians to grasp the changes in the mood of the base, believe they can exploit the situation in their favor. Finally, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the left who first promoted and then opposed OMOV, reaps the fruits of this twisted evolution.

6 A social and political history of Corbynism: Corbyn's Labour

6.1 2016: Labour's civil wars

6.1.1. No confidence

After a leadership contest marked by the condemnation of the party's establishment, Corbyn finds himself having to lead the party while facing extreme hostility from the PLP. This hostility is precipitated by the persistence of a wide gap with the Tories in opinion polls, which is not affected by the usual rebounds due to the election of a new leader. On the contrary, Labour remains for the whole of 2015 and the first half of 2016 at the levels of the vote in 2015 - around 30% of the preferences - whith an unremarkable improvement around the referendum on the EU in summer 2016 and then falls well below 30%. Corbyn's personal approval ratings are absymal: starting from a net balance of -8% at the time of his election, it drops to -40% by the beginning of 2016 (YouGov, 2016). These figures certainly are affected by Corbyn's lack of recognition among the general public, as well as his lack of familiarity with the communicative conventions of mainstream politics (Nunns, 2018). At the same time, as will be seen in more detail in the next section, it is undeniable that the campaign launched against him by much of the press, as the constant opposition of large part of the parliamentary elites of his own party, have had a big impact in representing Corbyn as a leader unable to control his own party (Cammaerts, 2016). Despite widespread accusations of extremism and his unmasked desire to break away from the party's recent history, Corbyn is well aware of the situation within the party and decides first to attempt a compromisory solution, appointing a Shadow Cabinet in which all areas of the party are represented. The solution soon turns out to be extremely dysfunctional; not infrequently, the Shadow Ministers have no hesitation in disavowing the public stances of the leader, as in the case of Hilary Benn, Shadow Foreign Secretary and son of Corbyn's mentor Tony Benn, declaring to the parliament to support intervention in Syria, contradicting the Corbyn's speech of a few minutes before (Benn, 2016).

After several months of medium-intensity conflict, internal opponents take the opportunity of the referendum on the UK's permanence in the EU to try to replace the new leader. In particular, Corbyn's performance during the referendum campaign is considered not convincing. Although Corbyn actively took part in the Remain campaign, participating in no less than 120 media appearances (Panitch & Leys, 2020; Seymour, 2017), the PLP and a part of the pro-Remain

membership consider his stance uninspiring and above all deem his reiterated affirmation of the need to reform European treaties to end Austerity extremely convoluted and therefore self-defeating; even worse still, the passion for the "remain and reform" approach is seen by some as a way of concealing Corbyn's anti-EU sentiments, expressed widely in the past by the Bennite wing of the Labour Left and by Corbyn himself, especially on the occasion of the referendum of 1975[22] (Goodall, 2018; Panitch & Leys, 2020). For Benn and the CLPD members, in fact, the European Community is nothing more than a capitalist project of deregulation of markets and social protections, as well as the venue of the dispossession of the powers of national parliaments and trade union bargaining; this approach makes internal opponents legitimately suspect that Corbyn's pro-EU stance, far from being wholehearted, might stem from the will to align with the members' mandate and not from convinction - 80% of members is pro-Remain (Panitch & Leys, 2020) – while at the same time a move to distinguish Labour's position from the Tory approach to Brexit, which is to use the deletion of treaties in order to implement ever more aggressive forms of liberalisation and compression of social rights.

Following the referendum defeat and several months of negative polls, party rebels take the initiative. On June 2, 2016, three days after Cameron's resignation as prime minister, ten members of Corbyn's Shadow Cabinet resign. The move intends to force Corbyn to quit, as the insurgents assume that the leader cannot think of continuing to lead the party after receiving an informal motion of no confidence from his closest associates and a large part of the PLP; Corbyn's hasty resignation would, in the minds of the conspirators, lead to a new leadership contest in which the former leader would not be able to collect 15% of the nominations from parliamentarians nor would find the time to change the rules of nomination. The plan is therefore to circumvent the support obtained by Corbyn among members, with a palace intrigue. However, the move does not work: counting on the support of the base, Corbyn decides not to resign and begins to plan how to replenish the Shadow Cabinet, this time including almost only his close allies. The denounces declaimed from the Shadow Ministers in Parliament are

[22] This is not a very rare position within the Labour movement. On the contrary, until the 1980s, the reluctance towards the European Community was widespread within the party. This attitude changes significantly during the modernization phase and with the attempt to return the party to eligibility, a phase in which the European Community becomes a symbol of cosmopolitanism and economic modernization. The famous speech by Jacques Delors to the British trade unions on "Social Europe" as an alternative to Tatcherism, held in Bournemouth in 1988, certainly made this change of mood easier.

contrasted by the wide support shown to Corbyn from the protesters outside Westminster, led by Momentum:

> The two scenes were a metaphor for the Labour civil war: a membership which formed the leadership's praetorian guard ranged against an overwhelmingly hostile parliamentary party. (Jones, 2020: 83).

Not only that. Thanks to the support of the unions, the NEC rules that in case of new leadership contest the incumbent leader should be automatically put on the ballot. A few days after that ruling, the 20% of the PLP approves a motion of no confidence triggering a new leadership contest, but Corbyn does not need to collect the nominations of parliamentarians. This allows the outgoing leader to easily beat Owen Smith, the soft-left candidate behind whom all of Corbyn's opponents gather, by a margin of about 24 percentage points. Thus the revolt of the PLP results in a triumph for Corbyn, which can safely restructure the Shadow Cabinet without the self-excluded internal opponents. In addition, the second victory is an important show of strength and sends the signal to internal opponents that the Corbyn leadership is there to stay. What will be renamed "the Chicken Coup" allows Corbyn to reactivate and galvanize his supporters against the external threat, despite a first year of leadership that has been not really exciting (Jones, 2020).

But it's not just MPs who show open hostility to Corbyn. In 2020, a leak of whatsapp messages[23] between party bureucrats at Southside, the party's headquarters, fully demonstrate how the party's permanent staff actively displayed hostility and attempted to boycott Corbyn. Demonstrations of dislike and contempt are repeated and often contain aggressively discriminatory tones against Corbyn's collaborators, sometimes with overtly racist tones. Many chats show that a portion of the Southside staff plotted from the start to remove Corbyn and his supporters from positions of power at all levels of the party, and have systematically decided to work less intensely to hamper the new leadership (Jones, 2020: 67-69). But the most serious sabotage actions take place during the 2017 general election. From the outset it is clear that the headquarters of the party intend to play an extremely defensive game, treating the negative polling as a given. Therefore, while Momentum and the leadership try, as will be seen, to launch a great effort of mobilization, Southside concentrates on distributing resources to safe seats,

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[23] The messages are part of an internal investigation into the issue of anti-Semitism, "The work of the Labour Party's Governance and Legal Unit in relation to antisemitism, 2014 – 2019". The report was not meant for publication.

where normally are located the most prominent MPs (Nunns, 2018). The leaked report also shows how some staffers actively tried to thwart the campaign. This includes the aforementioned tactic of inventing tricks to slow down work, but also more explicit actions such as the attempt to conceal the transmission of funds to right-wing candidates, as well as to prevent the sharing of information with the leadership office and the attempt to boycott the digital campaigning team (Bastani, 2020; Stone, 2020). All this accompanied by various admissions on the desire to see the party badly defeated to obtain a new leadership contest:

> I personally think we are going to do very badly indeed, and I think it will shock a lot of them how badly we do, including JC. So everyone has to be ready when he is in shock. It has to be clean and brutal […] These crazy people who now make up our membership never want us to win in any case. They are Communists and Green supporters.' (Jones, 2020: 135).

Nor does the disloyal opposition to Corbyn come only from within the party. A study by the London School of Economics (Cammaerts, 2016) shows that the British press as a whole has been extremely biased against the Labour leader. Excluding the Guardian, The Daily Mirror and The Independent which, while showing more critical than negative opinions, use largely an objective tone, all other newspapers use extremely critical or antagonistic tones in 65 to 90% of the articles in which Corbyn is cited. Cammaerts identifies some mechanisms used to delegitimize the Labour leader in the articles: lack of voice or distortion of Corbyn's view – Corbyn's opinion is rarely reported, and very often it is distorted or decontextualised; association with disliked public figures or characteristics, which evoke very emotional negative frames – for example he's often defined as "lenisist", "trot", but also as "loony" and "insane" and even as a spy for Czechoslovakia or a Putin's ally (Panitch & Leys, 2020); outright ridiculization - 30% of the surveyed articles mock Corbyn. But even progressive newspapers like the Guardian have not failed to vehemently attack the leader of the party (Bassett, 2016a). Often, moreover, the columns of the newspaper have given much more space to the attacks of the MPs than to the actions of Corbyn himself; at the same time, the newspaper has actively worked to spread the main lines of attack of the right of the party, that is mainly the supposedly "ineligibility" of Corbyn - because of his radical ideas and his communicative weakness - as well as the painting of his supporters as a group of extremists ready to do anything to crush pluralism in the party (Gilbert, 2016a).

Like internal attacks, negative press campaigns also intensify ahead of the 2017 elections. As soon as it is published, the electoral manifesto is severely ridiculed by the conservative press (Speakers' Corner 2017; Dunn 2017; Pickard and Parker 2017; Groves and Martin 2017;

Telegraph 2017). Almost all of the spaces dedicated to Corbyn on tv news if not openly negative often contain statements of doubt about his leadership, showing him as a weak leader (Jones, 2020). This changes as soon as the digital campaign is launched, which bypasses mainstream media, and the electoral rules kick in to allow equal representation on public media during the final weeks of the campaign; as will be seen in the next section, the chance for Corbyn to be properly represented coincides with a great increase of its popularity among the public.

6.1.2. The bone of contention: getting to the root of intraparty conflicts under Corbyn

We need to dig a little deeper to fully understand the hostility of the parliamentary elite towards Corbyn and the left. As is often the case in intra-organizational conflicts, the existence of frictions is revealing of the presence of important stakes for the organization and concerning different ways of understanding and structuring power relations and collective objectives. In particular, in addition to the legitimate concerns due to Corbyn's poor performances in opinion polls, two issues emerge from the conflict between the PLP and Labour Party leadership: the anti-establishment nature of Corbyn's political proposal, which results both in a strongly anti-establishment discourse and in the promise to unequivocally overcome the neoliberal conjuncture, as well as the different conception of the party which emerges from the peculiar context of Corbyn's election. Those issues will be dealt in the following three sections.

6.1.2.1. Corbyn against the establishment

A first factor explaining hostility both within and outside of the party is the fact that Corbyn unequivocally disavows some of the party's stance on issues that have been key in the previous fifteen years (Barnett, 2015), defining his political proposal and himself at odds with the recent Labour Party mainstream. Each speech and behavior by Corbyn points to the fact that he wants to move on, towards a "new kind of politics" (Murray, 2016). This allows him to obtain the favor of the opinion movement that calls for an overcoming of the season of New Labour and allows Corbyn to present himself as the restorer of Labourism, antecedent to the Blairian deviation. Of course, the first issue on which Corbyn is immediately distinguishable from the recent course of Labour is the invasion of Iraq; as early as 2003 the future leader of the Stop the War Coalition does not just criticize the senselessness of the war - as Obama too will later do, for example - but openly denounces the violation of international rules, the attempt to invent evidence in support of intervention and its overall imperialistic nature. In other words, Corbyn

never refrains from defining the enterprise and therefore the leadership of the party as illegitimate and criminal; his stance will be confirmed with the discovery of the non-existence of the so-called "weapons of mass destruction". The second issue on which Corbyn has an extremely clearcut position is austerity; as previously seen, Corbyn's stance is in total contrast to his predecessors and contenders, who do not have the courage to detach themselves totally from the austerity approach. On the contrary, Corbyn is not afraid to denounce the perverse effects of budget cuts on the middle and lower classes, and calls for a new season of public investments. Corbyn's clarity on the subject is from the beginning an extremely powerful weapon in his favor. Finally, Corbyn distinguishes himself from his predecessors of New Labour on the subject of greed; in this sense, the party line under Blair is defined by Peter Mandleson's famous statement: "We are intensely relaxed about getting people filthy rich as long as they pay their taxes"(Moody, 2019[24]). This attitude is at the basis of the trickle-down approach to fiscal policy adopted by New Labour, an approach that works in a phase of expansion leading to important budget improvements for public services, but does not allow to intervene on the matrix of the creation of inequalities. To this is added a certain condescension, on the part of the pivotal figures of the party, towards the widespread practice of sliding doors; almost all New Labour leaders, once retired from official party positions, have no problem becoming "filthy rich" using the knowledge acquired though government to provide millionaire consultancies. Both Blair and Brown end up working in the financial sector, the former for J.P. Morgan and the latter for Pimco. This of course raises serious conflict of interests, as historian Tariq Ali caustically points out:

> All that 'light-touch' regulation was bearing rich fruit. Virtually every senior member of the Blair and Brown cabinets went to work for a corporation that had benefited from their policies. (Ali, 2016[25]).

There is nothing further from Corbyn's ethics and behavior than this, whose dedication to the fight against inequality, his Jacobinism against the super rich, and his extremely thrifty lifestyle does not allow him any relaxation on the issue of wealth accumulation in the financial sector and no room for compromise or conflict of interest. It is therefore clear how, after years of "realist" politics, Corbyn succeeds in giving a moral purpose to his followers. This aspect is also recognized by some of his opponents, such as Jon Cruddas:

> "In the leadership election, Corbyn looked like the only one with a moral purpose, he looked like the only one who was animated, he looked like he had energy and vitality and passion because of the emptying out

[24] Retrieved at: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britons-take-a-generous-view-of-filthy-rich-20chv2vjv
[25] Retrieved at: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v38/n05/tariq-ali/corbyn-s-progress

> of the social-democratic tradition. So, it was three or four versus one and they were crawling over the wreckage." (Goodall, 2018: 88).

Compared to his competitors, always too careful not to make any false step immersed up to the neck as they were in the realities of parliamentarism and media communication, Corbyn offers a moral purpose to his followers. To quote Goodall again, Corbyn provides his supporters with the perception that their stance is "not only legitimate but right", in a moral sense. Reinforcing this aspect is the idea that with Corbyn, finally, we return to "true Labour" after a season of deviations and compromises with New Labour. The idea of Corbyn going back to "true Labour" is in fact wrong. First of all because, as previously stated, Corbyn is an absolute novelty, being the first leader to come from the hard-left of the party, a faction until then extremely marginal. Corbyn is a supporter of several policies that have never been part of the party's mainstream, such as: unilateral disarmament; opposition to NATO; support for the Palestinian cause against Israel; anti-capitalist and Marxist ideology. In any case, despite the weakness of the concept, the idea of Labour "coming back home" is extremely powerful precisely because it manages to provide a justification in moral terms to Corbyn's agenda and to define clearly the alternatives. Such an unmistakable image, as well as allowing Corbyn's policy to be infused with value, is an assurance against the return to the centrist past. According to Watts and colleagues (2018) this nostalgic and radically anti-establishment stance is part of a more general populist approach to intraparty politics adopted by the Corbynists. In line with the populist tradition, in fact, Corbyn frames the internal conflict in the Labour Party as a conflict between an authentic people - the party membership and the working class more generally - and a collusive establishment (Mudde, 2004) - New Labour, PLP and hostile bureaucracy. According to the authors, this form of intra-party populism provides a particularly powerful glue for the Corbynist movement.

What clearly distinguishes Corbyn from classic populism is the fact that he, far from proposing a centralization of powers over organizational intermediations, is actually deeply committed to the defense of the democratic procedures of the Labour Party. This is the typical CLPD approach, which since the 1980s – as has already been said and will be seen in more detail – has adopted an extremely procedural approach to party renewal. All this goes hand in hand with the symbology of "Old Labour", with its insistence on the links with the unions and on the restoration of the constituent and sovereign role of the annual conference. Of course, Corbyn innovates this repertoire as he actually becomes the subject of a kind of cult of his person,

especially since the election of 2017, as will be seen later. But it is important to note that this cult is not a voluntary creation of Corbyn and his allies (Liam Young, 2018 rise). Corbyn assumes a role that includes some characteristics of what Gerbaudo (2019) defines "hyperleader": in other words, he becomes a figure whose function is to maintain the cohesion and coherence of an extremely wide and disorganized movement. His supporters are extremely aware of this aspect, captured in the motto "A movement, not a man" (Nunns, 2018) describing the apparent contradiction between the cult of which Corbyn becomes the object and the fact that the figure of the leader himself counts less than his function. Corbyn is therefore at the same time admired and reduced to the sole role of megaphone of a movement that, given its novelty and lack of resources, needs a coagulant and a high-profile spokeperson (Young, 2018). The similarities with the concept of hyperleader end here though: if in some ways Corbyn, like Gerbaudo's hyperleader, can perform a function of disintermediation, allowing the anti-austerity movement to express itself through him over the heads of the hostile PLP and of party bureaucracy, his message is not one of tout-court disentermediation, and indeed he promotes the strengthening of the intermediate levels of activism, without which the project could not stand; even in the conflict with the party bureaucracy, Corbyn's project never aims to erase the middle strata of the party, but rather to prevent them from acting in total autonomy with respect to the mandate of the base that voted the left into power. Secondly, while Gerbaudo defines the hyperleader as a "benevolent dictator" (2019: 159) endowed with great charisma, Corbyn is especially admired for his devotion to the cause of party democratization and his total absence of charisma in the traditional sense of the term. If the hyperleader is at the same time seen by activists as "one of us" (Gerbaudo, 2019: 158) but also as an abnormal figure capable of leading alone the masses towards the collective end, Corbyn is appreciated above all for his ordinariness; ie for his "straight-talking", his total lack of manipulative communication skills and rhetorical art, in stark contrast to the elaborate spin and communicative mastery of Blair and other New Labour leaders (Barnett, 2015; Murray, 2015; Seymour, 2017). All these characteristics, together with his dedication to the cause of left-wing movements, make him appear as an eternal outsider, even when he is in power; it is precisely his inability to become a charismatic leader that makes him admired by his supporters, as he is the embodiment one of the main parts of his message, ie the rejection of the artificial and manipulative style typical of party leaders. Corbyn's anti-charisma is in short for its allies the best assurance of the fact that the new course intends to be serious in overcoming New Labour and austerity.

In summary, what Watts and colleagues appear to miss is that, despite the obvious similarities with populist discourses and attitudes, the rhetoric surrounding Corbyn in part has a completely different origin - being rooted in the tradition of the CLPD, it lacks an anti-political attitude and contempt for organizational mediation - and in part it is a description, though obviously simplified, of the circumstances in which Corbyn himself is acting. In other words, it is an objective fact that Corbyn has been predominantly supported by a bottom-up insurgency - without which even the unions would not have supported him - and that the party establishment has gone to great lengths to throw him off; a party establishment supported by an aggressive and biased press campaign. It would be to say that, more than the Corbyn's rethoric, it is the very situation in which Corbyn finds himself that is populist, since he is leading a bottom-up insurgency opposing a particularly unrestrained establishment; and this can only happen by virtue of the generalized degradation of intra-party linkage mechanisms and communication between the different components of the party - of which the Falkirk scandal is a plastic demonstration. Similarly, if populism also means the destruction of intra-organizational pacts and intermediation, it must be remembered that Blair was probably more populist than Corbyn; this to the extent that the former promoted the disarticulation of the organic relationship with the unions - without which the bottom-up pro-Corbyn uprising would have found higher resistance among union leaders - as well as the aggression against traditional forms of organizational intermediation, such as the annual conference, in favour of more disintermediated decision making process based on individual voting. On this trajectory, as will be seen in the continuation of the chapter, Corbyn takes a few steps back - effectively rehabilitating the unions to their central role - and some forward – refraining from reverting Blair's path of transformation of participation into individualistic forms, albeit with less plebiscitary vigour; but despite the apparent similarities, as will be seen, the Blair and Corbyn projects are absolutely different, in so far as the former mainly aims at strengthening the parliamentary leadership, while the latter promotes - or at least, attempts to promote - a weakening of the PLP in favor of the membership.

6.1.2.2. A revolutionary program?

Therefore, a first element of explanation of the hostility towards Corbyn is his stance against the establishment, whereby as establishment are meant the pro-Tory media and the PLP. Corbyn is elected precisely because of his anti-establishment message, which in turn strengthens the

opposition from that establishment. It is a vicious circle, in which Corbyn's positions activate a reaction that in fact confirms them, until the climax of the clash in the summer of 2016 that ends with the overwhelming victory of the left. Anyway, that's not the only explanation. Another source of conflict is to be found in the policies proposed by Corbyn; in this respect, the party leader has been repeatedly branded as extremist by internal and external opponents. But, as will be seen below, the question is a little more complicated than that; that is, the main source of conflict in this case lies not so much in the proposed policies as in the meaning attributed by Corbyn and his allies to such policies.

The radicality of the policies proposed by Corbyn is not a sufficient explanation of the hostility by the PLP because, at least at the beginning, the new leader resumes Miliband's agenda, which has never been the subject of such harsh criticisms. Listing only the main measures contained in the 2017 manifesto: Corbyn raises the minimum wage from Miliband's 8£ to 10£; proposes abolition of tuition fees against a reduction to £ 5000; bot pledge to abolish zero hour contracts and pledge to not increase public debt. As is evident from this summary comparison, Corbyn's proposal is not significantly more radical than that proposed by Miliband. On some key policies there is no change, while on property taxation Miliband is even more advanced. Of course, the proposal to abolish tuition fees distinguishes Corbyn, as well as the proposal on minimum wage is more substantial. These measures will then be complemented by the proposal for a Green New Deal in 2019. But the differences appear to be mainly differences in degree; it is difficult to say that Corbyn has introduced a total revolution of the Miliband manifesto, although some steps forward are evident.

What then is the point? Is the policy platform completly detached from the internal conflicts? In fact, no, the policies do indeed have something to do with party infighting. Not as such though, but rather for the frame within which they are inserted. Miliband, while claiming to want to overcome the season of New Labour and pro-market centrism, does not in fact develop a narrative based on overturning the political consensus:

> Miliband had a vision for an alternate future in 2015, but this ambiguity and equivocation throughout his leadership prevented him from presenting his manifesto as a concrete plan to achieve his vision. Devoid of this, his manifesto was not instilled with credibility as an alternative worth fighting for. (Byrne, 2019: 10).

On the contrary, for Corbyn the policy platform is inserted in a broader discourse on the abandonment of the neoliberal approach and trickle-down economics. If for Miliband the same policies communicate only themselves, they are "reformist" proposals in the sense that they are

promoted within the dominant political discourse without overturning it, Corbyn gives them a revolutionary spin; and this is not because they are actually revolutionary political proposals per se, but because they are communicated as the attempt to reverse a thirty-year course, reopening a space of opportunity for the return to a form of social-democratic organization of the economy. Corbynism as a lever to end neoliberalism for good, therefore "Corbyn has a rhetorical story to tell and Miliband usually didn't" (Goodall, 2018: 41). The question is not only that the proposed policies are perceived as unequivocally left-wing, but the fact that they are used as a tool to broaden the political discourse and provide the Labour base with a new sense of possibility and an alternative vision of the future, after more than thirty years of "There is no Alternative". In this sense, Corbyn's message is an extremely liberating and democratic message, as it aims to broaden the room for choice well beyond the narrow consensus stratified after the 80s. As Liam Byrne (2019) puts it, Corbyn's manifesto of 2017 puts Labour "back to the future", towards a concrete utopia that draws strength from the link with the Attlee government which managed, as Corbyn intends to, to undo a dying consensus and replace it with a brand new one. The focus on nationalisations is key in establishing this symbolic linkage between 1945 and 2017. Corbyn intends to reintroduce long-term planning and government action to correct the course of capitalism. But at the same time he promises to overcome the top-down management methods typical of the nationalizations of the 40s, recovering the message of the New Left that in the 70s-80s proposed introducing forms of participative management in public ownership (Byrne, 2019).

Virtually all the proposals are inspired by Miliband or other European social democratic parties. First of all, there is nothing strictly revolutionary in the proposal to nationalize some natural monopolies - rail, mail, water and energy - and nothing particularly unique. The establishment of a National Investment Bank, charged with relaunching industrial development and ecological transition, also takes as a model the German *Keditanstalt fur Wiedereufbau*, and requires the collaboration of private banks in the implementation of industrial policies (Bassett, 2020); the same applies to regional investment banks, proposed to reduce imbalances between the various areas of the Kingdom. In short, it is a project much more moderate than what proposed by the hard-left last time that this has tried to get into power:

> Corbynism resembled a democratised and regionalised version of post-war welfare capitalism, far more than state socialism. But neither did Corbyn's party resemble the 'hard left' of the 1970s, whose Alternative

> Economic Strategy called for withdrawal from the European Economic Community, widespread nationalisation and capital controls. (Bassett, 2020[26])

If, therefore, the proposed measures, taken individually, do not seem to be too revolutionary or innovative, it is the overall design, together with the context in which they emerge, that gives them a scent of radicalism; Corbyn and his allies want to propose a consensus for the new era, at a time when even the world's leaders realize that a change of course is necessary. There are no more OECD and IMF reports insisting on the social and economic costs of austerity; in 2013, even former Bill Clinton advisor and enthusiastic supporter of Third Way and financial deregulation Larry Summers proposes the concept of secular stagnation (2013) and takes a step back from neoliberal orthodoxy. In this contest of rupture of hegemony in economic policies, Corbyn proposes recipes that recall the entrepreneur/innovator state advocated by Marianna Mazzucato (2020) more than Tony Benn's protectionist socialism. Yet this reversal of the trend can only significantly increase the bargaining power of the non-market forces that exist in society thanks to the new role of the state as a planner and regulator. In short, although the policies are not so radical Corbyn proposes to undo a thirty-year consensus to replace it with a post-neoliberal consensus. The idea is to reconstruct a set of necessary preconditions to rebalance the power relations between workers/citizens and elites through the increase of social protections and the revitalization of localized, non-speculative investment; once the new consensus has been built and the ambition and courage of the popular classes has been restored, many things could happen, but that is not what Corbyn is in charge with. Yet it is not difficult to imagine how such a project could produce great fear and hostility within a commentariat and a political class, especially among Labour's ranks, who have bet everything on a narrow consensus and on the idea that paradigm shifts are not possible. Corbyn attracts great hostility because his message obliges the party establishment to play by new rules, due to the widening of the horizons of political debate; rules that, moreover, are established by an outsider who has proved surprisingly resilient and who, despite the frequent search for pacification, is not willing to bend his agenda to the wishes of the old masters of the party.

6.1.2.3. Members' party

So far three potential sources of the opposition expressed by a large part of the PLP against Corbyn and his political project have been identified. The first source, about which little has

[26] Retrieved at: https://ukandeu.ac.uk/goodbye-to-what-exactly/

been said because it is extremely intuitive, is linked to the poor performance in opinion polls, both as regards voting intentions and Corbyn's personal ratings always largely negative before the election of 2017. The second source of conflict stems from the fact that the neo-leader has defined himself in opposition to the party establishment as well as to its recent past and in particular to the season of modernization. Finally, the third source, has to do with the policies proposed by Corbyn; in general, these are not extremely radical political proposals; but what distinguishes Corbyn is the fact that he intends to use, both symbolically and practically, his manifesto to undo the neoliberal consensus already heavily damaged by the crash of 2008 and seven years of austerity. This attempt means, on the one hand, generating substantial opposition to the economic measures of the Tory government and making the public aware of the existence of alternative and feasible measures; on the other hand, it means widening the internal debate in Labour far beyond the narrow parameters set since the age of modernization. This latter aspect upsets much of the parliamentary party and party bureaucracy, which at first struggle to adapt to the fact that Labour intends to turn into an anti-establishment party.

If one looks carefully, it is easy to agree that it is neither Corbyn nor his rhetoric and his political platform that are *tout-court* populist as some commentators have argued. Rather, it is the configuration of power relations within the party that appears to be extremely polarized and de-istitutionalized. On the one hand, in fact, there is a progressive weakening of the consociational pact that supported the party for the first century of its existence, that is, the alliance between the PLP and unions; as we saw in the previous chapter, the unions shift from being a pillar of party stability to a relatively marginalized actor, for the will of several generations of leaders who try to distance themselves from any class connotation of the party. This produces a process of de-institutionalization of the party, since the relations between its two main components become less formalized and predictable; repeatedly dumped by the party's establishment, the unions are no longer able to contain the demands coming from their own base, strongly affected by the austerity measures, to associate with the weak hard-left of the party. Also, with the Collins Report, ther is a transition from a party model based on the consociation between PLP and unions and the adoption of forms of delegated democracy based on the annual conference to a party model in which the individual vote of the membership takes a central role and opens to the influence of the electorate through the establishment of the Registered Supporters scheme. The process of individualization of partisan relations (Faucher-King, 2008) actually began under Blair, that has nurtured the ambition of attracting an influx of moderate and

professional members in order to weaken the power of the most radical activists and redefine the identity of the party. Blair's project is on the whole a plebiscitarian project, since the granting of more powers to members is functional to the weakening of forms of organizational intermediation and internal representation - according to the paradox of "democratization as emasculation", already described by Peter Mair (1994) and discussed up in the first and third chapters. Before the 2015 leadership contest the Labour Party is become an "hollowed" party: on the one hand, the organic relationship between the PLP and unions has been disarticulated; on the other hand, the plebiscitation process started by Blair shows its flip side: if at first it strenghtens the parliamentary leadership, once the charismatic leader is no longer present, it is clear that the plebiscitary turn has severely depleted internal linkage mechanisms. If to this is added the fact that Miliband tries to re-establish forms of intra-party accountability by persisting on the path of individualization of voting rights, but without Blair's ability to dominate the atomized mass, this creates the perfect mix to produce unpredictable outcomes. A party with a century-old history, in which the relations between its apical components have assumed routinized and to some extent predictable forms - despite the wide margins of internal debate - becomes a disjointed organizational space: many of the intraorganizational barriers and formal and informal gatekeeping mechanisms that have been built in the past to prevent the direct influence of individuals on the party are considerably weakened.

All this makes possible the Corbyn insurgency, that is, the alliance between a marginal section of the PLP and the party base – no longer made up only of official members - against the party establishment, both in the PLP and in the bureaucracy. This is a populist situation: an extreme, paradoxical – if seen in the light of the history of the party – simplification of the internal conflicts within the party in the summer of 2015; a conflict that, although the Labour Party has since re-absorbed and fragmented this conflict due to its own persistent organisational and geographical complexity, will always influence the vicissitudes of the Corbyn leadership. A leadership that legitimizes itself at the base and against the PLP, which allowed Corbyn's candidacy only because its members did not foresee the potential risk for their power. It is worth remembering that all this is not a return to the "Old Labour" mythologized by both the Blairites and the left. In fact the Labour Party was born as a second-level party, formed by the association of trade unions and socialist societies looking for parliamentary representation; until 1918 the statute of the party did not even allow individual membership. This marks the measure of the transformation of the party, which for the first time in the summer of 2015 completes its

transition from a consociational and collectivist party to a membership party (Scarrow, 2015). All this under the eyes of the unions, which as an actor well integrated in the leadership of the party have been downgraded to the role of internal pressure group, however powerful enough to mark the fortunes and the direction taken by their allies in the PLP, as will be seen shortly.

What happened is extremely paradoxical if we note that Labour is historically a party with a fairly solid power structure, unlike for example the other anti-austerity movement parties, which are usually new parties, with little consolidated internal power relations and a tendential base-leadership polarization based on disintermediation patterns (Gerbaudo, 2019). At the same time, however, Labour has always been a highly pluralistic organization, in the sense that the different parts that make it up - PLP, unions, socialist societies, individual membership, local groups plus various campaigning groups such as the CLPD - hold different positions in intra-party power relationships and are carriers of different cultures and views. This pluralistic nature, historically stratified in a century of life and officially recognized since the constitution of the party, has two main effects. On the one hand, it serves as a constitutional limit to populist drifts, in the sense of the simplification of internal power relationships on the vertical axis and the dominance of charismatic leaders; although such a simplification occurs, as seen, at a given moment in the history of the party, organizational and cultural pluralism tend to produce an inertia that goes in the opposite direction (Bassett, 2020b). This alone explains the differences between Corbyn and the idealtipical hyperleader described by Gerbaudo (2019). Probably the only feature that links Corbyn to the tradition of the "Old Labour" is the devotion – at least in words - to party procedures and its polyarchic division of powers; polyarchy that, on the contrary, has directly been attacked by the charismatic leader Tony Blair, which has pursued the road of plebiscitarism.

If the first consequence of the pluralism typical of the Labour Party distances it considerably from the movement parties of the 10s, the second consequence points to some aspects of convergence. In fact, if we leave aside the issues relating to the dispersion of powers and internal checks and balances and observe pluralism as an eminently cultural phenomenon, it is clear that Labour is a party in which there are clearly different interpretations of the organization's objectives and the social groups it must represent (Miliband, 1961). In particular, there are two interpretations of the party that emerge most clearly:

> From the very beginning there was a marked tension between the idea of the party as a vehicle for a democratic mass movement, and the understanding that its sole function was to create, maintain, service and serve the interest of the Parliamentary Labour Party. (Gilbert, 2016a: 40)

The second interpretation, historically dominant, sees in the parliamentary strategy, and only in it, the field of action of the party. Consequently, the PLP raised to a prominent role; at the same time, the PLP must respond above all to voters, more than to members: any concession to them in fact means legitimizing a form of political influence from an extra-parliamentary source. This view is magnified by Blair, who strives to reduce the allegedly distortive influence of party activists, in favour of building linkage mechanisms with the electorate or, at least, with members and activists as representative as possible of it. The considerations regarding the practicality of this approach intersect with motivations of principle: if, in fact, one opts for parliamentarism, it is clear that a party has many more chances to triumph as much as it is attractive to voters; this explains precisely the various forms of rejection of grassroots activism by the leadership of the PLP.

On the contrary, the representation of the party as a mass movement challenges the dominance of the PLP. From this point of view, parliamentarians are not so much autonomous representatives of the electorate as individuals who must answer to the base of the party. Base that can be understood, depending on the moment, as membership in the strict sense or as a nuanced political area, ranging from party members to trade unionists and activists of sympathetic social movements (Gilbert, 2016a). This is precisely a "movimentist" interpretation of the party, which in this sense is invested with the duty to promote conflict and social change, including through forms of extra-parliamentary action, and not only to represent voters in parliament. As evidenced by the report commissioned by Ed Miliband in 2011, *Refounding Labour to Win*, among members and activists is widespread the request for recognition of this second facet of Labour, understood as a party that is not limited to electoral strategy and invests in its extra-parliamentary structure (Labour, 2011). It is therefore clear that, well before Corbyn's rise, a substantial portion of the party's base is ready to recognize that Labour is an atypical party that while on the one hand accepts the rules of parliamentarianism, on the other does not preclude direct action to promote social and political change through extra-parliamentary means; as will be remembered from chapter 3, this is exactly the contradiction that defines, according to Kavada (2019), the movement parties. Obviously, given its organizational complexity – the reader will remember that according to Kitschelt one of the characteristics of these is the low investment in decision-making structures that results in a poor

organizational structuration - Labour cannot be defined as a movement party; nevertheless, it is clear that, this "movimentist" interpretation of the nature and mission of the organization is to be trusted, it speaks of a party that shares with movement parties an important aspect.

The struggles conducted by the CLPD since the 70s are fully part of this extra-parliamentary interpretation of Labour, to the extent that the group headed by Tony Benn attempts to reform the party in a participatory direction. From a strategic point of view, the CLPD tries to build an alliance, with alternating fortunes, between local activists, libertarian social movements and trade unions, in order to undermine the PLP's dominance. From a tactical point of view, the path pursued is that of reforms in the procedures for selecting leadership and candidates, as will be seen in the next chapter. On the first point, the CLPD obtains the creation of the electoral college; on the second aspect, the proposal of Mandatory Reselection is first endorsed and then cancelled after the final defeat of the Bennites. This is also because, after a heel to the left between the late 70s and early 80s, the union leadership reconstitutes the traditional pact with the PLP. With the advent of Corbyn, the party's establishment saw a second edition of the 80s' nightmare and the attack on PLP dominance. This for two reasons: on the one hand Corbyn is the direct heir of Tony Benn, he is a member of the CLPD and makes no secret of it in his public speeches in which he frequently promises to devote himself to the democratization of the party and its transformation into a "movement"; on the other hand, unlike what happened at the time of Benn, in 2015 there are indeed conditions that can facilitate the transformation of the party in the direction advocated by Corbyn. On the one hand, part of the organisational reforms have already been implemented, the members have many more powers than in the past; in addition, the pact between PLP and unions has been torn apart; finally, Corbyn has a position of strenght, supported above all by the base but also by the unions, that Benn has never managed to even imagine. This explains the hard core of intraparty opposition against Corbyn: a leader legitimated by the wide support among the membership that owes nothing to the PLP and that has always flirted with pacifist, libertarians and anti-austerity social movements is indeed a serious threat to the dominance of parliamentarism (Goodall, 2018; Panitch & Leys, 2020) all the more so in a context in which different intraorganizational barriers which ensured that the PLP had an invaluable gatekeeping role have been removed. This tensions come to a head in the summer of 2016, when the members of the shadow cabinet resign, convinced that with this frontal attack they would have been able to force Corbyn's resignation; in their parliamentarist perspective, in fact, a leader distrusted by the PLP is a leader deprived of his most precious

source of authority. But Corbyn shows plastically that the source of his power lies elsewhere, outside the parliament; this is confirmed by the fact that the second leadership campaign awakens an extra-parliamentary movement led by Momentum that leads to the triumphant confirmation of the leader.

To sum up, the PLP's disagreement with Corbyn stems from the fact that he irrevocably refuses to play according to the rules established by the party's establishment. This is symbolically, to the extent that Corbyn clearly emerges as an anti-establishment and quasi-populist leader; programmatically, with the rejection of neoliberal consensus and the proposal of a new post-austerity social pact; and finally, from the organizational point of view, as he is the first leader who manages, at least temporarily, to lead to the dominance of the grassroots over the power of the PLP. But the very possibility of such a pattern of leadership to emerge is linked to structural social and organizational changes which are deeply intertwined and have altered the nature of the Labour Party. Without the anti-austerity movement on the one hand, and the individualization of the party and the dissolution of the pact between PLP and unions on the other, Corbyn could never have become leader. As will be seen in the conclusions of this chapter, these important transformations of the party are largely interpreted as responses to the structural and value transformations connected with the Silent Revolution.

6.2. 2017 General Election: the apogee of Corbynism

In the spring of 2017, Theresa May, who succeeded to Cameron, takes advantage of Labour's poor polls to call a snap election on June 8. May means to focus the campaign on Brexit on the offer of a government that is "strong and stable" - so the motto of the campaign – in leading the country through the transition. She has no idea that the election will have a very different result from the predicted one; called to finally crush Corbyn, the 2017 election will result in the umpteenth occasion when the Labour leader manages to overturn every prediction.

As soon as the election is announced, Corbyn's opponents in the PLP and Southside are relieved. As already seen in the previous section, a sounding defeat is given for certain and with it Corbyn's resignation. But even without taking into account the hostility towards the party leader as their motive, it is quite clear that the headquarters decide to play the campaign on the defensive, convinced that the situation is so grave that even the constituencies with a large Labour majority, the so-called "safe seats", are in serious danger. Much of the resources are

therefore devolved to these constituencies. Corbyn and his allies, however, do not share the same view; they are deeply convinced that polls can be overturned just like during the two leadership elections, counting on the vote of the abstentionists and young people, that according to leadership are two categories potentially extremely favorable to a left-wing program. The office of the leader therefore decides to launch a campaign, parallel to the official one by Labour, focused on the person of Corbyn and the revolutionary magnitude of the manifesto and attentive to induce the registration for the vote of minorities and young people. Once again, Corbyn has nothing to lose. With such a strongly hostile party, a sound defeat would be the end of the project; then the left might try to play on the offensive without much worries. In this the leadership is fully supported by Momentum, the organization born from the campaign for the leadership in 2015, that launches an unconventional mobilization effort in the marginal seats, left completely uncovered from the official campaign of Southside. Momentum uses its online firepower in order to recruit people through social networks and the app "My Nearest Marginal" in order to organize massive campaigning sessions in constituencies selected among the more easily winnable marginals. Naturally, the effort of the mobilization, although not limited to the constituencies whit sympathetic MPs, tends to give priority to the areas in which there is the potential to develop an activist base (Nunns, 2018). Therefore, the occasion of the election campaign is also used for the aims of movement building by the Corbynist faction in new areas of the country. Thanks to Momentum, even without important financial resources thousands of activists pour into marginal constituencies, often on their own thanks to My Nearest Marginal, which using phones geolocalization is able to show the nearest marginal seats where there is need of help. In the most striking cases, among which figures Croydon Central, Momentum succeeds to deploy up to 800 activists for a canvassing session; but it is not uncommon to find sessions, even in remote locations, with more than 50 activists knocking on doors, thanks to Momentum's ability to leverage the low costs of online communication and the habit of its audience to use social media. In addition, Momentum invites its supporters to circulate information and materials for the campaign among their whatsapp contacts and on Facebook, greatly amplifying their reach. If on one side Southside plays an extremely defensive game also online, in the conviction that the figure of Corbyn and the Manifesto are more of the burdens than of the assets, Momentum assists the aggressive strategy of the Corbyn campaign, supporting the leadership in the recruitment of volunteers and in the creation of viral digital material, especially video cuts on the immense rallies organized by Corbyn and some media

extras of the leader as well as creating videos and original memes[27] , contributing to the spread of his image and the creation of a cult of his person. Momentum states that 100,000 people have used the My Nearest Marginal app and that 30% of Facebook users have been reached by the online campaign (Silvera, 2017). This happens with the lowest amount of resources: it suffices only to notice that during the campaign the staff of Momentum could count only on 10 employees. But Momentum is only the most visible and active part of an online movement that gathers behind Corbyn. Social media becomes the "safe space" - safe from official media attacks - in which the movement can discuss, produce and circulate discourses and images and propose them to the general public. The vitality and creativity of this moment is probably the factor that most contributed to Corbyn's comeback in the 2017 general election. It is amazing the amount of pages and groups spontaneously born on social media in support of the leader of Labour (Nunns, 2018); the great merit of Corbyn's team is to seek the involvement of these informal groups, coordinating with them the creation and dissemination of contents (Seymour, 2017). The result is that the internet is literally overrun by the semi-official and unofficial efforts of the Corbyn-centered campaign, which dominates both the Conservatives and Labour's official campaign – while the latter benefits from it in terms of resonance. The great extension and capillarity of the online movement allows the content of the unofficial campaign to achieve extreme reach even in the absence of spending on advertising, exploiting the mechanisms of social netwokrs algorithms to multiply reach in waves of shares between pages and different groups. Another advantage of these forms of campaigning is that they allow Labour to reach young people, the target group of the campaign, on their terms and with a language they recognize, just because many of the online activists are themselves Millennials or younger (Nunns, 2018). The digital campaign by Southside is instead kept separate from the pro-Corbyn online movement, keeping on extremely institutional tones and without great attempts to promote the activation of the base; the official campaign focuses mainly on the online advertisement, getting to spend £1.2m (Pickard, 2019), with good results: the number of likes on FB, for example, increase by 75%. In addition, interesting tools are developed. The first of these is "Chatter", an SMS service that allows activists to send personalized messages to potential voters, instead of standardized appeals. Another tool is "Promote", which allows target

[27] The most famous of which, "Daddy why do you hate me", reaches 5.3 million views in two days in the last week of the campaign (Peggs, 2017).

social media advertising combining data from Facebook with those held by the Labour Party. Last but not least, "Dialogue", a new online canvassing app.

The online firepower of the Corbynist movement is also critical in allowing the campaign to bypass media hostility, allowing Corbyn's supporters to talk over the heads of mainstream media[28] and creating a vibrant alternative public sphere, on social media and on new blogs, among which stands out the Novara Media project. In the first phase of the campaign, before broadcasting neutrality rules kick in, the hostile attitude from the press and television continues to hit hard on Corbyn, who gets few spaces and often with negative coverage or questioning his performances in opinion polls. The campaign therefore focuses on trying to get a chance to speak on radio broadcasting, using the shock technique of announcing policy pledges suddenly during normal interviews, thus succeeding in catalyzing the attention - both hostile and friendly – from the public (Dorey, 2017). A first change of pace occurs when, on the evening of May 11, the Labour Manifesto is leaked; no one will ever know whether the move is part of the strategy of shock announcements of policies by the Corbyn team or if instead it was engineered by internal opponents. The fact is the usual hostile press contrasts with the reaction of the public, which in the majority favours the policies of nationalisation of public utilities, raising taxes to those earning more than £80,000 and abolishing tuition fees. The leak of the Manifesto is a turning point, as for the first time Corbyn manages to reach the general public without filters by the hostile media, directly with his political proposal; policies earn headlines for many days and relaunch the appeal of the Labour leader (Jones, 2020; Nunns, 2018). Once broadcast neutrality rules kick in, Corbyn's chances of presenting himself directly to the electorate increase greatly; the result is positive, as the leader of Labour manages to overturn many of the media narratives on his person:

> Corbyn had an affable, zen-like demeanour on television. Viewers could swiftly see the contrast between his media image – dangerous terrorist-loving extremist – and a reality which seemed poles apart. […]. (Nunns, 2018: 137).

At the same time, Corbyn uses his experience as a street agitator to organize a tour of the UK during which he is welcomed by huge crowds; the result is a "hybrid" campaign where classic rallies coexist with modern technologies that power the digital campaign. Not only that, the digital campaign and the strategy of rallies reinforce each other: on the one hand, digital tools

[28] To give an idea, during the Chicken Coup the alternative news site The Canary got more views than major newspapers such as The Economist e The Spectator (Bassett, 2019a).

serve to focus attention on large events, whose great success in turn allows to strengthen the image of Corbyn as an extremely popular leader; an image that then circulates online and multiplies again, in a virtuous circle (Goes, 2017). Corbyn's inclination to spend time among people and the affection with which he is greeted by his supporters contrasts extremely with the rigid and impersonal style, at times clumsy, of Theresa May's campaign. The ability of the Labour campaign to mobilize fresh energies through social media and the large rallies in which Corbyn is hailed as a star by supporters of the anti-austerity movement give the impression of an extremely vital and vibrant movement; all the opposite of the cold and unappealing communication by May, who from the beginning plays a race to the bottom convinced of having already won at the start a large majority.

Journalist Owen Jones summarizes in a sentence the approach of the Corbynists to the campaign:

> […] Using modern technology to expound creatively a politics which was unapologetically about the majority versus the elites. (Jones, 2020: 152)

Labour's unofficial campaign, an effective mix of digital experimentation, horizontalism derived from social movements, irreverence towards elites, extremely popular and perceived as innovative policies as well as the transformation of Corbyn into a pop icon manage to make a breakthrough among young people, leads to Labour's unprecedented triumph am that brings home 66% of preferences between 18 and 24 years, compared to a meagre 34% in 2015 (Dorey, 2017), with also a rising turnout: 64% according to Ipsos MORI for 18-34 years old, while according to Yougov 57% among 18-19 years old, 59 among 20 to 24 years old and 64% among 25 to 29 years old, compared to around 40% among under-35 in the 2015 election (Apostolova et al. 2017; Baker et al. 2017). The more young people in a constituency, the higher the number of votes for Labour (Khomami 2017; Stewart et al. 2018). The trend is even wider if young people belonging to minorities and low income voters[29] are taken into account, among which the 73% voted Labour (Baker et al. 2017). Among the under 35 Corbyn gains mainly among abstentionists and former voters of the Greens, which in fact fall to 2% (Pickard, 2019).

This surge in the youth turnout caused many commentators to start talking about "Youthquake" (Pickard, 2019). Of course, the narrative of the Youthquake does not depend only on changes in voting patterns, which are recognizable only ex-post, or the increased impact of social media,

[29] But the latter showed very low turnout rates, lower than 40%.

as previously seen. First of all, there is an issue of greater visibility, starting with the Labour's policies, as in 2015, that try to seduce young voters. Among these, the most popular: the abolition of tuition fees; lowering to 16 years the age of voting; reintroduction of maintenance grants for university students; investments in mental health and youth centers and reverse of cuts in services used by young people. In the narrative of the Youthquake also has a central role the outbreak of the so-called "Corbynmania" (Norris 2017; Pickard 2017a, b, 2018 a, b) that is, the mass support obtained by Corbyn among pop icons and influencers most followed by young people. The choir "Oh Jeremy Corbyn", sung on the notes of Seven Nation Army by White Stripes becomes the anthem of that spring and summer, an inevitable accompaniment to any music and pop culture festival for Millennials and Gen Z.

The election results are astonishing. Labour loses slightly, getting 40% of the preferences - 10% more than in 2015 - against the 42% of the Conservatives, recovering in just over a month almost twenty points of disadvantage in opinion polls. Not only that: Labour gains 30 seats after almost twenty years of shrinking and the Conservatives are left without an absolute majority, now having to rely on the unpredictable Irish unionists of the Democratic Unionist Party. Labour's rapid recovery from bad polls and despite not exactly benevolent media coverage is unprecedented. There is no doubt that the election campaign played a key role in such an amazing comeback; this is evidenced by the fact that, before the campaign, only 28% of Labour voters were certain to vote for the party; 36% of those who voted Labour decided in the last week, or even on the last day of the campaign (Ashcroft, 2017). Another surprise is the fact that of the 36 seats earned, 28 are taken from the Conservatives; which, together with the extraordinary success of a campaign set on radical tones, disavowed the centrist discourse that the only way to gain contested seats from the Tories is to move to the center. In addition, Labour manages to recover a large percentage of abstentionists: 38% of the 2 million votes earned in 2017 come from citizens who had not voted in 2015.

More complex is the issue of who voted for Labour, especially in relation to the economic condition. In some traditionally Labour working class areas, such as the Midlands and the North East, the Tories gained votes - but not in Wales though. In fact, in these areas support for Brexit translates into an increase in support for Conservatives; not that the vote for Labour does not increase here: it simply increases less than the vote for the Tories (Nunns, 2018). However, from the point of view of the occupational classes - in the UK coded according to the social

grades AB, C1, C2, DE cataloguing the types of employment - voters of the two largest parties resemble each other in 2017, especially because the Tories earn between C2 and DE - the lowest employment brackets. But if one looks at income instead of occupational cathegories it is clear that Labour shows a marked improvement among the lowest income groups compared to 2015, but also among the higher income groups to a comparable extent. In addition, looking at age, Labour shows to have a problem with older people in lower employment groups, while among young people it gets a plebiscite (Nunns, 2018). Not infrequently commentators and internal opponents have seen in these voting patterns Corbyn's inability to speak not only to Middle England, but also to Labour's traditional working class base (Hunt, 2016) and in particular to be unappealing for the "left behinds" (Ford & Goodwin 2014), ie the poorest, less educated and less skilled voters living in deprived areas. This reading turns into yet another critique of Corbyn's agenda and his progressive and multi-culturalist positions, perceived as "patronising" towards these left behinds (Dorey, 2017); according to this Labour-conservative critique, the party under Corbyn is confining itself to the urban and educated middle-class. Reality is actually more complex, and is influenced by the transformations in the working class already partly captured by Inglehart and Norris (2018) as already seen in Chapter 2. Indeed, the Corbyn Labour has lost votes among the traditional working class, mainly white, relatively old, poorly educated and resident in former manufacturing areas. But this decline is not only counterbalanced by an increase in votes among the middle and affluent classes, but also in the so-called "new working class" (Nunns, 2018), that is people working in precarious jobs and service industries in mainly urban areas, with often higher education and diversity and younger than the aging traditional working class. As will be seen in more detail below, the demographic base of Corbyn follows very clearly the trends described in chapter 2 with respect to the intersection between the Silent Revolution and the effects of the global crisis of 2008, though this makes it relatively difficult to provide an overall reading in terms of social classes.

The idea that Labour played on the polarization between urban classes and left-behinds is often related to election narratives as it focuses on Brexit. According to this interpretation, in fact, Labour managed to obtain a good result because it managed to collect the vote of all those opposing the Brexit proposed by the Tories (Goodall, 2018) who, on the other hand, managed to achieve good results in some former Labour heartlands which had strongly voted for exit from the EU in 2016. Not that Labour was in any way pressing for the annulment of the result of the referendum; but Labour's approach to a soft-Brexit, oriented to preserving jobs,

confirming the participation in the single market and EU citizens' rights in the UK and informed by a cooperative approach to negotiations has certainly been more able to attract the vote of Remainers than the Tories' more tranchant approach. Surely the Brexit issue is a sensitive one for Labour in 2017, as its membership and electorate, though mostly Remainers, contain a very large minority of Leavers, concentrated in crucial constituencies such as those of the north of England. Consequently, despite the formulation of an official policy based on a soft Brexit, Corbyn tries in every way to prevent the election from becoming a Brexit election, convinced that this terrain could prove extremely toxic for Labour.

In fact, at the start of the election campaign, Brexit is the dominant theme - because the election is called precisely because of the Prime Minister's intention to strengthen her majority in view of the negotiations - and Theresa May maintains good scores in opinion polls, stealing a large portion of votes from UKIP. Yet, post-election data shows that Brexit has been considered the key issue only by Conservative voters - 48% of whom identify it as the key issue of the election - while only 8% of Labour voters nominate Brexit as the most important issue of the election, after the NHS - the most important issue for 33% of voters - and austerity - with 11% -, virtually the same as inequality, education and jobs - respectively with 7, 6 and 6% (Ashcroft, 2017). The result does not change much among young people, since the lower the age of voters the lower the propensity to see Brexit as the key issue (Nunns, 2018). In short, it is clear that, rather than a Brexit election, it has been two elections in one. On the one hand, the Conservatives have capitalized on their now clearly pro-Brexit and chauvinist position. On the other hand, Labour has been able to compact a diverse social bloc, largely persuaded of the need to protect public services from austerity. This state of affairs is confirmed by the data of the British Social Attitudes Survey published in June 2017 and conducted in 2016, which testifies for the first time since 2008 that 48% of UK citizens favour higher taxation to fund public services and 42% of them supports redistribution from the rich to the poor (Natcen, 2017). At the same time, almost all the policies proposed by Labour on nationalizations and the strengthening of services have a majoritarian consensus (Goes, 2017). This shows unequivocally how, rather than a recomposition of an anti-Brexit bloc, Labour owes the good result of 2017 to the new ability to intercept the wave of public opinion that opposes austerity. Accordingly, Corbyn's triumph as party leader in 2015 and 2016 cannot be considered an isolated event or exclusively tied to the internal affairs of Labour, but is fuelled by a process of reorientation of public opinion in the

medium term. Reorientation that Corbyn's critics, inside and outside the party, do not seem to have been able to grasp at all.

After the excellent election result and the weakening of the Tory government, Corbyn lives the apex of his trajectory. In the first session of the new House of Commons, the PLP greets him with a standing ovation. Even Mandelson admits he was wrong about the new leader. At the same time, the PLP is profoundly transformed by the election, with new parliamentarians increasing the number of Corbyn's faction. Also in 2017, the number of members reaches 550,000 and for the first time the left wins the majority in the NEC. The Tory government is shaky and Labour is ahead in the polls for a long time after the election. Corbyn seems adamant about the role of leader of a renewed Labour and begins to prepare to become Prime Minister in the event of the likely fall of the May government.

6.3. The end of Corbynism

6.3.1. Brexit and GE 2019

For at least a year after the 2017 election, Corbyn acts as if he is about to take Theresa May's place. Indeed, the Tory government is extremely wobbly and is struggling to put to an end the Brexit affair, both because of internal divisions and because of the objective complexity of the matter - greatly aggravated by the problem of the Irish-Ulster border. In addition, Labour has a slight but steady lead in the polls until 2019. In short, there is nothing to suggest, for some time after the 2017 election, that the left is in danger. And yet, from the apogee of 2017 soon starts the decline, that begins in 2018 and ends with the crushing defeat in December 2019 following a snap election called by new Conservative leader Boris Johnson in search of the lost majority due to the Brexit issue. The Labour leader is definitively worn out by two old enemies, apparently tamed during the 2017 campaign: the hostility of the media and the party's contradictions on Brexit.

Starting in 2018, a massive pro-Remain movement begins to form, with the aim of convincing Labour to propose a second referendum or, among the most extremist activists, the revocation of Brexit. The movement is extremely composite, seeing among its ranks in leadership roles Blairites as Peter Mandleson in the case of the People's Vote campaign but also components of the soft-left as the future leader and shadow chancellor Keir Starmer with a strong base among the young and urban left, with ramifications in Momentum. In particular, opposition to Brexit

from the left crystallizes in the Another Europe is Possible campaign. Therefore, the heterogeneous anti-Brexit movement contains extremely different actors, moved by incommensurable motives: on the one hand, the People's Vote campaign is an organization led by the right of Labour, partly assisted by the LibDems and by part of the Tories, that uses the Brexit issue to attempt to undermine Corbyn's leadership; on the other hand, Another Europe is Possible genuinely supports the leadership but tries to influence its choices in the name of internal party democracy.

Corbyn loyalists strongly reject the demands from Another Europe is Possible, for two reasons. First of all, they perceive that the right wing of the party is trying Brexit to weaken the leadership and consequently react in a defensive way also to the "friendly" movement. Furthermore, they fear that the policy of the second referendum could be electorally damaging, as it would risk alienating the Leavers in the north and sending an overly convoluted message to the electorate. Both fears turn out to be well-founded: in 2019 general election, a few months after adopting the policy of the second referendum, Labour collapses in the north and in general loses the vote of all those voters who, although not convinced Tories, want to conclude the Brexit debate once and for all; among voters who let Labour down, 34% say they did so for "get Brexit done", and among those who move from Labour to vote Tory 71% cite that motivation - while only 18% in fact votes other parties to reverse Brexit and 5% for antipathy towards Corbyn (British Election Study, 2019).

Nevertheless, the Labour leadership is ultimately forced to include in its 2019 Manifesto a second referendum, with Remain as an option against a deal negotiated by the eventual Labour government. The choice is practically obligatory: about 90% of the Labour membership is pro-Remain, and this also extends to the hard-left; on the contrary, not a majority but at least a quarter of the electorate of the party is Leaver and therefore underrepresented within the membership. In addition, during 2019, a split of of Pro-Remain centrists which merge into the new formation Change UK and then into the LibDems, alarms the leadership of the party, which fears a repeat of the events of the 80s, when the split of the centrists of the Social Democratic Party led Labour to the resounding defeat of 1983. Finally, the disastrous result of the European elections, where the electorate splits on the options for and against Brexit, with the Brexit Party of Nigel Farage getting 30% of the preferences, the pro-Remain Libdems 19% and Labour and the Tories trailing with 14% and 8% respectively. Both major parties run for cover: the Tories

elect a strong pro-Brexit leader, Boris Johnson, and conclude a few months after a non-belligerence pact with the Brexit Party; Labour, as already mentioned, relies on the policy of the second referendum, with bad results. Labour arrives at the election campaign at the end of 2019 far behind in the polls, but this time fails to recover: it will conclude the election with a meagre 33% - however superior to what achieved by Brown and Miliband and very close to the results of the last Blair - against 44% of the Tories, losing 60 seats and giving Boris Johnson a large majority to "get Brexit done". After the defeat, Corbyn resigns; despite the broad support he still enjoys in the party, his designated successor Rebecca Long-Bailey does not manage to exceed 27% of the preferences in the following leadership contest, finishing second after Keir Starmer who manages to compact the soft-left and the center of the party. Despite the defeat, the left remains stronger than ever within the party, being able to count on more than a quarter of the preferences. This is not enough, however, to stop the wave of purges initiated by Starmer, who, taking advantage of some statements on the investigations on anti-Semitism in the party, during 2020 expells Long-Bailey from the shadow cabinet and Corbyn from the parliamentary group. In any case, the centrist shift and the return of the party's establishment under Starmer do not seem to favour the party's electoral fortunes to date, which in fact falls well short of the result of 2019 in the polls during the pandemic crisis, favouring especially the Greens and the SNP.

Before the 2019 elections, Corbyn's rate of approval plunges: from a positive balance in mid-2017 he falls to negative figures between -30 and -50 in the second half of 2019. Despite the fact that only 5% of voters who left Labour claim to have done so because of the leader, it is clear that the weakening of his figure played a role in the defeat; if only because it did not allow to repeat the recovery of 2017, when the negative polls were largely the result of a lack of knowledge of his person.

6.3.2. Corbynism's social roots

What finally broke Corbyn is then Brexit. The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union is all the more important for Labour because it has not only created a rift between both party members and voters, but has also expressed different interpretations within the Corbynist camp. 89% of Labour members think that Brexit was a mistake, including 31% of Labour who voted Leave (Bale et al., 2019) in 2016, while 73% of Labour voters think the same. In short, these numbers would suggest a party that tactically can only choose to carry Remain to its

extreme consequences, that is until the proposal to repeat the referendum according to the formula of the People's Vote. As we have seen this has not been so easy: partially out of respect for the democratic decision of the British people; in part because Labour's Leavers voters are concentrated in extremely delicate and marginal seats, such as those of the Red Wall that have been conquered by the Conservatives in 2019; and finally also because Corbyn is structurally eurosceptic, while his position is until late 2019 to leave the EU respecting the referendum mandate.

Brexit aversion does not directly translate into distrust towards Corbyn. In 2019, in the context of the survey from which the above figures emerge, 65% of Labour party members consider the leader's performance to be positive, compared to 33% who think the opposite - even more favourable numbers than the 2016 vote. Despite differences of opinion, 47% of members support Corbyn's Brexit policy against 30% of opponents. Of these, only 23% consider Corbyn a supporter of Brexit, while 34% think that the refusal - until then - of an endorsment to the second referendum is due to electoral reasons. Only 12% of the members believe Corbyn will change his mind. The most negative figures concern the 30% of members who oppose Corbyn's stance, of whom 56% claim to have considered leaving the party - this is about 88,000 members. Moreover, among Labour voters, the number of supporters and opponents of the soft-Brexit policy is equivalent. The reasons why the members of Labour oppose Brexit are primarily their lesser predisposition to show xenophobic opinions, compared to the electorate as a whole, and the widespread worries for the short and long-term negative effects of Brexit. So the Brexit issue exposes a rift within Labour and among Corbyn's supporters, which on the one hand does not translate directly into distrust of the leader; however it does contribute to weaken his position, especially in 2018-2019 with the start of the campaign for the second referendum and the resounding defeat in the European elections. If, therefore, Corbyn's project has also fallen due to the internal fractures at its base, this places at the center of the discussion the task of investigating the sources and the demographic structure of support for Corbyn, in order to draw a more detailed picture of the social roots of the phenomenon.

In their 2016 survey, Bale and colleagues compare Labour members before 2015 with new recruits, who largely support leadership. New entrants are not particularly young, but tend to be less well-off and more female. Among the old members, 76% come from middle class occupations - compared with 75% of the new - and 34% have an income below the national

average, while among the new members the number of income earners below the average rises to 41%, despite the number of graduates increases from 56% to 58%. Even more significant is the number of women, who make up for 52% of the new members against 38% of the old. The new members are not too different from the old ones as far as political opinions are concerned, though they stand slightly to the left. The differences are however small: the new members are pro-redestribution in 94% of cases, against 91% of the old; they believe that ordinary people do not get a fair share - 96% vs. 94%; support employess against management - 96% vs. 92% - and want to reverse spending cuts - 99% vs 92%. The differences become more meaningful if one considers the self-placement on a scale that goes from left - 0 - to right - 10: the old members place themselves to 2.39, against the new members that are to 1.95 and the members of Momentum that are to 1.35. New members are also much more socially liberal; for example, only 16% of them support censorship of films and magazines - against 21% of the other members; 16% want more severe penalties - against 27%; only 23% of the new members teach their children to obey authority, almost the half compared to old members. Finally, the new members are slightly more likely to see immigration favourably than the previous members.

So far, therefore, the most interesting data relate to gender - with a significant increase in women -, the significantly greater propensity to show socially liberal positions, the highest level of opposition to austerity and the highest number of individuals with lower salaries than the national average. Another interesting fact is that new members tend to be more often than before "educated left behinds", meaning people with a degree that earns very little - in this case, less than £25,000. Well, in the pre-2015 membership 41% of graduates earned less than £25,000, while this proportion rises to 51% among new members with a degree. All these features coincide perfectly with the categories discussed in chapter 2, namely libertarian populists (Inglehart & Norris, 2019), Generation Left (Milburn, 2019) and connected outsiders (Gerbaudo, 2019): people with good levels of education, socially liberal but that tend to be less wealthy than the national average. This identikit also explains the positions on the Brexit held by most Corbyn supporters; by virtue of their libertarian background, consequence of their level of education and of the Silent Revolution, the libertarian populists are tendentially cosmopolitan and little worried by diversity: it is therefore not surprising that they want to oppose the Conservative Brexit, based on a chauvinistic conception of the nation.

Whiteley and colleagues (2019) follow this line of analysis, adopting, as already done in this work, the theory of relative deprivation to explain the boom in Labour membership following Corbyn's candidacy. As the reader will recall, in the context of Chapter 2, analyzing the impacts of the Great Recession on the trajectory of the Silent Revolution, I have already described this approach by discussing frustration-aggression theories. In particular, the theory of relative deprivation (Runciman, 1966; Stouffer et al., 1949) argues that individuals develop expectations regarding their social, political and economic role: the wider the gap between expectations and the role actually played, the greater frustration and anger. In particular, in contemporary societies, education and family background play an important role in creating expectations; the effect of the 2008 crisis is precisely that of increasing the gap between expectations and reality, especially for educated and middle-class young people who have to suffer a retreat from family starting conditions. In analyzing the hypothesis of relative deprivation, Whiteley and colleagues choose a different path of analysis, deciding to compare not only new and old members, but dividing the new members into first time joiners and returning members. Here the results are partly surprising, since on the analyzed dimensions the returning and old members are very similar to each other, differering in significant measure from first time joiners in a way that confirms the theory of relative deprivation but partially questions the idealtype of libertarian populists. In particular, new joiners are less educated, less likely to work in high status occupations and with incomes well below existing and returning members; these characteristics do not seem to depend on differences in age. At the same time, the fear of poverty is much higher among first time joiners, 37% of whom fear social downgrading, compared to 16% and 17% of returning and existing members. However, the graduated among first time joiners earning less than the average salaries are the 37%, compared to 31% of returning members and less than 25% of old members. Thus the perception of relative deprivation seems to have two sources: one linked to the greater perception of vulnerability, which can be found in new members in general; and a more specific source, linked to the relative downgrading of a significant portion of graduates. In general, first time joiners are not middle class radicals, although the data on the frustrated graduates certainly indicates that a bulk of these exists; but even among those who come from the middle class, central is the theme of declassation and fear of poverty. In many respects, new joiners, though less white and male than the traditional working class, resemble the traditional Labour base more than pre-2015 members, being poorer and less educated. New joiners are younger than returning members,

but the average is still middle aged. The result is that behind the rise of Corbyn lies at least in part an alliance between the new urban working class and some sections of the middle classes that are undergoing a process of downgrading or proletarianization. As for the left positioning, first time joiners and returning members are similar, though the seconds are more radical; this confirms the idea of the return of exiled of the left alienated by New Labour in conjunction with a new wave of membership from social movements or citizens not previously engaged in Labour.

Finally, returning to the data discussed by Bale and colleagues, it can be seen that, while the new members are less active than old members, the former seem to hold more elite-challenging beliefs. As far as the first point is concerned, however, a distinction must be made. On the one hand, the new members are in general more active on the web than old members; secondly, the lower level of activity of the new members is mitigated by the wide activism of the members of Momentum, that in almost all areas of activity equal or exceed existing members - especially with regard to the propensity to participate in meetings and to canvass, while the propensity remains lower in more mechanical and non-relational activities such as distributing flyers and posting posters. As for the data on elite-challenging repertories, 42% of the new members believe that politicians do not care about ordinary people - as opposed to 31% of old members - and 40% of them believe that the new leadership respects the base - against 16% of the old members.

Although the data shows that, compared to pre-existing members, Corbyn's supporters are on the whole less well-off, more educated but in more precarious existential conditions, the label of Corbynism as "middle-class radicalism" is hard to die. This is due to the fact that the Labour Party membership is extremely unbalanced before 2015: according to data from Bale and colleagues (2016b) 76% of Labour members come from a middle-class background and 57% are graduates, well above the national averages. Among the new members, as we have seen, the number of members of occupational sectors identified as "middle class" - ABC1 in the British categorization - remains almost identical, while increasing simultaneously the number of graduates and the number of people living below the average national wage. So, although the party started from a solid, highly educated middle class base, Corbynism, while keeping the average high on the level of education - though first time joiners are less educated than returning ones - brings the level of income closer to the national average. Despite the narration of

Corbynism as radicalism for the middle classes (Goodall, 2018) and as a result of its "patronising" attitude towards the working class (Oduor, 2020), according to some commentators treated as an alien and passivated specimen which the middle class radicals intend to educate and defend in a philanthropic manner, the new members tend all in all to rebalance although partially the demographics of Labour; the phenomenon is even more marked among young voters, among whom low income is an excellent predictor of the vote for Labour in 2017 - although this also predicts abstentionism.

But what Corbynism fails to achieve in any meaningful way is to break away from the trend of increased participation and votes in the main urban areas and decrease in rural areas and in the north of the country (Cruddas, 2019). Although the vote for Labour is still very high in areas with low income and a majority of routinized jobs, it is extremely declining, while it is increasing in seats with large portions of "precariat", emerging service workers and in areas with high degrees of "cosmopolitan workers" - finance, public administration, arts recreation, education and health. But above all the predominance of big cities is striking, a pattern that is repeated also for membership - 15% of members live in London and a remaining 32% in other parts of the south; in the northern areas, the urban areas of Manchester and Liverpool stand out. This pattern may explain the equivocal representation of Corbynism as middle-class radicalism; more than middle-class radicalism we can speak of urban radicalism, although some characteristics of the inhabitants of large cities might put them on the frontier between middle class and working class: greater cosmopolitanism and social liberalism and, in general, greater connection to global culture and trades, despite a not necessarily dominant economic position. Certainly large part of the Labour membership, old and new, is composed of people who occupy jobs that are normally understood as middle-class occupations: but the data show that these provide decreasing social security and are subjected to downgrading and proletarianization.

These data must be contextualized within the analysis of the political protagonism of the middle classes during the Silent Revolution. As we have seen in the first three chapters the history of the NSMs, left-libertarian parties, the attemps to modernize political parties and lastly the squares of 2011 and digital parties describe the rise and fall of the middle classes as the key political actor in postindustrial societies. As we saw in the first chapter, postmaterialism stems from the extension of middle classes, when more and more people access conditions of relative well-being and material security; at the same time, the "culturalist" turn of the NSMs and the

emergence of reflective and self-expressive orientations that underlie the demands for organisational democratisation are a consequence of the endemic identity deficit among the middle classes, which with their expansion has become a major phenomenon in post-industrial society. The characteristics of the members of left-libertarian parties are incredibly similar to those of the NSMs. People on average young, more educated but not richer than the average, from the middle class, still students or largely from professions related to care, education and cultural services (Burklin, 1984, 1979, 1987; Dalton & Kuechler, 1990; Kitschelt, 1989). The members of left-libertarian parties come from the "postindustrial middle-strata of society" (Kitschelt, 1989: 104), they compose a "new middle class" (Loewenberg, 1978: 20) or "postmaterialist intelligentsia" (Schoonmaker, 1990: 50); blue collars are under-represented compared to the total population. As already mentioned with regard to the NSMs however, although the middle class background is an unmistakable feature in explaining the mobilization, even more important are the participation, professional and educational experiences, as indicated by the average age of the participants and their prevailing employment profiles. The middle classes are also the protagonists of the Labour Party modernisation project. The whole project revolves around the aim to expand the electoral appeal of the party, opening up to "aspirational" voters attracted by Tatcherism or otherwise repulsed by the image of working class and militant party culture. Although efforts to recruit individuals from management and liberal professions fail to significantly alter the demographic structure of the party (Les Gales & Faucher-King, 2010), the massive influx of new members, combined with a plebiscitarian approach to internal democracy and the adoption of particularly iconoclastic discourses and practices by the leadership succeed in supplanting party cultures and produce an image capable of attracting more affluent urban voters from the middle strata of society.

In the case of Corbyn's Labour, although we cannot speak of a particularly low average age in the case of his supporters, young people have a central role in the imaginary and because of their ability to act in an innovative way. The young age is in some ways less salient than in left-libertarianism because unlike the 80s today are not only young people that have been invested by the Silent Revolution; which is also demonstrated by Labour's voting patterns, that manages to attract the votes of the under-50s but struggles among the oldest cohorts. As in the case of left-libertarian politics, the protagonists of Corbynism are on average more educated people than the average but not as well off. If at the time of the NSMs and the first Green Parties this was explained primarily by the young age of the participants, in the case of the Labour Party,

the lack of correspondence between educational level and income is the consequence of the processes of economic degradation that have exploded in the last decade. If, as in the case of the political processes analyzed above, also Corbyn's Labour is mostly composed by an urban base coming from occupations that could be defined as belonging to the post-industrial middle strata, the difference is extremely marked compared to the past; this is because, to date, these are not rising social classes as in the 70s and 80s, but rather they are on a path of downgrading. The events recounted in this work can therefore be read as a sort of history, told indirectly, of the middle class as the key actor in political life at the times of the Silent Revolution. At first the middle classes burst onto the scene, imposing their demands through the NSMs and left-libertarianism, leading to the definitive scrapping of the old politics based on the polarization between working class and bourgeoisie; at a later stage, the middle classes, although this time allied with the more affluent, propose a reform of political parties in the sense of individualizing democratization and neoliberal economic modernization; finally, the middle classes that are being proletarianized because of the dynamics of economic deterioration triggered by the global crisis and, at least in part, by the effects of neoliberal economic modernization; their revolt starts with street movements and the electoral wave described by Milburn, this time seeking an alliance with the popular classes and no longer, as in the 1990s, with the progressive bourgeoisie.

7 The Labour left from Benn to Corbyn: embedding the Silent Revolution within the Labour Party.

As was seen in the previous chapters, the rise of the Corbyn movement in the UK and within the Labour party has been an highly unexpected phenomenon (Byrne, 2019; Nunns, 2018; Pickard, 2019; Seymour, 2017; Watts & Bale, 2019), and as such has mainly been observed in terms of discontinuity both by observers and by the protagonists of the events; discontinuity that has been recognized in the sudden rise of a marginal faction at the head of the party, but especially as a turn toward the rejection of austerity and neoliberalism (Bale, 2016; Byrne, 2017; Dorey, 2017; Goes, 2017; Whiteley et al., 2019) on the part of a party which in the previous twenty years had tried by any means to overcome the legacy of the traditional workers' movement and staunchly promoted pro-market policies and discourses (Faucher-king, 2008; Les Gales & Faucher-King, 2010; Seyd & Whiteley, 2002). This has been all the more surprising as the party's electoral base did not vary significantly; as Cruddas (2019) effectively shows, the party remains very strong in large cities and among the educated, young and progressive sections of the population, as in the days of New Labour. It is therefore necessary to account for this paradox, asking first of all whether it is those social sections that have radically changed their orientations. The authors who have focused on the connections between the protest movements of 2011 and the wave of the anti-austerity left in the Anglo-Saxon world and beyond have observed that the core of participation in both movements is to be found in those middle-class, young, progressive and educated people who react to the perceived downgrading following the crisis by formulating demands for enhanced social protections and public spending (Gerbaudo, 2017, 2019; Milburn, 2019; Norris & Inglehart 2019). Thus it would appear that the middle and educated classes, or part of them, have changed, developing a sensitivity toward political demands of a "materialist" nature (Inglehart, 1977) linked to the need to maintain quantitatively adequate living standards.

In addition to these considerations a further hypothesis should be formulated to explain the Cruddas paradox. And that is: is it possible that, in addition to the changes already reported, at the basis of the pro-Corbyn mobilizations might lie also factors that signal some structural continuity, especially with regard to public values? This article tries to answer this question, showing how the Corbynista insugency can at least partly be seen as the effect and the

continuation of one of the main trends that have marked the Western countries in the last 50 years and that sociologists have codified in the theory of the Silent Revolution.

Inglehart's Silent Revolution (1977) is probably the most comprehensive framework connecting social change, value change and political participation. According to such theory, two fundamental developments have been most impactful on participation patterns: the cognitive mobilization and the mass access to existential security through economic growth and welfare state led redistribution (Carneiro, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel., 2005; Nolan and Lenski, 1999; Inglehart et al., 1998; Inkeles and Smith, 1975; Inkeles, 1983b). More skilled citizens became more able to act as individuals outside hierarchies and more creative, while increasingly less deferent to authority (Norris, 1999, 2002); at the same time existential security reduced evolutive pressures towards conformism and led to the emergence of "post-materialist" aspirations related to the qualitative aspects of life and increasing the desire for the free expression of the self and of choice. The combined effect of these trends led to the rise of liberatian values and discourses, focusing on the critique of the hieararchical and bureaucratic organizaional pillars of the post-war consensus and experimenting new forms of horizontal, expressive and creative mobilizations (Dalton, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). This state of affairs has been captured by Inglehart in the concept of elite-challenging participation, describing new forms of participation that defy contituted authorities and long for horizonal and democratised relationships as the organizational pillars of mobilization.

In this paper I will start providing an interpretation of the New Left of the Labour party, a party-driven movement (Rye & Moldoon, 2020) emerged in 70s, as a tentative to embed some sort of elite challenging participation within the Labour Party. I have selected two main dimensions along which to identify and measure the projects of "postmaterialization" of the party, that is the adoption of forms of extraparliamentary action and the proposition of democratizing party apparatuses in favour of the direct participation of the base while reducing the power of party elites and, to some degree, the role of representative mechanisms. After analysing how the New Left adopted and reinterpreted the mandate of the Silent Revolution I will show how the pro-Corbyn movement can be seen as a continuation of the New Left project, both in the key themes and strategies – the critic of parliamentarism and the demand for intraparty democratization – and in part of the personnel – the leaders of the Party under Corbyn have been all involved in

the New Left and were closely tied to its leader Tony Benn, while the founder of Momentum[30] John Lansman was one of the leading figures of the CLPD, the organization of new leftists in 70s and 80s. This analysis aims to provide a unified reading of the post-70s Labour Left as a single party-driven movement emerging in two distinct waves and revolving around the issue of the reform of the traditional party form in order to accomodate to new practices and preferences for participation emerging among progressive citizens; this focus marks the difference with the previously existing Labour left, mostly intrested in economic redistribution but without any significant reflection on the overcoming of "bread and butter" socialism and of parliamentarism through the alliance with libertarian social movements (Wainwright, 1987). The analysis is based on writings and speeches from Labour left supporters and leaders and aims at enriching common representations of Corbynism as a return to socially-protectionist demands by emphasizing the libertarian and elite-challenging heritage of the Silent Revolution lurking under the surface of recent social upheavals.

7.1 New citizens, New Left

This section aims to show, through the analysis of Tony Benn's writings, how the New Left develops from the appreciation of the main social changes identified by the theory of the Silent Revolution and their impact on value change and political participation, recognizing the nexus between economic development, rising skills of citizens and their longing for new forms of political activities reflecting the increased variety of their concerns and able to involve them directly in decisions, at the expense of elite monopoly over political organizations. In the first part of the section I will therefore devote myself to outline the pillars of the analysis from which the New Left draws its political agenda and strategy; after that, I will turn to describing the proposals to reform the party aimed at adapting it to the emerging trends, in two main respects: the extension of the extra-parliamentary component of participation and the proposal for a democratization of the Labour Party and British society at large in the context of the direct involvement of citizens in decisions, supplementing representative bodies where they exist – within the party - and implementing them where they don't – in industry and the public sector.

Labour's New Left between the 1970s and 1980s has been an ambiguous entity. On the one hand, it has been founded on a somewhat radical analysis, based on overcoming the Keynesian

[30] The intra-party organization set up by Corbyn supporters to push his agenda.

compromise towards democratic-participatory socialism. Central to this analysis is the extension of the struggle for equality well beyond the narrow boundaries defined by european social democracy, to the point of encompassing, in addition to a radical distribution of material resources - to be obtained through the socialization of the productive system - the redistribution of social power through the democratization of the state and the productive system and the integration of the demands formulated by the minorities and the new movements attentive to race, gender, environment and territorial inequalities (Golding, 2016). This reinterpretation of socialdemocracy leads the New Left to focus, at least in intentions, on the overcoming of the parliamentarism of the Labour Party, in favour of an alliance with the new social movements and radical trade union militancy, as well as the experimentation of more open and less hierarchical forms of organization (Basset, 2019a). At the same time, however, with the exception of some cases of innovation in the forms of local government, the New Left strategy has resulted in a struggle for the reform of the internal structures of the Labour Party. How can such an ambitious analysis be reconciled in practice with such a narrow and inward-oriented focus? As we will soon see, this depends on the fact that the New Left, despite its great attention to extra-parliamentary dynamics, sees a reformed Labour Party as the vanguard vector for the transformation of the state and the economic system toward participatory socialism.

To grasp the intellectual roots of the New Left it may be useful to start from a short essay by Tony Benn published by the Fabian Society in 1970, in which the future leader of the New Left of the Labour Party develops his analysis of the main trends of change in the development of political subjectivities and in the forms of participation. The analysis revolves around what Benn calls the "new citizen", the subject of the "new politics":

> We are dealing with a new form of citizen, nowadays, who is far more intelligent than most people in position of authority yet accept that he is. (Benn, 1970: 6)

But what social changes lead to the emergence of the new citizen, and how does its emergence lead to the development of a new politics? In this respect Benn provides an intepretation of social change that in many respects anticipates Inglehart’s theories on the postmaterialist transition, cognitive mobilization and the emergence of elite-challenging forms of action. The engine of change is in both theorists economic development: the improvement of living standards, linked to technological development and the Keynesian compromise, for the first time in history allows common people to develop the ability for choice, both on the market and in cultivating their individual interest during leisure time; both had previously been prerogatives

of the upper classes. At the same time, the development of mass media and the diffusion of education, as well as the growing technical specialization in the division of social labour, means that the stock of individuals with good cognitive resources increases rapidly; thus the citizen becomes "more intelligent", but also more open and cosmopolitan because of the greater range of stimuli to which it is subjected, especially through mass communication. The exit from material need towards a new phase marked by existential security and relative well-being opens up new possibilities for the citizen, who becomes more and more demanding and self-affirmative; at the same time, the growing social complexity increases the integration of the citizen whithin productive and social systems, making it often a fundamental element in the chain of value production and consequently increasing its perception of being able to influence events (Winstone, 2015). This new perception of possibilities and capabilities leads citizens to come together and express new demands that emerge from below, precisely because the new citizen on the one hand is urged by the increase in social complexity to formulate new problems, while on the other he has now the cognitive abilities and the confidence that enable him to formulate those demands together with other peers without being dependent on political parties; he passes therefore from mobilizations based on loyalty – class, party and/or personal - to mobilizations based on specific "issues".

Faced with such developments, Benn believes that the type of socialism advocated by the Labour left must evolve too. The goal remains the same as always, namely the struggle for human dignity, but the way in which it is conceived must necessarily adapt to the new times. If the left is well equipped to face the material dimension of the struggle for human dignity - poverty and inequality, to be reduced through state intervention - it should now be noted that development has led to the emergence of the need for individuals to freely develop their own inclinations and of the desire to free themselves from the control of the bureaucratic and hierarchical apparatuses developed to manage the welfare society, which increasingly clash with the skills and values held by citizens. Consequently, the new socialism must know how to include also the struggles for individuation and the promotion and protection of diversity, as well as the liberation from the vertical apparatuses and the development of new forms of horizontal organization and power from below. In line with the post-materialist orientations - the New Left intends to propose a third way between

> […] the choice of bureaucratic state planning versus the market. […] a third option, based on democratic organisation and negotiation as themselves economic mechanisms. (Wainwright, 1987: 258)

It must be noted that this is a remarkable innovation in the Labourist tradition. Even in its most radical versions, labourism had developed a recipe based on the nationalization of the economy in a redistributive key, but without worrying about the democratization of the same (Miliband, 1969; 1978). This implies a "bread and butter" conception of the working class, that is, a strictly materialist vision of the needs of citizens. According to Benn and the New Left, this strictly materialistic interpretation of the needs of the middle-to-low classes is rendered obsolete by economic development and the growing differentiation that put at the center of the agenda issues linked to the recognition of self-expression and individual needs of liberation and realization. Socialism must therefore be updated, including the new post-materialist and liberating pulsions, reshaping its conception of the human and consequently its agenda in a redistributive as well as liberating-participatory key.

7.1.1 The extra-parliamentary expansion of Labour politics

For democratization to become really pervasive, new forms of direct participation and bottom-up decision-making must supplement the traditional mechanisms of parliamentary representation, bringing democracy into all branches of the state and arenas of social activity. In fact, Benn proposes to overcome the centrality granted by the Labour Party to parliament, both because he proposes to transfer the struggle for socialism and democracy to other arenas and because in his view becomes fundamental the role of formulating political demands by self-organized citizens in their issue-oriented organizations, as well as the integral liberation of the human being from all kinds of oppression - that is no longer understood only as material poverty, but becomes gendered, racialized and includes any other form of social stratification. From here derives the focus Benn and the New Left put on extra-parliamentary struggles and movements, intended both as the key actors prefiguring the demands emerging spontaneously from new citizens as well as social forces that could prove decisive in the struggle for the democratization of political, social and economic institutions. A struggle of which the Labour Party must become a bulwark. But the Labour Party has to, first of all, begin a process of internal democratization if it is to be credible as the leading actor in a radical democratization of the British state and society towards socialism:

> […] it cannot present itself as the champion of democratic socialist development without paying some more attention to what this could mean for its own structure, nature and role. […] Only if we can learn how to do that to ourselves, can we really be confident of our ability to do the very same on a much larger, national, scale which will be certainly necessary, if any of our visions is to be realized by us, the people […]. (Benn, 1970: 27-28).

The role of the party as vanguard of the transformation lies in the need to give a concrete and pragmatic translation to the demands of liberation that have emerged in society. By embodying a model of radically democratic organization, Labour can become a pole of attraction, capable of inspiring the rest of society and directing the emerging and multifaceted forms of conflict towards the reform of the state and the capitalist system. But in order for the party to be able to become the vanguard of the transition, it is necessary to use the internal democratic channels to undermine a leadership that is structurally hostile to change (Oduor, 2020). As early as 1971, during a lecture at the Fabian Society, Benn outlined the areas of internal reform to be addressed: the process for selecting Parliamentary candidates; who should elect the leader and deputy leader; and the accountability of cabinet members, MPs, local Labour groups, councillors, and trade-union delegations. All of these reforms envisage a significant reditribution of power within the party, from parliamentary and union elites to the direct participation of the base.

Alongside Benn's approach, which, as will be seen, will later spill over into the CLPD's battles involving many of the future leaders of Corbyn's Labour, various bottom-up tendencies developed in the same period, all aiming to challenge the usual logic of action and distribution of power within the party, especially at the local level and through militancy in trade-unions, as described by Hilary Wainwright (1987, 1994, 2018), one of future theorist of the movement-parties and pro-Corbyn activist. From the 1960s until the epochal miners' strike of the early 1980s, a series of new initiatives rooted in libertarian movements and/or in the most radicalized fringes of trade unions establish local alliances with party sections, introducing sometimes interesting experiments both with regard to cooperation in social conflict and direct action - a fundamental example is that of the miners' strike – and with regard to the experimentation of new modes of self-management of production and the innovation of local governance in a participatory key. With regard to the latter type of innovation, the Greater London Council led by the newleftist Ken Livingstone stands out, both as regards attempts to combine redistribution and greater direct participation of citizens in the management of public affairs and the inclusion of minorities brought to the fore by the new social movements - women, blacks, homosexuals etc. The case of the London Council, which is complemented by similar experiences in other major cities, is clearly an experimental applicaton of Benn's reasoning, since the alliance with movements is forged by including social movement activists within local party and government decision making. Anyway, despite widespread experimentation, as well as the development of

a common sense in the party's base favorable to this kind of innovations and numerous statements of support by Benn and other New Left leaders, these experiences fail to become sistematic and create a stable alliance on a national basis, probably because the leaders of the party left decided to put all their efforts in trying to reform the party, without ever managing to take control of it (Wainwright, 1987).

7.1.2 Reforming the party

As already noted, the alliance between the Labour Party and the new citizens is conceptualized by the New Left in a way that poses the party as the vanguard of a wider array of movements. But for this to happen, the party has to change, and for two reasons: because by democratizing itself by embracing the new citizen's demand for more direct control it can become the credible vehicle of the transtition; but also because by democratizing it could erase the barriers that prevent the new citizens from exerting their influence on party decision making. This reasoning leads to the establishment of a strategy based on a clear ordering of priorities: first reform the party, through the setting up of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD), then forge the alliance with extraparliamentary movements.

The aim of the reforms advocated by the CLPD is clearly to shift the balance of powers in favor of the party on the ground, while at the same time reducing that of the party in public office - to use the categories coined by Katz and Mair (1995) - in fact proposing the overthrow of the most undemocratic feature of parliamentarism, namely the complete separation of the masses from the work of parliament (Panitch & Leys, 2020). While the focus remains on the party and its role in representative and parliamentary politics, the attempt is to democratize it by increasing the weight of the extra-parliamentary component – the party on the ground, to use again an expression coined by Katz and Mair. This results in practice in a strategy based on an attempt to influence the party's annual conferences in order to change constitutional rules. This goal is pursued both by building alliances with trade unions and with the membership base. This second objective is pursued through the attempt to affiliate to the CLPD as many constituency branches and individual members as possible, encouraging local offices to pass resolutions in favour of the group's demands. The CLPD performs a capillary work, which relative success is guaranteed by the great support for the battles of the New Left at the membership. Thanks to the long-term experience and leadership of figures such as Benn and Lansman, the CLPD perfectly grasps the key nodes of the Labour power structure, promoting

reforms aimed at undermining the dominance of parliamentarians, as well as the tactical needs to wrest control over conferences from party leaders. As for the latter, the crucial aspects are the alliance with the trade unions and the ability to organize the party base, often oriented to the left but unable to advance their demands autonomously. The activists of the CLPD try to compensate this disorganization, carrying out a widespread activity of campaigning and recruitment throughout the year, as well as through the establishment of fringe meetings during conferences to instruct and check that delegates and trade unionists vote according to the group's strategies.

The reforms pursued by the CLPD are aimed at ensuring "the translation of Labour Party programmes into Labour Government policies" (Panitch and Leys, 2020), that is, ensuring the direct control of the membership on internal decision making processes. Having obtained broad consensus in the party's base and trade unions, the CLPD manages to obtain mandatory reselection in 1979[31], after six years of campaigning on the issue, while it failed to transfer from the Parliamentary Party to the NEC - the party in central office - the control of the electoral manifesto - although it was then able to impose in view of the 1983 elections the most radical manifesto since the post-war period. In addition, the CLPD managed to secure to change the rules for the election of the leader, intitutin the electoral college mechanism, which subtract from the PLP monopoly on the choice of the leader. After the reform the leadership will then be elected according to a mechanism that gives 30% of the votes to members as well as parliamentarians and 40% to the unions.

It is clear that the battles fought by the New Left are not against the idea of political change through parliament *per sè* but rather against parliamentarism, that is

> They challenge the view that the Parliament, and the state in Parliament, is the sole source of moral political authority. The reforms attempted to extend constitutional legitimacy to forms of political democracy outside Parliament as well. (Wainwright, 1987: 52)

The reform of the constitutional rules of the party in this perspective is only the first step towards the renewal of the party form, in order to ensure greater influence to the extra-parliamentary social forces and reduce the barriers between citizens and parliamentary decision making. The second step is the transformation of the peripheral nodes of the party into spaces open to citizens' initiatives and to social movements, as show some experiences of local

[31] The reform will be canceled by the next Labour leader, Neil Kinnock.

government established by the New Left, including Ken Livingston's GLC and the radical devolution of power to citizens' committees - the most reknown among which is the Women's Committee. These reforms constitute an attempt to reverse the progressive absorption of the parliamentary elite within state institutions, which makes even Labour-led governments entirely unaccountabl to the party base, as showed by the vicissitudes of the '60s and '70s. Obviously the attempts of reform meet a very strong resistance from the parliamentary elite, leading in 1981 to a split by the right of the party that founds the SDP and then fuels the counter-revolution started by Neil Kinnock.

7.2 The Corbynist continuation of Labour's Silent Revolution

The 2015 leadership contest unexpectedly projects many of those who had been the younger leaders of the New Left to leading roles within the party. This is true for Jeremy Corbyn and his shadow chancellor John McDonnell, two of the pupils of Tony Benn who kept the flame of the New Left alive during the years of marginalization of the left under the "modernising" leaders (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). Both have been involved in protest and libertarian movements since the 70s and have advocated ever since for the alliance with extraparliamentary activists and the democratization of Labour. Another key figure that marks the continuity in personnel between the New Left and the Corbyn project is Jon Lansman, one of the leading activists and very capable schemer of the CLPD, turning into Momentum founder. These veterans have been joined by a new generation of activists, most of whom coming from the anti-austerity social movements. In the following sections I will try to show how the pro-Corbyn movement can be interpreted as a continuation of the New Left project, both from the point of view of strategy and from that of discourses. In particular, I will focus on two discoursive poles that have been key both to the New Left and to postmaterialism more generally, that is the expansion of participation outside strictly parliamentary-centered activities and the democratization of political structures and organizations.

7.2.1 The extra-parliamentary dual strategy: between the party and the social movement

Milburn (2019) defines the libertarian and anti-austerity movement parties emerged on the left after the Great Recession as informed by a "dual strategy". In this conception of political strategy parties have to act at the frontier between parliamentary politics and extra-parliamentary movements, in the belief that neither domain is sufficient but both are necessary

in determining the desired social change: on the one hand, pursuing direct action in society responds to the need to confront the dispersed and partly informal nature of power in increasingly complex societies (Melucci, 1996); on the other hand, the state continues to be an actor which in such a dispersed society still holds important levers of economic policy and the almost complete monopoly on coercion through law development and enforcement. Movement parties therefore end up structuring themselves around a dual strategy, which aims at partly contradictory objectives (Kevada, 2019): competing to win election and promoting social change, also by extraparliamentary means. According to Wainwright (2008), their most distinctive feature is the will to harness "non-state sources of power" through movement building alongside state sources of power through the conquer of parliament by electoral means.

This dualistic conception of party strategy, between institutional politics and civil society, filters in Corbyn supporters' discourses about the pro-Corbyn movement's strategy within Labour and more generally within British institutions and society. A first knot to be untied in this regard is that Corbyn supporters almost always focus on Momentum as the actor tasked with the pursue of the dual strategy. But how does the focus on an organization that operates within a party reconcile with the fact that the dual strategy usually concerns the party's strategy? An organization within the party can certainly act outside parliament, but by definition it is forbidden to directly resort to the parliamentary road. Wainwright (2015) helps us unravel the dilemma. In discussing the prospects of the left-leaning Labour Party, Wainwright clearly illuminates the components of the dual strategy: electoral conquest of the levers of the state and construction of movement-based counter-powers in society. In its turn, the dualistic logic is shifted on the internal dynamics of the party, envisaging Momentum as an actor capable to express this dual approach within the Labour Party:

> While Momentum has stated its intent to 'encourage those inspired by Jeremy Corbyn's campaign to get involved with the Labour Party', it has also pledged to 'build new and support existing organisations that can make concrete improvements to people's lives'. In other words, and at least in theory, Momentum is an attempt to not only turn grassroots groups towards the Labour Party, but to turn the Labour Party to supporting these grassroots groups and helping new ones to emerge. (Wainwright, 2015[32])

Therefore Momentum should use the dual strategy both by supporting the electoral branch of the Corbynist insurgency - performing mainly campaigning tasks and defending the leadership

[32] Retrieved at: https://www.redpepper.org.uk/my-support-for-jeremy-corbyn-is-about-much-more-than-reclaiming-labour/

from other factions - and by establishing extraparliamentary direct-action networks, linking and partnering with social movements.

Although the dichotomous pattern is recurrent in statements from Momentum leaders, different exponents have provided different specifications of the terms of the dualism. For example in 2016 the founders of Momentum Adam Klugg, Emma Rees and James Schneider[33] have published on Red Pepper an article of presentation of the new organization, defining its strategy through the dichotomy between a campaigning machine and the construction of a social movement active in local communities with informal repertories of action:

> This membership growth offers Labour the opportunity to return to its radical heritage and become a social movement *as well as* a campaigning machine again – dual aims Momentum seeks to encourage. To build this movement, branches and constituency parties should be engaging more actively in communities, supporting grassroots organising and building networks for popular education. […] We also believe that electoral victory alone will not be sufficient to fundamentally transfer wealth and power to the overwhelming majority. We also need to build up a social base that can support a Labour government's transformative changes. In particular, we need to build organisations of popular power. (Klugg et al., 2016a: 39)

There aren't many differences between this conception and Wainwright's, since the key issue is the fact that while state power is necessary to affect social change, it must be complemented by localized initiatives empowering citizens to self-organize in order to act directly to achieve some of the goals declared by the party and to defend them once obtained. However, again in 2016, founder James Schneider releases another interview in which the dual strategy is formulated in different terms:

> In terms of our aims, Momentum has a dual strategy. We want to make the Labour Party more open, participatory, and democratic. We want it to be an activist party, organizing to win in every community, standing for Corbyn's platform. We want to transform the party so that it can transform society. But we also want to provide a point of connection between the movements and the party, to use this moment to build popular power and increase capacity at the grassroots level. The Labour Party should be a giant lever for all popular struggles, raising them up and uniting them, providing them with a strategy to take power and win. To do that it we need a party strategy and a social strategy, in concert with each other. (Schneider, 2016[34])

In this case the dichotomy is between objectives of party reform and promotion of social conflict. Here the opposition is framed differently, since the act of reforming the party is contrasted to direct action that takes place independently of representative institutions. This might lead to reinterpret the dicotomy not as one based on the *locus* of participation – inside vs.

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[33] The only abstent among the founders is Jon Lansman.

[34] Retrieved at: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/10/momentum-labour-party-corbyn-uk/

outside the parliament - but as an opposition between parliamentary centered actions and forms of actions that exist outside any reference to representation. That is, the apparent inconsistencies in the representation of the strategy are resolved if it is noted that one of the two poles of the opposition is not precisely parliamentarism in the strict sense, meaning a form of politics that takes integrally place within the parliament, but parliamentary-centered politics, that is all those forms of political action that hold as their final target the parliament and relations of power within it. Modifying the internal rules of the Labour Pary can be seen as a parliamentary-centered activity in so far as the ultimate aim is to alter the composition of the parliamentary delegation of the party and/or the methods of selection thereof. The hypotesis that we have to do with the distinction between parliament-centered action and extraparliamentary action is further clarified by another official source, that is a statement of the NCG of Momentum after the defeat of 2019:

> With a change in leadership, our movement has the chance to shift our focus away from parliament alone and towards new horizons. We can build up political education in every part of the country. We can support trade unionists in their fight for better pay and conditions. We can strengthen direct action groups challenging the government on the climate emergency. We can train and support a new generation of socialist leaders. We can form renters unions to build power and take on bad landlords. As many already are with Coronavirus, we can organise mutual aid to protect those most vulnerable to the worst impacts of Tory rule. (Momentum, 2020[35])

In the same document the NCG analyses how Momentum has effectively focused, until then, on electioneering and intra-party campaigning for constitutional reforms; as this activities are deemed insufficient, the leadership proposes to complement them with "new horizons" of action outside the focus on parliament. This poses all that has been done since the foundation of Momentum was parliamentary focused. Each of these three extracts adds a further element that enriches our grasp on the framework of the dual strategy as it is conceptualized in the Labour left. On the axis parliamentarism vs extra-parliamentary action is first identified a contrast between campaigning for elections and movement building, then between objectives of party reform and promotion of social conflict and finally the opposition between parliamentary centered activities and direct action in social conflict.

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[35] Retrieved at: https://peoplesmomentum.com/building-the-movement/the-future-of-our-movement-statement-from-momentums-ncg/

It must be noted, however, that even though Corbynists have thought and discussed a lot about building the extraparliamentary branch of the party and many of them actually come from social movements, there is evidence that they have not been able to develop strong links between the party and movements (Bassett, 2019c; Fielding, 2018: Skogan, 2020) and to mould the former in the image of the latters, ending up "doing more and better what the CLPD used to do inside the party" (Panitch & Leys, 2020: 232). This is mostly because, as will be seen later, the mounting of internal conflict between the parliamentary group and the leadership has forced activists to make a choice between using their time and energies to defend the Corbyn project or to try and innovate organizational routines. The former choice has prevailed, leading again, as happened with the New Left, to focus primarily on the battle for constitutional rules with the conviction that democratizing internal procedures giving more power to members would automatically empower the left and strenghtent its links with mobilizations taking place outside parliamentary politics.

7.2.2 Democratization

As for the issue of the democratization of the party, it is possible to find strong continuities between the New Left and the pro-Corbyn movement both in terms of strategy and discourses. Once the left-wing leadership has gained power through the combination of an insurgency of the base and the support of part of the trade unions, it tries to cement its grip on the party on this two pillars, exactly as the CLPD tried - without succeeding - more than thirty years earlier. Once again, the affirmation of the left necessitates a harsh fight against the parliamentary group and rests on the unstable alliance with local activists and trade unions. In the face of repeated attacks by the parliamentary group, culminating in the triggering of a new ledership contest after mass resignations from the Shadow Cabinet in summer 2016, Corbyn shows how the source of his power and legitimacy within the party stems from outside the parliament and resides in the great popular support conveyed by the movement that was formed behind the remnants of the CLPD. At this point the left, adamantine with respect to the need to decrease the power of the PLP in favor of members, takes the road of constitutional reforms. The reason for this choice is twofold. On the one hand, it is a matter of finding a way to maintaint power and get some chances to retain it to the left even after the eventual end of Corbyn's leadership; all this would be impossible without a downsizing of the power of the largely hostile Parliamentary Group or a change in its composition. On the other hand, there are also

considerations of an ideological nature, in which is clearly present the legacy of the New Left; in this sense, the idea is to encourage the opening up of the base of the party and its democratization, in the belief that this can ensure the alliance with libertarian and radical social movements, attracted by the chance of affecting parliamentary politics guaranteed by the reduction of barriers to bottom-up decision making:

> And initially, it did seem like the election of Corbyn was proof of the correctness of Benn's adage. The democratisation of Labour and the democratisation of society was a singular project with two distinct but continuous moments. Corbynism could, the hope was, give voice to the new social movements and a new multi-ethnic and urban working class that had arisen in Britain's sprawling metropolitan centres. (Oduor, 2020[36])

Once again, therefore, the democratization of the party is seen at the same time as a tool to allow the left to take and maintain power and as a first step in a project of democratization of society in which the party must act as the vanguard of a hybrid alliance between parliamentary forces and social movements. Although for the first time the left is in power within the party paradoxically this time the results are even narrower than in the 80s: while the leadership manages to reduce the threshold of parliamentarians required for the appointment of a candidate leader and increases the number of delegates from the constituencies in the NEC, mandatory reselection, which as will be remembered has been seen by the CLPD as the key reform, is never proposed directly by the leadership for fear of the opposition from the right of the party. This time it is up to Momentum to wage the battle for reselections, obtaining some small result in the revisions of the procedures for triggering a constituency vote for the replacement of a distrusted parliamentarian; but automatic reselection will definitely be sunk in 2018 because of the opposition of the unions that have seen in it a threat to their power of lobbying and selection of MPs. In addition, the formula for triggering local selections formula will prove ineffective (Skogan, 2020). Other proposals, such as direct selection of shadow cabinet members directly by membership (Boffey & Helm, 2016) and the creation of "local government Committees" elected among the members and made responsible for approving the programmes of candidate councillors (Stewart & Elgot, 2017) are not pushed with conviction.

7.3 Labourists and Movementists

Given the vicissitudes of the Labour left, the pro-Corbyn movement-wave has a sedimentary composition (Avril, 2018; Burton-Cartledge, 2019; Glaser, 2019; Goss, 2019; Pickard, 2019;

[36] Retrieved at: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4548-socialism-or-democracy

Perryman, 2019). The two main components of such intraparty movement are made up of the veterans of the New Left – many returning to the party while others never left – and younger first-time joiners, many coming from the anti-austerity and libertarian social movements, most of whom never even considered joining the party before Corbyn's bid for the leadership. If, as we have seen, the two waves of Labour Left insurgencies converge on the fundamental vision of the party and of the innovations to be promoted, there are, however, certain differences of perspective. The veterans of the New Left have strong ties with the unions and are much more prone to reasoning in terms of intraparty conflict and strategy, following the experience of the CLPD:

> Several older activists speak with the certainty and precision of experienced stalwarts back on home territory: now that we've won the leadership, they insisted, it's a matter of changing the party — resolutions to conference, replacing right-wing MPs, and so on. The familiar formula was expressed with great confidence that it would produce the desired left turn in the party, ready for government. (Wainwright, 2016[37])

On the contrary, the new "movimentist" activists (Bassett, 2016, Pickard, 2018; Schenider, 2016) are more focused on the alliance with social movements and on the attempt to contaminate the party with the cultures and organizational logics experienced in these, adding feminist, anarchist and prefigurative interpretations to the repertoire of the Labour left. These differences are sufficient to cause attrition within the movement:

> They [the movementists] thought he [Lansman] was obsessed with structure, he thought they were lacking in any sort of organisational ideas. Lansman was the product of the left's history, its hierarchies, of CLPD, of running slates and party organisation. He had kept the left alive over thirty-five years. They were born of the new movement from outside the structures of the party. These two strands became one within Momentum and Emma Rees became its first national coordinator, but in those early months everyone was fighting for their vision, as Lansman admitted: "They wanted a complete open-door policy. They wanted it to be a totally horizontal organisation, totally anarchic. […]" (Kogan & Kogan, 2019: 251)

Momentum tries to face these contradictions constituting a leading group that includes both Lansman and the representatives of the new movementist sections. Strategic hesistation will be resolved by the escalation of intraparty conflict; in particular, after the insurrection of the parliamentary group against the leadership in 2016, most of the new movimentists resolve to take seriously internal struggles and to set aside the exclusive focus on movementization:

> I think the second leadership election actually solved most of the older problems. Most of the early problems were about the dilemma, how important was the internal battle, how important was the external? The coup [when Labour MPs passed a vote of 'no confidence' in Jeremy Corbyn and launched a leadership challenge] made it completely clear how important the internal battle was and it totally turned everyone to

[37] Retrieved at: https://jacobinmag.com/2016/03/tony-benn-corbyn-thatcher-labour-leadership

> understanding that we'd got to defend Jeremy. Everybody understood that. And I think once we had won that second battle, everybody understood that now we'd got to win a general election. (Ghadiali, 2018[38])

Internal conflict, therefore, forces the pro-Corbyn movement toward the sphere of parliamentary-centered activity. If this on one side resolves, at least temporarily, the strategic dilemma facing Momentum, from the other it inserts an element of potential frustration, ready to explode and to lead many activists to disengagement in case of the slowing down of the ascent of the left:

> Such were the circumstances that presided over the difficult birth of left renewal from a deeply neoliberal Labour Party, a dilemma largely dictated by the conditions of Britain's first past the post electoral system. Movementist activists entering Labour with radical political consciousness are being shaped into a new cadre of Labour party door-knockers, focused on Party maneuvering, electioneering and at best community engagement deploying methods drawn more from Obama and Sanders' campaigns than from the organic ruptures of Greece and Spain. Stripped of strategies for social change which foreground social mobilization, the post-movementists in Labour now have at their disposal merely tactical innovations (networked and "crowd-sourced" forms of organising) constrained within the reformist boundaries implied by Labour's long history of Fabianism. (Lewis Bassett, 2016[39])

It is interesting that many new activists define New Left veterans as "Labourists" as opposed to the "movimentist" activists (Bassett, 2016, Pickard, 2018; Schenider, 2016) and describe them as extremely Inward-oriented and focused on procedures and organizational cohesion. It's interesting because, for example, the New Left has given birth to experiments involving social movements in local government probably more significant than those proposed by left of 10s, just think of the aforementioned case of the GLC. In addition, the term "Labourism" (Judge, 1999; Miliband, 1961; Wainwright, 1987) does not describe generically the fact of being a member of the the party, but rather the ideology of wholeharted acceptance of representative politics as the only framework for collective action and the dominance of parliamentarism:

> If the party subscribed to any ideology at all it was, at most, that of 'labourism'. This was an ideology with three emphases: first, a political economy which rooted labour firmly within a capitalist economy; second, n insistence that labour's interests could be advanced through social reform, and; third, the focusing of political action upon the institution of parliament (Judge, 1999: 75)

Yet, in her study on the New Left, Hilary Wainwraight (1987) describes it as a movement built in open controversy with the Labour tradition of parliamentary predominance. How is it possible that the remnants of this tradition come sto be associated with regular Labourism, a tendentially parliamentarist, inward oriented and bureaucratic political culture? It is not possible to reduce the concerns of the new movementists to mere errors of prospective or

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[38] Retrieved at: https://www.redpepper.org.uk/how-momentum-came-together/
[39] Retrieved at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/from-movementism-to-labourism/

organizational naivety. Rather, it is possible to assume that the long-term participation within the party, the experience of aggressive factionalism and of the rules of the intraorganizational game ended up absorbing, at least in part, the anti-system orientation of the veterans of the New Left, leading them to postpone *sine die* the construction of the extra-parliamentary alliance in favour of the objective, already defined as a priority by Benn, of democratizing the party. Something similar, as already seen, happened to the movementists of the 10s after the experience of the mounting of intraparty conflict. It is evident that, at least in part, the formal structure of the party and the patterns of intra-organizational conflict are extremely effective in producing mechanisms that make it difficult, if not impossible, to put the organization on a path different from that traced in the wake of parliamentarism. This is all the more evident if, as it seems, these tendencies end not only to constrain the actions of activists, but even to reshape their organizational culture and political ideology.

Another apparent difference between the two waves is the way the mobilizations have orginated. In the case of the New Left, as already seen, we have to do with a movement that emerges from the reflexivity of some members of the party who, intellectually grasping the changes in the public sphere, call for a profound organizational reform; among these, some have actually succeded in establishing an alliance with social movements outside the party - this is the case of Ken Livingstone's GLC - but it is clear that the origin of the mobilization is entirely internal to the party. In the case of the pro-Corbyn resurgency of the left, the context is clearly different; most of the Corbynistas come from years of participation in social movements. In this we can probably see at play a significant cultural difference, because despite a convergent strategic analysis it is easy to notice that those activists who had been to a lower extent socialized to the practices and norms of party activism show a form of more radical rejection of the party form. While the New Left aimed at building the preconditions of the alliance between party and movements, most of Corbyn supporters enter the party with the previous experience of participation in social movements in mind; this also explains the recurrent reference to the need to "turn the party into a movement" (Garland, 2016; Skogan 2020; Corbyn, 2015; BBC, 2016; Garland, 2017; Jones 2016, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2016; Perryman, 2017; Wainwright, 2019; Boffey & Helm, 2016; Stewart & Elgot, 2017), frequently referred to among Corbyn supporters while there is no reference of it in the New Left.

7.4 Conclusions

In this paper I have proposed an original interpretation of the Labour left as a fairly coherent party-driven movement, with continuities in personnel as well as in its complexive vision and strategy, emerged in two waves in the 70s-80s under Tony Benn's leadership and from 2015 to 2020 under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, who had been Benn pupil. Although Benn and Corbyn's Labour Left is commonly - and correctly - identified as being more radical in economic policy issues compared to the party's mainstream, here I proposed an interpretation of this intraparty movement as focused on organizational reform. Obviously, the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive and, put together, give a clearer idea of the radicality of the project of the left. The new Labour left that emerged in the 70s has been described above as an attempt to reform the social-democratic party form, with the aim of making it better suited to the libertarian and postmaterialist preferences emerging among progressive citizens duirng the Silent Revolution. In the New Left, this attempt is explicit and is the result of a reflexivity of actors within the party, who see the growing risk of marginalization of the old socialdemocracy in a context marked by individualization and rising intellectual skills of citizens. In the second wave, that of "Corbynism", it is instead a question of taking up a repertoire of practices and ideas already experimented by the New Left and to build an alliance with a new generation of activist travelling the reverse path, from movements to the party. Movementist Corbynists are themselves a full product of the Silent Revolution, while the New Left was a tentative to align the party to it. However, the history of the post-70s Labour left also shows how complicated it is for a traditional party to move to a party form that includes the elite-challenging mandate of the Silent Revolution and to create a stable linkage with social movements; in particular, in the case of Labour, it is clear that internal conflict has in fact forced the critics to focus essentially on the reform of intraparty democracy procedures, abandoning or otherwise heavily marginalizing the attempts to build a durable link with social movements.

Corbyn's Labour Party is not the only party that, following the Great Recession and austerity, develops political discourses and practices merging libertarianism with the adoption of demands focused on the redistribution of material resources and social protections. Gerbaudo (2017) emphasizes that already in the movements of 2011 it was possible to find original mix between materialistic demands and an organizational ideology partly taken up by libertarian anarchism of the Global Justice Movement; also Gerbaudo, in his work on digital parties (2019)

stresses that the elite-challenging libertarianism of millennials explains a large part of the organizational dynamics typical of these parties, through the development of a democratizing and elite-challenging ideology defined as "participationism". Milburn defines the "Generation Left" emerging from the crisis as having two peculiarities: the first is its merging of libertarianism and demands for social protections; the second is the desire to turn political parties into entities resembling social movements in their direct pursue of social conflict. Lastly, Norris and Inglehart (2019) describe the wave of post-2011 progressive movements parties as "libertarian-populists", merging materialist demands with continued commitment to the cause of libertarianism and deep suspicion of the elites. The basic idea that I've taken from this studies and that has animated my analysis of the Labour left as inspired by the Silent Revolution is that we cannot understand the motives as much as the demands and forms taken by post-recession mobilizations if we fail to take into account that these are shaped by new economic grievances as much as by the prosecution in the postmaterialization of public values. As I tried to show, the return of materialist demands for social protections, documented in the literature and testified by political manifestoes, does not lead to the slowering of the Silent Revolution. In fact, returning materialism and continuing postmaterialisation often go on simultaneously and in some cases they are embraced by the same collective actors. The focus on value continuity allows to enrich the framework of the analysis on anti-austerity movements and parties, including in the explanations new causal links and helping to reduce the shock effect of such mobilizations.

8 Mobilizing: ground campaigns in the digital age

This chapter presents an analysis of the innovation that has taken place in electoral mobilization techniques following the adoption of digital technologies to facilitate and coordinate voter persuasion activities. The focus will be on the case study of the Labour Party between 2017 and 2019, and on Momentum's role in introducing the connective campaigning methods developed in the USA by various Democratic candidates. The analysis fits into the framework developed in the first part of this work and the case study of the Labour Party. As we saw earlier, the adoption of new communication technologies is one of the two key drivers of change in the forms of participation in political parties. The other key driver is value change, which as Chapter 4 indicated tends to intersect with technological change and define the uses to which a given technology is put and the meanings assigned to it. In centering our of connective campaigning on the case study of Corbyn's Labour, the following discussion will explore one of the two facets of participation in political parties, viz., mobilizing. The other facet, organizing, will be explored in the last two chapters.

Before moving to the analysis of the specific case of the Labour Party, I will outline how forms of campaigning and their relationship with collective participation evolved from the development of the first modern parties up to the digital age. I will then lay down a theoretical framework bringing together the theories advanced in the literature on what I term "connective campaigning". This theoretical effort seeks specifically to identify two closely intertwined though distinct components of connective campaigns, viz., digital and human infrastructures. Regarding the interconnection of value change and technological change, I will propose an interpretation of connective campaigning in terms of the expectations of democratization that accompanied its emergence and that most likely underpinned its popularity among the post-materialist and libertarian sections of society. Here I will draw on the analysis offered by Stromer-Galley (2019) and my reworking of it. Lastly, after a roundup on the history of connective campaigning which will offer some generalizations on the relationship between campaign infrastructures and democratization, I will turn to the specific case of the Labour Party. I will thus propose a reading of the drivers of the party's connective campaigning during Corbyn's leadership, and of the form taken by these mobilization practices.

8.1. Ground campaigns: a historical perspective

8.1.1. Electoral campaigning and party organizations

According to Gerbaudo (2019), the organizational structure of digital parties, as we discussed in Chapter 3, is a consequence of cultural and technological change. As for the first aspect, Gerbaudo refers to what he calls "participationism", i.e., an interpretation of politics that focuses on individuals' direct and immediate participation, rather than institutional mediation and party bureaucracy; as we have seen, this concept has arisen from the discussion on the Silent Revolution. The second aspect, technological change, is theorized by Gerbaudo as an imitative process: like the Fordist-era factory, the party becomes a mass party, importing the "technology" of human organization—I will come back to this concept later—which defines the period in question. Through this process, then, the digital party adopts the large web corporations' platform economy model.

Kavada (2019) argues that this way of understanding the relationship between party organization and technology must be reassessed. She maintains that it is not so much a question of identifying the mechanisms whereby political parties imitate capitalist organizations, but of identifying a common cause that shapes both: the evolution of communication technologies. This influence is exerted above all on campaigning methods, which reflect the changing forms of mass communication fairly faithfully. Before World War II, campaigning methods were rudimentary and labor-intensive: large numbers of volunteers went door-to-door and organized events at the local level for the candidates and the party. Given the need for a large amount of relatively simple and repetitive labor, it was essential to have vast membership apparatuses and be able to organize standardized human work efficiently. With the rise of mass media and in particular the introduction of television, parties began to transform according to the electoral-professional model (Panebianco, 1982): there was less reliance on local activists, whose role and power decreased, and party leaders were better able to address the public directly without mediation. Consequently, staff shrank in numbers and became more professionalized. Likewise, the resources needed to keep pace with the evolution of mass media techniques and technologies steadily increased, as did the spectacularization and personalization of politics. The weakening of the link with the base pushed parties to seek resources from the state, which explains the trend towards party cartelization. Later, we see a further evolution, prompting Kavada to speak of a third era of campaigning:

> From the 1980s onwards, electioneering entered a "third age" (ibid) of postmodern campaigning in response to the rise of 24-hour rolling news, the proliferation of television channels and the fragmentation of media audiences. Political marketing and the micro-targeting of voters, together with sophisticated polling techniques, became crucial aspects of electoral campaigning (Norris 2000). (Kavada, 2019: 201)

It should be emphasized that this reading posits a direct relationship between technological change and parties' internal organization: new communication techniques that change the rules of competition in the electoral arena are followed by organizational change that has profound effects on the parties' internal composition and power relations (Smith, 2009). This analysis dovetails with Deseriis's (2020) view of platform parties as a straightforward continuation of the trends captured in the concepts of catch-all, electoralist and cartel parties. Adopting digital platforms provides a semblance of democracy but at the price of exacerbating the trend towards a smaller, more professionalized party staff, as well as disempowering the parties' bureaucracy and intermediate layers. The decisive factor in the success of platform parties, according to Deseriis, also lies in their ability to provide a measure of top-down democracy combined with a talent for to aggregating demands that allows them to compete effectively in the hypermediatized arena. From this perspective, even the internal democratic processes become a means of legitimization and distinction in the media discourse.

The evolution of communication technologies profoundly affects political parties, leading to a widening gap between leadership and its social base which is only part offset by the trend towards increased individual voting rights—often in plebiscitary settings—as the role of members becomes secondary in campaigning. Party leaders may have cause to get rid of members: as we saw in Chapter 3, membership is both a resource and a cost, since members must be given incentives of various kinds to remain with the party. If mass membership becomes less useful, it loses its appeal for party leaders. The costs of providing such incentives may outweigh the benefits, and parties may be less willing to bear them. This is all the truer if electoral competition moves to the center ground because of demographic changes—the collapse of class cleavages and the expansion of the middle classes—and the creation of a public sphere unified under the television. In such circumstances, parties may regard the mechanisms of internal democracy and respecting members' party cultures as obstacles to freely developing electoral tactics. As we have seen, if campaigning costs increase but membership drops, the parties will inevitably have to seek state resources. This opens a "perverse" circle:

> Parties are benefiting themselves (financially and electorally) at the expense of some of the functions that have made them so essential to the democratic process, such as socialization, mobilization, and representation. Although the media and other political actors assume some of these functions, it is quite difficult to substitute for the parties' role in mobilizing voters and in representing their views. Interest groups

> may be more articulate in expressing citizen interests, but they do not aggregate conflicting interests and execute the policies of government. (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000: 184)

As parties dismantle their other traditional functions, they are less and less able to carry out activities outside the electoral sphere, gradually shutting themselves in the latter arena (Kölln, 2015). Parties may realize that this pattern has negative effects, especially when competition in the media is saturated and there appears to be a comparative advantage in being able to mobilize specific groups. Under some circumstances, as we saw in Chapter 1, post-cartel parties emerge and establish strong connections with certain social groups by forging alliances with specific civil society organizations.

The interpretative framework developed by Panebianco (1982) can help in understanding the link between change in communication technologies and organization, mobilization and internal power relationships. According to Panebianco, institutionalized parties first need to extend their capacity to control certain zones of organizational uncertainty in order to ensure their survival and, possibly, growth—seen from the point of view of those who hold power within the organization. These zones of organizational uncertainty identify the vital functions of the party, whose failure to function could affect its survival as an organization. Panebianco lists six zones: competency, environmental relations management, internal communication, formal rules, organizational financing, and recruitment. Internal party actors who exert more or less intense and widespread forms of control over one or more zones of organizational uncertainty have more power in the organization, as they can control an area which is vital to its survival. This is especially true for environmental relations, given that the environment is the primary source of uncertainty for the organization, precisely because it is difficult to control. Environmental relations are conceptualized as belonging to different arenas, which are the areas in which the party acts. Inevitably, one of these areas is the electoral sphere, as the destinies of the party's candidates and, often, the resources the party can draw on depend on it. Clearly, then, a change in the environment, and specifically in the forms of electoral competition, will directly affect the party's organization. If the context of action changes, so will the actors, forms of action and functional organization needed to cope effectively. But this will also change the balance of competences and power in the party, as the actors that are acting in the zone of uncertainty change and are faced with new challenges or can count on new resources. In the medium term, this may affect the distribution of power and resources between the various components of the party, profoundly altering its internal relations and organizational stance.

8.1.2. The evolution of constituency campaigning

The literature offers several idealtypical representations of the different phases of campaigning. All these typologies focus on two fundamental elements: the role of technology and membership, usually assuming that labor-intensive campaigning techniques are gradually replaced by more capital-intensive and professionalized ones.

Norris (2002) distinguishes between premodern (1850-1950s), modern (1960-1980s) and postmodern campaigning (1990s onwards). Premodern campaigning is organized entirely at the local level and is labor-intensive, in the general absence of centrally coordinated national campaigns. In the next stage, as we have seen, campaigns are increasingly professionalized thanks to the spread of television, which also has the effect of leading to greater campaign coordination on the national scale. Lastly, we have postmodern campaigning. This is the stage of the permanent campaign, where professional consultants and opinion polling take on a greater role, and media management is increasingly sophisticated. At the same time, there is also a return to local campaigning as a way of targeting specific communities. Now, however, local campaigning is more centrally planned than in the premodern phase. Referring to Norris's categorization, Farrell and Webb (2000) argue that the three stages of campaigning are punctuated by technical, resource and thematic changes. From a technical standpoint, the major innovations are television, opinion polling and, more recently, new digital communication technologies that allow direct contact between voters and campaigns and the use of data for targeting. Resource changes refer to the growing strength and influence of central bureaucracy and professionals on campaigns, including the use of external advisors and feedback mechanisms such as opinion polls. These are all developments that detract from the basic functions of activists and entail significantly higher costs. Lastly, changes in campaign theme have brought a gradual presidentialization, with the figure of the leader becoming increasingly central.

This chapter focuses on the new forms of ground campaigning, specifically in Great Britain; the analysis of overall campaign change serves to conceptualize the shifting role of local-level campaigns. It should be borne in mind that in first-past-the-post systems such as Britain's and in all electoral systems where localized voting is of great importance, forms of local campaigning and canvassing are undoubtedly more intense than in proportional systems, where local voting clearly has less impact. Given the distinctive features of the UK approach, which,

like any FPTP system, combines the trends described above with a more structural presence of voluntary canvassing, it is not surprising that a flourishing literature has sought to explain the evolution of local campaigning in Britain. Denver and Hands (2002) distinguished between Fordist and post-Fordist local campaigns. The former are standardized campaigns where there is little demand for specific skills and whose sole objective is to mobilize supporters; the latter provide flexible specialization and extremely sophisticated targeting that directs a specific message to local resident groups, where modern marketing techniques and localized knowledge come into play.

Fisher and Denver (2008) used the Farrell and Webb model to describe the evolution of local campaigning in the UK during the so-called postmodern phase. The model's first area of campaign change, technical change, is important to the extent that it affects the level of centralized planning and the campaign budget. In the area of resource changes, the evolution of the forms of campaigning has a major impact on the level of central party control over local campaigns, the transition from a volunteer-based local staff to professionals, and the adoption of local level feedback techniques. With regard to the thematic aspect, the main change concerns the role of leading politicians in local campaigns and the shift in targeting, which now focuses on specific individual voters rather than seeking to mobilize whole groups. On the basis of these distinctions, Fisher and Denver propose a three-stage framework where each stage of campaigning is differentiated according to the technical, resource and thematic developments.

For the United Kingdom, Fisher and Denver (2008, 2009) identify two key trends during the post-modern phase, viz., modernization and centralization of local campaigns. First, they note that between 1992 and 2005 the local membership of the main parties dropped radically, with a simultaneous increase in the use of technological tools, first the fax and telephones and then computers. Consequently, the modernization of campaigning, which basically means replacing traditional volunteer work with more technological forms, is the combined result of a shrinking labor pool and the wider availability of technologies. To prove this point further, Fisher and Denver (2008) develop an index of traditionalism in campaigns, which includes measures of such long-standing methods as poster and leaflet distribution, doorstep canvassing, public meetings and "manual" polling day activities. The data show that the traditionalism index dropped between 1992 and 2005 for all major British parties, although there was a revival of traditional campaigning for the Libdems in 2005—which Fisher and Denver believe can be explained by the fact that for the first time the party had an opportunity to garner a significant

electoral advance. The level of modernization, on the other hand, is gauged on the basis of the number of PCs used; in general, the main function of digital technologies is to make it easier to develop personalized campaign materials, increase the number of voters contacted through phone banking, create readily accessible and segmented voter databases, and register individuals to be contacted or who have already been contacted through canvassing or phone banking.

The second trend, that of centralization, refers to the fact that constituency campaigns are increasingly directed by professionals from central party headquarters (Fisher et al. 2006). This is associated with the resurgent interest in local campaigning during the post-modern phase, especially for target seats, which in the UK are called “marginal seats”, i.e., seats won with a majority of a few votes, and which can thus be contested by two or more parties. This means that the amount of planning and resources committed to campaigning is highly differentiated on the basis of the central office’s assessments of individual seats, unlike in premodern campaigning, where the high differentiation between local campaigns was primarily a function of resource differentials and not of central party strategies. This translates into several types of action, including transferring money, appointing special campaign organizers in key seats well in advance of the campaign—this is a novelty of the 90s—and the use of forms of remote campaigning for other less competitive constituencies. Here again, the 90s saw unprecedented innovation: from 1997, many parties started to use call centers targeting specific constituencies and groups, an advance facilitated by the development of automated call technologies. Moreover, the distribution of electoral material is often highly personalized on the basis of local issues, with coordination between local activists and the central party (Fisher et al. 2007). From the standpoint of centralization, the Labour Party has had an advantage over competitors (Fisher et. al, 2006).

For local participation, as we have seen, the main consequence of campaign modernization and centralization is the increase in paid staff with responsibility for local efforts, especially staff working from national headquarters and call centers. Webb and Fisher (2003) show that there has been a general increase in the proportion of paid staff to the number of members. Another possibility explored by the parties has been to “professionalize” local volunteers, educating them in the use of digital technologies and modern voter persuasion and marketing techniques (Fischer & Denver, 2009). All this translates into a sharp drop in the typical main activity of labor-intensive local campaigning in first-past-the-post systems: doorstep canvassing. The

decline is unequivocal: it has taken place for all parties in all types of seats—marginal and otherwise—with percentages of voters contacted falling everywhere by 10% or more.

All this can have a paradoxical outcome. As we said, the return of local campaigning springs from two developments. The first is the relative saturation of the national campaign space: as all parties campaign on TV and the necessary skills and resources are now widespread, significant margins are no longer available in this area. It can thus be advantageous to try to gain ground in localized campaigning, which was undervalued throughout the modern stage of campaigning. Second, the rise of digital technologies and changing approaches to electoral marketing, as well as the progressive diversification of society, have led to a focus on the concept of targeting, i.e., creating personalized messages for specific groups that the parties consider to be of fundamental importance. In this sense, geographical location is one of the most important voter segmentation parameters; in addition, local issues such as services, security and so forth can have an appeal for many sub-groups. This means that in the 90s, with the shift to postmodern campaigning, there was a renewed focus on local campaigning, although in less and less labor-intensive forms. The rise of targeting is also partly the effect of electoral dealignment (Denver et al., 2003; Denver & Hands, 2002): while in the past the parties could be content to mobilize their base, a more mobile electorate requires a greater effort of persuasion; so far, the main weapon of persuasion is to adapt the message as closely as possible to the needs of the individual voter. In the UK, the Labour Party leads the way in postmodern campaigning (Pattie & Johnston, 2009; Fisher & Denver, 2008). Labour's dominance in new techniques, built up around the mid-1990s, is driven by the party base's dwindling turnout since the 2000s, resulting from the disillusion with New Labour: under such circumstances, the party had no choice but to replace human work with technology and targeting, although returns on investment continue to drop (Pattie & Johnston, 2009; Denver & Hands, 2001).

Until the mid-2000s targeting mainly took the form of replacing labor-intensive techniques with technology-intensive ones, and as a result brought a reduction in the number of local campaign volunteers. However, it is important to note that in theory the new campaigning approach can potentially enhance volunteers' activities much more than modern campaigning. Modern campaigning's focus on television clearly made it impossible for activists—who normally act locally and for obvious reasons do not command television coverage—to play a decisive role; Norris (2002) shows that the increase in the number of TVs is correlated in all countries with a decrease in party members, in line with the trends described above. And yet, if the focus returns

to local campaigning, it means that campaigns are once again played out on the ground, where activists live and work. All the more so, as local targeting requires a knowledge of the area that staff at national headquarters normally does not have, and persuasion operations can be more effective if carried out by local people who are already part of local networks and are recognized by their peers and neighbors. In other words, postmodern campaigning, although it places the reins of the strategy even more firmly in the hands of headquarters and professionals, makes it necessary to build relationships and ties with local actors, inside and outside the parties (Denver & Fisher, 2008). As in the case of post-cartel parties, it is possible that targeting can at least partially reverse the trajectory of detachment between parties and local bases, precisely because creating links with local activists and actively involving them in campaigns can potentially help improve electoral performances (Vromen, 2017; Denver & Hands, 2001).

8.1.2.1. Postmodern campaigning and voluntary work: targeting and voter mobilization

To fully understand how postmodern campaigning opens up the possibility of a return to the involvement of the volunteer base—as will be seen, both party members and non-members—we must start by framing the concept of targeting more precisely. First, targeting is vital to mobilization efforts, defined by Bedolla and Michelson (2012) as

> nonpartisan contacts—through indirect methods such as mailers or leaflets, through live phone banks, or through door-to-door visits—made by individuals on behalf of community-based organizations to encourage targeted individuals to vote in an upcoming election. (Bedolla & Michelson, 2012: 3)

Targeting thus identifies people to whom persuasion efforts will be addressed in order to mobilize them to vote, mainly through canvassing and phone banking. The goal is to make ground campaigns cost-effective, enabling campaigners to focus only on the voters who are really crucial for the election. These "nonpartisan contacts" can have three main purposes: to contact swing voters without fixed political allegiances; to motivate base voters to turn out; to collect new data (Nielsen, 2012).

So targeting, or microtargeting, basically means using quantitative data to predict voter inclinations and potential behaviors; in turn, this requires, in addition to data, conceptual models hypothesizing the relationship between such data and behavior. These theoretical models can have varying levels of sophistication: at the basic level past voters are identified, while in more complex cases voting propensities might be deduced from demographic variables, taken singularly or combined with each other. The peak in the sophistication of predictive analysis is reached in the United States, sometimes with grotesque outcomes:

> In 2006, data consultants began using these thousands of individual data points to construct mega "clusters" (12 in all) of the electorate along the lines of "suburban values" voters and "latte-drinking young urbanites." Essentially, this was the attempt to develop composite categories (clusters) out of the mess of micro-level factoids used in 2004. The problem, however, was both that field organizers were still swimming in data and these lifestyle clusters were not tied in any real way to voter attitudes or behavior. Junior-level staffers, for instance, often had the ability to access consumer marketing data, and could engage in such activities as searching for people of a certain income or looking to see how many kids they had, in addition to seeing what lifestyle clusters their universe of contacts belonged to. The lifestyle clusters, meanwhile, were not helpful in terms of the information most useful to field campaigners. (Kreiss, 2012: 110)

Given the large amount of data required, it is clear that a breakthrough for this type of activity took place in the 90s and 2000s thanks to the widespread adoption of personal computers—a key aspect of postmodern campaigning—and the creation of user-friendly computer interfaces for access to databases that even non-experts could use easily; in the 10s, it became possible to use smartphones to access databases or download pre-assembled datasheets, completing the evolution.

However, not all types of microtargeting are equally refined. Nielsen identifies three ways of targeting. The first is precinct-based targeting, i.e., systematically contacting all the inhabitants of certain areas: in this case, data on individual voters are not used and the process is extremely crude and labor-intensive.[40] There are then two list-based targeting methods, viz., the use of individual data, which are often very expensive to obtain, either in monetary terms if purchased from third-party companies or in terms of work if collected by volunteers. The way data is collected is influenced by local laws. In the United States some states allow individual data to be bought and sold, while in the United Kingdom parties can rely only on aggregated data or on data collected by hand or by telephone by volunteers. Given the costs of such data, parties usually store them in proprietary databases, updated at each election round; this means that local canvassers must obtain access to central party data, which of course is granted to them under specific terms and conditions. Consequently, each mobilizing effort also serves to update the data in the party's possession, which must be collected using standardized methods, producing stratified databases.

[40] In some cases these techniques may be used for reasons other than the mere lack of resources. As Bond and Exeley (2016) note, the Bernie Sanders campaign for the 2016 Democratic primary took advantage of the large number of volunteers available to systematically contact everyone in the voting areas. This was for two reasons: first, because it was believed that Sanders's potential voters are cross-demographic; second, the intention was to build a database from scratch of individuals to be mobilized independently of the party.

It is clear that, while digital technologies allow targeting to become a widespread practice, thanks to improved data storage and the extensive use of computers and graphical interfaces to access storage, this also poses the problem of who is to do the work of persuasion that targeting makes possible. Given the sheer number of call involved, it is inconceivable that any party could sub-contract all the work of contacting potential voters to professional agencies, since it would be too costly. The obvious solution is thus to rely on the free work of armies of volunteers, who can be recruited in different ways. The typical approach in American politics, given the decline of party networks, is mainly to build what Nielsen calls "campaign assemblages", i.e., ad hoc alliances between parties/candidates and local civic associations. In the UK, however, as we will see in greater detail in the next section, the parties themselves do most of the work, though more recently digital apps have been used to mobilize unorganized supporters.[41] This latter option has also been explored in the United States, starting with the Obama primary campaign in 2008. Whether parties use campaigning assemblages or digital technologies to mobilize individual volunteers, there is the problem of making sure that volunteers abide by the methods and priorities set by the campaign. In the case of campaign assemblages, this entails bargaining between the entities involved, while in the case of digital campaigning the control and guidance functions are part of the very nature of the apps used for campaigning, which as we will see in the next section normally grant hierarchical levels of access—in this connection, Stromer-Galley (2019) speaks of "controlled interactivity". In addition, this kind of campaigning work requires that volunteers be prepared for canvassing, both in terms of how to persuade and interact with voters and in terms of the correct and efficient collection of data. This requires that there be a medium- to long-term activist base capable of exercising control over new volunteers and training them in the correct manner of canvassing.

Thus in the 2000s, first in the United States and then in the United Kingdom, there was a return to citizen participation as a key element of electoral campaigns. Here, the effect of digital technologies is the opposite of leading to "slacktivism": on the contrary, they produce a massive demand for participation from campaigning organizations. In addition, the new campaigning methods can contact more and more voters, putting nonvoters in direct contact with election campaigns and potentially contributing to raising turnout. The emergence of data-driven ground

[41] Some sort of campaign assemblages can now also be seen in the United Kingdom, although the support organizations normally have a more organic relationship with the parties. For example, the Labour Party relies on the resources of the party-affiliated trade unions and workers' societies; in these cases, these resources are in fact partly internal although not directly controlled by campaigners.

campaigning, however, is not only a consequence of technological change but also, as we have seen, of the evolution of electoral competition. On the one hand, the glut of advertising in traditional and online media leads to information overload, which makes the voter insensitive to traditional media stimuli (Shenk, 1997); this makes it necessary to produce personalized and interactive messages, conveyed by a human, personal medium. Second, the fact that the audience is becoming increasingly fragmented both socially and in people's access to information and media (Prior, 2007) means that voters must be reached in their specific field of action. Lastly, it is widely acknowledged that mass media and direct mailing fail to persuade (Green & Gerber, 2008). To a growing extent, it is clear that the widest possible combination of media is needed to effectively contact and persuade different types of voters by leveraging many modes of communication and interaction. Consequently, alongside the persistence of classical media and the emergence of online targeted advertising, there is a significant return to individuals as a means of getting the election message across. Stromer-Galley refers to campaigning based on volunteers as yet another form taken by two-step flow: human beings are used as media to spread a message, first by identifying "opinion leaders"—campaign volunteers—and then by using their free work and social capital to make the message circulate. Rhodes (2019) and Nielsen (2012) speak of personalized political communication,[42] in the sense that individuals become a medium for political communication. The new phase of postmodern campaigning thus does not reverse the upward trend in the costs of campaigns and professionalization, since digital tools and databases are not cheap and require expertise to develop and maintain. Rather, alongside these forms of capital- and skill-intensive campaigning, it reintroduces forms of labor-intensive campaigning enabled by digital technologies and made necessary by the evolution of electoral competition, leveraging citizens' growing digital literacy and simplifying interfaces.

Increased volunteer participation does not necessarily mean increased membership. Campaigning activities can also be effectively carried out by non-member volunteers (Lees-Marshment & Petitt, 2014), though Garland (2016) shows that non-members are less willing to engage in high-intensity face-to-face activities such as canvassing, but are as active as members in low-intensity activities such as leaflet delivery. On average, however, members are more

[42] In this case, personalization is to be distinguished from the other uses of the term in political science, which refer to the increase in the pre-eminence of leaders and individual candidates in political messaging or the personalization of the modes of involvement and individual frames in digital participation (Bennet & Segerberg, 2013).

active than supporters, but the latter are particularly useful for expanding the pool of volunteers and for extending campaigns' outreach network. The main problem, though, is that it is the high-intensity face-to-face activities that provide the best electoral payoffs, as shown by Fisher and Denver (2009) and Fisher (2010). Face-to-face activities by volunteers are more effective in persuading voters than automated and/or standardized methods and the use of paid professionals, while canvassing is more effective than phone banks (Bedolla & Michelson, 2012; Nickerson et al., 2006; Green and Gerber 2008), though it requires more human work and organizational skills. That volunteers yield better performance than paid staff can probably be explained by the fact that volunteers who are already part of neighborhood networks can be more effective and motivated in creating ties with the public than paid professionals, and are undoubtedly better able to enter into spontaneous and personal relationships with voters (Scarrow, 2002). Bedolla and Michelson (2012) emphasize the narrative and interactive nature of electoral persuasion conversations, arguing that these conversations are effective to the extent that they manage to change the cognitive schemas of the individuals contacted through dialog and the narrative of norms of civic duty and participation. Phone banks and canvassing are thus effective precisely because they allow individuals to incorporate a representation of themselves as voters and active citizens, but this can only happen if there is a genuine interaction with an individual who has such a self-understanding and the ability to "infect" others. Only a direct emotional experience such as face-to-face interaction can modify individuals' self-understandings and overcome their abstentionism.

But how much does ground campaigning actually weigh in the economy of an election? It is important to note that, in majoritarian systems, moving voters in a few key constituencies can completely change the outcome of an election. In addition, if the candidates rank neck to neck in opinion polls and the other modes of campaigning are, as we said, "oversaturated", even a small advantage guaranteed by ground efforts can be decisive. This is widely recognized in the United States, where research by Herrnson (2004) shows that as early as 2002 most insiders considered the ground campaign to be the most important part of the presidential campaigns—with a great leap forward compared to only ten years before, when Herrnson conducted his first interviews. Nielsen (2012) estimates the impact of ground campaigns to be between 1% and 5% of the votes, percentages that can effectively decide many elections. Green and Gerber (2008) have shown that personalized political communication is more effective than advertisements, direct mail, emails, and robocalls in getting people out to vote. The British

literature on the relationship between constituency spending and election results confirms that a significant investment of economic and human resources in ground campaigns can be decisive, although returns on investment vary (Cutts et al., 2012; Denver & Hands, 1997, 2001; Fisher & Denver, 2006; Pattie et al., 1994; Pattie & Johnston, 2009; Seyd and Whiteley, 1994). In the 2000s for example, the Labour Party suffered a sharp decline in return on investment as New Labour's popularity dropped. Given the tight UK election spending rules, which sets a very low ceiling for individual candidates, acknowledging the impact of constituency campaigning creates an incentive to use volunteers: it is not possible to go beyond a certain threshold of expenditure and any subsequent campaigning efforts can only take place if the party attracts more or better qualified volunteers (Seyd, 2020). It is clear, then, that healthy local party networks, together with central office support—providing human resources, data and possibly loans—are essential to influencing the electorate. Local actors are often aware of this and also use electoral canvassing to recruit new volunteers and expand their base in view of future elections (Fisher & Denver, 2009).

8.2. Citizen involvement and infrastructures in connective ground campaigning

After this overview of the evolution of campaigning and the return to ground campaigns, this second section of the chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the new forms taken by ground campaigns in the digital era. The two main features of these new forms of get-out-the-vote effort, which appear in their purest forms in the English-speaking countries, are: 1) extensive use of digital technologies for collecting data and coordinating action; 2) increasing involvement of volunteers who are not formally affiliated with parties, or even the development of campaigns that are based entirely on organizational networks created from scratch for each campaign. It is thus interesting to understand how these campaigns can affect the organizations engaged in electoral competition—especially political parties—and the relationship between them and participants. To do so, I will propose a theoretical framework for the different forms of digital ground campaigning, and will then turn to an analysis of several empirical cases, including that of Corbyn's Labour.

8.2.1. Framing digital ground wars

In this section I will try to provide a theoretical framework of ground campaigning facilitated by the use of digital technologies for data storage and coordinating volunteers' activity. I will focus on the two key aspects of these forms of collective action. The first is the apparent

contradiction between the spontaneity of voluntary action and organizational decentralization facilitated by digital technologies, and the fact that these technologies are constructed in such a way as to ensure that campaign leadership has significant levels of control over action and ability to coordinate it. The second issue concerns the dualism between the two forms of organizational infrastructure that come into play in digital election campaigns, viz, digital infrastructure and the traditional human organizational infrastructure, which may also take different forms depending on the specific use made of digital technologies.

8.2.1.1. Spontaneous or managed citizens?

8.2.1.1.1. Connective campaigning

Essentially, the digital technologies used in on-the-ground campaigns that rely on volunteer work have two functions: to collect, store and access data for targeting potential voters, and to coordinate volunteers' activities. The first function is a prerequisite for the second: collecting and accessing data is what enables the campaign to determine which types of citizens will be targeted. During campaigns, the activities carried out in this connection are of two types. The first is data entry, or updating information—demographic, or regarding voting intentions—about the citizens contacted by volunteers. This can be done in various ways depending on the level of database access granted to volunteers and the level of control over their work. Thus, data may be input directly, or collected and sent to a person delegated by campaign management. The second main activity consists of creating contact sheets: the data contained in the database are used to create lists of citizens to be contacted, which are delivered to individual volunteers or to the groups making calls or going door to door. Here too, access levels can vary: spreadsheets may be created centrally, or independently by volunteers.

As regards the coordination function, it is clear that one of the key Internet affordances, viz., low-cost communication (Earl & Kimport, 2011), comes into play. Only by allowing fast, simple and costless information about the activities to be carried out do digital technologies enable campaigns to organize the work of an unprecedented number of citizens. This possibility is reflected in different types of action, most of which are carried out using digital maps showing volunteers where and when campaigning activities take place. In addition, mailing lists or WhatsApp groups—features often integrated with the maps—may be created along with contact lists that prevent redundancies. Some of these activities have a more spontaneous nature, allowing citizens to self-organize campaigning work according to their own preferences.

For example, volunteers can generally create their own events and promote them through maps and mailing lists. Naturally, this depends on the level of access guaranteed by the creators of the apps and the type of activities allowed, which might vary from standard activities such as canvassing and phone banking to other more creative forms of persuasion such as flash mobs or other non-formal actions. In all these cases, however, app affordances interact with each campaign's specific form of organization and hierarchies. For example, though many campaign apps allow any volunteer to create events, management often delegates this task to specific activists. As mentioned earlier, another type of relatively spontaneous activity is the creation of WhatsApp groups or mailing lists to organize individual activities or the entire campaign. This often serves to improve coordination, but is not a necessary prerequisite for using the apps. WhatsApp groups are often created by local activists who are most fully integrated in campaigning organizations, and are also relied on to expand the messaging network, create a base of activists following the campaign, and create venues for discussion and exchanging views that are relatively open to the campaign and candidates. Maps and mailing lists may also be used by management to exercise forms of control over collective actions with a more clearly directive approach. The most striking example of this is where the central office monitors the levels of activity in specific areas and determines whether they fit in with their priorities, and thus decide whether or not to nudge volunteers to take certain actions or shift their work elsewhere. In all these cases, we can speak of datafication of campaigning activities, which are monitored and transformed into data to be compared with management's benchmark metrics.[43]

As we have seen so far, these forms of campaigning radically change how volunteers' activities are coordinated. From classic vertical coordination, whereby the highest levels of campaign hierarchies determine the type of actions volunteers must carry out and communicate them through the intermediate levels of the organization, there is a shift to a scheme where activities are basically coordinated using digital apps. This is done according to the different degrees of access allowed by each interface, but in general management is indirect and is exercised through action on the platforms rather than through vertical chains of command. There is also room for spontaneous action: *ex-novo* campaigning groups and events not strictly required by the leadership can be set up, while easy access to information about activities and the absence of barriers to participation—platforms are open or require only digital authentication—allows

[43] Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) speak of the "analytics turn", meaning the increasing use of data to organize and manage collective action.

volunteers to personalize their level of involvement to a large extent. In fact, except in the case of "super-volunteers" (Bond & Exley, 2016) with greater responsibilities, these campaigns are based on the free work of citizens who are not bound in any way to participate in any specific activity: they are free to join when and how they prefer. The lack of mechanisms ensuring the continuity of individual involvement is compensated by the fact that the ease of circulating information allows campaigns to engage a much wider a pool of activists.

These aspects tie in with the categories proposed by Bennet and Segerberg in *The Logic of Connective Action*. These authors distinguish between three forms of connective and collective action on two levels. First, connective action occurs when organizations are replaced by digital technologies in coordinating collective action. This can take several forms. The "purest" form is crowd enabled-connective action, where organizations disappear and collective action is entirely organized through social networks that aggregate masses of atomistic individuals. In between collective action and crowd-enabled connective action, we have organizationally brokered connective action, which occurs when digital technologies are used to facilitate coordination between pre-existing groups and, once the terms of the collective action are negotiated among them, to disseminate information on the mobilization. The clearest case of this *modus operandi*, which is open to the involvement of atomistic individuals, was in the Global Justice Movement of the 90s and 2000s. What is common to the different forms of connective action is that they reduce the dependence on traditional organizational networks, so much so that it becomes possible to mobilize individuals whose only link with the party or movement is digital.

Second, Bennet and Segerberg show that the shift from collective coordination to coordination facilitated by digital technologies leaves more room for the personalization of involvement. This takes many forms. The most obvious, as we have, is that individuals can negotiate their involvement according to their own preferences, joining only the activities they choose from time to time without having to account to anyone. In many cases, moreover, individuals are given great freedom to express their creativity, both in self-organized actions that have not been decided on by the mobilizations' leaders, and in terms of formulating personal action frames. As we saw in Chapter 3, digital mobilizations develop extremely wide and manipulable discursive frames to reach the largest possible number of citizens, since their operativity is based more on quantity than on the stability and predictability of engagement,. Individuals often have ample room to adapt these frames to themselves and personalize the mobilization's

message, enhanced by the ability to communicate through personal devices such as smartphones and PCs and create viral content that reflects and spreads the individual point of view on social networks. All these forms of personalization actually lower the costs of participation, both because individuals must make fewer sacrifices to the needs of the collective organization, and because they can participate in collective actions without investing time in creating contacts and preparing activities.

It is clear that the forms of campaigning we have discussed contain both features of Bennet and Segerberg's connective action: the—partial—replacement of organizations with digital technology[44] and the personalizability of individual participation. Consequently, I will refer to these forms of campaigning from now on as connective campaigning or connective ground campaigns.[45] Two clarifications are in order here. The first is that Bennett and Segerberg do not make an explicit distinction between connective and collective action, as they merely present the three different ideal types of collective/connective action. Rather than using these ideal types as such, I have chosen to adopt a synthesis of the two ideal types of connective action that emphasizes the two forms' shared differences that set them apart from classic collective action. I chose this theoretical approach because neither of the two ideal types alone is sufficient to describe the variety of forms taken by connective campaigning; where these forms stand on the continuum between pure connective action and collective action depends on how the campaign's human and digital infrastructures are organized in each case. This leads to a second consideration, viz., that the concept of connective campaigning should not be understood as an exhaustive representation but only as an ideal type, from which actual campaigns may deviate in varying degrees. Indeed, organizational hybridity in connective campaigning is the rule rather than the exception (Chadwick, 2007; Flanagin et al., 2006), given the multiple intersections between digital infrastructures and organizations. It is thus a concept of practical

[44] To emphasize this aspect, Kreiss (2012) develops the concept of networked politics: "I use the idea of 'networked politics' in a dual sense. On one level, networked politics refers to electoral activities that take shape through the technical infrastructure of interlinked computer networks. On another, I refer to networked politics as a mode of organizing electoral participation. Networked politics involves sustained and coordinated collective action that occurs outside of direct managerial relationships and is premised on the voluntary contributions of supporters." (Kreiss, 2012: 6). I prefer to use the concept of connective action for two reasons: because it intuitively typifies the differences between collective-traditional efforts in a way that Kreiss' concept is unable to do, and also because Kreiss' conceptualization misses the element of personalization which is clearly key.

[45] Gibson (2015) uses the term "citizen initiated campaigning" to refer to those cases in which citizens—both party members and non-members—use digital tools provided by a party to campaign for it. It is a useful and very clear concept, but I think it tends to give the impression of citizens organizing independently, thus partially obscuring the polarity between spontaneity and management which I find to be key in describing these forms of campaigning.

analytical value: it is used not only to emphasize the differences between different macro-types of campaigning, but also to highlight the reciprocal differences between forms of digital campaigning by evaluating how much each deviates from the ideal type.

This nuanced approach, which looks more at differences of degree among the various practices rather than making a clearcut distinction between connective and collective action, may recall the leveraged affordances approach developed by Earl and Kimport (2011). According to the latter authors, online actions can leverage the cost-reducing affordances of the Internet. But not every digital-based practice takes place completely online: the amount of collective action happening online and offline in each practice can be balanced in different ways; the more action takes place online, the more the cost affordances can be leveraged. Consequently, there are wide differences between digital-based activities in terms of how much they leverage affordances, and from an analytic standpoint these differences in degree are much more useful than a sharp distinction between digital and non-digital activities. Translating the concept into the terms used so far, we can say that the most strongly leveraging activities are those that replace traditional organization with digital technologies. By framing the question in these terms, we can easily link Earl and Kimport's analysis with that on the different modes of connective campaigning, which will be able to leverage the Web's affordances in a different way in each specific case—although ground efforts are necessarily located at a level of medium-low leverage, as they are facilitated online but take place largely offline.

8.2.1.1.2. The persistence of management

Especially in the United States, starting with the Dean and Obama primary campaigns, the adoption of digital technologies in organizing ground wars, complemented by the flourishing of unofficial blogs and social network groups in support of candidates, has led to some decidedly optimistic interpretations of the new course as a return to citizen democracy after decades of increasing professionalization (Nielsen, 2012). The new technologies permit growing citizen involvement in campaigning, an involvement apparently no longer mediated by vertical power relations; in addition, they make two-way communication possible between campaign base and leaders. The Internet's potential to effectively decentralize campaigning work and bring about greater immediate citizen involvement can only stimulate the post-materialist social imaginary, which extols direct participation and flattened power relations, as we saw in Chapter 4. These perceptions are perfectly captured by Suellentrop (2003), who

coined the term “peer-to-peer politics” to describe the first forms of connective campaigning the United States.

The idea that election campaigns, after decades of rigid management, become self-organized efforts in which citizens not only transmit campaign messages but are also free to produce their own messages, is decidedly appealing. It is also clear that the Internet is an effective tool for integrating the volunteers’ social networks into the campaign, bringing in many people who would have been impossible to reach with traditional methods (Nielsen, 2012). Each volunteer, supported by campaign guidelines and *ad hoc* digital applications, becomes an entrepreneur of participation:

> Take, for example, the Obama campaign’s 2008 MyBo social media platform or its 2012 upgrade, Dashboard. The logic of that software, just one of many platforms created during and since the 2004 presidential campaigns, is about helping super-supporters organize offline their social networks of friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members in the spirit of two-step flow. The campaign provides guidance on whom to target and what kinds of activities to hold, but if the rhetoric coming from the Obama campaign is true, the emphasis is on promoting creativity and independence on the part of these super-supporters in activating people in their social networks. (Stromer-Galley, 2019: 186)

The fact that volunteers are given more freedom means that not only is there growing willingness on the part of political parties to delegate work to volunteers, but also to give them decision-making power over action in fields previously controlled by party management (Lees-Marshment & Petitt, 2014). The relationship between management and volunteers thus changes: in connective campaigning, the former’s function is no longer that of dictating what action will be taken by the latter, but rather of “setting up systems that enable volunteers to participate” (Klug & Rees, 2019: 128). The very staffers who produce and manage the apps are often pervaded by an ideological vision of their function and a digital optimism that makes them see themselves as mere facilitators of the spontaneous action of volunteers:

> These debates centered on the nature and value of leadership, hierarchy, and organization, and were often attempts by staffers to reconcile their own paid roles with a deeply felt political valuation of “participatory democracy,” a concept that in practice was interpretively flexible enough to mean everything from a “decentralized,” self-organized campaign to a campaign that invited meaningful participation. (Kreiss, 2012: 56)

In addition to organizational decentralization of official campaigns, the spread of the Internet has made it possible to create unofficial campaigns, both online and offline facilitated by online tools—as was seen in Corbyn’s campaigns. Unofficial campaigns are the extreme expression of connective campaigns’ inherent tendencies towards decentralization: in the absence of structured forms of leadership, volunteers’ actions and content creation are unfiltered. This frees the activists’ creativity and enables them to manipulate campaign content and images according

to their own cultural codes. It is no coincidence that unofficial campaigns are at the center of what has been dubbed "cool politics" (Penney, 2017), i.e., the transformation of political leaders into pop icons. The fact that the Internet allows the creation and viral circulation of individually personalized content sets up intense patterns of cultural appropriation and reinterpretation of the images involved in campaigns. Increasingly, the preferred tool for these forms of appropriation and messaging are memes, viral video or static visual content that is continuously reproduced and manipulated. Official campaigns can sometimes try to get in touch with the most recognizable components of unofficial campaigns—for example, group admins and page owners—to agree with them on the creation and dissemination of content. The model followed is that of viral marketing (Penney, 2017), in the sense that personal endorsement and content-sharing are used as a means of advertising a product—in this case, the product is a candidate or a party. In any case, the emergence of unofficial campaigns, though it maximizes the base's enthusiasm and outreach through forms of costless personalized expression favoring the campaigns, also entails considerable risks inasmuch as it is almost impossible to control the flow of spontaneously generated content. Inappropriate behavior or the misrepresentation of candidates and the campaign by unofficial activists can seriously damage the reputation of some candidates; individual cases of improper behavior can also be more easily instrumentalized by opponents.[46]

The trade-off between decentralization and control is extremely visible in unofficial campaigns, but it is a key aspect of any form of connective campaigning. This is for several reasons. The first is extremely practical and relates to the fact that the leadership needs to make sure that volunteers stick to the party script even in the absence of vertical chains of command. Volunteers must carry out useful activities, without hindering the campaign, and above all they must do nothing that could harm it. Moreover, it is important that the work of the volunteers recruited through the platforms be linked to that of party staffers. This can be done in several ways. If volunteers are given little organizational independence, staffers can exercise control directly during the activities and while they are being planned, using different management techniques. Nielsen (2012) mentions four such techniques: 1) constructing distraction-free work environments; 2) controlling work in the office; 3) insisting that scripts be followed in

[46] The case of the 2016 US Democratic primary is emblematic: Hillary Clinton accused Sanders supporters of being misogynistic hooligans, cementing in the collective imagination the notion of the "Bernie Bros", crass young males willing to do anything to troll the political opponent of the moment.

interactions with voters; 4) surveillance and traps to discover if the work is really done—and punishing inefficient volunteers or staffers to get others to toe the line. When volunteers have more room to self-organize, i.e., in cases where the organizational infrastructure cedes ground to digital connectivity, the central organization can no longer directly control each individual campaigning activity, but can steer volunteers by managing the level of access to data and platform affordances. Choosing how to manage and control the volunteers is largely a question of scale: if the staffer/volunteer ratio is quite high, classic direct management might work; conversely, if there are too many volunteers, it becomes necessary to control them indirectly via platform affordances and the partial release of databases. There is thus a trade-off, typical of connective campaigning, between allocating resources to paid staff with managerial tasks and the need to invest more in digital control and coordination technologies. Unlike staff costs, those for digital technologies do not increase linearly: they enjoy significant economies of scale, since it is extremely expensive to set up a database or develop an app. Afterwards, however, the cost of maintaining and managing them is very low, and does not vary much whether there are one thousand or one hundred thousand volunteers.

The second issue is related to the fact that creating vibrant communities around election campaigns enhances debate and scrutiny on candidates' positions and actions. This makes it much easier for supporters to find a receptive audience for their grievances and criticisms, which can damage the candidate's image. Staffers can do relatively little in this connection: they can choose for example to integrate discussion forums on the apps and campaign websites, but they cannot prevent the discussion from developing elsewhere, for example in local activist groups and on social networks. Emblematic cases of this occurred in John Kerry's election campaign in 2004, when the candidate was widely criticized for his vague views on abortion, and with the GetFISARight mobilization during the Obama campaign in 2008—which will be discussed later.

Stromer-Galley (2019) offers a fundamental theoretical contribution to understanding how the leadership of connective campaigns tries to respond to these control problems and what tools they adopt to channel supporters' energies towards the desired ends. The analysis revolves around the concept of interactivity, which the author defines as the key affordance of digital technologies, meaning:

> Interactivity, as a concept, can be thought of as a property of the communication channel that makes feedback possible, either feedback with the computer system or application, or feedback between people channeled through the Internet. (Stromer-Galley, 2019: 2)

Interactivity is thus a key affordance because it enables the Internet to develop its potential for decentralized communication and coordination. But campaign leaders are not interested in decentralized communication and coordination per se: what they want is that such communication and coordination be conducted in a way that is instrumental in achieving the goals of the campaign and does not bypass the established leadership. As a result, they will look for ways to limit and address this interactivity within their *desiderata*. In this connection, Stromer-Galley speaks of controlled interactivity, referring to the fact that the platforms used for campaigns are designed to allow certain interactions and prevent others. From this point of view, while electoral campaigns have worked over time to create opportunities for interaction among supporters, spontaneous interaction with the staff or candidates has generally been prevented. The platforms also allow supporters to access only some of the data held by the databases, which is intended to direct their campaigning efforts in the groups selected for them by the management. In general, limiting the platforms' affordances serves to prevent bottom-up control of data and to nudge supporters to carry out the activities decided by the leadership, as will be seen very clearly in the case of the Labour Party's My Campaign Map tool. Campaigns have little strategic interest in allowing genuine democratic exchanges about priorities and organization between leadership and the base. Campaigns are highly targeted activities, whose sole objective is normally to elect a given candidate; the organizers are interested in maximizing engagement, disseminating content, making contact—both face-to-face and digital—with the target groups, and collecting money. All interactions that go beyond these goals are sidestepped (Kreiss, 2012). Consequently, the democratic potential of the affordance of interactivity is severely limited, if not completely eliminated:

> That distinct, simple property reveals the ways that presidential campaigns aim typically to circumvent interaction when it gives supporters greater genuine participatory voice in the campaign, and promote it when it serves strategic aims and goals. (Stromer-Galley, 2019: 2)

This should be enough to temper the enthusiasm of those who regard connective campaigning's typical dynamics of self-organization as the new frontier of participatory democracy. Of course, broad forms of decentralization and self-organization are possible—but only within the boundaries set by the leadership. This is because platforms and databases are private property:

as long as the leadership owns them and thus has control of the platforms, it will decide whether or not to make affordances and data available to users.[47]

Thus, connective campaigns enhance the role of volunteers, who are no longer just passive recipients of the message as in modern campaigning. However, they are not viewed as equal participants but as tools whose use must be optimized. Staff have neither time nor an advantage in interacting without filters with volunteers; on the contrary, too much independence could lead to problems of control and in maintaining hierarchies, especially because these campaigns can scale very quickly. Accordingly, the goal is to facilitate engagement in a two-step flow: first identify volunteers, and then induce them to take action for the campaign. In connective campaigns, therefore, volunteers are thought of more as pawns than as thinking individuals (Carty, 2010). The fact that they often do not receive direct orders from their superiors may be misleading, as control of their actions is primarily indirect, through the active construction of the space of interaction and action by the staffmembers who manipulate platform affordances and access to data.[48] Connective campaigns are yet another device that construes citizens not as being endowed with sovereign power, but as mere instruments in the hands of political elites or potential sources of problems of control. Despite all the talk about the Internet's democratizing potential, the situation does not seem so very different from that described by classical authors such as Neumann, Ostrogorski and Michels: in electoral politics, when the masses take action they do so fundamentally in a subordinate manner serving the purposes of political elites. As demonstrated by the emergence of modern campaigning, then, when circumstances change and elites feel they no longer have to rely on mass participation, citizens are simply pushed back into the role of passive recipients of political propaganda. Nevertheless, election campaigns are still the main occasion of citizens' direct involvement in mainstream politics; at the same time, elections are the most important ritual of celebration of democratic institutions and values, as well as the crucial moment when citizens can exercise their collective power over rulers, choosing whom to elect. So we must not be too pessimistic in bemoaning the emptiness of the democratic participatory ideal; rather, we must understand how and under

[47] By contrast, Alan Scott and John Street's (2000) concept of "organized spontaneity" could be interpreted as a democratic counterpoint to controlled interactivity. The term emphasizes digital technologies' ability to allow decentralization but also facilitate coordination between atomistic actors in leaderless protests. The problem, however, arises when leaders do exist and exert control over digital tools; this forces us to reformulate the question in the following terms: who organizes participants' spontaneity, and what tools and resources do they use to do so?

what terms ordinary citizens can be an active part of the great game of democracy. As the continuity between connective campaigning and the classic elitist theories of parties shows, what citizens can do is choose the "army" in which they enlist, but the army's strategy and greater rewards are out of their reach. Furthermore, it should be remembered that, narrow though campaigns' aims may be, they can produce unintended offshoots, such as new voluntary organizations, community building, the development of new personal skills and of public fervor (Carty, 2010).

The concept of controlled interactivity can be linked to Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl's (2005, 2009, 2012) theory of intraorganizational barriers, which holds that the Internet enables the members of organizations to interact quickly and immediately, bypassing the formal channels of intraorganizational communication. Organizers can decide to take advantage of this affordance of the Internet, promoting interactivity—interaction between individuals at the base, party members or otherwise—and/or engagement, i.e., interaction between users/members and organizations. While the concept of interactivity is quite intuitive and overlaps with Stromer-Galley's theory, engagement is a more complex notion, and is Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl's most original contribution. It should be noted that they see engagement as including the interactions between the base and campaign leadership, the relationship between participants and the organization as a whole, and participants' ability to determine the organization's structure and functioning. There will thus be more engagement when the base has more independence and, consequently, can make decisions about the structure of the organization of which it is a part, for example by creating new sub-organizational units independently or participating in decision-making processes. At the same time, potential control by the volunteers over the structure and affordances of the platforms used by the organization might in turn broaden the scope of engagement, conferring greater freedom in the self-management of collective activities. Seen in this light, the idea of engagement raises the issue of who owns the platforms; so far, connective campaigns have used corporate platforms—as in the case of MeetUps and Yahoo! Groups—or, more often, platforms controlled by campaign leadership.

Organizations can decide to manipulate levels of engagement and interactivity by controlling how much access to platform affordances is granted. Allowing greater interactivity and engagement means using the Internet to break down intraorganizational communication barriers. Here again, it is a question of degree: the axis of engagement runs from forms of institutional involvement—with few opportunities for interaction with the leadership—to

entrepreneurial forms with a high level of engagement, while the axis of interactivity runs from personal interaction modes to impersonal ones. As in the case of the trade-off between decentralization-control in controlled interactivity, Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl see in the removal of intraorganizational communication barriers a dynamic of organizational leaders waiving a degree of direct control over collective action. This is because as long as high communication barriers are maintained, the leadership is able to restrict individuals' modes of involvement and action. If barriers are lowered, the effect is not to encourage all members to act entrepreneurially or personally. Rather, it empowers all individuals to express their inclinations towards a specific type of participation. As a result, choosing to break down communication barriers has outcomes that are not always predictable and are often fairly uncontrollable. Compared to the concept of controlled interactivity, the scheme developed by Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl has the great advantage of identifying different dimensions. It is thus easier to operationalize and better suited to formulating analytical comparisons of different forms of collective organization.

Of course, control over affordances cannot ensure that supporters do not self-organize in some way. For example, this form of control is entirely ineffective against blogging or the dissemination of user-generated content, as well as against volunteers' informal face-to-face activities. Despite all the 2008 Obama campaign's controlled interactivity, there was an insurrection of the base, which will be discussed later in the section on case studies of connective campaigning. However, even when increasing opportunities for disintermediated interaction enable supporters to mount challenges to the leadership, the latter usually succeeds in reaffirming its power and primacy. This is for two basic reasons: first because the imbalance in resources would require a massive, prolonged mobilization on the part of the base, which is very complicated to support through digital tools alone and in the absence of stable mobilization structures. In addition, challenging candidates and parties during a campaign is risky, because it can damage electoral prospects: for leadership, the fact that the base shares its goal of winning the election is an effective tool for procuring obedience. This was the case of Blair's New Labour, which managed to impose even partly unpopular turns in the name of the return to electability. The desire to achieve electoral triumph is probably the strongest mechanism for maintaining the base's subordination, as it prevents defections when the option of voice is denied. Foreseeing possible conflicts, some groups of volunteers may decide to refuse to use the data and platforms made available by the campaigns (Nielsen, 2012). This is especially true

for campaign assemblages based on organizations with deep local roots that can try to make up for volunteers' lack of access to databases and management platforms by using the connections and information available to them locally. This is because it is clear to volunteer groups that having access to data and platforms means submitting to the power of those who control them. At the same time, data control can be an important tool in internal party competition since actors with priority access to databases and platforms may in fact decide to use them as a blackmail tool or to facilitate the election of candidates of their liking (Nielsen, 2012).

It should be borne in mind, however, that the control exercised over volunteers cannot be too strict, as otherwise it is impossible to generate the necessary enthusiasm that makes the organization scale quickly by delegating work to energized volunteers (Kreiss, 2012). Volunteers have an incentive to participate only if they feel directly involved and valued and if management's control is not suffocating. This is why indirect control techniques are preferable to vertical management. At the same time, a certain level of autonomy is what allows connective campaigns to become big while remaining effective. Volunteers can take more action independently, since they are delegated access to the platforms' data and resources: too much access makes them ungovernable, too little prevents connective campaigning from operating effectively. Consequently, each campaign freely chooses its own mix of control and decentralization, according to its own purposes, internal power relations and the organizational and political leaders' representation of the role of citizens. As volunteers' tasks increase, the number of tasks carried out exclusively by staffers drops, as does the amount of work required of them and, consequently, their number. This produces a paradox: if it is true that the more decentralization, the more tasks can be carried out by volunteers and this leads to a reduction in paid staff, then it can be said that greater decentralization increases the amount of work done free by volunteers compared to that paid for by the organization. This becomes even more problematic in that the free work does not increase the activists' influence, as would be the case in traditional parties with a clear *cursus honorum* and other forms of reward. If the campaigns are nebulous organizations, *ad hoc* and connective, all forms of recompense—which for activists consists of purely collective and symbolic incentives—stop when the campaign ends. This is all the more reason for finding ways to galvanize activists and spark their enthusiasm and desire to contribute, as well as their admiration for and identification with the candidates and the party. As mentioned earlier, this calls for inspiring leadership and a form of management that is as minimally invasive as possible. On the trade-off between control and

decentralization, different actors can have different points of view: for example, as Kreiss shows, while political leadership can be very attentive to message control and keeping the base in line, organizational leadership will tend to focus on the need to expand the number of volunteers and the tasks assigned to them, increasing decentralization in order to reduce costs and increase outputs.

In sum, then, the control exercised over volunteers can never be all-encompassing or even overly authoritarian. Election campaigns are neither a nightmare of narrowcasting, with volunteers reduced to robotically mouthing the campaign message, nor the triumph of participatory democracy. Like it or not, they are not such a radical departure from the past of electoral politics, though their tools are more up-to-date: citizens enlist in an enterprise that has meaning for them, to which, given the difference in resources, they can only contribute if they agree to submit to the strategy laid down by political leaders; but, to ensure a minimum of participation, the latter cannot exercise all-encompassing control. Naturally, political leaders will tend to negotiate from a position of strength, and are thus unlikely to hand campaigners control over key areas such as policy-making. Nevertheless, some concessions to volunteers' autonomy and free expression must be made, if only to ensure that collective action is effective. Leadership's efforts here chiefly follow two routes. The first is to guarantee that volunteers have the perception of self-organization. To do so, it is necessary to leave some room for spontaneous action for the base, which can try to leverage and expand it according to its abilities and objectives. Second, leadership can try to frame the candidate in such a way as to arouse the base's enthusiasm. As Bond and Exley (2017) point out, if campaigns do not provide material incentives, volunteers will mobilize only if they believe in the candidate or in his cause. It is thus unlikely that a connective campaign will work for candidates who are unattractive and do not promise revolutionary change. It is mainly for this reason that the greatest successes in connective campaigning are often obtained by outsiders, such as Dean, Obama, Sanders and Corbyn, rather than by establishment politicians: only credible and rhetorically gifted outsiders can mobilize the elite-challenging enthusiasm of citizens who are increasingly distant from establishment politics and attracted by unconventional modes of action by protest-oriented discourses. Moreover, only outsiders—with the partial exception of Obama—can afford to risk delegating a significant measure of autonomy to the base. As we have said, then, the currency in the exchange between volunteers and candidates is not the devolution of powers to the base, but the very figure of the candidates themselves:

> Often the issue is not so much whether the candidate can *give* allies what they want as whether the candidate wants to *be* the candidate they want. (Nielsen, 2012: 114)

Seen in an anti-establishment and elite-challenging light, connective campaigns are quite ambiguous. On the one hand, they need an enthusiastic base to function; enthusiasm which is not possible to create artificially, but which depends largely on the candidate's ability to send an inspiring message, which when the public is critical basically means a message that is critical of the elites. For the first time, digital technologies allow outsiders to count on new resources in campaigns against better-established candidates, i.e., the ability to mobilize armies of volunteers and to obtain large donations through them. But this has a cost: setting up the technologies and databases needed to coordinate volunteer work is anything but cheap. The outsiders must thus have the skill and luck to be able to mobilize enough online economic resources to scale their campaigns and equip them with the structures required to manage the potential of collective participation. Social networks, or digital communication infrastructures at virtually zero cost for candidates, as well as the creation of spontaneous and pervasive unofficial campaigns, can help a lot.

8.2.1.2 Campaigning infrastructures

8.2.1.2.1 Campaigning infrastructures: digital and human

As we have seen, the key feature of connective campaigns is the use of digital technologies to increase the amount of voluntary work used in persuasive ground efforts. It follows that the specific form taken by each campaign depends essentially on two factors: how digital tools are structured, and how human work is organized. Naturally, the two factors interact: on the one hand, the affordances of digital platforms enable or preclude certain actions, channeling the activities of volunteers in the direction desired by the campaigns' political and organizational leaders; on the other hand, people can use the tools made available in different ways, according to their own mode of organization. For this reason, it is necessary to distinguish between campaigns' digital infrastructure and their human infrastructure. Breaking down each campaign in terms of these two factors can give us a grasp of their specific dynamics and enable us to compare different organizational models, trying to disentangle the distinctive effects of each tool and organizational form.

We will begin with the concept of digital infrastructure. Here, Kreiss (2012) has studied the digital infrastructure developed within the Democratic Party, starting from Dean's primary campaign in 2004, the first significant connective effort. Kreiss identified a system of

> consultancies and [..] best practices, dedicated tools, and trained staffers that […] served as an infrastructure for online campaigning that a number of Democratic candidates drew from in 2006 and 2008. (Kreiss, 2012: 13)

The infrastructure is thus made up of technical artifacts, organizational forms and social practices that constitute the background of connective campaigns. It is a constant work in progress, which in the case of the American Democratic Party emerged chaotically from the 2004 primary, and was then updated over time. Elections are a powerful stimulus in this connection, bringing temporary accelerations in data collection and database creation and in innovations to technologies and practices.

To avoid overlaps with the concept of human infrastructure, which will be analyzed later, Kreiss's theorization must be put into context. The main source of confusion is that his concept of infrastructure includes organizational forms and social practices, as well as technical tools. Accordingly, it might seem that the concept is also capable of taking human infrastructure into account. But this is not the case. Kreiss in fact focuses on the practices and organizational forms that govern the *development* of digital technologies in connective campaigns, while the concept of human infrastructure refers to their *use* by variously organized volunteers. To use a metaphor, Kreiss' analysis deals with the hardware of the campaigns and the social conditions of its development, while the concept of human infrastructure identifies the social software that runs on this hardware. The concept is valuable because, in addition to effectively identifying the technological infrastructure, it highlights that this is a social as well as technical enterprise, whose success hinges on organizational, economic and political factors that must be analyzed to understand the specific form taken by digital tools. In part, this aspect has been stressed earlier, when we discussed how campaign platforms can take different forms, according to whether or not leaders are willing to delegate more responsibility and work to volunteers. This, in fact, is only one of the possible elements involved in the development of the digital infrastructure. Kreiss mentions other factors linked to the economic and organizational structure as well as the political vicissitudes of the Democratic Party, of which Dean became secretary after his primary defeat. As such, he was tasked with solidifying the new practices and technologies adopted in the 2004 campaign.

As for the concept of human infrastructure, Tufekci (2017) discusses the impact of adopting digital tools on collective action. She argues that the major difference this has made is that the costs of communication and coordination between actors have dropped dramatically. As a result, much of the organizational work that has always preceded any form of collective action

has become substantially superfluous. Before the digital age, an enormous amount of logistical work by one or more organizations was a prerequisite for any mobilization. This logistical effort called for a network of human relations and structures for transmitting information and orders that made up the organizational infrastructure supporting mobilizations. Without a large support infrastructure, it was generally impossible to mobilize large numbers of citizens. This has changed with the advent of the digital age: citizens can coordinate action and send material resources to a given place at the required time by simply posting and following threads on Twitter and other social networks, taking advantage of digital platforms' focusing capabilities (Gerbaudo, 2012). To prove the point, Tufekci contrasts the long and extensively negotiated organization of the March on Washington in 1968 with the explosion of protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013: in the first case, the mobilization rested on a complex and solid organizational network; in the second case, the Internet enabled a mass of atomistized individuals without previous relationships to mount a challenge to the political establishment.

Thus, Tufekci's concept of infrastructure identifies the "how" of the organization of collective action. In this vision, the infrastructure can either exist or not; this is because the concept identifies the invisible work of building the action's organizational assumptions, which in the case of the crowd-enabled protests of Gezi Park is substantially absent. Or rather: it takes place in the rooms of network corporations that build platforms and their affordances, but it has little to do with protesters. This view, however, conceals the fact that even crowd-enabled action is a specific way of configuring collective action, which takes place in close relation to the digital infrastructure. Although there are no pre-existing organizational structures, even crowd-enabled mobilizations involve the development of relationships between different subjects and a division of work that must not be understated, but analyzed and compared with other organizational forms. This is even more significant for connective campaigning, which is not a form of purely connective action but includes various forms of volunteer coordination and different types of alliances and bargains between different components of campaigns and hierarchical stratas.[49] In all these cases, to speak of a lack of human infrastructure would be totally inadequate, because a) the delegation of coordination functions from organizations to digital technologies is almost always only partial, and b) technologies are used in many different

[49] Nielsen (2012) refers to refer to the sum of groups, individuals and organizations taking part in each specific campaign as "campaign assemblages".

ways by people, who in turn almost never act alone without establishing some sort of collective division of labor.

Earl and Kimport present a perspective that bridges Tufecki's binary approach to infrastructures and the point of view outlined here. In analyzing "the back-end human dynamics of organizing", they find

> that while participation [in the digital age] is still collective, it appears as though organizing is not similarly always collective. (Earl & Kimport, 2011: 157)

Translating the statement into terms we have used so far: participation still takes place within a network of social relations and a collective division of work; what changes is that the organization that is the prerequisite for action today can be partially or totally outsourced to digital technologies. But the points made above, viz., that organization is only partially delegated to technologies and people almost never act alone in using technologies continue to be true. And they are even truer in activities such as campaigning. In addition, it is important to remember that connective campaigning often requires an amount of back office work that in many respects can be captured by Tufekci's concept of infrastructure. For example, this holds for the preparation of walk sheets with contacts and maps to be assigned to volunteer canvassers: where automated platforms are not the only means of processing and updating contact details on the basis of the databases, human back office work is still necessary prior to canvassing, and data entry is carried out entirely or partially in the field. Without this work, coherent and non-redundant contacting campaigns cannot be conducted.

Nielsen's concept of campaigning assemblage captures some features of my concept of organizational infrastructure. In his view, campaigning assemblage is

> a name for a combination of technologically augmented organizations, groups, and individuals whose combined capacities for action are brought to bear on a shared project. (Nielsen, 2012: 20)

What is particularly valuable in Nielsen's definition is its recognition of the continuing role of organizations and the consequent interdependence between human organization and technology—"technologically augmented organizations". But the concept is likely to be too specific, insofar as it refers to local alliances between formalized organizations and campaigns; in my interpretation, this is only one of the possible forms that human infrastructures can take. What Nielsen's concept illuminates is the complexity of the bargaining and conflicts that develop within the human infrastructure, exemplified by his tripartite typology of the morphology of the relations between the different components of campaigns: hierarchy—

classic vertical coordination; network—decentralized and horizontal coordination; market—coordination through the purchase of goods and services. Even where there is no formalized infrastructure in the form of stable organizations, these relations continue to exist and result in bargaining and conflict. On the other hand, the concept's main limitation is that it does not consider the organizationally transformative effects of digital technology, leaving the concept confined to the analysis of traditional forms of campaigning using digital technology—especially databases—to "augment" traditional practices (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Nielsen, 2012). By contrast, my concept of connective campaigning encompasses the augmentative capabilities of digital tools while also recognizing their potentially transformative impact, fully deploying itself as affordances are more markedly leveraged and communication barriers torn down.

Lastly, it is important to stress that Kreiss and Tufekci agree on a key point, viz., that infrastructure is a fundamental part of the power of collectives. Infrastructures serve to show this power, even more than they are instrumental in achieving goals. An excellent organizational machine—one that can mobilize tens of thousands of individuals in the desired places and times, with ease and order—does not need to crush opponents: it is enough to frighten them into negotiating or playing on the defensive. This, Kreiss argues, is a key element in connective campaigns: the show of strength and the capacity to mobilize gives legitimacy to the actors while demoralizing their opponents. According to Tufekci, the lack of infrastructure is the Achilles heel of digital mobilizations. The latter, in fact, use digital tools as shortcuts that make it possible to mobilize tens of thousands of individuals without prior organizational work; but it is precisely such organizational work that enables movements to develop their capabilities, i.e., the stable relationship and leadership structures whereby they can endure and to be activated and deactivated as commanded by their central "brain". As a result, Kreiss maintains, digital mobilizations risk being clay-footed giants, capable of moving large masses but unable to sustain themselves over time and to act consistently in the face of hostile or bargaining opponents. Thus seen, digital mobilizations can intimidate opponents in short skirmishes but not over the long haul, and only until the opponents call their bluff.

8.2.1.2.2. Infrastructural maintenance

Earl and Schussman (2003) argue that online collective action brings a paradigm shift in how continuity in collective action is maintained. Traditionally, given the high costs of developing

an organization from scratch, there was a need for what Taylor (1989) called "abeyance structures", or all those socio-organizational mechanisms which enable a collective organization to remain active in the periods between mobilizations, continuing to employ and provide incentives to activists and thus retaining their organizational experience and training and preventing the destructuration of social networks, collective identities and strategies (Taylor & Crossley, 2013). Therefore, in pre-Internet classical social movements, a movement weathering lean times had to be able to mobilize resources to ensure a minimum level of essentially inward-oriented activity, in order to prevent its organizational, affective and ideological structures from disappearing. But if human infrastructure is replaced by digital infrastructure, the picture changes:

> E-activism is cut of a different cloth: there are low start-up and sunk-costs and websites can be turned on, turned off, saved, and re-published with little effort. (Earl & Schussman, 2003: 179)

If, as in every form of connective action, the digital communication structures become the pivot of the organization of action, it is clear that actors also have to take their maintenance into account. But creating a site from scratch requires relatively little effort and less collective work compared to traditional mobilizations. In addition, even when digital mobilization infrastructures are expensive—as is the case of the databases and platforms used in connective campaigning—they are more likely to survive periods in which they are turned off. Databases or platforms do not disappear if they are not used: they may simply need to be updated, but their basic structure and the information stored in them remain. The only really significant issue is that of stickiness: websites that are most frequently used in a given period are said to be "sticky", meaning that they attract more users and are easily recognized, and it might not be easy to restore a satisfactory level of stickiness after mobilizations are temporarily discontinued. Human organizations and networks are different: if they are not constantly maintained, they decay. With the transition to digital activism, it may be that the classic abeyance structures are replaced by digital infrastructures which, given their low maintenance costs and ability to be reactivated and reused at any later time, act as digital abeyance structures (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Earl & Schussman, 2003).

Given the cyclical nature of campaigning, the issue of infrastructure deactivation and reactivation is crucial. The discourse on abeyance also holds true for the digital infrastructure: it continues to exist between one election and another, while ceasing activities is even useful, as it allows time to improve the tools (Kreiss, 2012). But connective campaigning is not based

only on digital infrastructure, but rather on the integration of digital and human infrastructures. As mentioned above, the more human infrastructure replaces digital infrastructure, the more important it becomes to find mechanisms to keep volunteer organizational networks active. Note that this observation does not contradict the theory of digital abeyance. In particular, Earl and Kimport (2011) refer to uses of the Internet that can leverage the latter's affordances to a greater or lesser extent: the more a collective action takes place online, the more it leverages the affordances of the internet; i.e., there is more leverage as digital infrastructure replaces human infrastructure. As a result, Earl and Kimport divide digital collective actions into three categories according to how much of the action takes place online. From the most to the least leveraging, these categories are: e-movements, e-tactics and e-mobilizations. Connective campaigning clearly falls into the category of e-mobilizations, i.e., forms of connective action in which online tools are used to facilitate offline action. This explains why campaigning abeyance differs from idealtypical digital abeyance, as it is a form of low-leverage digital action: while the digital infrastructure of campaigning behaves in abeyance like any other digital infrastructure, this is not the case for its human component.

Maintaining a human infrastructure between campaigns might be quite an advantage in connective campaigning, especially for reasons stemming from the complexity of field work. Not being able to count on at least a core of veteran volunteers who can train and lead the new entries would force campaigns to start afresh scratch at each cycle or spend a large proportion of the available resources on recruiting professional staff. The greatest difficulties arise from the highly interactive nature of canvassing: door-to-door volunteers must be psychologically prepared for dialog with citizens who are not infrequently hostile, and must know how to use a conversational and spontaneous style in conveying the necessary information and persuading voters without being overassertive. As studies on the subject show (Bedolla & Michelson, 2012; Nickerson, 2007; Nielsen, 2012), the quality of interaction is central to voter persuasion and mobilization. This puts the focus on the issue of individual training and talent, all resources that campaigns might try to retain. Canvassers also need to know enough about the job and its complexities to not quickly lose morale after encountering the first difficulties and rejections (Bedolla & Michelson, 2012). At the same time, volunteers need to be trained on the technicalities of data collection and data entry, while leadership and organizational skills are needed in order to keep canvasser groups under control in the absence of paid staff. Given the emotional complexity, and the need for technical skills and managerial supervision, recruiting

and motivating volunteers during each campaign is a daunting task. As such, it is difficult to achieve without a solid activist base that can take on the most pressing responsibilities and support relations between grassroots volunteers and management. The ability to function as a group in a setting that is emotionally challenging because of the difficulties in interacting with a frequently antagonistic electorate and the stress of a frenzied campaign makes it useful to be able to count on solid local networks with veteran activists. This is even more important if we consider that canvassing is more effective when carried out by people who belong to the neighborhoods and know their critical characteristics. Identifying the most enthusiastic volunteers and keeping them active can prove to be an asset, as they tend to work more, act in a more personal and interactive way, and generally know more about the local context and the campaign issues (Nielsen, 2012). Moreover, solid relationships of trust are fundamental in a situation where management is delegated to volunteers who often have neither the time to check that every activity is carried out to perfection nor the ability to discipline unsatisfactory campaign workers. Of course, centralizing efforts, for example by using phone banks, makes it easier to supervise volunteers and reduce the emotional impact of conversations; as mentioned earlier, however, data shows that face-to-face canvassing is more effective and in many cases more stimulating for volunteers.

In summary, Bedolla and Michelson list three reasons that make maintaining the human infrastructure between one campaign and another essential: 1) the need to keep the volunteer base engaged in order not to lose the skills and enthusiasm that have been mobilized, and if possible broadening and consolidating it; 2) recruiting and training paid staff, which depending on how the campaign is organized will have a greater or lesser role in the field; 3) where possible, integrating electoral persuasion efforts with other local level participation programs, by embedding campaigning organizations in the local associative fabric. It is interesting to note that Earl (2015), in listing the situations in which digital mobilizations continue to require stable organizations, mentions two that are typical of connective campaigning: a) when digital technologies are used to facilitate the organization of offline activities—in these cases network affordances have no influence on the physical organization of offline activities, which will function in a traditional manner; b) when stable networks are critical to securing participation—for all the reasons listed above.

These needs largely explain the Democratic Party's attempt to institutionalize campaigning structures, moving from *ad hoc* campaigning assemblages to a unified campaigning

organization, in addition to creating a sustained technological infrastructure. The second goal was easily achieved: the development of technologies, interfaces and databases continued through the consultancies linked to the party, without too many obstacles. The question of creating an organization that collects volunteers and makes it possible to start mobilizing from a solid base at each cycle was more complex. Here the results were meager: the party managed to develop a set of practices that are adopted and implemented after each campaign, but failed to create stable organizations for mobilizing volunteers. The two main attempts—Democracy for America (DFA) after the Dean campaign in 2004 and Organizing for America (OFA) in the wake of the Obama campaign—were relatively short-lived. Both campaigns used the same digital infrastructure, adopted the same practices and probably relied to a significant extent on the same pool of activists, but were unable to create a stable organizational network that could also remain active at the local level between election cycles, to lobby congress and support new candidates. In other words, the ability to develop abeyance structures was lacking, while digital abeyance was guaranteed by continuous investment in digital infrastructure. In the case of OFA, part of the project's failure was due to President Obama's fear that a vital grassroot machine could have caused embarrassment to the government and the party, after the first taste of conflict with the #GetFISARight movement, when online supporters challenged Obama's position on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. In short, what the Democratic Party failed to achieve was the transition from a mobilizing approach to an organizing approach (McAlevey, 2016). It is important to note that the desire for greater structuration might spring not only from the campaigns' needs, but also from the will of the citizens who have been involved in grassroots work and want to remain active. It is a response to what Karpf (2012) calls the "what's next question": after experiencing the enthusiasm and the ability to collectively affect electoral politics, volunteers want to continue with their involvement and set the bar higher with more ambitious goals. It is precisely this self-confidence of the base that often alarms party leaders. In fact, the failure of attempts to build campaigning organizations spawned a nebula of short-lived organizations, essentially sedimentary in nature (Chadwick, 2007; Karpf, 2012), in the sense that there was a stratification of practices and technological structures that are taken up and updated at each election cycle but without creating a truly stable mobilization machine.

8.2.2. Case studies

What we have said so far can be summed up in the following scheme. For digital infrastructure, the analytical dimensions to be considered for each campaign are:

1) Affordances: the actions that the platform makes available or denies to volunteers and staffers—i.e., access to databases, creation and location of events, group formation and management.
2) Intraorganizational barriers: how specific digital tools affect engagement—communication between leadership and base, distribution of decision-making powers, control over platforms and interactivity, communication between participants.

For human infrastructure, the dimension are:

1) Organizational structures: the structure of social relations between the different actors involved in the campaign, i.e., relations between staffers and participants, the nature and structure of volunteer groups.
2) Division of labor: which component of the campaign performs what tasks.

I will now turn to a comparison of the most significant cases of connective campaigns in the USA and the UK using the categories developed above. The choice of these cases was motivated by the fact that, while connective campaigning was first implemented in the USA, the UK's Labour Party followed the example while implanting the practices and technologies developed abroad in a much different context with stronger party-based human infrastructures. Consequently, the comparison can be grounded in a more varied set of human and digital infrastructures, exploring the recurrent patterns of adaptation and integration that take place regardless of variations in the components of campaigning infrastructures. In line with Stromer-Galley's approach, the comparison seeks to shed light on how connective campaigns show patterns of top-down management even in the absence of overarching vertical chains of command; but while Stromer-Galley concentrates only on interactivity and digital infrastructure, I will show the patterns of adaptation between digital and human infrastructures while focusing on both interactivity and engagement.

8.2.2.1. Connective campaigning begins: from 1996 to Howard Dean's primary campaign

The 1996 US presidential campaigns were the first attempts to use digital technologies in presidential campaigning. Without examples to follow, the 1996 innovators lay the ground for the genre of campaign websites containing info on candidates, speeches, campaign ads, detailed position papers, and offering ways to engage supporters. The theoretical-practical mainstay of these campaigns is two-step flow: i.e., providing users who support the candidates with materials that they can then use to persuade friends, acquaintances and members of their

associations. Partly because of the overall lack of digital literacy and the primitiveness of the tools, and partly because of the leadership's the concern for keeping tight control over the campaigns, supporter engagement remained at an extremely low level. In addition to being able to use the material on the websites to persuade their contacts, supporters generally could fill out forms to register as volunteers and be contacted by the staff to be recruited or assigned tasks. Other available tools included pre-prepared digital material to forward to online contacts and printable material or digital images for customizing desktops and personal blogs. There are no

informational cul-de-sacs, where people came but there was no outlet to leave. (Stromer-Galley, 2014: 39)

Starting from 2000, a host of insurgent candidates, without much to lose, start experimenting more ambitiously. The Bradley (D), McCain (R) and Ventura primary campaigns led the way; Bradley's site listed 15 types of activities supporters could undertake; McCain invested in the use of digital maps to locate activities, though only the candidate's official tour was hosted there at this stage. However, McCain also provided online badges to active volunteers based on their online and offline level of involvement. Contact activities were still subject to control by staffers, even if supporters were increasingly encouraged to enlist. Naturally, supporters' growing capacity to function as spokespeople for the candidates in two-step flow, acting outside direct staff control, began to raise concern that over-zealous supporters or those with embarrassing connections could put the candidates in an awkward position.

The 2004 Democratic primary was a turning point in the history of connective campaigning. This was also because of the spread of the Internet: over one third of Americans used it to obtain political information at that time (Rainie et al., 2005). The greatest experimenters were the defeated Democratic hopefuls Clark and Dean, while the frontrunners maintained a more traditional approach. Despite getting off to a good start, when it collected $1 million in online donations and was supported by numerous spontaneous gatherings on MeetUp—a digital platform used to facilitate offline event and group creation—the Clark campaign foundered quickly because its official management refused to make use of the base of 3000 volunteers collected by the unofficial campaign for the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses. In fact, the Clark campaign managed to mobilize a fair amount of participation and support compared to the candidate's ambitions, but the management deliberately decided to wreck the campaign, as it did not know what to do with the support of the connective base. By contrast, the Dean campaign was more successful, and was able to compete effectively in the first contests. It was also the first case where connective campaigning worked well, although it was still

experimental and did not lead to victory. In addition, it was the beginning of the creation of the digital infrastructure in the Democratic Party (Kreiss, 2012).

The turn marked by the Dean campaign was due to its ability to integrate the official campaign with spontaneous MeetUps. The explosion of engagement figures on MeetUp for Dean is impressive: from 79 meetups in March 2003 (Dodson & Hammersley, 2003) to 800 meetings in December, with more than 140 thousand registered supporters and more than two thousand comments per day (Gillmor, 2004; McCullagh, 2004). MeetUps were extremely effective in activating substantial participation, producing what Weinberg and Williams call "electronic-to-face communities" (Weinberg & Williams, 2006), i.e., groups that are active offline but supported by a digital infrastructure that facilitates coordination and dissemination of information between current and perspective members. As the MeetUps spread, they drove the creation of several blogs, discussion forums and online donations—hitting 40 million dollars by the end of the campaign; all efforts not directly controlled by the campaign management. To try to establish order in the MeetUp jungle, the campaign staff used the official blog and mailing lists to advise supporters and provided each Meetup with detailed agendas—which were in no way binding—and sometimes took part physically in the meetings. Another platform adopted by many supporters was Yahoo! Groups, one of whose major limitations was that it did not provide links between the different groups scattered throughout the country. This was also true of MeetUp: both platforms allowed high interactivity within but not among groups. At the same time, it was even more difficult for staffers to collect information and data on supporters' activity on Yahoo! Groups than on MeetUp. As a first partial attempt to coordinate supporters' activities centrally, campaign staff set up Yahoo! Groups and MeetUps directly, but these efforts struggled to gain headway in the welter of spontaneous groups. In other words, these platforms' affordances were inadequate for both top-down control and for coordination between different groups. Once this was understood, the Dean campaign began to develop its own platform, called Get Local, which was also used to launch mobilizations against the Iraq War. The new platform integrated local groups' data in the campaign databases, allowing staffers to monitor supporters' activities and communicate officially with them. Despite all these efforts, not all groups migrated to the official platform. The campaign thus continued to be poorly integrated, and activists often had to log on multiple times in order to monitor and participate in local activities. Consequently, the leadership decided to enter into an agreement with MeetUp, which sold partial access to the data on supporters and groups registered on the site to

the Dean campaign (Stromer-Galley, 2014: 96). With the two platforms, however, the Internet for the first time supplanted the party's state offices in distributing instructions to volunteers and sharing voter files for canvassing and phone banking. The Dean campaign was also the first to create a digital division within its organization, placing its work at the center of the ground effort. Nevertheless, foregoing digital interactivity proved to provide certain advantages that Dean did not have: the Bush campaign, for example, used digital technologies in an extremely top-down way as a tool for addressing and disseminating information; in doing so, it avoided the Dean campaign's control problems, and also did not have to deal with activists' expectations whipped up by the apparent spontaneity promised by the digital turn.

Dean fared poorly in his first electoral test, the Iowa caucuses. This was partly due to the ground campaign's weaknesses, and in particular to the difficulties in integrating voter data with field activities, which resulted in many potential voters being contacted to the point of exhaustion, while others were not contacted at all. Another problem was that there was no solid local volunteer base, which the campaign tried to overcome by sending volunteers recruited online from other states, but without being able to compensate for the lack of local knowledge. In the New Hampshire primary, where better trained digital volunteers supported a stronger field operation and better organized data and contact infrastructure, the result was much more satisfactory. This connective campaigning model proved to be appropriate, as it was based on a strong synergy between digital and human infrastructures, but it is expensive and requires significant resources, time and a strong local presence as well as good online mobilization capacity. In summary, then, the Dean campaign was an experimental project which still struggled to integrate traditional campaigning with new mobilization techniques. To frame it within the theories discussed above, it may be useful to locate the campaign in the collective action space conceptualized by Bimber and colleagues, whose two orthogonal dimensions are engagement and interactivity:

> The official Dean campaign organization in early 2003 would have been located in the lower-right quadrant, the typical location of election campaigns, which are very hierarchically organized and share some features with the military organizations that conduct campaigns of war. It offered mainly institutional engagement and impersonal interaction with some opportunities for volunteering and more personal experiences. By the middle of the year, people not connected officially with the campaign initiated a variety of personal, entrepreneurial modes of engagement on behalf of Dean. These activities involved Meetups that were personal and entrepreneurial, as well as opportunities for individuals to blog and act as mobilizers – activities spread along the upper half of collective action space, where engagement is entrepreneurial (Wolf, 2004). Within a few months during the middle of the year, the Dean campaign embraced and encouraged these independent activities. Without exerting any centralized control over them, the impersonal-institutional campaign endorsed and supported the unofficial entrepreneurial-personal activities. By late

> 2003, the official and unofficial Dean campaigns had amalgamated into a complex collective action process with elements across the collective action space. (Bimber et al., 2012: 100)

The great discovery of the Dean campaign, in addition to its experimenting with connective practices, is that a candidate who, all in all, was little-known and quite remote from the party establishment—Dean was the only vocal opponent to the War on Terror and openly used elite-challenging and populist language towards his party's leading figures— can use the Internet to mobilize large numbers of volunteers and amounts of money. Of course, this is not enough: the money raised must be used to develop a sound digital infrastructure, and the way volunteers are organized must be codified. But it is clear that a campaign of this kind can deploy energies from outside mainstream politics: it is worth noting that for 42% of Dean activists—66% of the under-30s—this was their first involvement in a presidential campaign (Pew Research Center, 2005). The Dean campaign's ability to experiment was largely fueled by the low expectations associated with the candidate's outsider status: with less to lose than the frontrunners, he felt freer to risk and innovate.

At the end of the campaign, Dean could count on 3.5 million registered supporters and hundreds of still-active MeetUps, as well as the awareness of having found a way to mobilize on the ground the support obtained online. After the campaign, Dean became chairman of the Democratic Party from 2005 to 2009 and launched the "fifty-state strategy" to revitalize the party at local and state level. The heart of the project was DFA, Democracy For America, the successor organization to the primary campaign committee Dean For America. The new organization was based entirely on the skeleton of MeetUps that supported the Dean campaign. It was a proto-example of what Karpf (2012) calls "neo-federated" organizations, meaning that they are online federations of local groups resting on a parallel digital infrastructure—much like MeetUp, the main difference being that in neo-federated organizations such as DFA there is more coordination between the different local groups. DFA was something entirely new: for the first time, a presidential campaign resulted in a new organization, as an outgrowth of the digital and human infrastructure built up by the connective campaign. This was possible precisely because the organizational connective effort "exceeds" leadership's goals in that it mobilizes a broad base that is in part self-organizing. As a result, the base aspires to formulate its own goals and to think of its future regardless of whether the campaign ends well or not.

In the end, Dean's strategy was only half effective. The rest of the party took a stand against building a permanent activist base, both because they did not want to empower it too much and

because they preferred to focus on the short term (Nielsen, 2012). What Dean was able to do, however, was to bequeath his successors a fully functioning digital infrastructure and a wealth of tried-and-true practices, handed down through a web of private consultancies deeply interlinked with the Democratic Party, such as Blue State Digital.

8.2.2.2. Obama 2008 – 2012

If Dean's campaign was the first actual connective campaign, Obama's campaign was the first successful connective campaign. This was the result of the candidate's strength and of the political conjuncture, but also of chairman Dean's work in establishing a set of practices, technologies and huge databases. For the first time, a connective campaign could build on a solid foundation without having to improvise or start all over from scratch. The results this time were exceptional.

In digital infrastructure affordances, the main innovation was the use from the beginning of the MyBo platform as a key element of the digital strategy. All efforts on social media and many on traditional media sought to channel supporters towards the platform. At the end of the campaign, Obama could count on 35,000 affinity groups, 2 million platform users and 13 million mailing list subscribers (Ambinder 2008), including 5 million small donors (Kreiss, 2012). In addition to the established features of campaigning platforms—a campaign blog, detailed supporter profiles, personalized fundraising pages, apps for managing affinity groups, videos, speeches, photos, how-to-guides that gave people materials to create their own content, and event-planning tools—MyBo enabled volunteers to access databases for targeting voters, which left them more leeway for self-organizing canvassing efforts. In general, MyBo was better than Get Local at centralizing the organization of campaign activities on a single platform, while allowing more flexible uses of the website and greater access to data, which reflected the fact that volunteers had more autonomy in fulfilling some tasks. This marked the transition to a model of connective campaigning that is deliberately volunteer-centered (Lees-Marshment & Pettitt, 2014): volunteers were not steered by the platform towards specific contact targets, but were empowered to self-organize to contact individuals on the databases. This translated into greater freedom to personalize individual involvement: a connection was all that was needed to begin canvassing at any time, without having necessarily to deal with staffers or coordinate with other people to get the data. The coordination function was supplemented by the platform, which, thanks to data entered by the volunteers, traced contacts

that had been made and their outcomes. Centralizing campaigning on the platform made tracking activities far easier than it was for Dean's campaign. In addition, the spread of smartphones and mobile apps brought new features that further increased the level of personalization; for example, the iOS version of MyBo enabled users to reorganize phone books by the geographical location of contacts and priority levels assigned by the campaign. The database built by Dean and the consultancies linked to the party was merged with Project Narwhal, which reorganized databases to intensify the interrelation between ground activities and the digital infrastructure's data-mining capacity. Narwhal was innovative because it gave volunteers access to data about voters and other registered supporters that Get Local did not allow. In addition, the tool enhanced the campaign's data-mining potential by integrating database data with the systematic collection of social media data.

The Obama campaign was also the first campaign of the social media era. The number of people who received persuasive material from online campaigns rose to 46% of all American adults (Smith & Rainie, 2008): the Internet's role in political affairs was now fully recognized and legitimized. In addition, the rise of social media brought two-step flow to the next level, multiplying the opportunities to share and create material. There was also growing integration between platforms. Social media exponentially increases the connections between individuals and the number of connected individuals; to give an idea of the figures involved, by 2012, Obama had 34 million likes on FB which in turn were in contact with 95% of American Facebook users (Stromer-Galley, 2014: 160). Electoral material could thus be distributed at no cost to an unprecedentedly wide audience, while other advantages of the social media era included the nascent practice of targeted advertising and the ability to create apps that cluster individual contact data from Facebook according to the campaign's targeting priorities (Steinberg 2008; Vaccari, 2010).

Given how MyBo and database access were structured, the campaign rolled back the boundary between staff and volunteers, entrusting the latter with responsibilities that had been the prerogative of employees. To compensate for this lowering of intraorganizational barriers, campaign management focused on training "super-volunteers" whose role was to convey campaign priorities in each specific area from the management to the base. These super-volunteers were supported by local staffers, in an unprecedented effort to spread the campaign over the entire country—suffice it to say that in 2008 Obama opened 50% more field offices in swing states than his rival Romney (Kreiss, 2012). Paradoxically, despite the greater freedom

granted to volunteers by platform affordances, the Obama campaign was an extremely centralized effort, precisely because of the major deployment of field forces that enabled state offices to exercise constant coordination and control through super-volunteers (Nielsen, 2012). The campaign thus showed very high levels of interactivity, both in offline groups and among groups and individuals through the platform. At the same time, engagement with the staff was mediated via super-volunteers, who acted as a buffer between the base and operation leadership. Again, engagement was essentially controlled and top-down in nature; volunteers could receive instructions from the staff, but not communicate directly with them.

As part of its recruitment effort, the campaign created the "Camp Obama" project, a traveling training program for new super-volunteers. Leadership showed a preference for inexperienced activists, in the belief that they were more easily molded to suit the campaign's priorities than veteran campaigners. Over 10,000 volunteers were trained for the 2008 primary alone, many of whom were also mobilized in the 2008 presidential campaign and again in 2012. This mix of training, extensive staffing, and volunteers' general tendency to willingly obey staffers ensured the campaign's success. Here, in fact, the new affordances of the MyBo platform were used less to promote bottom-up self-organization by volunteers than to relieve paid staffers from some routine tasks, so that they could concentrate on management and strategy rather than, for example, on back-office chores. The combination of an extended ground organization with greater devolvement of campaigning tasks to volunteers thus served to extract more free work from the latter without increasing their influence.

To find new recruits, Obama focused mainly on young people, aware that the younger generations are more tech-savvy and thus more willing and able to adopt the digital organization and tracking technologies deployed by the campaign. The younger generations reciprocated Obama's interest in them, attracted both by the innovative structure of the campaign and the candidate's insurgent stance. Obama cultivated a rhetoric that was very similar to Howard Dean's, painting the opponent Hillary Clinton as part of the old party establishment. With his status as an outsider, as well as the promise of being the first black president and his ability to rally the libertarian *ethos* to his cause, Obama enjoyed considerable influence as an anti-establishment firebrand. At the same time, the extensive use of online tools gave a countercultural flavor to the campaign, as it allowed supporters who were disillusioned with mainstream media to bypass them. This also reflected on the strategy of the two contenders: while Clinton could count on interest groups and already affiliated voters, Obama leveraged his

elite-challenging positioning to maximize the ability to mobilize otherwise scarce resources through the Internet and bring young and disenchanted abstensionists back into play. The venture was a success, and Obama managed to attract unprecedented numbers of volunteers—as well as unprecedented amounts of money. And none of this came cheap: sophisticated digital technologies, the strengthening of efforts on the ground and the continuing, if not growing, use of television drove up costs, from the 37 million of the Clinton campaign in 1996 to a staggering 630 million in 2012 for the second Obama campaign (Stromer-Galley, 2014: 179). The micro-donations facilitated by digital connectivity, however, accounted for only a portion of the campaign's fundraising; the more Obama became an established candidate, the more he also managed to attract contributions from large donors and institutions.

To sum up, we can say that the digital-based Obama campaign showed some apparently contradictory characteristics. On the one hand, it intensified tracking and data mining of volunteer activities and social networks. On the other hand, it gave more organizational autonomy to volunteers, but this autonomy was offset by two strategies intended to ensure that leadership could continue to direct the campaign:

1) The database interface, which steered volunteers' outreach towards the established campaign objectives while leaving room for groups or individuals to organize ways of achieving these objectives.
2) Staffers monitored volunteer groups via their relationship with selected super-volunteers. While volunteers tended to obey management, checking that their aims were aligned with those of the campaign and that they acknowledged the greater experience and skills of staffers and super-volunteers was essential in ensuring that they continued to do so.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, an unprecedented situation arose: for the first time, connective campaign supporters used campaign platforms to challenge the candidate. In June 2008, Obama stated that he would vote in favor of the Bush administration's proposed amendment to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—FISA—which would grant retroactive immunity from prosecution to the telecommunications firms that assisted the administration in its warrantless wiretapping program, which he had opposed for years. Obama's supporters begin using MyBo, creating a group of 15,000 people—the largest on the platform—to protest the candidate's position, using the hashtag #GetFISARight. The protest spread to other social networks and succeeded in raising enough money to produce a TV

advertisement. Obama decided not to repress the protest, and indeed encouraged his staffers to engage in the discussion on the blog. Obama's supporters used the opportunity to criticize the campaign leadership and to show their organizational self-confidence. In fact, the leadership not only suffered a blow to its image, but the protest also diverted many volunteers from action on the ground. However, quashing the protest, though it would have been easily accomplished given the campaign's control over the platforms, would be too costly in terms of support and participation, confirming the criticisms voiced by FISA's opponents. The Get FISA Right case shines a powerful light on the need for a trade-off between lowering intraorganizational barriers and ensuring coordination through forms of soft power: if volunteers are given the freedom to wield organizational tools, other ways of controlling them must be found. This can involve vertical management, or a deft hand in dealing with volunteers' expectations:

> Much of the division's work involved expectation setting. It was always, in the words of a staffer, a "delicate dance" to "make sure people feel like they are involved in the campaign without giving them a sense that they are actually setting strategy." This expectation setting was always an art, as was staffers' work as coordinators of citizen participation. With participation taking place outside formal organizational structures, achieving effective coordination was about providing: "signposts and training for people to successfully go bottom up and sort of rise up and grow and lead, but in the end it is up to them to do whatever they want. What we saw was that when you provide that public utility and a strong framework … a strong and obvious and transparent framework for what needs to be done, the vast, vast, like 99.99% of people want to be as efficient as possible with their time and want to make sure that they do everything they can to help, and so pretty much everybody is on the same page". (Kreiss, 2012: 184)

This scheme works perfectly as long as the leadership and base's interests are aligned. But clearly the situation gets complicated when friction arises, especially because after months of self-organized activity volunteers raise their expectations and might feel they are ready to step in and take over if they feel that the natural leadership has dropped the reins. In the Get FISA Right case, however, the insurgency failed: Obama managed to establish a dialog with the base, defending his own image as an open candidate, but without making any concessions. The rebels were unable to seize the moment, perhaps out of organizational weakness or because they were unwilling to harm the candidate for whom they had mobilized so far. In the end, inertia was on the leadership's side, although the case makes it quite clear that very low barriers to participation could have blown up all the sophisticated persuasive management mechanisms deployed by Obama's ground machine.

After the 2008 elections, the campaign organization Obama for America transitioned into Organizing for America, exactly as took place with the Dean campaign. The size of the new organization was remarkable, as it brought together all of the 13 million Obama supporters and mailing list subscribers. The organization's goals differed from those of Dean's DFA; in this

case, it is a case of "governance organizing" (Karpf, 2012), i.e., of producing mobilizations in favor of the president's agenda. The organization thus sought to take advantage of the participatory potential developed by the campaign to complement the president's congressional influence with extra-legislative forms of action (Vaccari, 2010a). In addition, the new organization was supposed to support the election of candidates close to the leadership. The leadership, however, decided to severely limit the local sections' independence and the organization's freedom of manoeuvre to avoid fomenting factional infighting. This was mainly achieved by officially integrating the organization with the Democratic National Committee (DNC), making it part of the party and thus eliminating its chances of developing independent decision-making structures:

> The move meant that the machinery of an insurgent candidate, one who had vowed to upend the Washington establishment, would now become part of that establishment, subject to the entrenched, partisan interests of the Democratic Party. It made about as much sense as moving Greenpeace into the headquarters of ExxonMobil. (Dickinson, 2010)

OFA was thus an intentionally weak and reactive organization, designed to support the president's calls to action but structurally prevented from acting in conflict with the party establishment. These choices soon took their toll: as early as 2010, the organizational machine of 2008 had been completely dismantled, so much so that Obama had to rebuild from scratch for the 2012 campaign (Sifry, 2017). In short, the goal of creating a stable campaigning base for the president ran up against the trade-off between control and decentralization: the new organization was sacrificed—along with its ability to mobilize and inspire supporters and thus produce abeyance—on the altar of party appeasement and vertical control over internal relations. With this, Obama chose to become a "normal" president, abandoning his electoral machine together with his appeal as an insurgent to retire to the chambers of power and the DNC establishment.

8.2.2.3. Sanders 2016

The 2016 Bernie Sanders primary campaign is interesting because, despite the Democratic Party's ten-plus years of innovation and experimentation with connective campaigning, the team found itself in unknown terrain, testing the potential of new techniques to the limit. First, the outsider Sanders was plagued by a chronic shortage of resources. This prevented him from hiring enough staffers to create offices in any state except Iowa and New Hampshire. As we saw from the Dean and Obama campaigns, it is crucial that the digital infrastructure be complemented by a solid army of staffers. In Obama's case, then, the role of the staffers became

extremely pervasive, given the greater freedom guaranteed by the MyBo platform affordances; each neighborhood team included super-volunteers who were directly trained and in contact with a paid staffer, whose supervision was the only tool the campaign had to ensure that the organizational decentralization provided by MyBo resulted in more free work being done, rather than in more control or independent volunteer organization. The problem with this approach, of course, is that a campaign structured in this way can only scale in proportion to the increase in paid staff: a luxury that Sanders could not afford, since the campaign was very rich in volunteers but poor in staff. The solution was to use volunteers to replace all local staff, dividing the work that would have been done by each staffer between two or more part-time volunteers. Accordingly, the digital tools available to volunteers were designed so that work could be split among several part-time volunteers. For example, a tool was developed for uploading photos of the data sheets collected during canvassing, so as to separate data collection and data entry tasks and to coordinate them remotely and easily. This network of volunteers was formed entirely from scratch, through major events called "barnstorms" held by the central team around the country to recruit autonomous local campaigning groups. Sub-committees handling specific tasks were set up during the barnstorms and coordinated by WhatsApp and Slack groups that kept the volunteers in contact with each other and with the national staff. Most of the volunteers were employed in the classic tasks of connective campaigning: canvassing, phone banking, recruiting volunteers and back-office operations. In turn, sub-committees of the volunteers who participated in each barnstorm replicated the event in other locations without the support of the national staff. By the end of the primary, it is estimated that over a thousand barnstorms had been held, two-thirds of which were led by volunteers (Grim 2019).

The trick that Sanders's campaign pulled off seems to be this: more than on direct or indirect control, it relied on the will of volunteers to support an insurgent candidate. From the very first contact, it induced them to see the action in extremely practical terms, with a rigid division of labor, precise timetables and a strictly operational focus. It is no coincidence that the campaign's creators, Bond and Exley—the latter had already worked for Dean's campaign—never tired of repeating that the campaign was decentralized only in terms of the division of labor, while the plan and priorities were necessarily dictated by the center. To define this type of organizational structure, in which local groups created completely from scratch are held together by a digital infrastructure of WhatsApp groups and continuous conference calls, Bond

and Exley coined the term “distributed organizing” or “distributed centralization”: while the work is distributed, the plan is centralized (Bond & Exley, 2017). In some ways, this approach follows the opposite approach to earlier connective campaigns. The latter were first of all a digital infrastructure—in Dean’s case, unintentionally, through the emergence of the MeetUps—which volunteers could access freely; in addition, they worked to set up an organizational infrastructure. Despite marked staff interference, especially in the Obama campaigns, there was room for volunteers to organize themselves directly through platforms. This poses the issue of affordances: more contained in the Dean campaign, which could not rely on supervision by local staffers, more open with Obama who had more human coordination resources. In Sanders’s case, however, the digital infrastructure could not be accessed by members of the local volunteer groups. Though these groups had much more work delegated to them than in other campaigns and were much more independent in performing it, they were created top-down by the leadership and assigned specific tasks at the time volunteers joined. The digital infrastructure consisted of contact-tracing software and telecommunication structures that supported groups and put them in contact with national coordinators. Event platforms were also used in this campaign but had a much more marginal role, serving mostly to advertise the events set up by local teams of volunteers and put them in contact with prospective members.

The Sanders campaign was an experiment in which decentralization and hierarchical coordination coexisted in a hitherto unseen pattern. On the one hand, the entire organizational pyramid was based on teams of volunteers recruited during the campaign, with the exception of the national staff. This means that the leadership had to be willing to accept a certain amount of chaos and inexperience, unlike the Obama campaign, which was able to count on a widespread network of staffers and the ability to train all the super-volunteers effectively. On the other hand, the organizational leaders were extremely clear about the fact that the campaign was “high input, low democracy” (Bond & Exley, 2017: 111): everyone’s suggestions and contributions are accepted, but only project leaders can make decisions:

> We won’t win if everyone doesn’t contribute the best ideas, offer constructive criticism when appropriate, engage in problem solving, and help anticipate future problems as we scale. That said, it’s up to project leaders to make decisions and for the rest of the team to align with those decisions. Fast and effective decision making can’t happen by consensus, but it should be informed by all the smart people we have working on the team across various areas of expertise. (Bond & Exley, 2017: 111)

The campaign took place within an extremely short timeframe, and the organization was extremely stretched and therefore fragile. It could maintain its coherence only if the volunteers

agreed to submit willingly to Bond and Exley's hyper top-down approach. Volunteers had to accept that they were doing an extremely tiring and repetitive job, that they could make suggestions but could not self-organize or claim significant decision-making powers. The rule of submitting to the higher-ups also applied to volunteer leaders.

How was it possible that volunteers docilely accepted such an agreement? According to Bond and Exley, it was the fact of sharing a common revolutionary goal that made the volunteers agree to be pawns to the great plan of the campaign. The recruitment of volunteers was based on a dual communication mechanism. First, a direct, unvarnished statement of what they could expect and what was expected of them:

> As organizers or volunteer leaders, you need to propose a strategic plan and invite others to join you. Don't worry about being undemocratic. If your plan is not smart enough, not enough people will join you, and you can give up on the revolution and become a small nonprofit instead! (Bond & Exley, 2017: 62)

Second, the promise of becoming part of a revolutionary movement, whose goal was not to experiment with here-and-now forms of self-government in such a limited organizational setting as the campaign, but to try to create a mass movement to change the country. In this approach, it is important that the volunteers consider the candidate credible, and be inspired by his anti-establishment stance; in addition, this framing of the campaign served to give volunteers a sense of responsibility, making them feel that the effort's success depended entirely on their diligence. By contrast with the Obama campaign, volunteers were treated as members of a political movement rather than as mere supporters: they are both manpower and the backbone of the human infrastructure that was entrusted with running whole chunks of the campaign (Common Knowledge, 2020). In addition, while it is true that the campaign plan was extremely centralized, Sanders' super-volunteers were much better informed about it than in previous campaigns: in fact, the traditional information barriers that arise when paid staff is put in leadership positions and volunteers remain subordinate (Nielsen, 2012) disappeared since the Sanders campaign, by almost eliminating paid staff, put strategic information directly into volunteers' hands.

Bond and Exley's intention of creating a mass movement, centralized in decision making but based on the base's total identification with the collective mission, led them to significantly reduce the role of targeting in the campaign. Here, it was no longer as important to recruit specific demographics according to their interest in niche issues, often defined a priori by campaigners, as to be able to mobilize enthusiasm for Sanders' collective enterprise, which

proposed to overturn the democratic party establishment and to bring redistributive measures and environmental protection to unexpected levels for a radically capitalist country like the United States. In fact, the campaign sought to mobilize the broadest possible cross-section of a working class encompassing different income groups, working conditions, ages and ethnicities. Rather than addressing specific demographics, the campaign attempted to give substance to the Occupy Wall Street motto, “We are the 99%”. Microtargeting was thus abandoned in favor of a sort of “blanket targeting” in the primary states, taking advantage of the advanced automatic call systems and the large number of volunteers. This strategy also aimed at mobilizing non-aligned or abstentionist voters, those who are more likely to be attracted by an anti-establishment message but were probably not registered on the Democratic Party databases.

Bond and Exley’s “big organizing” or “distributed organizing”, together with the appeal of the most anti-establishment candidate in the Democratic Party’s recent history, who at this critical juncture for American society sought to revive the message of Occupy Wall Street, was extremely effective in building a campaigning movement on an initial financial footing that was anything but sound. But finances improved during the campaign, which managed to mobilize nearly 300 million dollars from 3 million small donors, ensuring independence from corporate donors. At the same time, Sanders’ big organizing worked to reduce the amount of money required for the campaign and to generate revenue by leveraging digital connectivity and a base galvanized by a revolutionary program and a vibrant movement.

But this extreme approach also had its limitations. The main problem was the difficulty of ensuring sufficient geographical and demographic homogeneity for the movement. Despite the stated goal of mobilizing disadvantaged voters and/or abstentionists, the bulk of volunteers in many states hailed from whiter, younger and wealthier areas (Bock-Hughes, 2020). This is because these demographics were better prepared for and accustomed to collective participation, and therefore more responsive to a call to action as sudden as that formulated by the barnstorms. To mobilize other demographics, it may be necessary to work on organization and persuasion in the long run. Giving substance and reach to such an effort, however, calls for resources and dedicated staffers well in advance of the election deadline. Such demographic-geographical inconsistencies caused significant shortcomings in the campaign’s two-step flow, leading for example to a structural weakness in Sanders's performance among the Black population—while among Hispanics this problem did not arise. It is thus necessary, on the one hand, to supplement volunteers with more resources and paid staff, according to the model

launched by Obama; on the other hand, it is essential to create local networks that can outlast the campaign and engage in the construction of networks of activists well before the next campaign kicks off.

Four years later, Sanders's 2020 campaign in many areas still faced the same problems as before. Not that the movement created in 2016 had been entirely disbanded. On the contrary, it fueled the growth of two organizations, Our Revolution—the direct heir to the campaign—and the intraparty group Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The DSA in particular has shown impressive growth, rising from 15,000 subscribers in 2016 to over 80,000 four years later, greatly expanding its geographical reach and presiding over the election of some of the most popular progressive congresswomen of the moment, including Ilhan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Starting in late 2016, Our Revolution began to gird up to support pro-Sanders candidates, creating local alliances with social movements and other organizations. and coordinating locally with the Democratic Party (Gautney, 2018). At the electoral level, the organization's achievements have been encouraging: in 2020, of the 450 candidates it endorsed, 74% were elected (Our Revolution, 2020). Sanders himself stated that the goal of the 2016 campaign was to generate a mass movement that could survive his candidacy; the point, Sanders emphasized, was not to repeat Obama's mistake in quickly demobilizing volunteer groups and related organizations after the election (Clift, 2017). Though Sanders was defeated again in 2020, his figure and the issues contained in his manifesto are more popular than ever. The work of building a movement proceeded slowly and unevenly across the country, but it nonetheless proved its effectiveness in fueling an institutional leftist force with few precedents in the US.

8.2.2.4. Momentum for Corbyn 2017-2019

Corbyn's Labour Party differs considerably from the cases we have seen in the United States, for the simple fact that the party can count on a more solid and structured base of activists. Even though Labour's local rootedness is uneven at best, it can rely on a human infrastructure made up of local officers, militants and simple members and sympathizers that is much more widespread and integrated than the Democratic Party's. Moreover, all of the party's campaigning apparatuses are internal. This applies both to the digital infrastructure, which is directly controlled by Labour rather than outsourced to outside companies that sell services to individual candidates as in the case of the Democratic Party, and to human infrastructure. Although each election campaign requires a significant increase in the level of activity and the

number of people involved, leading to an expansion of the organization and hence to new recruitment drives, the fundamental campaign infrastructure of the campaign consists of long-standing activists. In other words, there is nothing comparable to the situation faced by Dean, Obama and Sanders, each of whom basically had to rebuild their network of volunteers and staffers from scratch, with a gargantuan effort. Rather, the key issue of campaigning in a party like Labour is the need to expand the number of workers during campaigns, as activists alone may not be enough to do everything needed to persuade voters. This is where digital technologies come into play.

Connective campaigning made its debut in the UK much later than in the United States. Despite the technology-intensive turn of election campaigns in the UK, marked by the growing adoption of computers, computerized databases and phone banking systems since the 1990s, until the 2017 campaign the decentralization typical of connective campaigning was entirely lacking. In other words, rather than being used as part of a new connective organizational system, digital technologies served to make traditional voter contacting faster, more efficient, and more systematic. Unlike their counterparts in the United States, moreover, British parties are not allowed to buy data on citizens. As a result, voter persuasion and targeting are based entirely on data collected directly by volunteers or aggregated data on the demographic composition of different areas (Fisher et al., 2011)—as well as on activists' situated knowledge. This has two effects: there is more need for volunteer work, not only to contact voters and record the results of interactions, but also to collect data on whom to target. The rudimentary nature of databases also makes targeting problematic: especially in areas where the party is weak and has few volunteers, it is difficult to obtain data on the electorate. As a result, ground campaigns tend to turn into simple efforts to mobilize regular Labour voters. Lastly, strict budget rules, which severely constrain each constituency's expenditures, as well as the fact that British politics is far more resource-poor than American politics makes it very difficult for the party to recruit staffers for any targeted constituency. This means that the central party has relatively few tools for inducing local volunteers to change how they campaign.

Thus, throughout the 2000s and the first half of the 10s, the use of digital technology was essentially augmentative and not transformative (Earl & Kimport, 2011). The problem is that Labour was not under evolutionary pressure to take the risks associated with expanding interactivity: having based its campaigning practices on the reliance on relatively stable—albeit slowly decaying—local party networks, the party was not faced with the challenge of having to

build a participatory infrastructure from scratch and with few resources. In the summer of 2017, a new set of factors were added to this situation. In the first place, the party could count on Momentum, the organization founded in 2015 in the wake of the Corbyn leadership campaign. As we will see in the next chapter, Momentum was probably the most effective organizational answer to the "what's next question" (Karpf, 2012) that regularly emerges at the end of electoral campaigns where the grassroots have been intensely involved. The circumstances of Momentum's birth led this organization—whose objective is to support the leadership and to promote the party's socialist and participationist transformation——to focus increasingly on campaigning. To all intents and purposes, the use of digital technologies is absolutely central to Momentum, both from the standpoint of organizing and from that of mobilizing. Momentum follows the model of the digital parties described by Gerbaudo, as its internal decision-making structure hinges on the My Momentum platform and its organization follows the dynamics of stratarchization, in which the tie between central offices and peripheral structure is maintained essentially through digital channels and "branding". As regards mobilizing, Momentum gave proof in 2015 and 2016 of knowing how to effectively leverage social media and WhatsApp groups to coordinate volunteers and provide focal points for protests and volunteering in support of Corbyn. As early as 2016, moreover, the organization was put in charge of introducing new automated phone banking tools integrated with the party database that enabled volunteers to contact potential Corbyn supporters independently—with a total of 100,000 calls (Peggs, 2017). Momentum stood out from the beginning for its skill in using social media and digital channels in general for direct communication with the base and the electorate, producing original content and engagement that, through the sharing mechanisms coordinated by its digital activists, managed to circumvent the mainstream media—whose coverage had been largely negative—and reach an audience even exceeding that of paid online ads. Though still a young organization, Momentum can boast considerable digital expertise and has from the outset shown a flair for using the Internet to organize electoral campaigns. In addition, its ideological affinity with the Sanders insurgency, which took place the year before the UK's 2017 general election, brought Momentum into contact with the ideas and practices promoted in the United States.

While the problems faced by the Labour Party itself are not comparable with those of outsider Democrats in the United States, the latter's position is in many respects similar to that of Momentum and the Corbynist movement more generally. The movement is extremely young,

with strong grassroots enthusiasm but few economic resources, and its conflicts with large sections of the party make it relatively weak. In this situation, it is necessary to make the most of the only available resource, viz., the base's enthusiasm. As a resource-poor newcomer, Momentum must experiment outside the traditional schemes in order to survive—like outsider candidates in the United States. As in the case of other connective campaigns, moreover, Momentum shares a horizontalist ethos and a belief in grassroots democracy, with a strong vein of digital optimism exactly like all digital parties (Gerbaudo, 2019). Nor must we forget the particular circumstances in which the 2017 election took place. As was described in Chapter 6, the party headquarters decided to play on the defensive, convinced of the need to limit the damage from what was expected to be a catastrophic electoral defeat. The official Labour campaign was thus preparing to pour resources into a series of constituencies that were held with a tiny margin, to prevent the total annihilation of the party and the loss of all its seats in parliament. But the Corbynist left was not content to wage a defensive campaign: aware that a resounding defeat would spell the end of the party's leadership, it was ready to set up an extremely aggressive campaign on social media focusing on the figure of Corbyn. But a burning question remained: with all resources deployed elsewhere, how could an offensive ground campaign be organized to take marginal seats held by other parties? It is here that Momentum came into play; by fielding both its sides—the organization that campaigned for the party, and the leader's praetorian guard—Momentum introduced new connective organizational tools and practices, setting up a ground game that was alternative to the official campaign (Nunns, 2018). Momentum complemented the Labour ground effort, above all in the contested marginal seats, in four ways: training new volunteers for canvassing and phone banking; strengthening local networks through recruitment; introducing new approaches to contacting and engaging voters; and lastly, by developing and implementing the My Campaign Map app—originally My Nearest Marginal—the most markedly connective element of the campaign. The numbers were impressive: in 2017, when Momentum had only 22,000 members (Silvera, 2017) and ten staffers in the central office, the group's app was used by 100,000 people and reached 30% of the UK's Facebook users with self-produced viral videos. On the day of the vote alone, activists contacted 400,000 people on WhatsApp and were able to count on 10,000 volunteers taking the day off.

The training program focused on door-to-door conversation techniques. Super-volunteers from the Sanders campaign gave lessons to new activists, who in turn were encouraged to replicate

such events (Kogan, 2019). In 2017, the program involved 3,000 activists, for whom the website provided papers with insights on campaigning that they could use to replicate the training events. All the groups selected for interviews stated that they replicated the training activities promoted by Momentum locally in 2019. In addition to covering canvassing and phone banking techniques, practical training centered on a theme dear to Bond and Exley, viz., the canvasser's genuine personal involvement in the conversation with voters. Canvassers were encouraged to seek common ground with their interlocutors, bringing their own experience, motivations and situated knowledge into play and listening actively to the interlocutors' comments and questions, committing themselves to entering into a relationship with their way of thinking, their needs and their fears in an authentic way, and above all to stressing the constant link between the party's policies and the daily experience of the interlocutors:

> There was a great training by national momentum last week, the thing they were saying is you can knock on a door you don't need to know everything in the manifesto or about Labour, you need to know why you're there knocking on a door and talking of politics with a stranger, you've got to put your story in it and think about how your life could change and how your life has been affected by Tory austerity and the best conversation on a doorstep is when you find that human connection. You know I had conversations with other people that work in NHS and see how privatization affects people or people that like me are scared for the future of their granma. See you should bring that, which is very human and it's less big picture, look we're all suffering here and we need to change. (0161 Podcast, 2019)

According to several respondents, this model of persuasion where canvassers put their own experience and persuasive skills on the line is extremely innovative compared to the usual way the Labour Party normally campaigns:

> We'd go out canvassing and repeat and send the groups, we'd encourage people to actually have political conversations on the doorstep, not just what they used to do, which is just are you voting Labour? Yes, no. Okay, bye. Like actually, if someone says, I'm not sure, no, then you're actually trying to have a conversation to persuade them. (A)

> I think that the main thing in terms of the general election was we were much more about a community organizing much more about having those conversations on the doorstep whereas the Labour party was usually more about data gathering, which is really important but we stressed the fact that we need to have those conversations, persuading people. (B)

As regards recruitment, in 2017 Momentum identified 30 marginal constituencies where it would concentrate its mobilization efforts on campaigning weekends. These constituencies were selected on the basis of being considered "winnable" and according to whether they had potential for leaving a "sustainable legacy" (Nunns, 2018), which means that the campaign felt it could build up a network of activists and maintain it over time. In addition, Momentum recruited 1.2 million volunteers for voting day activities. In 2019, support for local parties became more systematic, with the introduction of the "Labour Legends" program, which asked activists in Britain and abroad to take a week off to campaign for the party. The results were

astonishing: 2,000 volunteers were recruited, donating on average 2.6 weeks of work, for a total of 90 years of voluntary work (Cant, 2019). After declaring their willingness to participate in the program, the volunteers were assigned to teams acting in specific constituencies selected by the HQ. Also in 2019, Momentum launched a recruiting effort via e-mail, offering various positions to volunteers, in particular in order to develop a "Social Media Army" for making social media posts go viral by bypassing the algorithms (Skogan, 2020).

As regards local engagement, innovative new approaches were unevenly distributed across the country, as they depend essentially on local groups' creativity and vitality. As we will see in Chapter 10, Momentum activists in many cities adopted repertories of non-formal action adapted from the arena of social movements in order to create community and to involve citizens, especially those who are less politicized:

> Our regular programme of cultural and educational events meant that we provided an easy route for people inspired by our work to get involved and get to know our organisers. Over time these events also provided new activists with opportunities to develop their leadership and organising capacities. While organising politically can often seem daunting and confusing to the inexperienced, running a reading group, organising a red bloc or putting on a Northern Soul night often does not. In reality the skills required are similar, and it is through our open and freewheeling events calendar we were able to develop a skilled and capable cadre of leaders who gradually moved into more political activity. (Redmond & Rose, 2019)

As regards initiatives linked to the elections, the most intense efforts at innovation in the party's organizational repertoires probably came from the Manchester group. Manchester Momentum's strategy was to create social events such as concerts, football tournaments, debates and convivial evenings. On these occasions, activists met with the city's youth and distributed pledge cards encouraging interested citizens to declare their willingness to participate in campaigning activities, even though there was no ongoing election campaign at the time. So when the 2019 General Election was called, Manchester Momentum was already well-positioned organizationally, as it had collected over one thousand pledges in the previous months. Volunteers were recruited in abundance, making it possible to organize "away days" in eight other constituencies outside Manchester, with an average of about 300 participants per session and a complex logistical effort to organize activities and transportation (Sandor, 2019). The group also logged a new national record for daily contacts, reaching up to 2,000 people per day (0161 Podcast, 2019). It thus became the fulcrum of the campaign in the north-west of England, taking over entire local groups that were less able to mobilize (C). Manchester was not an isolated case: many particularly strong local Momentum groups decided to support other constituencies in mobilization efforts by sending their members on "away days". This was the course taken by Momentum Sheffield, for instance, though the group decided to support only

four constituencies where candidates had publicly endorsed the Corbyn Manifesto and had the reputation of being allies of the left (D). The Bristol group identified four more constituencies outside the city where they sent their activists on a weekly basis, but they put their resources at the disposal of all the South Wales constituencies needing support for ad hoc events (E).

The Manchester group was active throughout the year in implementing its "cultural strategy", which focused on creating a mixture of entertainment, community building and political mobilization:

> Like elsewhere around the country, Corbyn's leadership galvanised a segment of young people in Manchester who flocked to Labour and were keen to get involved. However, many found local branch meetings to be boring and not particularly welcoming. People like Rose, who was already involved in grassroots organising and energised by Corbyn's leadership, were concerned that the party would lose the new members and took a conscious decision to turn to culture instead. Members started organising parties, football clubs, film screenings and discussions to attract and engage people. Engagement then started to translate into political involvement. As Rose and Beth Redmond recently explained: "We would organise a football game on a Tuesday and the same players would turn up to an antifascist demonstration at the weekend." The aim was "making politics fun"; creating spaces for people to come together, develop a sense of camaraderie and shared sense of purpose. (Sandor, 2019)

"Making politics fun" was the watchword of the Manchester activists, as it encapsulates what they think the movement can add to compensate for the shortcomings of the party, which fails to sufficiently mobilize the younger generations and nonvoters because it is unable to inspire them and give them a sense of collective purpose:

> […] we talk about this concept of collective joy and having these big common experiences and obviously in the last thirty, forty years the succession of politicians have done their best to close these public spaces where you feel these moments of collective joy and opening them up for more people in order to make them experience this feeling of change of politics and how you do feel about yourself and your community, whether it's football or it's a rave or whatever I think these are special ways of doing it, and I think that's why people are in it for the long haul than would be if we just spent our time going to branch meetings. (0161 Podcast, 2019)

Something very similar was also undertaken in Glasgow, where the local Corbynist group organized "rave and register" events during rave parties to encourage young people to register to vote, as well as informal groups like FckBoris or games like Boris Bingo—where instead of using the standard numbered squares, players mark off the catchphrases and clichés uttered by the Prime Minister during his televised debates (F).

Manchester's brand of cultural strategy does not stop short at the threshold of the elections, but has inspired how Momentum activists organize electoral activities, trying to maintain a good level of sociality and communitarian spirit without sacrificing the effectiveness of collective action. Indeed, according to activists, community-building is exactly what it takes to motivate volunteers to commit themselves to the party's common purpose and elect Corbyn to Downing

Street. By harnessing a wide range of activities, the cultural strategy also enhances the skills and willingness to participate of all those volunteers who cannot or do not want to shoulder the burden of canvassing but who would like to lend a hand in organizing events and providing the campaign with logistical support:

> […] there are loads and loads of people that want to get involved but for a number of reasons they're not able to go and knock on doors. The support has been overwhelming, and yes you were saying we've seen these numbers on the final week in 2017 and the fact that we're seeing them now makes us think that we will be able to mobilize 400 people two weeks on. (0161 Podcast, 2019).

The cultural strategy did not have the sole purpose of creating an army of volunteers to be used during election mobilizations, but was part of a long-term project to build a permanent local activist base in support of the new pro-Corbyn socialist MPs.

Not all local groups were able to field a long-term strategy as successfully as Manchester Momentum. Nevertheless, early mobilization efforts bear fruit in the election season. Even when they failed in bringing about a stable level of activity, they were still useful in connecting activists with people outside the party and letting the latter know about local Momentum groups. These groups thus became vehicles of mobilization when the campaign generated attention and enthusiasm in the pro-Corbyn base (F). Many activists were positively overwhelmed by the unexpected wave of participation and enthusiasm:

> We rented a large empty shop right in the town centre which acted as a base for our volunteers. People lent us tables, chairs, sofas, cushions and we covered the large windows with posters. It was a fantastic hub full of activities like telephone canvassing, folding leaflets, sticking labels on envelopes, stuffing them, so something that less able people could do. A lovely atmosphere where members got to know each other. People could bring their children and dogs. We ran training sessions and had various events to entertain our volunteers with music, comedy, poetry provided by local talents. Even well-known speakers like Ken Loach and Paul Mason came. There was always some food available plus tea and coffee and a reasonably priced bar & eatery across the road that served food all day. We also encouraged the townsfolk to pop in and everyone was made very welcome. We were happily surprised by the amount of participation. (G)

Momentum succeeded in doing this because of the agility of its decentralized groups, which being loosely organized and weakly connected with the national headquarters could afford to act very informally, and free from the influence of the party's routines and power structures:

> Well for example the Labour Party is more procedural, not just anybody can start saying I'm the Labour Party, and start involving people and taking decisions, even practical ones. Those decisions have to be made with the right people in the room, following a specific rulebook, and this is because it is an organization with a lot of resources, a machine. You don't want people just taking over in undemocratic ways. Momentum has a lot more space to be free I guess, and to allow people to do things, so anybody can take the Momentum name and start acting immediately. While the features of Momentum it is smaller, less organized than Labour and more informal. (H)

This made it possible for activists to be involved in innovative new ways while maintaining an extremely informal style, with activities organized peer-to-peer through WhatsApp groups and

other informal channels of communication. Depending on the context and number of activists, WhatsApp groups were either self-organizing and open to all, or mere broadcasting instruments—i.e., non-admins could not respond (I). This enabled new recruits to integrate more easily into the organization than in the regular party, which is on average less willing to experiment and more rigid because of its consolidated bureaucratic routines and power structures (H). In this sense, Momentum serves as an effective "buffer zone" for bringing new people holding libertarian views into the party networks. When asked their opinion of the specific contribution of Momentum groups to the Labour Party's electoral campaigns, almost all the interviewees cited this aspect, viz., the ability of local groups to operate very informally and thus be open to different inputs and to horizontalist and communitarian repertories of action, where everyone's contribution is valued and hierarchies give way to free collaboration among peers. Moreover, Momentum groups showed themselves to be more practically minded and outward-looking oriented than local party branches, since the latter often expend more energy in internal struggles than in mobilization and voter persuasion. Especially in 2017, this led to a stalemate in the campaign: in the constituencies controlled by the party's right wing, Labour's campaign was extremely defensive, as the objective was to defend sitting MPs—and with them, a fundamental resource for control over local structures. By contrast, Momentum sought to make up for this lack of ambition:

> It's a kind of dynamism that we bring to the table. […] And Momentum stepped up to bridge the gap left open by the rest of the party. Momentum previously existed only to support Corbyn, a sort of faction sort of independent from the general electoral operation. But it stepped into the void where the Labour Party was falling short, and we were able to mobilize lots of people. So having established that credibility in 2017, also with some right wingers, because we did a lot to help different MPs, in 2019 when the left was more in control of the party. (H)

Thanks in no small measure to the organizational model borrowed from Bernie Sanders (H, J), the local groups often took a distinctly outward-looking approach and devoted their energies to building up extensive networks of activists, emphasizing practical tasks over cultivating small groups of hyper-loyal militants. This eminently practical outlook attracted people with working class backgrounds and relatively low levels of education to the movement, because of the down-to-earth nature of its activities and opportunities for putting everyone's abilities to good use:

> When Momentum was first set up, maybe not so much now, but certainly when Momentum was first set up, this was a more accessible way of involving working-class people in politics. I've never been to university for example. I'm a single parent. So I've no formal education. I come from the poorest area in the city. I live in a—what's called a council estate and I'm on the low income. So this when I first joined Momentum, Momentum was really reaching out to people like me. As it evolved, it's become more dominated by university graduates, younger people, people who want to maybe find a career pathway into politics and that sort of thing and the meetings have become more complex, more involving political theory

> and that sort of thing, but initially it was less political theory, more about just teaching kindness and socialist values in a basic and accessible way and I found that intrigued me. (D)

In some cases, the election campaign was an opportunity to try to inaugurate a Manchester-style cultural strategy, as the activist from Reading points out: though the city's group was relatively inactive, it made a major effort during the campaign to multiply its affiliates with non-formal and communitarian methods:

> So we did a watch party to the debates, we had this local pub that we use for our social events, they let us put the debate on the tv, we invited people there and use it as an opportunity to talk with people about the campaign of what we wanted to do, to involve them into more active campaigning. (J)

The cultural strategy worked in Reading, at least in the short term. While at the beginning of the campaign the group was extremely small and could only work in support of the canvassing activities organized by the party, by the end of the campaign the socialization and mobilization activities had widened the pool of available volunteers to the point where the group was able to manage canvassing sessions independently:

> A lot of what Momentum was doing at the start of the election campaign was trying to get people into the canvassing so we wanted them to be active in the campaign and they weren't necessarily active without that encouragement. Then towards the end of the campaign we started to run our own canvass sessions. (J)

Another example of a tactic for broadening involvement in view of the elections was the use of national protests launched by Momentum headquarters, such as the "Strike to win" campaign (Barnett, 2019). In the weeks leading up to the 2019 elections, Momentum activists showed their solidarity with university strikers in eleven cities with marginal constituencies, in return asking strike participants to support the Labour Party by volunteering for the general election. The Cambridge Group activist (H) described how the Momentum campaign against Barclays Bank, though not deemed particularly successful, served the essential function of putting small Momentum groups in contact with a pool of potential participants who were unconnected with the party networks, which it then succeeded in mobilizing for the upcoming electoral campaign.

8.2.2.4.1 The human infrastructure behind the map

In the runup to the 2017 elections, Momentum developed the first connective campaign tool in the history of the party, the My Nearest Marginal app, used by more than 300,000 people, 50,000 in the first week alone (Rhodes, 2019)—while Momentum at the time had around 24.000 members (Savage 2017). The app directed volunteers towards the marginal seat nearest to them. The app showed all constituencies with majorities of less than 7,000 votes. Users could click on each flagged constituency to see the events organized there, or enter their postcode to view a list of events organized in their vicinity in chronological order. The map also enabled users to

organize WhatsApp groups in each constituency and a self-organized car pool service; to give an example of the latter's effectiveness, it is estimated that in the first weekend after the app was launched, more than 100 people car-pooled to the constituency of Derby North alone (Rhodes, 2019).

In 2017, the effect of My Nearest Marginal (MNM) was extraordinary. Even if the data are not sufficient to demonstrate a correlation between Momentum's level of involvement in each seat and electoral performance, there were several constituencies—Brighton Kemptown, Hampstead, Kilburn, Lancaster and Fleetwood, for example—where a massive influx of volunteers matched gains in vote share of over 10%. (Nunns, 2018). In many constituencies, local organizers were literally overwhelmed by a flood of thousands of volunteers, to the point of struggling to assign tasks to each of them. In some cases, volunteers had to be sent back home, as there were not enough party activists to lead canvassing sessions:

> […] one night in Covent Garden there were over a hundred people and I ended up in the group with the constituency organizer and she said they had to take out a lot of MNM sessions because too many people arrived and they didn't have enough boards, you had 3 people at each door and it was a waste. [...] every time I went with MCM I arrived in situations where organizers were afraid because there were too many people and few boards and then manage such large sessions becomes a bit challenging. (K)

It became clear that the app was useful only if the local participatory infrastructure worked effectively: without local organizers who could manage the influx of volunteers, dividing them into groups, organizing tasks, delivering walk-sheets, coordinating activities and ensuring that data were correctly entered, the app could not deliver on its potential (I). In 2019, My Nearest Marginal was replaced by My Campaign Map (MCM), which retains the features of its predecessor but is an actual a map of the UK, with constituencies in different shades of red according to their marginality: the smaller the margin by which the constituency was won or lost in the previous elections, the more intense the shade of red. Morover, the new app adds a more sophisticated mechanism for suggesting events to users. While the earlier app showed events in a purely chronological order, an algorithm now cross-checks the priority assigned to each seat – not only on the basis of its marginality but also on the long term strategic priorities of the movement, defined as the estimated chances of leaving a sustainable legacy in the constituency - with the footfall at that seat: if too many activists have been directed to a specific constituency, it will lose priority in the interface, in favor of less well-covered places. The new version of the app thus increases the ability to track, by datafying activities; this in turn makes the tool more intelligent and responsive, as it can automatically reshape the information given to volunteers. The app is even more successful than My Nearest Marginal: as of November

2019, it had had 1.4 million hits and had been used to set up 21,000 canvassing events (Clarke, 2019).

The app's users—who do not necessarily have to be party members, as the platform is open-access—can engage in two levels of activity: they can use the map to find individual events, or sign up to the WhatsApp groups in each constituency to provide more continuous support for activities organized locally by the party and Momentum. This significantly reduces the costs of participation, as prospective participants can make a contribution even if they do not belong to stable local networks that require a steady commitment. Individuals can simply find out about events through the app, and freely choose to take part under their own conditions. As a result, the people who join events through My Campaign Map are mainly outside the local organizational networks—both non-members and inactive members. This leads to significant surges in the free labor pool available to local organizers (A, B, D, F, H, J), though there are also cases in which party activists decide to use the app to help in other constituencies on days when there are no planned activities in their own area (B, K). In addition to serving as a channel for occasional participation, MCM also facilitates the more lasting recruitment of people who join the team of activists throughout the campaign. In this case, the WhatsApp groups are the main tools for attracting and coordinating volunteers:

> Actually, after participants find where they're going they tend to join the WhatsApp group, and we did have a link to the WhatsApp groups online and many of them were quite successful. I mean usually people would use the website once and then go on, they don't tend to make friends. But these WhatsApp group were very useful because they allowed us to move things quickly if needed. (B)

One interviewee notes that My Campaign Map's eminently practical orientation may attract poorly with relatively little education, who may want to help with practical activities but are not interested in attending organizational meetings and political discussions, or taking part in the routines typical of local party groups:

> […] there is definitely a layer of people within the Labour movement, who find the meetings boring and tedious and a waste of time or just can't cope with the ridiculous amount of academic language used and everything about policy, procedure and blah, blah, blah, but they want to be actively helping to make change. So they want to sort of go to the bits where you're out and about and interacting with the community and that sort of thing. So I do feel strongly that My Campaign Map is a useful tool going forward for the Labour Party and for Momentum, because it is reaching out to people who don't come and sit through these two, three-hour long meetings where you're talking about process and policy. (D)

The platform has two filter levels for creating events: the first is that only party members can set up events, while the second is that each event must be approved by Momentum central staff. The interviews with Momentum activists engaged in the 2019 general election campaign indicate that while joining in campaigning is extremely free and open, activities are still

organized by people holding leadership positions in Momentum or the local party networks. This is for two main reasons. First, MCM does not give ordinary users access to party databases with voter data. To be able to canvass effectively, which is the main activity in British campaigns, they need to get in touch with a local group that organizes a session and holds the walk-sheets listing people to be contacted.[50] In other words, though one component—MCM—of the digital infrastructure allows relatively open access to any Labour member wishing to post events, access to the databases is still the prerogative of the party's locally organized structures. The digital infrastructure's affordances play against each other, giving volunteers the impression that they have considerable impact on how the campaign is organized, but then undermine this impact by using fairly traditional patterns to manage the data needed for canvassing. In fact, the decisions on who leads canvasing sessions are firmly in the hands of the local party—and its secretary in particular (K)—which annually elects an organizer in each ward (i.e., each subdivision of a constituency) or leaves campaigning to the candidate. In some cases, Momentum activists who are particularly close to the party executives have been able to organize sessions and access data, but only with the approval of the party's local campaigning team (J). In other cases Momentum activists have been relegated to a subordinate role because of lack of access to data:

> To an extent, so most of the stuff that we were doing we were joining the Labour campaign that already existed. The reason for that is that the Labour Party is quite well organized in our city, so they had access to all the data, we didn't have access to data, so it didn't make sense for us to go door knocking separately, we wouldn't know which doors have already been knocked, risking disrupting the work they were doing instead of building on our own. What we did separately was marketing and getting people involved. (H)

Obviously, this does not mean that there is no room for Momentum groups to self-organize. First, as we saw in the previous section, activists can take action in a number of areas left uncovered by the party, concerning the creation of events, the training of volunteers and the construction of a network of communitarian and informal activism—"marketing and getting people involved". Second, when one or more Momentum activists succeed in being allowed to organize canvassing sessions—either because they are on the party board, or because there are not enough official organizers—they can decide to take a relatively open and decentralized approach, assigning the organization and management of the activities to WhatsApp groups or assemblies (J).

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[50] The way access to databases is structured means that it is the activists who create the WhatsApp groups, precisely because anyone else would have difficulty in leading campaigning activities without access to data.

A second reason that explains the continuing centrality of the traditional organizational network concerns the relative complexity of the organization of persuasion activities, given that managing large numbers of activists calls for planning and organizational skills that are not within everyone's reach. Canvassing requires two types of organizational skills. The first type could be called technical skills, including a knowledge of how sessions operate, the technical niceties of data entry, and potential problems that volunteers might encounter:

> To run the board you have to have experience, because it is a fundamental role and the board includes a roadgroup, which is usually a street or two nearby, but in many areas they are not so close, and therefore the fact of being able to read the data, understand that the data you write is the correct one is crucial. For that reason, taking a random person that comes from MCM you risk not only to waste time but also to make a lot of people waste their time too, who then if it is an experience negative say "hello I won't come anymore". (K)

Other problems may be related to the complexity of using digital database access tools (L) and knowledge of the local context, hot topics and the candidate (J).

A second set of skills relates more generally to the ability to coordinate large numbers of volunteers and to make the experience of participation as fruitful as possible, both for individual volunteers and for the party. As we will see in the case of the Hendon constituency, it is first necessary to have a fairly precise idea of how many participants will show up so that a sufficient number of activists with experience in leading campaigning groups and a good knowledge of the local area can be assigned to lead canvassing boards. Second, it is necessary to produce enough paper material for data collection and to create synergy between the data collection staff and data entry staff—two separate tasks, since regular activists do not have access to party databases. Lastly, it can be helpful to add outreach to other constituencies to the activities indicated on My Campaign Map, so that the influx of volunteers can be somewhat more predictable. The ability to organize participants' work effectively can be essential to the success of a campaign, especially if large numbers of people are involved. In such cases, the main problem is to give tasks to all participants, without wasting their potential work, but also without disappointing the expectations of volunteers from other constituencies who are hoping to engage in useful activities. According to the interviewee in Hendon, well-organized activities can greatly expand the influx of participants:

> We actually got like quite a good reputation early on because of that. If you went to Hendon, you can make a difference. You could knock on all the doors, talk to local people, you weren't going to be standing for an hour near a train station, waiting to get aboard to then spend 20 minutes knocking on doors to speak to one person to go home which is what was happening elsewhere at the start as they were trying to organize. So, I think like organizational advice we got from the community organizer was really helpful with that. […] Again, it's keep coming back. So we say, "Look, I think this is the place you come to campaign. Get

> to know it, get to know us and keep coming back over and over and over again. […] if you come to help me, and you're knocking on our doors, you will speak to a lot of people, you will make a difference, you will not be like wasting your time queuing up for polls". We had a target. (L)

The party has historically addressed the problem of organizational skills by entrusting the task of leading the sessions to experienced activists; as we have just seen, this does not change with the rise of connective campaigning. At the same time, it is important to note that even the Labour Party participants tend not to question the hierarchies of the campaign. In line with the literature on connective campaigning analyzed in the previous sections, Labour Party and Momentum activists and organizers tend to converge on the concrete goal of electing the candidates and winning the election. Considerations on how democratic the organization of campaigning activities may or may not be take second place to the need to be effective. This leads volunteers to accept the leadership of the party appointees, who are recognized as both legitimate and competent. All respondents stated that they did not experience particular conflicts during the campaign, and found the climate to be pleasant all in all, as party activists proved to be kinder and less competitive than usual (H) and there was a general willingness to listen, cooperate and learn from others (F). The only reported frictions arose from older people's difficulty in using digital tools (D), a problem that was usually solved through specific training or by reassigning tasks.

From what we have seen so far, even if the party has a well-developed digital infrastructure and an open-access map, its human infrastructure still has an absolutely key role. This is because the databases do not guarantee access except to certain specific party figures, but also because local activism networks manage effectively to have control over the activities promoted on My Campaign Map. This depends only partially on MCM's affordances, and in particular on the need to be members to post events. What is undoubtedly more important is the ability of party activists to present themselves as legitimate leaders, and participants' tendency to accept the classical hierarchy in planning activities, although sometimes with room for peer-to-peer coordination—although always avoiding interference with traditional persuasion efforts.

To deepen our understanding of the issue, the party activists were asked to do a thought experiment during the interviews: imagining what the 2019 election campaign would have been like if local branches of Labour and local Momentum groups had not existed, but all they had had was MCM. This abstract question was intended to stimulate the interviewees' reflexivity, urging them to pinpoint the specific contribution that the human infrastructure made in the model of connective campaigning promoted by the Labour Party. To a large extent, the

responses focused on the considerable difficulties of campaigning on the basis of digital infrastructures alone. In listing what would be lost if there were no local structures, the respondents did not deviate much from what has been said so far with respect to the role played by human infrastructures. In particular, they stressed that a permanent network of local party activists is fundamental both in developing technical and organizational skills for conducting campaigns and mobilizing volunteers, and as regards a detailed knowledge of the local area and of the candidates (D, F, H, L). According to some of the respondents, a second set of problems relates to the fact that local party groups have an irreplaceable network-building role in maintaining a stable pool of volunteers that are always ready to act without having to start the mobilization process from scratch every time (H, L). In addition, a network of local activists serves to establish lasting connections between the party and local communities, providing them with greater persuasive capacity and credibility in campaigning than an effort carried out only during the election campaign could ever have.

However, some more surprising answers cast light on some unexamined aspects of this form of connective campaigning. For example, the Cambridge interviewee noted that in some ways MCM's purpose is to allow campaigning activities to take place even in places where local groups are weak or absent. If groups are weak and struggle to develop networks of activism because of poor organizational/communication skills or because of an unfavorable environment, MCM can make up for this deficit by facilitating the influx of volunteers from other places or by increasing the proposed events' visibility—i.e., reducing information barriers to reaching out. If there are no groups whatsoever, MCM can facilitate the creation of local groups active in the short run, as being able to post events and WhatsApp groups on the map significantly increases noticeability, removes communication barriers and cuts information costs. The interviewee from Reading refered to this potential of "focalizing", an expression that recalls Gerbaudo's (2012) theorizing about digital platforms focusing attention and attracting participation towards certain organizational poles. In general, however, the more common interpretation is that MCM cannot function effectively without a core of local party activists. Several respondents thus saw MCM as a mere mobilizing tool, useful in expanding the pool of free labor available to local organizers in the short timeframe of the campaign (F, I).

To sum up, while My Campaign Map is extremely open in its call to action—anyone can access it and take part in campaigning events and groups—it does not in fact overturn the approach to organizing specific campaigning activities, since its affordances do not permit any real bottom-

up control over the campaign. The fact that the data are held by the party and all activities rely to some extent on traditional party networks enables the party to steer participation towards the desired priorities. This form of connective campaigning simply guarantees a) more personalized individual involvement and easier access to information on how to be useful without belonging to a local networks, and b) a "connective" expansion of the local volunteer pool. The fact that this form of connective campaigning is less explicitly top-down might also attract libertarian participants, who enjoy the perception of—controlled—personalization of involvement, the relatively high degree of delegation in organizing certain activities, and the overall climate of peer cooperation:

> This networked content-sharing, of signing up to join car pools to help in marginal seats, of phone banking and of door-knocking in groups, offered activists, myself included, a sense of belonging and a belief that all of our contributions were valued equally. Such a notion was reinforced by the horizontality of the campaigning organization, in that there was no requirement to seek authorization about sharing content or making a decision about what activity you felt able to participate in. There was no chain of command telling activists when, where or what to share and no rigid script to stick to when talking face-to-face with the electorate. Of course, there were organized events and technical infrastructure devised by the national Momentum team, but the message that got through online and on the ground was "here are the tools, now go out and canvass". Momentum's inclusive messaging and its internal structure that emphasized organizationally enabled participation made it clear that politics was something that *you* can do, which afforded each supporter a sense of agency. (Rhodes, 2019: 181-2)

The platform allows a medium to high level of interactivity, as users can interact, but only in WhatsApp groups and events created and put on the map by local leaders. The level of engagement is relatively low: only people who already belong to the organization at the local level can organize activities through the platform. Once again, this is a form of top-down engagement which sets limits to the scope of volunteer action. It should also be emphasized that even local activists do not have significant control over MCM's operation, as there is no feedback mechanism whereby they can affect the priorities that the algorithm developed by Momentum headquarters assigns to seats (F, J). In fact, Momentum designed MCM as an instrument based on a radical form of centralization, with no interest in supporting and developing local groups. MCM is entirely focused on maximizing participation in the short term, with the assumption that coordination effects must stem from the workings of the app itself and not from the relationship between local groups and the center or between local groups. This is perfectly clear to activists:

> So, Momentum central office organization was based on basically a sort of distributed organizing technique, wasn't organized around the existing branches of Momentum existing in different places. So they created a whole series of organizing tools which were essentially a kind of sales funnel to get people to go where they would hear from someone telling them what they should do and then enter a WhatsApp group to get more information on campaigning. (H)

The app effectively optimizes Momentum's scarce resources, even at the risk of sometimes dampening spontaneous coordination among human actors. At the same time, however, its data driven mechanisms are at least partially undermined by the fact that control of targeting data remains in the hands of the Labour Party, which has never shared them with Momentum in their entirety (H, I). This further detracts from the platform's effectiveness, and is also a barrier to its democratization.

8.3. Conclusions

Before concluding, it is necessary to review the many issues raised in this examination of the new forms of digitally enabled campaigning. These can be summed up in two sets of considerations. The first concerns the specific mechanisms of connective campaigning, i.e., the generalizations that can be formulated after analyzing the various cases. Specifically, I will identify several compensatory mechanisms between digital and human infrastructures which are intended to ensure that the campaign leadership continues to be able to manage volunteers in an increasingly digitalized environment, albeit with varying forms of integration between the different components of the campaigns. Second, it is necessary to locate the analysis within the theoretical framework and the case study presented in the previous chapters, underscoring the interrelation between value change and the development of communication technologies in the context of participation in political parties.

8.3.1. Infrastructures, affordances and management

After presenting the concept of connective campaigning and a three-stage framework for analyzing and comparing its empirical manifestations, I have analyzed four specific cases. Regarding the overall structure of the campaigns, the analysis confirms Stromer-Galley's thesis that control of connective campaigns is fundamentally top-down, although in forms that have been updated to the digital age by partially replacing vertical management with digital platforms. The analysis also makes it possible to expand on Stromer-Galley's thinking in two directions: first, I argue that campaigns do not rely only on controlled interactivity, but on both controlled interactivity and controlled engagement. It is above all certain forms of engagement that are tightly structured, as can be seen from the relationship between staff and volunteers and from the fact that volunteers' action is determined by platform affordances, but they cannot change how the platforms work. Interactivity is often relatively free, precisely because controlled engagement puts specific limits on volunteers' freedom. In one form of engagement

that is not always strictly controlled, volunteers can create new groups in an autonomous and "entrepreneurial" way (Flanagin et al., 2006, 2012): almost all campaigns provide for such an option—although they try, as we saw in the cases of Obama and Labour, to exert a influence over the groups. Only the Sanders campaign, whose version of connective campaigning was the most "collectivist", reverses the process of group formation, putting it under the control of the campaign leadership.

In addition, unlike Stromer-Galley, I argue that the control of interactivity and engagement is not only top-down, through manipulating platform affordances, but also depends on how digital and human infrastructures are structured and mutually integrated. For human infrastructures in particular, two aspects emerged from the analysis. The first is organizational, relating to staffers' ability to control not only how the platforms operate, but also how volunteers use them. This transforms some affordances that have potential for organizational decentralization into mere tools of work-extraction. The second aspect is cognitive: volunteers adapt to a cognitive schema that sees the official management as the only real "owners" of the campaign, and thus feel they must ultimately submit to it in order to ensure that the effort is successful.

In conclusion, the cases analyzed show that there are compensatory mechanisms in the structuring of digital and human infrastructures which are managed directly by campaign leadership and designed to maintain control over volunteer work: the more platforms allow volunteers to access data and the Internet's affordances, the more the human infrastructure is organized in a way that offsets these forms of decentralization by applying other mechanisms of control and constraint over volunteers' activities. This was especially true of the Obama and Labour campaigns: the former used trained super-volunteers as go-betweens for the campaigning base and state staffs, while the latter essentially neutralized the relative openness of the platform by keeping data firmly in the hands of local party officers. The more the human infrastructure can act independently, the more leaders will attempt to control platforms and data—as shown by the Dean campaign, where efforts to get spontaneously formed activist groups to toe the campaign's line by integrating them with centralized platforms met with little success. In the extreme case of the Sanders campaign, the leadership decided to exert control over both group formation and digital infrastructures, delegating to volunteers only practical tasks or the replication of "branded" and ready-made initiatives such as barnstorms.

8.3.2. Connective campaigning and libertarianism

In Chapter 4, I discussed the elective affinities between digital technologies and post-material libertarianism. At this point, we can now clear the field of one of the possible affinities, viz., the democratizing and decentralizing potential of Web affordances: in connective campaigns, these affordances are manipulated in such a way as to prevent bottom-up control over the campaign's aims and how activities are organized. At the same time, however, it should be noted that the democratic potential of the Internet's decentralizing affordances is not the only possible affinity between libertarianism and digital technologies. Chapter 4 discussed three points of conjunction between value and technological change: liberation from organizations, i.e., the growing possibility for citizens to act outside the perimeter of collective entities that are often perceived as too invasive and demanding and thus unable to guarantee enough room for individual preferences; liberation of organizations, in particular through the disappearance of the mechanisms of vertical and bureaucratic management and coordination; and lastly, the increasing opportunities for personalizing involvement, providing citizens with wider margins of self-expression and choice. On the other hand, as we saw from the examination of libertarian movement parties in Chapter 3, in many cases libertarian citizens' decision to join certain organizations has more to do with the organizations' ability to stimulate the post-materialist social imaginary than with their actual capacity for democratization—think for example of the Green parties and digital parties, whose ability to democratize the party form are dubious at best, but this has not prevented them from cashing in on the post-materialist and "participationist" imaginary.

It is important to note that connective campaigning can stimulate discourses and imaginaries informed by digital optimism. This depends on two widely explored features: the disappearance of forms of vertical management and the return to massive volunteer involvement, after a lengthy period of increasingly professionalized campaigns. The change of pace in management is clear: the chains of command tend to disappear from sight behind the affordances of digital platforms and the free consent given by volunteers to official organizers; there is a transition from top-down control to complex organizational and technological techniques that construct volunteers' interaction and action spaces. Change in the management approach also has an impact on the work carried out by volunteers and their perceived level of independence, since they are delegated greater responsibility and some scope for self-organization in certain activities—although always within the bounds set by campaign leaders. As Shabi (2019) shows,

this is reflected by the fact that electoral campaigns are experienced as moments of bottom-up self-organization and as the creation of communities focusing on often radical collective goals. The idea of a community of intent, self-organizing outside hierarchical relations, can only stimulate the libertarian ethos of post-materialist citizens. At the same time, all this is possible because postmodern campaigning brings a return to a significant level of citizen involvement, alongside and often replacing professionals. Without this change, it would be completely impossible to adopt a libertarian ethos within the campaign. It could even be assumed that, given their increasing usefulness, volunteers tend to end up acting in a fundamental zone of organizational uncertainty for parties and candidates (Panebianco, 1982): campaigns that base much of their activities on volunteers would collapse without them. In Panebianco's theory, the fact that an actor is decisive in a zone of organizational uncertainty ensures that this actor can exert a certain leverage on the organization. Is this also true of connective campaigns? As for the organization dynamics inherent in the campaigns, the empirical evidence has so far been negative: even when the volunteer base has rebelled against leadership, for example in the #GetFISARight mobilization, the massive imbalance in resources and the fact that, ultimately, goals are shared has crushed the power of the base. But this leverage could operate further upstream, not so much on whether volunteers can withdraw their consent during the campaign, but on their willingness to take part in it in the first place. It is certainly no coincidence that all the candidates who deployed forms of connective campaigning are for the most part anti-establishment candidates who appeal to people's elite-challenging tendencies. The leverage implicit in the need to build broad volunteer bases thus operates mainly in the selection of candidates and/or through the ability to improve the prospects of candidates who are often well outside the political mainstream. These are indeed very indirect mechanisms of influence, but they must nevertheless be pointed out in order to provide a complete picture.

Lastly, it is important to remember that connective campaigning lends itself perfectly to the need for personalization which, as we saw in Chapter 4, goes hand in hand with the processes of individualization. Skogan is extremely clear on this point:

> The digital tools lower the cost of participation for activists by providing structured, detailed and easily accessible information, direction and abundance of choice, and aids in network-building between activists. Through highly centralised mobilisation efforts, deciding beforehand what sort of activism is important, Momentum allows for activists to choose on an individual basis when, where and how they may participate by providing an abundance of choice. […] In its mobilisation efforts, Momentum has recognised that potential activists may not sense that their participation will make a difference, or may not feel comfortable participating in the activities Momentum organises. Momentum attempts to solve this problem by providing an abundance of choice, setting up a wide array of possible actions to participate in but letting people base

> their activism on individual preferences like place and time, the type of action, and the amount of participation required. (2020: 66)

In conclusion, it can be argued that connective campaigning reinforces libertarian orientations through a good level of personalization, organizational change—especially changes that curtail forms of vertical management—and the construction of a democratizing and elite-challenging ethos, primarily through organizational decentralization and the emergence of anti-establishment candidates.

9 Organizing for democratization: the making of Momentum

As seen in chapter 7, Momentum is informed by a dual strategy that is reflected in a multiplicity of objectives. The first strategic strand leads the organization to attempt to influence Labour's behavior in the representative arena. This, on the one hand, means campaigning to achieve electoral successes, but also fighting within the party to change the methods of selection of candidates and push for certain policies to enter the official manifesto; a fundamental part of these battles is waged to support the left-wing leadership and its strengthening through the conquest of elective positions within the party. The other strand of this dual strategy revolves around the ambition to foster extra-parliamentary participation, in alliance with social movement and acting in their vein. Both strategic strands are informed by an approach in which the democratisation of procedures and social relations is absolutely central; this means, on the one hand, improving accountability mechanisms and increasing the power of members in relation to the decisions taken by the party, but also promoting more horizontal and less formalized organizational forms. Skogan (2020) summarizes the role of Momentum within the Labour Party defining it "vehicle for socialism", a new form of participatory socialism to pursue through the transformation of the party and the use of its resources. Dennis (2019) has instead preferred to define Momentum as a "movement faction", underlining as it acts both as a pressure group within the party - contesting intra-party ballots and pushing for reforms – and as a social movement in other arenas, that is building its own nonhierarchical forms of engagement at the local level and using informal channels of mobilization. Muldoon and Rye (2020) propose to interpret Momentum as a "party-driven movement", that is a movement emerged from a party, initiated by internal actors allying with social movement networks outside the party and importing some of the features of movements within a party that in many respects continues to behave like other traditional parties.

Momentum is the answer to what in chapter 8 I have identified as the "what's next question" (Karpf, 2012), that is the interrogative that the protagonists of any grassroot campaign formulate regarding how to keep the mobilized citizens active:

> Momentum exists to channel the energy and enthusiasm from the Jeremy Corbyn for Labour Leader campaign, using the experiences and creativity of ordinary people to increase power and activity at a grassroots level, based on the principles of participatory democracy and solidarity. Through this process, we aim to make people more powerful in society and build Labour into the transformative governing party of the twenty-first century (Klug et al., 2016: 40).

The opportunity to give continuity to Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign is provided by the database developed by Jon Lansman to collect donations and data from all the supporters involved. The objective of Lansman's data collection had the practical purpose of allowing the coordination of the campaign, but it also looked at the strategic objective of using it to unify the left of the party and those coming from anti-austerity social movements in a new organization. At the same time, the emerging group of new activists from social movements had been looking for a vehicle to make the transition to electoral politics; also in this sense the campaign and the database appear a unique opportunity (Schneider, 2016; Nunns, 2018).

Momentum was launched officially on October 8, 2015, less than a month after the election of Corbyn as party leader. The organization is formed around a leadership group composed by Lansman - the New Left veteran - and three "movimentist" activists coming from the anti-austerity and libertarian social movements. It is a compromise choice, aimed at giving some influence within the organization to both of the two dominant strands of the pro-Corbyn movement. The new organization is therefore fragmented due to different interpretations of its future role: the sections more linked to the Labour left are clearly more inward-oriented, that is, focused on internal struggles and the reform of the party, while the movimentists are mainly interested in using the Labour Party as the pivot of an alliance of all the anti-austerity movements. In addition to the dilemmas regarding strategic priorities, the new organisation must decide on its structure; from the outset there are two alternatives: a classically Labour structure, based on local groups electing delegates to a national assembly, or a structure more focused on individual voting rights, regardless of local structures? As seen in chapter 7, the strategic dilemma is basically resolved by the mounting of internal conflict within the party. Until the summer of 2016, Momentum remains substantially inactive, in order then to return to prominence in occasion of the tentative of the PLP to overthrow the leadership of the party. In that context Momentum begins an aggressive mobilization in support of Corbyn, both organizing the campaign for his re-election and through unconventional methods such as rallies and protests in front of Westminster. The new focus falls more markedly on intra-party issues, while its renewed popularity brings the organization to grow substantially, with the number of members rising to 50,000 by mid-2017 – from the less than 10,000 at the beginning of 2016 – and local groups reaching 150.

This chapter has the aim to explore how Momentum tried to respond to the organizational dilemma concerning its form of intraorganizational democracy and what have been the effects of the chosen path. As happened in the case of the strategic dilemma[52], it is also in this case internal conflict that precipitates decisions and produces cohesion within the leadership, that acts staging a fully fleged coup. In particular, as will be seen shortly, the alleaged attempt by members of the Trotskyist group Alliance For Worker's Liberty to take control of the organization leads Lansman to promulgate in secret a new constitution. The new constitution deprives local groups of any influence and transfers decision making on the digital platform MyMomentum, through individual voting procedures. This organizational model, similar in every respect to that of the digital parties described in chapter 3, will have the effect to weaken both local groups and the mechanisms of intraorganizational linkage, initiating an irresistible dynamic of centralization and stratarchization. These trends will bring widespread discontent among activists and members, who will see in this drift of the organization a grave betrayal of of Momentum's mission as an organization born with the aim of democratizing the party and give direct say to common members. To conclude, I will analyze the internal debate initiated on the occasion of the renewal of the executive in 2020, highlighting the proposals for reform and the stakes of the contest.

9.1 Delegated or individualized democracy? The birth pangs of a digital organization

As previously seen, the discourse on democracy is central to Momentum. The organisation has invested a lot on discourses on the democratization of Labour and has tried to position itself as a democratic vanguard. Of course, it is important to define what democracy means in this case. And precisely the specification of the concept, or its organizational incarnation, has been the spark of bitter conflicts within the movement, exploded between 2016 and 2017 and partly re-emerged in the competition for the election of the new executive – National Coordinating Group - in 2020. From the beginning two general interpretations of intraorganizational democracy and as many options to give it a shape emerged – general interpretations and organizational options that as will be seen are only partially overlapping. On the one hand the distinction is between those who opt for a formal democratization, based on the devolution of powers to members and

[52] As seen in chapter 7 Momentum has faced the choice of concentrating more or parliamentary-centred activities or movement-building.

others, essentially "movimentist" activists, for whom democracy is something more informal, decentralized and participatory, focused on the reaching of consensus among all participants and on the collective creation of political cosciousness (Avril, 2018; Skogan, 2020). The latter tend to be very suspicious of delegate democracy, the intermediary mechanisms and creation of cadres which this entails; they are also unwilling to participate in endless meetings marked by ideological confrontation, and believe that it is important to allow the direct participation of everyone in every important decision (Gerbaudo, 2020a).

As far as organizational options are concerned, the question is whether to reproduce the typical representative system of the Labour Party, based on the election of delegates from each local group, in a democratised version, or an OMOV constitution, in which each member can individually take part in decisions outside any representative mechanism and bypassing local groups. Movimentists tend to converge on the latter option, not only because of a preference for decisions on an individual basis, but because this mechanisms allow more freedom of action for local groups and an open door policy on affiliations (Kogan & Kogan, 2019): if local groups are not ingrained in the decision-making process, there is less need to exert controls or pressure on them in order to maintain organisational coherence. The different attitudes emerge quickly: the organization is provisionally equipped with a democratic structure based on delegates, as Lansman strives to avoid the excessive multiplication of local groups in order to prevent the creation of puppet groups used by other organizations to take control of the movement; on the contrary, the movimentist components of the directive don’t want to accept any containment of the radical openness of Momentum, and are favorable to the flourishing of local groups, also by virtue of the hypothesis to transform them in outward-oriented action spaces, stripped of the constitutional role of identifying delegates. The problem, however, is that the construction of a direct democracy model based on online voting tends at the same time to decrease the costs of building local groups (Karpf, 2012) - by virtue of the fact that the franchise can be granted with fewer concerns and controls given its lesser value - but also to discourage their creation (Gerbaudo, 2019) as these no longer function as the necessary element of decision making procedures. In fact, despite the desire to develop a model of organisation capable of make the decentralized initiative of the members flourish, the movementists tend to opt for an organizational form that does not significantly encourage the development of local groups and indeed, in some ways, as will be seen, strongly centralizes power. In addition, the open door

policy favoured by the movimentist leaders and strongly opposed by the expert Lansman will then create the conditions for the alleaged attempt of coup by extreme left groups.

As already happened with the strategic dilemma described in chapter 7, it is once again internal conflict that leads Momentum's leadership to converge on the choice of a specific organizational form. Beginning from the foundation of Momentum and the provisional institution of decision-making system based on delegates from local groups, various groups of seasoned activists of the extra-Labour radical left, conventionally defined as Trotskyists and largely affiliated with the Alliance for Workers Liberty - AWL - begin to infiltrate local groups, in order to take advantage of their greater experience to take control of the organization (Dorey, 2017). These actors are not particularly interested in Labour's electoral fortunes, as to the use of the new organization as a platform for their propaganda and for the search for visibility. The pro-Corbyn columnist and activist Owen Jones refers to them using the following words:

> […] the sectarians are highly disciplined, highly organised, and highly experienced. The interests of their own sects are far more important than any movement. Only their sect, they believe, has the correct politics: everybody else's are fatally flawed. They have no faith in the Labour party. Momentum, for them, is an embryonic political party. The prize is Momentum's contact data, containing the details of tens of thousands of people. At an opportune time, they will walk away from Labour and found a new party, which will get 300 votes in a byelection. They will triumphantly hail these as 300 votes for socialism. These sectarians must be stopped. They are throttling the enthusiasm and excitement of the young people who have been inspired in the last 18 months (Jones, 2016a[53])

In many pro-Corbyn accounts (Barca & Lansman, 2016; Basset 2019a; Elgot, 2016; Gerbaudo, 2019; Kogan & Kogan, 2019; Murray, 2016; Pickard, 2018; Skogan, 2020 Syal & Mason, 2016), the Trotskyists are defined as a political culture on their own, not riconducibile neither to the veterans of the Labour left neither to the movimentists; they are the only component of Momentum that is significantly devoted to delegate democracy, beacause they see it as a necessary part of their strategy to conquer the organization. Trotskyists are described as a noisy minority of extremely experienced and time-rich activists, able to exploit these resources in order to get in control of local groups composed largely of young activists, most of whom highly inexperienced and with less spare time. The problem with this kind of activism is that, generating a conflict for the control of the internal structures of Momentum, it prevents the organization from playing its role of organizational support to the leadership of the Labour Party and inhibits all other activities defined as vital by the leadership of Momentum and large

[53] Retrieved at: https://www.theguardian.com/global/commentisfree/2016/dec/07/momentum-hope-saved-saboteurs-sectarian-labour

part of the membership. In short, as the worsening of conflict within the Labour draws Momentum activists towards internal struggles within the party, so the conflict within Momentum pulls them towards another level of intraorganizational conflicts, in a series of Chinese skatole that ends up paralyzing the Corbynist movement.

The latent conflict precipitates in 2016 during the first National Committee of the new organization, elected by delegation from sixty local groups. Object of the discussion is the overcoming of the provisional structure in favor of a system based on OMOV. In a heated confrontation, the proposal is rejected by a very small majority led by the Trotskyist groups, despite the huge support from the membership: a survey of all members held between 2016 and 2017, on the occasion of the launch of the new constitution of Momentum, shows as these largely favoured the option of the individual vote: 80% of the voters opted for the OMOV, against 12% of preferences for the delegated democracy (Momentum, 2017).

Given the rejection by the National Committee and the newly created steering committee, Lansman decides to act and, in accord with national leaders, launches the aforementioned membership survey in order to demonstrate the broad support for the digital OMOV. At the same time, work begins on the secret drafting of a new constitution. Once sure of the membership's manifest consent, Lansman and his associates promulgate the new constitution, dissolving the National Committee and the Steering Committee. The coup is made possible by the fact that Lansman himself, as already seen, was still in that moment the owner of the database of the Corbyn campaign and therefore the personal holder of the Momentum brand and all the annexed resources. With an email, the leadership informs members that the new constitution is ready and asks for ratification by individual vote, quickly obtained:

> Most of our members joined Momentum because they support Jeremy Corbyn and want to help him achieve what he is trying to do. I have also taken legal advice, based on a review of a substantial body of Momentum records, which is that in order to operate effectively as an organisation with members, Momentum needs written rules or a constitution with which all its members agree, and in our current circumstances, the only way of agreeing such a constitution which is binding on the relationship between the organisation and our members is to seek the individual consent of each of our members and affiliates. It would commit to the Labour party, create an internal election and management structure and allow effective campaigning techniques. In short it would become an effective element within the Labour party and have it as its priority (Kogan & Kogan, 2019: 304)

Besides the obliteration of the delegated system, the new constitution defines the official affiliation of Momentum to the Labour Party: from then on only the members of the party can join it:

> All Momentum members will have to be Labour party members by 1 July so sectarian groups that are not able to be involved in Labour also cannot be involved in Momentum (MacAskill & Hacillo, 2017[54])

The double move is the final blow to the tentative of the extreme left to take possession of Momentum and strengthens the control of the next OMOV elected NCG as a result of Lansman's resignation right after the coup (Pickard, 2018*).* As in the days of New Labour, OMOV is justified as an instrument aimed at giving voice to the majority of members, against the disproportionate influence of self-selected vociferous left activists; the difference, this time, is the New Left's heirs who strike. The move is heavily criticized as giving "Lansman and his allies more power to expel far-left factions and activists from Momentum" (Silvera, 2017; Stewart & Syal, 2017) and as the consolidation in control of a small London based faction (Hannah, 2018), betraying "its origins as a spontaneous campaigning group and become too like a 'top-down vehicle' for enforcement" (Wallis, 2019). The defeated respond giving life to a new organization, Grassroot Momentum, that fails to survive to the first meeting (Bassett, 2019b).

9.2 Digital "undemocracy"

The adoption of OMOV carries Momentum towards an organizational form comparable to that of the digital parties described by Gerbaudo (2019) and Deseriis (2020). The voting rights of the members are exercised through the platform MyMomentum; the members can use the platform to elect the NCG, answer to consultations promoted from the executive or to subject motions, provided that these are supported by at least 5% or 1,000 members and then voted by 30% of those entitled. As in digital parties, members struggle to promote successful motions and voting opportunities are almost entirely decided by the leadership, with often unpredictable timing and non formalized procedures; the most striking case regards the vote on Momentum's endorsement to the candidate successor of Corbyn, with options selected not through open primaries but set up by the NCG (BBC, 2020; Hermanns, 2020). This leads, also in the case of Momentum, to diffused criticisms regarding a model of digital democracy regarded as only apparently democratic and in truth tendentially plebiscitarian, given the almost total monopoly of the HQ on the timing and the content of consultations (Skogan, 2020; M). In his study on the relations between local groups and HQ of Momentum, James Dennis (2019) shows how the organization's incardination on a digital infrastructure according to the logic of distributed

[54] Retrieved at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/04/momentum-relaunch-factionalism-jon-lansman-labour

centralization (Bond & Exley, 2016; Gerbaudo, 2019) in fact leads to a radical disconnection between the various organizational layers. On the one hand, while there are digital organisations such as 38Degrees, GetUp! and MoveOn that routinely adopt data driven instruments or formalized consultations to allow supporters and members to make their views heard (Chadwick & Dennis, 2017; Dennis, 2018; Hall, 2019; Karpf, 2012, 2016; Vromen, 2017, 2018), Momentum does not undertake to do any of this. Communications between HQ and local groups are basically just calls to action, through which the central organization invites local groups and individual activists to replicate the campaigns launched and adopt the digital tools developed at the national level. Several respondents confirm what Dennis has already observed:

> The communication between national Momentum and Sheffield or any of the internal city group tends to be we receive emails. We receive instructions. We receive campaign subjects, campaign dates and things like that. Things do seem to be very much organized in London and then fed out to the rest of the country. Although that doesn't stop us organizing on smaller campaign issues locally, which we do, but the big campaign issues are very much London centered, London authored and then drip fed down to the rest of the country rather than being that grassroots that it was when it initially formed (D).

In fact, the definition of the strategy, the sharing of digital instruments and of various types of "toolkits" available on the site, as well as the brand of the organization, are the only resources that the HQ of Momentum distributes to the groups. This model of organization, derived from Bond and Exley's distributed organizing, is conceived as a way to generate mass action on the input of a center that acts as the "brain" of the collective action even when resources are scarce; as seen in the previous chapter, election campaigns are the moment when this organizational logic unfold most clearly:

> So, Momentum Central Office organization was based on basically a sort of distributed organizing technique, wasn't based organized around the existing branches of momentum existing in different places. So the created a whole series of organizing tools which where essentialy a kind of sales funnel to get people to go on a call where they would hear from someone telling them what should do and then enter a WhatsApp group to get more information on campaigning. So individuals regardless where they came from or what their experience was were encouraged to create a new level organization with their friends or people they could meet. […] that meant there wasn't anyone specifically contacting us as local groups telling us look that's what you've got to do, it was more like we had the opportunity to sign us to the HQ channel just as anybody else would be able to do (H).

It must be noted as, nothwistanding Momentum's official recognition of local groups, mechanisms of officially structured communication between these components of the movement are inexistent. This means that, on the one hand, these calls to action do not have the nature of "orders" coming from the fulcrum of the organization, but are rather invitations to use the tools that the HQ makes available; at the same time although the instruments developed by Momentum - especially the toolkits and MyCampaignMap - can be exploited with greater

success from organized groups – see chapter 8 – these are freely accessible to any individual, both members and not. This has two main implications. First, that the relationship between local groups and the national organization is destructured in both directions: HQs do not exercise a "command" over peripheral groups, as well as the latter do not have the ability to provide feedback to the former. Second, the local groups do not receive from Momentum any instrument in order to guarantee their ability to direct local activities, but the concession of the brand. All this means that there is a huge unevenness and variability in the network of local groups, each of which is structured according to the availability of local resources and the organizational culture of the promoters. This radical disconnection has the effect of freeing local groups from any responsibility for organizational formalization; if this naturally reduces any incentive to the creation of a widespread fabric of peripheral units, on the other hand it allows active groups a greater degree of freedom in experimenting with more flexible and horizontal tactics and forms of organisations, as already seen in chapter 7. But in the absence of a centralized direction all this is left to the abilities and will of each group.

Another extremely problematic factor is the ownership of contact lists. Local groups have the necessity to communicate directly with the members of Momentum in their territory, in order to organize their activities and mobilise them also outside national calls to action or to be more effective in pursuing national strategies. The problem is that members' data are held by the HQ, which does not share them with local groups. It is not then possible for the activists to have an official list of the members in their territory; the groups must therefore find alternative ways to collect the data, for example through events, the FB and the WhatsApp groups on My Ccampaging Map, in order to build their own local databases parallel to the national ones; this obviously involves a great deal of energy to obtain redundant data:

> So they'd have these staff for HQ or they'd have volunteers at HQ, but actually getting an email centre was a f*cking nightmare every single time just getting an email. I would have to spend like huge amounts of my life getting me in a week, because I wanted to get anyone out, chasing people, sending emails hasn't gone yet, phoning people up, nagging people. I couldn't get a reliable membership data once the membership started. I even went up there to try and change the data to correct it and it would get reset and it would go back to the old stuff and all the missing mistakes and I couldn't get them to do. I was told but "it's not our job to help local groups" by one of the volunteers in HQ. It's obviously a stupid thing to say, but it was obviously the ethos that a lot of people had (I).

Evidently this mechanism of centralized control of the database places great obstacles to mobilizations of the peripheral nodes and considerably diminishes the capacity of local groups to authoritatively present themselves as legitimate representatives of Momentum. This, coupled

with the lack of distribution of economic resources to the periphery nodes, contributes in many cases to moving leftist activists to other intra-party organizations:

> I think one of the big problems Momentum has is because it's not the local group which don't have any membership funding, it's just very hard to do anything really. And so, a lot of members who are active in the Women's Forum or in Young Labour or in other groups, trade unions, they just kind of did their activity there. And because it was really just getting to the point where it was too hard to organize through Momentum, we don't have access to data, we have got no funds. So Dudley Momentum's been kind of on-off in terms of its activity to be honest. And I think that's quite common (N).

In addition, given the considerable disconnection between the different componets, when conflicts of interest arise between local groups and HQ the former find it is impossible to oppose the decisions of the national executive; in addition, on some occasions the HQ does not show any hesitation in completely overstepping local groups:

> Suddenly, out of the blue, some of our members are being phoned up by people from outside the area, being told that the Momentum-supported candidate is this random person. And it's like, "hang on a minute, we've got our own, local candidate as part of the applied candidates" … we weren't even consulted or contacted. And then we weren't allowed to put out an e-mail to our members, saying "we did not have any say in selecting Momentum's candidate", so we then found other channels to reach out to our members, which had people go "oh, you're washing your dirty linen in public", it's like… we weren't given any other choice. We couldn't e-mail our members because our e-mails have to be approved by national Momentum (Skogan, 2020: 65)

All this contrasts remarkably with the representation of Momentum as a member-led movement. In 2016, the founders Klug, Rees and Schneider presented the organization as follows:

> In particular, new technologies make communication and distributed networks much easier. Momentum is a network in itself, and also part of a wider ecosystem of organisations, groups and social forces working towards social change. Momentum is also an example of the more horizontal way organisations can come together in the twenty-first century: it was essentially formed in reverse order. The founding of Momentum in October 2015 saw groups organically springing up all over the country, with local volunteers setting up Facebook pages and organising meetings, running ahead of the then-incipient central coordination. Within a day it was a big organisation (Klug et al., 2016[55])

What a few months later would become the core of intra-organizational conflict is described by the founders as the great resource and peculiarity of Momentum, narrated as one of the few organizations to spontaneously arise from the aggregation of a network formed from local groups of supporters. This representation leads the founders to insist very much on the centrality of local groups both as spaces of action and as keystones of the entire organization. Of course, the fact that the reality of an increasingly centralized and stratarchical organization will later

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[55] Retrieved at: https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA457302456&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=0968252X&p=LitRC&sw=w

refute these premises could only produce strong disappointment and even resentment among activists. Momentum is centralized in that calls to action come from the center and the data and the brand are held by the HQ; it is stratarchical in that the imbalance in the distribution of resources does not translate into a hierarchical command relationship, as in a progressive autonomization between peripheral nodes and center of the organization. Momentum is at the same time a centralized and weak network.

It is important to note that activists tend not to recognize directly the stratarchic nature of the organization; or rather, even when they recognize it, they trace it back to the dynamics of centralization:

> People are really pissed off because of this democratic deficit […] I think that's Momentum typically those the Momentum is always about let's create a national, so let's not go through the local. That was their problem. They weren't really saying, well, actually we should be going to local parties and enabling local parties to build up their own kind of trips to modules because they build their trips to marginals that means that they're building relationships within their own membership, which will outlast relationship that parties (Hackney Momentum).

This way of framing the issue probably contributes to place further discredit on Momentum, since all of its defects are traced back to the key issue of the democratic deficit, even when the situation appears to be more complex. In fact, many activists have lost faith in the democratizing function of the organization:

> I think, mainly, what went wrong is that we sort of de-democratized. We became more central. Accountability is lost. And we also changed from the organization (O).

> The Labour Party and Momentum are both prime examples of the iron law of oligarchy (P).

> So mainly Momentum started off as one thing, but what it turned into was something else. It started off as the feeling of it with an idea and a belief, a common belief that so many people shared and a wish and a symbol of hope. What it became was just another franchise, another controlling front owned by one group that could not respect members' commitment and took their voice away when it came to voting for national leader. (D)

So the successful attempt to stop the infiltration of radical left groups, defined in the critical phases of the conflict as "self-selected" full-time activists unrepresentative of the membership, ends up concentrating power in the HQ. This produces the predictable paradox of creating a new clique of self-selected activists, likewise those who access positions of power and influence at the central level of the organization are largely activists who during the founding phase of Momentum have had more time and resources to spend to carve out a position of prominence:

> A substantial proportion of people running Momentum were self-selected people who volunteered full-time at the dawn of its creation. If we're honest, these are people who got into their positions only because they had the financial means that afforded them the opportunity to devote endless unpaid hours to a project based

> in central London. Jobs were mostly given out on the basis of the experience that people had gained as full-time volunteers. This is not the way to build working-class organisations, full stop. So the problems are not just 'at the top,' they run right through Momentum — and include many people who are backing the Forward Momentum project today (P).

9.3 Forward Momentum

That of Momentum appears in all evidence to be a classic case of organization that has been forced to operate some sort of articulation of its ends caught in a condition of haste and between many pressures. By articulation of the ends is meant, following the lesson of Angelo Panebianco (1982), the process whereby parties and organizations select, among the explicitly formulated objectives, only those compatible with the survival of the collective organism. Of course, the definition of what ends are compatible with the survival of the organization is made by the actors who hold more power within it and therefore it is not a neutral operation. But it is one thing to affirm, as Panebianco does, that organizations operate a process of continuous adjustment between ideologically defined objectives and imperatives linked to the survival of the organization and/or of its executive group; another thing is to follow Michels' lesson, according to which organizations in the process of institutionalization inevitably operate a far more radical replacement of ends: once ideological aims are "used" to the purpose of defining the identity of the organization these are replaced by aims related to the maintenance in power of the leadership.

In the previous section I have showed how a delegate based system of representation has been replaced by the use of a digital platform and the individual vote with the aim to stem the influence of extreme left groups within Momentum. This has led to dynamics of centralization and stratarchization, perceived by large part of the activists as a democratic deficit, within an organization that had declared democratization in a socialist key as its most explicit goal. In fact, this has not been an instance of substitution of ends, but rather of their articulation: among the decision making models considered to be democratic, the least dangerous for the leadership of the organization was chosen and that, incidentally, was also the model favoured by the vast majority of the membership. Herebelow I will analyze the effects of the disappointment generated by the effects of this choice, looking into the debate developed within Momentum in occasion of the election of the national directive – the NCG – in the spring of 2020, a particularly critical moment since it has been the first contest after the defeat of 2019 and the end of the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. In particular, I will concentrate above all on Forward

Momentum, an electoral list born with the objective to challenge the status quo in the organization, against Momentum Renewal, identified as the list favouring continuity.

Enough predictably, the criticisms moved by Forward Momentum to the previous leadership are focused on two issues, that is the procedures of intraorganizational democracy and the relationship with local groups. First of all, the list is critical of the coup with which the new constitution was promulgated at the end of 2016 (Booth, 2020; Milburn, 2020; New Socialist, 2020a); although the option for a OMOV constitution had gained the support of the overwhelming majority of members, the authoritarian methods adopted by Lansman are considered inadequate to a movement that makes of democracy its watchword. Very unflattering remarks are directed at the previous leadership: a leadership described as investing a lot in creating a favourable status quo and that will go to any leght to defend it (Forward Momentum, 2020; New Socialist, 2020b; Sriskanthan & Scattergood, 2020) and prone to back-room intrigues (New Socialist, 2020b). Moreover, the "distributed centralization" approach adopted by Momentum is arshly criticized; the problem here lies in the fact that the NCG and the HQ have had the role to elaborate plans of action without capacity nor interest to look for feedback and listening to the priorities of the members on the ground:

> Power has been concentrated at the top of Momentum. The mass-membership that comes out in force at elections has been taken for granted the rest of the time. It's as if you can tap up a mass movement at certain points and then let them go again. I don't want to use the phrase 'booty call', but it's like a 'booty call'! There is a disregard for the energy and ideas of the membership, which is actually so important to building power and organisational capacity (New Socialist, 2020b[56]).

The NCG felt remote and inaccessible to many members (New Socialist, 2020c). If such an approach could be bearable during a phase in which the left was preparing to take power, Corbyn's defeat raises the theme of the sustainability of the organizational model in the long term (Milburn, 2020). The high level of intraparty conflict of the years 2016 to 2019 is considered one of the most relevant causes of the centralization of Momentum and of the practices of parachuting of candidates not approved from local groups (Gibbons, 2020). Such practices have long been tolerated by activists in view of a higher end, but have progressively undermined the trust between the different components of the organization (New Socialist, 2020). Many activists seriously threaten to abandon Momentum because of perceived dysfunctionality:

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[56] Retrieved at: https://newsocialist.org.uk/interview-momentum-ncg-candidates-london/

> M: And really good, a big group of activists here. So I'm always really keen to hear from people around the country. And I've tried to listen to more people. But yeah, and I do hear all the time that there's a huge disillusionment. Now, people would rather just go back to their unions, go back to their community groups and just organize within those. […]
> Interviewer: And why do you think that so many people are feeling discouraged with Momentum?
> M: Because I think there was a huge promise of it being a grassroots movement. I think people also realize that like, you can put blood, sweat and tears into something and still lose, really. So yeah, it's like twofold. It's like I think, we've been led by the top down, and we lost, like what? How can we change this?

Finally, other criticisms relate to the organization's alleged London-centricity, as well as to the overwhelmingly binary nature of options put to the membership for deliberation, the effect of which would be to impoverish internal debate (Hermanns,2020; Novara Media, 2020).

Given the controversy on Momentum's democratic deficit, Forward Momentum invests from the beginning on the innovation of the processes, in a perspective that could be defined as prefigurative. If the preceding leadership is accused of not negotiating its strategic choices with the base and in particular of offering members a "narrow choice" between pre-set alternatives (Jafri), Forward Momentum establishes that the program of the list must be discussed with members, through focus groups directed by the founders of the list, which are also in charge to make a synthesis of the points emerged from the discussion and to translate them in the definitive program. Moreover, the candidates to the NCG are selected through a primary open to all members of Momentum that have adhered to Forward Momentum. Out of 4,000 list supporters, 2,000 vote selecting 24 among the 64 candidates (Booth, 2020). The logic of this strategy lies in the assumption, widespread among "participationist" activists (Gerbaudo, 2019) as already seen in chapter 3, according to which only by using democratic methodologies it is possible to mobilize large amounts of progressive citizens:

> While it's early days, some criticisms of our campaign from supporters of Momentum Renewal focus on our apparent preference for 'process' at the expense of turning outwards towards working class communities. Process can mean many things, but criticism of process is often used as cover for criticism of democracy. Indeed, some have also argued that Momentum should focus only on democratising the Labour Party, and not itself be democratically run. Forward Momentum rejects the trade-off between democracy and effective organising. In fact, we think democracy is essential to Momentum becoming an effective organisation (Hermanns, 2020[57])

But it is not only a matter of using the method considered correct, but also of demonstrating concretely to disillusioned members the list's firm will to change the organization:

> Michael Walker: Andrew what do you understand is the difference between your two slates and why do you think our audience should back your slate over Renewal?
> Andrew Scattergood: Well, I think we have started this differently from the outset. So, Forward Momentum is practicing democracy. We are just literally saying it, and if members want a truly democratic movement

[57] Retrieved at: https://www.redpepper.org.uk/forward-momentum-on-democratic-reform/

> then we are leading by example on this and you need to just look for example of how we selected our slates. […] So, we are putting forward an example of exactly of what we think we can do. It's a demonstration of democracy in action. We have had too much of the backroom deals going on. We have had too much of the selections being done by not the grassroots and not the members, and we are showing that this is how we intend to go forward (Novara Media, 2020[58])

While criticisms regarding the democratic deficit blame it on the dynamics of centralization, those regarding the marginalization of local groups insist on the progressive stratarchization of the organization. In the absence of mechanisms of linkage between peripheral nodes and the center, Momentum becomes an organization broken down in two levels; this has extremely dangerous effects for the overall integrity of the movement:

> Too often, organisations like Momentum end up with two classes of people involved: the local activists who do the unglamorous heavy lifting, and the office and leadership who are professionals and have rarely, if ever, attended their local groups or other grassroots networks. This isn't some abstract moral point: we want an organisation in which the rank and file *are and become* the leadership, and we need a system for making this happen (Chessum, 2020[59])

Local groups do not play any role in the infrastructure of Momentum, and this discourages the participation there (New Socialist, 2020c), making the organization unable to build lasting partnerships with other actors present on the territories (Hermanns, 2020). Moreover, the resources made available to groups by the HQ are not considered sufficient: this regards in the first place the problem of the use of the database (M), cited frequently, alongside with the centralized selection of candidates, defined as Momentum's gravest democratic *vulnus*; but this has also to do with the lack of support to local activities, which are impaired by the absence of a comprehensive strategy to support the development of local groups and activists, as well as on the absence of any effort at facilitating cooperation between groups (Gibbons, 2020; Milburn, 2020). These criticisms are echoed by demands to transit to an organizational model better equipped to promote regional structures, which might be in the position to supervise the coordination between groups (Chessum, 2020); in part, a similar solution had already been adopted during the phase marked by the delegate-based structure, in which the local groups elected regional delegates, who in turn elected national ones: the mechanism was suspended because the radical left, although not strong in every local group, had been successful in gaining the majority at regional level, greatly amplifying its strength in the national committee. Of course, the new proposals for regionalisation concern not only decision making but rather the distribution of resources.

[58] Transcripted from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFmIEGCn4hg
[59] Retrieved at: https://medium.com/@michael_chessum/5-points-on-forward-momentum-43c1ee5591e8

Concerning the organizational restructuration, Forward Momentum consequently proposes a mixture of the two models of internal democracy already experimented. According to such proposal, the executive would continue to be elected online with individual vote, while the organization's strategy is established through periodic meetings of delegates. Policy priorities are set by the members through a multiple online vote, with the possibility for each voter to define the priority level of each option put to vote, while the specific periodic campaigns are always voted online with a traditional voting system. These constitutional reforms would have to be approved during a special Refounding Convention, including the participation of delegates and the submission of inputs from both the local groups and the digital platform. While this complex mechanism could improve intra-organisational linkages and give new impetus to local organising and posing new constraints to the governing bodies, It would still leave open, however, the question of the choice of options on which members are called to vote, which as we have already seen is a key issue in the democratization of digital parties (Chessum, 2020).

In the detailed plan published on the official Forward Momentum website (Forward Momentum, 2020) some reforms aimed at enhancing the role of local groups within the organization and facilitate cohesion between the different levels of the same are indicated, too. First, it is proposed to give sovereignty to local groups over the choice of which candidatates to support for local and parliamentary elections, eliminating the practice of the imposition of names by the NCG in the event of conflicts with groups. In addition is envisaged the creation of regional conferences composed of delegates from local groups dedicated to devoting resources to specific projects promoted by local groups, and the creation of national calls to which any group can apply for obtaining resources on specific projects, with a particular focus on the empowerment of areas where the movement is weaker. Moreover, it is suggested to create offices of Momentum outside of London, essentially on a regional basis. Lastly, it is proposed a reorganization of the MyMomentum platform, providing new instrument aimed at building local groups alongside with previously existing tools aimed only at individual participants.

As already mentioned, the Momentum Renewal list has been identified with the previous leadership, both because many candidates are close to the previous leadership and because the candidates are overall more prominent within the party and in local politics (Roger, 2020). This does not prevent Momentum Renewal from recognizing the correctness of some positions held

by Forward Momentum. In particular, the candidates oftern acknowledge the radical disconnection between local groups and the HQ, let alone of the dynamics of centralization that have discouraged the participation at the local level and the confidence of the members in the organization (Elmi, 2020). The lack of a national strategy for spreading the organization throughout the country is recognized (Burtenshaw & Barnett, 2020; Elmi, 2020) as a consequence of the need to build from scratch and in a short time an organization effective in supporting Corbyn's leadership. Not infrequently also Renewal's candidates make proposals similar to those put forward by Forward Momentum, as the transfer of part the HQ away from London (Aldwinkle, 2020; New Socialist, 2020c) and the promulgation of a new constitution (Shanly, 2020). The main problem is that, on all these points, Momentum Renewal appears more reactive than proactive and being basically dictated the agenda from Forward Momentum without the ability to innovate much on the proposals. This relative passivity does not escape the activists:

> A: I think they are essentially the same thing. The only thing is that Forward Momentum launched a campaign and said "Look, Momentum needs to change, we need to come together, we need to be more grassroots led, and we don't need to imitate the right-wing backdoor deals and backroom sort of shenanigans." Momentum Renewal said, "Okay, we will take on what are you saying, and this is what we want to do" (O).

The point on which Momentum Renewal does not limit itself to absorbing the positions formulated by Forward Momentum is in the appraisal of the process of formation of the lists and of the program. As already seen, Forward Momentum adopts an extremely open process of creation of the lists of candidates through open primaries and uses focus groups to listen to members priorities in building the official program. Against this model, Momentum Renewal claims a more centralized one. This is because, on the one hand, focus groups are pointed out as deresponsibilizing campaign promoters with respect to the decisions taken (Momentum Bristol); at the same time, the process is accused of not being really open and of providing an advantage to the self-selected promoters of the list, both as they have free hand with respect to the formulation of the program from the vague points emerged from the focus groups, and because they enjoy a visibility that makes their selection as candidates far easier (New Socialist, 2020b; Novara Media, 2020). Momentum Renewal therefore supports, at least regarding the electoral phase, a more traditional model of decision making, based on the initiative of the executive that elaborates a proposal and submits it to the members; this position is also defended by virtue of an alleaged greater capacity for strategic planning and selection of candidates aimed at also giving representation to certain groups of minority or vulnerable members, that would

not be granted enough protection by a simple selection by the membership (New Socialist, 2020b; Novara Media, 2020). This way of understanding intraorganization democracy can probably explain why, even recognizing Momentum's democratic shortfalls, Renewal does not appear much assertive in criticizing the past leadership while for Forward these limits are serious and need to be overcome rapidly; many candidates in Renewal see them as nothing but a necessary evil, that can be only partially corrected and never be completely prevented, because eliminating centralized direction would damage the capacity of the organization to act coherently and effectively:

> Again, I think when people talk about Momentum to be more democratic, Momentum elects a national coordinator group by one number one vote like all bodies of the Labour Party, it's a representative democracy. We couldn't run everything by referendum because it'd be ridiculous. It'd would be a waste of manpower, staff time, money. I think there's a lot of misinformation out there about Momentum by people who use it for their own political advantage. So, for example, we have a number of people complaining that when slates are drawn up, that there is no consultation. Well, actually, Momentum has an application process. People interviewed. You have to go through an open, not public, but it's visible and can be held to account process for how people get onto it, as opposed to other organizations that have absolutely no almost no internal path, no internal democracy, but aren't criticized, even though Momentum is more democracy than they do (Q).

Even though Momentum's faults are recognized, in this case there is also the idea that the problem lies not so much in the insufficient democracy as in the exaggerated expectations that some members have placed on the organization; this would lead the activists of the left to judge Momentum according to very demanding standards compared to how they do, for example, with the other organization of the Labour post-New Left left, that is the CLPD, an organization that appears to be much more lacking than Momentum for what concerns internal procedures:

> For example, I'm a member of the campaign for Labour Party democracy. I've never been consulted as a as a CLPD member on who should be on a slate. But the criticism (0:30:00) on it tends to be leveled at Momentum. Again, I think that's for political reasons (Q).

However, Momentum Renewal's skepticism does not break through. Forward Momentum's greater clarity and coherence in articulating the organization's distinctive discourse on democratization and its ability to present itself as the alternative to the organization's establishment is enough to grant it a landslide victory: all Forward Momentum candidates are elected, granting the list a monopoly over the executive of the organization.

9.4 Conclusions. The failures of organizational democratization

In Chapter 3 I showed how the democratic nature of procedures is the cornerstone of the organizational ideology of digital parties. Activists want to have a say in the party's choices

and reject intermediations, opting for a decision-making model based on individual online voting. This meets the need of the party to build a light and relatively inexpensive infrastructure, while at the same time being able to make decisions deemed legitimate by supporters and in the public sphere. The problem is that individual voting is not enough to guarantee accountability; the literature shows that the procedures of intraparty democracy are not institutionalized, that is, the content and timing of the consultations is established unequivocally by the leadership outside any formalized framework. Alongside these dynamics of centralization, a separation is observed between the party as digital infrastructure and local offices, which have no role other than that of outward-oriented spaces of action. The history of Momentum confirms these observations: after a first phase marked by a form of delegated democracy the organization opts for a digital OMOV that erases the constitutional role of local groups; this is not counterbalanced by any form of resource allocation. Also in this case, therefore, the dynamics of centralization and stratarchization typical of digital parties recur.

Two further remarks must be made. The first concerns the problem of organizational democratization as one of the main aims of a political movement. In fact, it is not only digital parties that show a profound contradiction between attempts at democratization and centralizing and strategizing effects; the same, as has already been seen, also occurs in libertarian movement parties. In short, whenever attempts have been made to transpose into political parties the idea of an individualizing, elite-challenging and libertarian democratization, derived from the social movements and generated by the Silent Revolution, the results have been extremely disappointing. This does not necessarily mean that the antecedent paradigms were more effective from this point of view. Rather, the point is to observe how this kind of aspiration to democratization has so far resulted to be self-defeating, contributing, after a first phase of enthusiasm, to considerably weaken the legitimacy of political organizations because of the disappointment of initial expectations. Although the quest for democracy in the sphere of collective organization is an ineliminable issue in post-materialist societies, a little more disenchantment and healthy understatement could help protect organizations from discredit.

Finally, the role of conflict as a trigger for responding to organizational dilemmas. It is obvious as in Momentum and more in general in Corbyn's Labour the moments of dramatic conflict putting at existential risk the project of the left are the triggers that force the leaders to put aside their differences and to choose, often with little margin, the option that best responds to the

need of the moment. In these events, intra-organizational conflict is the filter that deforms and transforms discourses into practices and institutions. This means that the operation of giving an organizational shape to Momentum is not so much a process of debate and planning, but rather the outcome of existential challenges which often leave the leadership with few room for manoeuvre. Both in the case of the choice of the strategy and of the organizational form, Momentum takes a net decision only in the moment in which its existence is put in danger. This undermines strategic capacity and long-term planning. The Corbyn project and its organizational pillars seem to struggle to advance with a minimum degree of strategic planning; of course the occasions of conflict are those in which unexpected energies are liberated and the organization makes a leap forward towards greater clarification and formalization. But the project as a whole rests on poor foundations.

Cap 10 Local organizing

In this last chapter I will focus on the analysis of how Momentum groups innovate organizing in the Labour Party at the local level. Such innovations concern the repertoires of action and the organizational forms assumed by Momentum groups and the party, sometimes jointly but frequently in opposition and mutual competition. The chapter will therefore try to identify the values and projects that lie behind the tentatives of reforming participation and organization in local contexts, as much as the patterns identifying and explaining the behaviour of Momentum groups in each city. To do so I will first of all focus on how activist conceptualize the problem with local groups, that are defined as bureaucratic entities. Then I will turn to analysing the behavior of Momentum local groups in different contexts, focusing on their development, their trajectories and the main activities undertaken. Finally, I will try to formulate some explanations accounting for the discontinuities and overall weakness of Momentum's efforts to reform local party activism and organization.

The research work behind this chapter has been heavily affected by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Initially, the research design included a series of interviews to carry out online in order to obtain an overview on Momentum groups in various contexts; in addition to this part of the research, it was scheduled a research stay of at least six months, divided between two cities: Manchester and London. The choice of these two localities is linked to the nature of the organization of the local left: in Manchester, as it has been seen, the Momentum group is very active and probably the most flourishing group of the UK; this would have been an analysis of the movement's behaviour in a relatively favourable contex, although blocked as regards access to representative positions and the effective control of the local party: it would have been therefore of a case study on the action of Momentum as a partially independent actor. On the contrary, in London the left in many places has effectively taken control of the party, dissolving Momentum within it; in this case, the research interest would have been to observe how the activists of the Corbynist left are modifying the functioning of the party when they have taken control of it. Participant observation and in-depth interviews with the different chairs in each group, as well as with the activists and other figures involved, would have allowed an intensive, in-depth analysis, to be integrated with the extensive study carried out with interviews with other groups.

None of this was possible: the pandemic forced me to cancel the fieldwork and I was only able to conduct interviews from remote, which resulted in a significant depletion of available data. This has been aggravated by the conjuncture: in the spring of 2020 many groups were long ago deactivated for the reasons that we will see below; the Covid was simply the final blow to many already worn out local groups. The impossibility of interviewing more people and even of being able to select the interviewees means that often informers are people who have not participated in the foundation of groups and the phases of greater activity, and this limits the knowledge and critical understanding of the dynamics that the interviews aimed at grasping. In addition, due to the very nature of a research which could not rely on an accurate sampling, I have been forced to make due with contacting those who replied to the messages on FB; this of course makes it impossible to draw a picture of groups that are no longer active because they left the movement for the party, and one can oly hypothesize some mechanisms based on observations without knowing how widespread they are.

10.1 Bureaucratized Labour sections

Discourses on the need to transform the party at the local level revolve around the concept of bureaucracy. It is not uncommon for pro-Corbyn supporters and activists discourses on the need to democratize the party to be introduced by the qualification of the party as excessively bureaucratic. In general, when activists mention Labour's bureaucratism they intend to make reference to the formal structure of party members' activities, based on local meetings and detailed procedures that end up imposing themselves on newcomers and curb most efforts at organizational change:

> During the early membership surge under Corbyn, many Labour members for the first time came face-to-face with often decaying branch structures and hostile local branch executives. Local party structures remain a bastion for the Labour right – a bottleneck preventing members engaging fully in the life of our party. Dominated by complicated bureaucratic processes, 'freeze dates' for elections to multiple different board and committees, and a complex rulebook with often opaque or deliberately withheld standing order books, it's this battleground more than any other which stymied the left's progress in the Labour Party (Helmi, 2020[60])

On the one hand, therefore, bureaucratic proceduralism is what makes meetings particularly rigid and uninviting, while on the other competence in the field of procedures complemented by long-term entrenchment in the vital ganglia of the local apparatuses is what allows opponents

[60] Retrieved at: https://labourlist.org/2020/06/momentum-renewal-the-labour-left-needs-to-focus-on-party-branches/

of the left to maintain control of large sections of the party. Activists therefore perceive the formal structure of the party as a barrier that severely limits the ability of the left and new members to influence the party, creating a bias in favour of those who, while being able to count on less popular enthusiasm, are used at running the machine. The critique of bureaucracy therefore takes a double meaning: a more specific one, linked to the need to innovate the modalities of participation in the party in order to open Labour to civil society and to give impetus to the extra-parliamentary strategy that is otherwise destined to fail; while the second meaning of the opposition to bureaucratism more generally concerns the will to overcome the traditional party form based on collectivism and delegation, towards a new form of participatory party. Likewise in the 70s and 80s this analysis is not only addressed to the party considering a participatory state and a Keynesian model of mixed economy as the final outcomes of a process that starts from the creation of a participatory political organization.

It can be useful here to refer again to the analysis of Flanagin and colleagues with respect to intraorganizational communication barriers, and in particular to the concept of engagement:

> Engagement may at first appear simply to constitute "decentralization" or "centralization," but it is different. Engagement entails the extent to which participants are offered opportunities to shape the organization's direction, regardless of where in a hierarchy decisions are finally made (Flanagin et al. 2012: 93-4).

The critique to bureaucratism by the Labour left consists in portraying party participation as too constrained by institutional forms of engagement:

> When engagement is institutional, individuals' access to organizational processes is strictly bounded in a system that defines and controls opportunities. Organizational hierarchy, such as the classical Weberian ideal type, plays a key role in influencing the shape and form of engagement while serving to reduce volatility and increase predictability. […] Collective actions that fall at this end of the continuum are more likely to have well-developed organizational routines, procedures, and artifacts that are intended to introduce members to the official organizational mission and standards of procedure (ibid.: 94).

This extract illuminates the link between formalization and verticism. Although with the Labour Party we are not dealing directly with a problem of centralization, since the centre of power of the party has been conquered by the faction opposed to bureaucratism, it is clear that the ability to bound collective action through proceduralism is an important resource for maintaining stability. In this case, therefore, rather than maintaining the power of the centre against the periphery, bureaucratism allows to perpetuate the organizational logic inscribed in the normative apparatus of the party, that is pre-existent to the left's access to power. This means that it becomes difficult for newcomers and critics to dethrone those who have been able to

build their power within such a framework; hence the function of hierarchical maintenance performed by intra-party bureaucratism:

> **Interviewer:** Some activists speak of Labour as a very bureaucratized party. Can you help me understand what they mean?
> **J:** I would say that the reason why I would agree with that is that there are a lot of ways the people in the party that hold power were able to maintain that power and stop other people from gaining in power by using the rules to their advantage. So, it [bureaucratism] cements power and cements those hierarchies, so that they can be maintained.

Conversely, critical activists intend to promote a participatory model closer to entrepreneurial engagement:

> We call engagement "entrepreneurial" when individuals have a high degree of autonomy and may design collective organizational action efforts in ways that are not sanctioned or controlled by any central authority. In entrepreneurial cases of engagement, organizational members do not act within constraints or rules of action associated with the organization or group. In the extreme, member coalitions based on agendas, strategies, or tactics outside any official organizational framework can form idiosyncratically within the organization or network, and may be short-lived. Self-organizing mechanisms predominate. Individuals move easily in and out of organizational roles, and they are more likely to bridge the divide between the private and public realms. […] entrepreneurial engagement in which members develop innovative repertoires of response, experiment through trial and error, and rarely develop stable routines and procedures (Flanagin et al. 2012, 93-4).

The promotion of an alternative model often is experimented within Momentum groups. Since the organization is new and poorly structured, for activists of the Labour left it is possible to use it as a space for promoting organizational models openly defying the official structure of the party:

> **J:** So Momentum groups can have a chair but our group has never had a chair.
> **Interviewer:** Why?
> **J:** I wasn't involved in that decision. But my finding of it was the sort of run a non-hierarchical group. So all decisions were taken as a group rather than having one person make decisions. And we would take interns to chair the meeting. Something that was very different in Momentum meetings to Labour party meetings for me, in my experience was the Momentum meetings really made a concerted effort to make sure we were letting people speak. And that we were told it on women or minorities to speak rather than letting men dominate the conversation and the meetings. And by having a rotating share, that responsibility fell on everybody and not just on one person. We all have to be conscious of that, and we all had to think about it during the meeting. So that we could, and by that I mean there are lots of meetings —that these people saying, "Well, wait, wait, wait, wait—Let this person speak" but I think that was an important thing to do. So I think that was why there wasn't a chair in our grouup, it's nonhierarchical. So everybody had a role but their role… it wasn't like in the Labour Party where the Chair is in charge, the Secretary is the second in command and then everybody else is on a lower level. It was—we were all equals.
> **Interviewer:** But do you think this thing is common in Momentum groups or yours is an exception?
> **J:** I think the principle is fine but I think some groups will have a Chair or they have co-chairs. So they will have one woman and one man as chairs. It's really just on the group but I think the principle of non-hierarchical organizing and doing things slightly different from the Labour Party is quite common.

Consequently, Momentum becomes in many places a magnet that attracts all those who feel excluded from the closed system of local branches (Hilder, 2019).

As already mentioned, Labour bureaucratism does not only affect the internal distribution of power, but is also a strong disincentive to participation. Many supporters of the Labour left, especially young people, claim to have a strong repulsion against the party's local branches:

> **H:** I personally really don't enjoy working with the structures of the Labour party, they're kind of bureaucratic, I normally prefer to work on grassroots campaigns. For me it was just more fun, different easier.
> **Interviewer:** Could you please make some examples of what leads you to say that Labour is too bureaucratic?
> **H:** Well for example the Labour Party is more procedural, not just anybody can start saying "I'm the Labour Party", and start involving people and taking decisions, even practical ones. Those decisions have to be made with the right people in the room, following a specific rulebook, and this is because it is an organization with a lot of resources, a machine. You don't want people to just taking over in undemocratic ways. Momentum has a lot much space to be free I guess, and to allow people to do things, so anybody can take the Momentum name and start acting immediately.

The Labour Party stymies individual initiative by saddling it within a bunch of rigid formal rules. This has the effect, on the one hand, to prevent horizontal and informal forms of organization and relationship among participants. On the other hand, this focus on procedures makes party meeting extremely boring and uninviting, expecially for young people:

> Labour now has around 100,000 young members. But looking around the halls in which we have local meetings, you wouldn't be able to see any evidence of that. The party seen by millennials and Zoomers on Instagram, which looks exciting and dynamic, is a far cry from what they'll find if they rock up to a branch or general committee meeting. Our local parties are too often dull, lifeless and, frankly, pointless. This is not a novel insight. I don't know how many times I have heard someone standing in an internal party election say: "We joined Labour to change the world, not approve last month's minutes" (King, 2020[61])

Other activists are less conciliatory in the way they express their criticisms:

> **R:** And I don't know if you've ever been to a Labour meeting, they're a fu***ng boring, yeah, they are fu***ng boring, like, I just see people that come out all the time with questions like: "Why are we meeting today?". You know what I mean? Like, what was the point in that meeting? We were just meeting, to read some minutes and then go off.
> **Interviewers:** How do these meetings work? What is boring?
> **R:** Well, I mean, you go into them and you'll get a cup of tea and you'll sit around and then check the agenda. "Can everyone have a look at the minutes from the previous meetings?" Anyone say officers reports, any business to attend to a motion from this branch to discuss. You know what I mean? Like, it's just business, business, business. And I don't think people have ever felt like, what's the actual purpose of having a Labour Party meeting? Because we aren't organizing anything, we're not discussing anything, we're not creating anything. We're not even debating anything.

An answer to this state of affairs is once again the proposal to take inspiration from social movements, that is, the democratization of decision making and the increase of outward-oriented activities in connection with movements, as well as the increase in opportunities for training, debate and community engagement. Also the Election Review (Labour Party, 2020)

[61] Retrieved at: https://labourlist.org/2020/06/our-local-parties-are-dull-they-must-be-reimagined/

commissioned by the party with the aim to analyze the roots of the 2019 defeat, points the finger at the inability of the rigid local structures to engage new members. The Review makes two suggestions to overcome the problem: meetings open to non-members and the creation of a volunteer bank. In summary, open the party to society and increase the volume of outward oriented activities at the expense of inward oriented ones. And in fact, "opening Labour" sometimes is used as a byword to refer to the framework of desired changes to how the party organizes and mobilizes. In an article for Medium, James Darling (2015) after resuming the classic post-materialist scenario in which people acquire more and more skills, multiply their identities, patterns of direct communication and allegiances and become more creative in the expressive use of their spare time, advocates for a new form of party, that he calls "Open Labour", the main features of which are: 1) radical openness to the public: all meetings, information and decision-making procedures also available to non-members; 2) making participation enjoyable, focusing on self-expression through development and use of personal skills, enhance possibilies of influencing how the party organize and makes decision and develop participative and/or digital alternatives to classic meetings; 3) policy making by doing: put policies to the test by allowing people to discuss them and run experiments; 4) move away from an organisational principle based on constituencies, substitute it with skill and purpose based networks. Opening Labour therefore means to focus on individuals with their skills and desire for self-expression, making the party more receptive to diversity (Shabi, 2017) while erasing anacronistic organizational barriers dividing members from non-members and preventing bottom-up cooperation.

Sometimes the demobilizing nature of the party's procedures is consciously used by those who control its peripheral locations to avoid the rise of challenges to their power; the pro-Corbyn left may attempt to overthrow this state of affairs, coordinating those excluded from the branch system:

> I mentioned before that, some people in the Labour Party are quite keen on keeping new people out because new people are new threats. And you have to remember certain wards, certain wards, certain constituencies, don't have meetings, they don't engage people. And often that's just to keep reeling factions, reeling groups in. So you might have three counselors in a very safe Labour ward. The party doesn't reel locally. New people don't come in and try and take over and try and become counselors because they don't know how. But with Momentum, you would receive invitations to meetings. People are very open. People wanted you to get involved, wanted you to do new things, that kind of stuff. (Q)

Yet, the militants of the left clearly face a structural contradiction: while their objective is to open the Labour Party to society, trying to modify the organizational routines of a strongly

formalized structure inevitably producing strong tensions and conflicts, with the consequence that a good part of the energies of the militants are sucked by the inward oriented activity of facing the opponents to change (Muldoon & Rye, 2020). But in turn internal conflicts can lead to an exacerbation of the tendencies to bureaucratic proliferation and proceduralism, since these are at least in part the consequence of a lack of trust and of informal mechanisms of accountability and linkages within the party:

> **O:** So, eventually what happens is that you end up going to a lot of meetings, but not actually doing anything.
> **Interviewer:** But how can you change that?
> **O:** We need to change that, yes. It has to do with accountability. Now, accountability is key. The people who are elected – our elected officials need sort of breathing space to do things. So, I will say, traditionally, we have had monthly meetings that you have to be in the room to scrutinize. And no, I don't think that's acceptable. I think in the 21st century, you ask someone to write a report by a specific date, the date that report is handed in. The next one can be the next month, the next one is a month after, and then every three months we are going to hold a meeting for accountability. Even as well the person is not doing their job properly or not in the way that we would like, we can always email them, we can always let them know. And then, at the annual general meeting, if we think this person hasn't played his part, then we can elect someone else rather than every month having them come up and kind of say, "Okay, it's been a month. What have you been doing?" They are volunteers at the end of the day. How much things can they be doing?

The possible increase in proceduralism as a result of conflict is not the only self-validating feedback mechanism produced by party bureaucratism. Another problem extremely evident to the militants of the left is the fact that the procedural structuring of the party has the double effect of producing an organizational culture that tends to reiterate itself even in face of personnel change and to regressively influence the political choices of the party:

> That was in a way the big grand bargain of Corbyn as leader: you can have this left-wing leader of party, but on the down side, the party is this huge old, ancient jargonelle that is going to take a lot of work just to kind of to move it around even a little bit because there is this huge Labour movement bureaucracy attached to it with entrenched interests and so on. So, I think that's part of the whole reason why we needed a Momentum that was kind of connected to the social movements and to act as a kind of a counterbalance to the very bureaucratic party. And then I am kind of interested in how kind of bureaucratic modes of organization then lead to certain types of politics, kind of top down conservative, in some cases […]. And so, I think these kinds of bureaucratic modes of politics then kind of transform itself into political culture. […] this type of thinking is quite common, across the Labour Party actually as well. And so, I think we need to do everything we can to break both that way of doing politics, but also the political culture comes out of that. (R)

So the left must disrupt party bureaucratism not only because it prevents those who have run it for decades from being overthrown, but above all because it intrinsically tends to reproduce hierarchical patterns and organizational and cultural rigidity niping in the bud any attempt at democratization and transformation of society. Not infrequently this awareness results in positions that closely recall the anti-bureaucratic and anti-authoritarian critique typical of the

post-materialist polemic against the vertical organizations typical of the social-democratic left in the Keynesian settlement:

> For it can't go back to being the traditional trade union establishment party, any more than the BBC can revert to Reithianism. […] If Labour is to challenge the individualism, corporatism and privatisation of society overseen by today's monstrous elite it has to do so with a different political culture: with intelligent, deliberative democracy, not collectivism; through voice, liberty and collaboration based on human rights, citizenship and self-determination. There can be no return to public values unless they are grounded in such active participation of the public (Barnett, 2015a[62])

As in the New Left, also in the pro-Corbyn movement there is a widespread conviction that the top-down socialism of the twentieth century cannot return, because people have changed and aspire to greater freedom of initiative and direct control over their lives and the contexts in which they live. The response to social and value change once again lies in the proposal of a form of party that can combine redistributive proposals and an organization as participatory as possible. Once again, it is a matter of building an Open Labour, acting at the frontier between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics:

> Open Labour means three things then: first, to be sure, a much more open Labour party, with a culture and democratic ways of doing things that really is fraternal not sectarian or administrative. Second, a party and movement much more open to ideas from within and without, especially over how the economy and the constitution works in in a European context, in addition to social policy where Labour is on more familiar ground. Third, respecting and working openly with others wherever possible, especially other parties, for example on defending our liberties: seeing alliances as a positive rather than a last resort, most obviously by embracing a fairer voting system. In other words not collaborating instrumentally but being open to being improved externally as well as internally by partnerships, and ending the ghastly, reactionary, Westminster politics of 'winner takes all'. (Barnett, 2015a)

Besides dissolving the boundary between party and society, it is also necessary to replace, both in the imaginary and in organizational practices, the hierarchical pyramid with the horizontal networks:

> It [the Labour Party led by the left] faces two alternative futures: one in which all the negative, hierarchical and factionalist tendencies of the 20th century left are allowed to resurface; another in which Momentum — and ultimately Labour itself — becomes a horizontal, consensus-based organization, directly accountable to its mass of members. If we do this, we can avoid the problem that plagued and ultimately killed the 20th century far left — hierarchy, discipline and the party line — and foster a movement that looks like 21st century Britain; argumentative and diverse, respectful and tolerant of difference. A network, not a hierarchy. (Mason, 2016[63])

Therefore, in full continuity with postmaterialist positions a radically left wing vision of society and economic processes is proposed but only on condition that it is integrated within a project of individualizing liberation and radical decentralization. As already stated by Inglehart (1977)

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[62] Retrieved at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/open-labour-only-way-for-corbyn-to-replace-blatcherism/

[63] Retrieved at: https://medium.com/mosquito-ridge/why-i-joined-momentum-e2e8311ea05c

radical socialism and postmaterialism have no necessary relationship between them, neither in the sense of implicating each other nor in the opposite of excluding one another. On the contrary, they are compatible as long as the socialist demands are reorganized in an expressive and participatory way.

10.2 Momentum groups and the Labour Party at the local level

In this section I will try to grasp, using interviews with local activists, the most significant patterns that lie behind the different behaviors of Momentum groups in different contexts and the way they try to innovate participation, both within and against local Labour sections. First of all I will attempt to make some inferences regarding the factors explaining why in some contexts Momentum groups have relatively thrived, while in other have struggled or have even disappeared or never developed in the first place. After that, I will focus on the innovatory role of Momentum groups, both observed as autonomous actors and as they try to influence the existing Labour Party sections.

10.2.1 Patterns behind the successes and insuccesses of Momentum groups

An issue that emerges clearly from the interviews regards the discontinuous nature of the process of constitution of Momentum groups. Many groups, in fact, appear at first in correspondence with the rise of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the party, and then tend to become inactive, for two main reasons: on the one hand, it is sometimes the great success of the left at local level that makes a seperate group superfluous, since it becomes immediately possibile to conquer the local party structures; in other cases, the scarcity of resources and/or hostility on the part of the other sections of the party are such as to nip left-wing activists in the bud. Often, then, the groups tend to re-emerge at a later time, in correspondence of waves of enthusiasm generated by successes or conflicts at the national level; in particular, the 2016 "chicken coup" and the 2017 elections were often decisive in this sense.

An emblematic case is that of the Westminster group, in the center of London, where a first Momentum unit develops in 2015 directly from the campaign for the Corbyn leadership. The peculiarity of this group is to gather first and foremost citizens already active in the party who, probably by virtue of this integration into the party, shut down the group after a short time to devote their efforts to traditional party structures. Only in 2017, after the general election, a group of young activists, little integrated in local party networks, decides to restart Momentum:

> So speaking personally, I did not really plan to take on the sort of position that I did, but I felt like especially after the 2017 election result where it seemed like Corbyn and Corbyn's Labour Party were outperforming expectations, and it seemed as locally as it has been, you know, you get a socialist government in this country. It seemed like Momentum was sort of the vehicle that was driving that nationally, and so it seemed like we need to be part of that on local map (S).

The initiative has little success: since the left has already found its own set-up within the party, the Momentum group ends up being a – small - cage in which young activists isolate themselves into irrelevance. But in many other cases the 2017 election is decisive. This is the case of the Hendon group, which was previously shut down from mid-2016 following the suspension of some activists because of a disciplinary complaint by a local leader from the right of the party; at the end of the suspension, activists do not find the strength to take action until the 2017 wave of support and enthusiasm increases their confidence. Also in Reading the campaign of 2017 revives a group of activists already present on the territory but scarcely active, ensuring an unprecedented influx of energy and participants. Also in this case, as in Hendon, Momentum succeeds to attract participants that had previously felt rejected from the party:

> So, yeah—so when the 2017 election started, and after being kind of rebuffed by the Labour Party. I tried again, and I said, "Look, the election campaign started." I'd like to get involved and help. I've got the skill but I'm willing to do whatever really, like I'm desperate for us to win this election. And, again, I was just sort of like, brushed off. So, I contacted the Momentum, Reading Momentum, and I said, "Oh, look, this is what I do. This is what I experienced. Oh, God." And the reaction I got from Momentum was the exact reaction I was looking for from the Labour Party. They said, "Oh, that's amazing. We could really use your help with this and this." […] And then I got more involved in Momentum, I ended up on the steering committee and I have kind of become one of… we don't have a chair but I became sort of the de facto chair at some point (J).

In other cases, it is the attempt by resigning Shadow Ministers to force Corbyn to resign in 2016 that triggers a sudden and impetuous reactivation of Momentum groups. This is what happens, for example, in Bristol: during a meeting organized by the local MP Thangam Debbonaire in order to explain to the membership her choice of resign from the Shadow Cabinet, the concomitant presence of hundreds of Corbyn supporters leads to a harsh confrontation. As a result of the event and the conflicts that emerged a wide group of Momentum supporters start to reorganize and taking advantage of the unprecedented wave of enthusiasm and participation seizes a few weeks after the occasion to present a list of candidates for the renewal of the executive of the local party, obtaining an extraordinary victory. For a while the party is hit by an unprecedented wave of participation, with the number of participants at meetings more than quadrupling compared to previous averages. The phenomenon is generalized on national scale, allowing groups to flourish also where the organized base is feeble. The leaders of Momentum take notes:

> People tend to join when they're pissed off with the party. I think that although Momentum doesn't run out really, we are on television, as Facebook videos, as Facebook groups, all social media is used very good. We're out there, people know who we are (Q).

But the enthusiasm in Bristol does not last for long, and in fact in the "day-to-day work of building the movement" (E) the circle of activists is reduced to a nucleus of twenty people. These demonstrate to have understood the lesson of 2016: if it is difficult to achieve a satisfactory level of participation on strictly local issues, support for local battles has to be gathered by attracting the attention of the membership thanks to the opportunities provided by the waves of enthusiasm generated by the Corbyn saga. For example, the Bristol group manages to pass a series of important motions thanks to the idea of making the voting session coincide with a meeting at which the leader of the party would be present for a pre-election visit.

Large mobilization cycles triggered by events on a national scale also impact on already active groups, disrupting previous patterns. This is what happened in Manchester, one of the largest groups in the UK. For a couple of years the history of the group has been marked by harsh conflict between the Trotskyist militants of the AWF who had founded several groups in the city, obtaining in the beginning the reins of Momentum Manchester, and a group of young activists close to Jon Lansman (T). At the beginning 2017 the second group succeeds in getting control of Momentum Manchester on the base of a program centered on the involvement of the young citizens through a cultural strrategy based on informal events and political education. But the strategy does not take off immediately, and the group remains bogged down in the clashes between old and new leadership, until the election campaign of 2017, as a result of which participation increases and the cultural strategy finally gains momentum (Q), to then maintain good levels of participation for another two years - as already seen in cap 8. Something very similar occurs in Leeds, where a group born in 2015 and devastated by "people falling out with each other and personal vendettas" (R) manages to overcome internal differences thanks to a flooding of new members from May 2017 and organizes the first meeting after a year since running the campaign on the ground. The reason of these patterns is easy to explain: on the one hand, the new recruits tend to "crowd out" pre-existing activists, thus greatly diluting the importance of the dynamics of previous internal conflicts; in addition, while previously the groups did not have great incentives to engage in outward-oriented activities, election campaigns and mobilization waves allow to find a clearly identifiable stake - and one from which many can benefit from, also because enhanced chances of success also unlock career

opportunities in local politics etc. For a while, this provides an incentive to turn to outward-oriented activities and to set aside internal differences.

Among the observed cases, the only one in which the dynamics of group re-activation is not connected with national mobilization cycles but depends entirely on the choices of activists is that of Hackney. The group was aborted in the first place because the activists suffered a burning disappointment after the coup with which the new constitution had been promulgated in early 2017; they then decided to devote themselves once again to the creation of a separate group when they realised that local Labour was too narrow a place, compressed by internal conflict and electoral cycle routines, to allow activists to cultivate their own ambitious political education initiatives.

Regarding the conditions that contribute to favor or to inhibit the development of local groups of Momentum it is necessary to observe as the picture turns out to be particularly fragmented. Factors that in some cases seem to explain the success of groups in other contexts are at the root of the difficulties in developing groups at least partially autonomous from local sections of the Labour Party. A particularly emblematic aspect of these ambiguities is related to the balance of power between the left and right of the party in the local context: the presence of a thriving fabric of left-wing activists can be an important precondition for the development of Momentum groups as well as inhibiting their emergence in favor of continued participation in the party. In various cases, Momentum groups are meant as "safe spaces" for left-wing activists that, during and after the rise of Corbyn, struggle to carry on their initiatives within local parties, especially when these are controlled by segments hostile to the new leadership. As previously seen, in many contexts the Labour Party is a very conservative entity, hostile to any innovation and tendentially opposed to the entry of new people who could alter internal power relations; many new activists, especially inexperienced ones, therefore benefit from the creation of a separate group in particularly hostile and change-resistant contexts (Q). It is the case for example of the group in Rossendale, where the right occupies all the positions at local level and the group of Momentum is constituted with the aim of organizing opposition to the direction of the party; or at Wordsworth, where opportunities for propaganda and political education are hampered by the party leadership controlling the timing of activities and budgets:

> So what you are generally find, so what happened here was at first Momentum group was really active because it was the only way we could do anything. We have no ability to, if we wanted to do like an interesting meeting or like invite an interesting speaker, we had no control over that because the right

> controlled all the local meeting. We wanted to do an activity with local Labour Party members, that wasn't, just stupid, knocking on doors and really boring kind of election and everything. We had no access to the data, the membership data to do that. So, we had to organize through Momentum (A).

After growing in numbers and self-confidence, the Wordsworth group embarks on the conquest of the Labour sections, achieving a significant success. This strengthening of the left is the precondition of the abandonment of the Momentum group; in fact, if this was built with the aim of allowing the left to carry out the desired activities in a context marked by the hostility of the party leadership, it loses its usefulness when such hostility is overcome:

> As we all took over the local Labour Party kind of branches, that shifted and we started to be able to do things through the local Labour Party, and I guess that the Momentum group kind of withered, but it kind of continued as, I guess, was the kind of left caucus. So, we've got like WhatsApp groups, just with the left people on the local executive committee or one of the local Momentum people and then when we've got to organize for the AGM of the local Labour Party to make sure that we keep winning but we meet together as a left caucus and kind of organize together. So, I get we all came from Momentum in that kind of sense. I guess that's how the split works here but because the left has taken over the Labour Party in my constituency anyway, we can kind of do what we want there (A).

Once taken control of the party, keeping active separate groups becomes redundant, a commitment that drains energy and time from activists:

> So I think there is a mundane reason which is again just the time that volunteers have to put into things. So if you can organize just by going to one meeting a month in your Labour Party branch meeting, why would you go to two meetings a month with the same people at Momentum meetings and Labour Party meetings (S).

Similar dynamics can be found in Lancaster and in good part of London (K): if the left is very influential in the local party, there are no Momemntum groups; in other cases when the left is weak but gradually gains power, there is the transition from a phase marked by great activism that preludes to the conquest of the local structures of the party, which is followed by a substantial replacement of Momentum groups by networks of factional solidarity fully integrated within the party. The case of the Manchester Group is partly different, since it combines two functions: that of internal opposition to local government detained by the Labour right and that of building separate space for the outreach and community organizing initiatives of the left. In this case, the progressive increase of the activists does not lead to the conquest of the local headquarters of the party. Consequently Momentum does not lose its *raison d'etre* and indeed manages over time to become the core around which all the dissidents inside the party organize. But there are also cases, as in Sheffield, where the fact that the activists of Momentum take control of the party does not lead to a dismission of the local group, which finds its core aim in building more informal and movementist forms of involvement, as well as participating

autonomously in the campaigns launched by the HQs of Momentum and in collaboration with other social movements. Interesting is also the case of Reading where after a first phase the group fragments in what could be defined its primary components: some of the activists enter the leadership of the local party, others engage in a mutual aid group and others eventually give birth to a socialist club dedicated to political education. Here, too, a semi-formalized structure is replaced by an informal network of left-wing activists, ready to converge in the case of specific events but without organizational coordination.

Another obstacle to the development of local groups is the excessive weakness of the local left. In absence of a network of pre-existing activists, Momentum must start from scratch and this turns out particularly problematic especially out from the metropolis (U), since the reduced pool of potential activists complicates remarkablly the task (T) and often in smaller cities political loyalties are organized in a "tribalistic" way (O); since to the lack of human resources is added the systematic lack of economic resources, it might happen that in many contexts the local left decides to organize itself through other already structured and better funded intraparty organizations, such as the Women's Forum, Young Labour and the trade unions (N). When the left is particularly weak and disorganized, the hostility and the recalcitrancy to innovation by local parties that elsewhere has been the trigger for the creation of Momentum groups manages to demobilize the movementis supporters of the left:

> Well, I think definitely loads of people I knew through other campaigns and other social movements joined the Labour Party, because they saw a huge opportunity. I think the thing is that even if you had a local constituency Party where people joined with exciting ideas about that the way to transform the Labour Party, they wouldn't even be able to change really the way that the local Party work, because the rules are set nationally by the Labour Party rule books. […] I think what probably happened is that people went along to meetings, thought this was really boring, and never went again. And they continue to pay their membership because they wanted to vote Corbyn and wanted to be involved in other ways, but yeah, if you went along with the local meeting and said, I'm a videographer and I did kind campaign, working with international social movement making change. They will just look at you and nobody would be interested. They wouldn't say "Great, can you help us with this all-star campaign and we will support you with that and you can make videos of this and that". I think it's, they really are not interested, the whole organization just would not be interested in changing (G).

From these observations it would seem therefore possible to assert that Momentum groups develop and remain active if the left has enough resources, but is not able to hegemonize the local party. This is all the so when activists build local groups with the objective to guarantee a safe space for left activists in a hostile context. If instead the groups are born with other objectives that cannot be pursued within the party also after the conquest of power, and there

are enough resources to manage the partial redundancy of positions and commitments, then it is possible that a Momentum group persists even when the local party is controlled by the left.

10.2.2. Renewing participation and organization

Regarding the innovative role of Momentum in the local contexts, it is necessary to distinguish between two spheres of action. The first concerns the differences between the activities and the modalities of organization of Momentum and the Labour Party; to grasp these I will analyse how Momentum develops its exclusive field of activities, apart from the party. The second sphere of activity regards how Momentum activists collectively attempt to influence local parties, modifying the way in which these are organized and take their decisions and develop local initiatives.

10.2.2.1 Momentum groups' peculiarities

The interviews to the activists have allowed to identify four main differences between groups of Momentum and local branches of the party: Momentum groups are normally more open and welcoming; they entertain more relations with social movements; tend to carry out campaigning tasks in a more proactive and sometimes innovative way; they tend to innovate more the repertoires of engagement activities and to be more predisposed to community outreach using informal methodologies.

Open and welcoming groups

The groups of Momentum are described from almost all the activists as more open, less conflictual and more welcoming than the Labour Party (B, C, E, F, I, J, Q, U, W). This is not surprising: as already seen, many of these groups formed with the aim of gathering the activists of the left who were or felt rejected by the local parties. Apart from the initial phase, in which several groups have been swallowed by the conflict between new activists and Trotzikists, there is a certain level of cultural homogeneity within the groups that allows a more relaxed climate. Moreover, since the organization is new, it has no organisational heritages to deal with, nor any particular form of structuration of roles and powers (J). This means that it is also possible to experiment new decision-making procedures, more fluid and inclusive than the rigidly standardized models typical of the Labour Party (C, J); in general the structure of roles and tasks is extremely informal and prescinds in great part from the use of authority (E). This

attitude of the groups translates into a greater propensity to carry out recruitment efforts and to get in touch with people outside the party (B), as well as to leave more room for free debate and collective formulation of opinions (I), which in the Labour Party is often sacrificed on the altar of routines, quarrels between activists and the rulebook; in some groups that fail to take power, this ability to create debate and confrontation becomes the pivot of activities, with a view to working on the training of new activists able to participate within the party as individuals (N, R).

Cooperation with social movements

Although Labour has a solid and secular relationship with the unions, Momentum groups often show a greater predisposition to side with the more militant segments of unionism and to take part to elite-challenging actions, like pickets (C, D) and lobbying activities in favour of community organizing and conflictual unions such as ACORN (E). In general, cooperation with the unions, but also with other organizations that express clear programmatic positions, is aimed at the promulgation of measures at the local level. The topics on which Momentum groups build alliances with social movements go from the ecologism, to housing (E, R), to anti-fascism, (T), LGBTQ+ mobilizations (R), anti-racist and antideportation movements (T, U), food banks (M) and disabled people's rights campaigns (D).

Campaigning

In chapter 8 we have already seen how Manchester Momentum and other groups have innovated campaigning by utilizing informal social events and a cultural strategy based on outreach through the costruction of relationship with citizens directly in the spaces where they spend their spare time. Besides these aspects already dealt with, the interviewees signal a more proactive attitude from Momentum, that appear more motivated than the local parties because of the strongly felt desire to promote the Corbyn leadership. It is probably the very fact that the 2017 and 2019 elections are perceived by a good part of the right of the party also as an opportunity to end the leadership of the left, which explains why Momentum activists and in general Corbyn's supporters are more willing to put their energies at the disposal of the campaigns, as they perceive that at stake is not only the electoral result but the wider prospects of the left within the party. This makes Momentum activists more systematic in outreach efforts (H, W) and more likely to engage in conversation also on voters that are not registered on party

databases, as well as more prone to innovation in propaganda efforts (F). In several cases the expenditure of energy during campaigns pays as it triggers the creation of a base of activists that otherwise it would not have been possible to reach (T, W).

Community organizing and engagement activities

As far as community organizing and engagement activities are concerned, it is possible to distinguish between activities that take place in the sphere of entertainment and more markedly politicized ones, often oriented to non-formal protest. As regards the first area of action, as already seen Manchester is leader in the cultural strategy of involvement of young people through the creation of informal events such as sport competitions, parties and meetings at pubs. These events have the purpose of creating communities and recruiting citizens directly from the environments that where naturally hang around, of course, but they are also functional to the financing of local groups (C). Often informal meetings in pubs also function as spaces for debate, based on creating more or less structured political education events, with or without guests, as well as for discussing the organization of future activities and the strategy of the movement (E, J). These modalities of involvement are explicitly aimed at the creation of a relaxed and convivial climate that for many Momentum groups is a precious and defining characteristic (R).

With regard to the more politicised activities, it is possible to distinguish between activities aimed at political education and activities of conflictual moblization. The first area includes all major events such as The World Transformed Bristol, a festival dedicated to socialist political education and spinoff of The World Transformed, the Momentum conference parallel to the Labour Party conference. Many other groups also frequently hold training and debate events (A, L, O, T), whose objectives are public awareness and the training of more class-conscious activists (R). Regarding the conflictual activities, these are above all participation to campaigns launched from national Momentum, like that for the boycott of Barclays, bank accused of financing non renewable energy sources (O). There are also cases of campaigns on more local issues, such as mobilizations against the closure of public services (Bradford), the opening of food banks and fundraising to support homeless people affected by restrictive policies (Q). In Hendon the Momentum group supports the inhabitants of the council summer to mobilize and to constitute themselves in association in order to formulate own requests to the managers of the service, obtaining the cancellation of the previewed demolition and an extraordinary plan

of maintenance; the success of the campaign then feedbacks in increased votes for the party in the constituency and at local elections. The Sheffield Group is also very active, including support to the strikes against McDonald's, political education activities, anti fracking campaigns, occupation of banks for climate and the organization of city wide debates with all the candidates in occasion of local elections.

10.2.2.2. Changing Labour

Regarding the attempts to influence the Labour Party at the local level, it is possible to identify two levels of action. The first of these levels is that of trying to influence the decisions taken by the party through internal votes. The second level is that of the overall reorganization of the modalities and logics of action of local parties.

Influencing decision making

As for the influencing internal voting, Momentum groups can lobby for certain motions to be passed and support the election of allied candidates as party officials and in local government.

As far as the first type of action is concerned, it is almost always acts of opposition to decisions taken by local governments, whether Labour or not. In the first case, it is a matter of internal opposition to a leadership from the right of the party; in the second, it is a matter of trying push the local party to assume a clearer stance in its role of opposition. The main topics of the motions promoted by Momentum regard the privatization of public services, housing, environmental policies and anti-unions measures. Particularly interesting is the case of Manchester, a city where the role of Momentum as internal opposition to the local government assumes proportions unmatched elsewhere. Momentum has carried out lobbying activities in local branches and with councillors in order to obtain the cancellation of measures harming homeless people dwelling in the city center, decisions regarding the building policies and above all in favour of the promotion of the Green New Deal. The activities of the activists have concentrated above all on this last point, with considerable vigilance over local industrial policies and with the proposal of detailed motions aimed at addressing in the specific context of the city the objectives declared by the Labour for a Green New Deal campaign, managing also to push for the local election Manifesto to make pledges for the reconversion of public transport and municipal energy providers.

At Bristol Momentum manages to get control of three local sections out of four (E), as well as to propose a left candidate in each ward of the city[64] on the occasion of the local elections of 2020, then postponed because of the Covid pandemic (M). In Manchester, in spite of the position of minority, Momentum succeeds in creating a network of seven councillors on ninety elected by Labour, with the objective – considered feasible by the interviewed – to widen the network to twenty-thirty councillors with newly elected councilors in 2020 (T); Manchester Momentum has also fought for the deselection of incumbent councillors. In Birmingham and Sheffield all the successive chairs of Momentum in the last few years have succeeded to be elected as chair of a local party or political officers in a constituency. In Wordsworth and Hendon the activists of Momentum succeed in obtaining indisputed control over the local party, even if in the second case only at the end 2019. In Rossendale instead the results are decidedly poorer, since Momentum activists are not able to influence the selection of the councillors and the delegates to the conference, but are at least able to wide the internal debate.

Interesting are also the cases of groups in Tameside and Reading. In the first case, the results are extraordinary: Momentum Tameside promotes the national assault of the left to the collateral organization Young Labour, obtaining the control of it; moreover, with the support of Manchester Momentum, it manages to elect its leader Leigh Drennan as mayor of the city – 250,000 inhabitants – and chair of Labour in the North-West region. The case of Reading is interesting not so much because of the successes obtained by the left, which gets control of the city party, but for its parallel weakness at the level of local branches. This is because, while for the important ballots at the city level Momentum succeeds to mobilize a good amount of members, it has been difficult to find activists willing to undertake tiring task to participate in branch meetings, that are often controlled by very old right wingers in private and inaccessible settings.

reorganization of local parties

The results are extremely limited in this respect. Among those interviewed, only six mention having succeeded in influencing the cultures and procedures of local parties; almost always, these innovations cannot be said to be structural, but are contingent on the permanence of the left to a role of local prominence.

[64] The result is excellent because councillors are elected with a first past the post system in each ward.

A first area of intervention concerns, as can be expected from what was said earlier, the attempt to make local parties more open and welcoming. As already seen, in Momentum groups the results are quite good; but this is something different than modifying the culture and the climate of the Labour Party. In Wordsworth, the left, after taking control of the local party, manages to make the associative life more open to the proposals of each member and oriented to political education:

> So, we've made it much less lock down, much more open if someone wants to organize a kind of did more social activities, made the meetings much more interesting. When I first arrived, each monthly meeting was just like the first hour was basically just the local councilors, droning on about, like oh, well, I'm on the committee, that's doing a review into parking in this particular area of Battersea. So, I wanted everyone to respond to the consultation and blah blah. Just like boring shit. And so we stripped out all as much of the boring issue as we could and started to have, let's say, a speaker on the new models of economic democratic ownership or Extinction Rebellion, some kind of actually very radical and interesting speaker and then sort of break into groups and by actually discuss and come up with ideas of what would you do with in terms of active things that we can do around those issues (A).

In Sheffield, in addition to improving the social life and cultural offer of the party, Momentum activists do their utmost to revive internal debate on the occasion of the votes on local party motions. This is made by contacting all the members of both Momentum and Labour, trying to involve them personally and inviting them to debate events so that they can form an opinion and then participate in votes open to all members. This is a significant innovation compared to the modus operandi of a large part of local parties, in which the debate, when not totally absent, is still a matter for activists only. At Reading instead the focus falls mainly on the creation of a less hostile atmosphere within the party, in order to increase the number of participants in local meetings. The first step in this direction is the approval of a code of conduct for all members, as well as support for the involvement of minorities and LGBTQ people. In addition, activists try to make the meetings more accessible, both by expanding the topics covered and by changing the style of conducting the meetings. Lastly, attempts are made to prohibit the practice of holding meetings in private settings, such as the houses of councilors.

The only context in which Momentum succeeds to influence the party in this sense without taking control of it is Manchester, where the cultural strategy influences also some of the activities held under the banner of the party:

> We were just a much more alive active enthusiastic party where people got to know each other. We have more kind of events. We have political education events, monthly film screenings, there's discussions afterwards on different issues. So yeah, it was a really different Labour party than it was when I joined it, but obviously wasn't even close to enough, because we didn't tear up on an election and it takes a long time to do stuff, but I think that everyone who's trying to be a bit like totally negative now so we can do anything it's not true we did a lot (C).

Another area of action is the democratisation of decision-making procedures. In particular, in the cases of Bristol and Reading, there are changes to the procedures in the promulgation of the Manifesto for local elections. In other cases the innovations promoted from the members of Momentum consist in bringing the local parties to carry out tasks that are in their statutory mansions, but that are not carried out because of the lack of internal competition. For example, in Rossendale activists are committed to ensuring a minimum of pluralism and transparency in the procedures for the selection of candidates as councilors; despite failure in getting selected, they have been capable to set up a debate that has no precedent in that context. In Reading instead, the activists manage to obtain the promulgation of some motions to be presented at the Annual Conference of the party, after many years in which the local leadership had shown total disregard for internal debate, only clinging to local issues and the maintenance of organizational routines.

10.3 Conclusions. Limited achievements

Even accounting for the methodological issues described at the beginning of the chapter, a general assesment can be made: levels of activities and results of the groups are at least fluctuating, with cycles of activity and deactivation and often with little structure to prevent that; in almost all the local contexts the experience of Momentum seems dying, of course because of the Covid but many groups claim to have significantly slowed down activities already during 2019, with the exception of the December general election. In fact, the only result that seems to remain is that there are now new left-wing cadres active in the party, not infrequently occupying good positions in the local hierarchies; but the networks of activism behind them seem to crumble; surely networks of knowledge and contacts remain, often transferred from Momentum to Labour, but almost everywhere they lack organization and above all the number of active people on a stable base outside of the office holders is under way of reduction. Probably a more intensive research, with ethnographic presence in localities where the Momentum left has taken power would have allowed a more in-depth understanding of such dynamics, but again this was prevented by the outbreak of Covid.

It is indicative that only one of the respondents claims to be satisfied by the level of participation in his group (T). The other groups show almost unanimously that the current phase is marked by a drastic decline in the level of activity. This, of course, because of the pandemic (C, D, E, I); but alongside the recent situation, several medium-long-term problems are highlighted. First

of all, for areas outside the big cities the low level of participation, outside the main waves, is the rule not the exception (N, W). For almost all the groups, moreover, the defeat of 2019 has had a deep demobilizing effect: having put all their hopes in the seizure of power for years, after the mirage of 2017, has made the defeat and the end of the Corbyn project a particularly dramatic moment. Many groups, having endured several cycles of campaigning for the two general elections, the two leadership elections and the various local deadlines, had to take a break after the 2019 elections (C, D, I, U). In this scenario of exhaustion and reflux, perhaps temporary, the pandemic has had a significant impact, which has probably given the final blow to many local groups. The causes of the exhaustion of the groups, besides the many electoral contests, are tied in the first place to the high levels of internal conflict (D, W) and to an excessive expenditure of time and energies given to the existence of double positions for Momentum activists also active in the party (D, I, S). In addition, there is another problem, which is particularly worrying, linked to the fact that the purpose of the movement appears to have disappeared; many activists are simply no longer willing to carry out the tiring, repetitive and boring tasks typical of participation in electoral politics, in the absence of a strong purposive motivation linked to the support to the Corbyn leadership and the hope of electoral victory for the left (I). Many activists, especially those with movimentist backgrounds, show a structural rejection for the activities typical of party activism and have not had time to develop meaningful ties and stakes within the organization; The loss of purposive commitment linked to a charismatic leadership and the conviction of being able to take power in the medium term eliminates what for many have been the only incentives to undergo a tiring and frustrating work within the party. This problem is in fact aggravated by the structural lack of resources in Momentum, which on the one hand prevents activists from developing stakes in the organisation - since there are no resources to be redistributed – while on the other hand seriously undermines the capacity of planning activities and organisational development in the medium term (C, D, G, I, N, S).

To be fair, some attempt to support the territorial diffusion of the Corbynist project has been made, although not by Momentum but by the Labour Party. This is the case of the Community Organizing Unity – COU – launched in January 2019 with the aim of strengthening party networks in certain areas of particular electoral interest – expecially former industrial areas in the North and Scotland (V). This using Alinsky's community organizing methods, already the benchmark of the Obama campaigns, that is, identifying at local level a number of stakeholders

and community leaders and making the party's resources available to their mobilization efforts on local issues. The COU therefore tries to expand the network of activists linked to the party by supporting local struggles. In this case there is therefore a twofold attempt: on the one hand planning the territorial spread of the movement, while on the other hand overcoming commitment mechanims based only on purposive incentives linked to Corbyn's prospects through the substitution with purposeful incentives linked to the interests that the actors develop directly in their areas of life; the COU wants to convince citizens to join Labour by showing them how the party can help them solve the problems that affect their lives. The Unit, 40 organizers strong, has mainly been involved in mobilization around housing and environmental issues, but has also supported FC Newcastle fans in protesting with employees against the owner Mike Ashley, accused of having bought the team just as a financial investment waiting to be sold to sheiks and of having worsened working condition and heightened ticket prices (Jaffe, 2019). The whole protest impacted for 5-10 million pounds on the income from the football club, and was subsequently turned into a campaign for the living wage supported by football fans and other Newcastle citizens (V). In other areas, such as Broxtowe, the Unit has worked to train party activists and supplement particularly week local parties in salient consituencies (X).

But there have been various problems with this project. First, it has involved only around 40 professionals, which is not nearly enough to provide for a vast strategy. Second, also the COU has been swallowed by intraparty conflicts. While it was never stated explicitly and the director of the Unit categorically excluded it (V), both supporters of the left interviewed and the detractors frame the COU as a tentative to superseed the coordination role of regional units of the Labour Party, which task had previously been that of coordinating campaigning efforts and making groups grow (L, P, X). Regional offices are framed by Corbyn supporters as particularly right wing and conservative entities, the purest examples of the bureaucratism much despised by the left. While rejecting the framing of the COU as a factional effort, even Dan Firth, the director, admits that the idea of community engament is averted by regional parties, which are more intrested in traditional campaigning tasks and internal power disputes and see this kind of outreach efforts as wastes of time and energies. The activist interviewed in Broxtowe goes as far as suggesting that the COU selects, among those constituencies in need for help, only those that have left-wing MPs particularly undermined by right wing regional offices. Anyway, we do not have enough data to establish on a solid ground that the COU has been established as a

factional effort rather than with the objective of enhancing the prospects of the party. What is sure is that it has been at least perceived as such, and such perception has swallowed it into the sink of intraparty conflict; as soon as Keir Starmer is selected as Corbyn's successor, he decides to give the right of the party a clear signal by shutting down the Unit:

> The full value of the unit, however, was never going to be seen so quickly. 40 years of damage cannot be undone that fast. But it was part of a serious response to a real problem, which anyone committed to radically transforming Britain needs to answer: how do we build up power and institutions representing the vast majority of people to take on the dominance of the super-rich? In its place, the new leadership seems to have opted for focus groups and "authentic values alignment", as advised by PR firms. What does this signal? Labour members may fear that it's not just the community organising unit that has been binned, but the hope to radically transform Britain as well (Sultana, 2021[65])

Once again, the Corbynist movement shows a good level of intuition and innovation: in this case, adopting outside election time the organizing techniques of big organizing borrowed from the American tradition that goes from Alinsky to Bond and Exley (Hilder, 2019), after effective electoral experimentation by Momentum. But again, long-term planning capacity is undermined by chronical underinvestment of resources and by the severe levels of intraparty conflict. Once again, factional infighting deforms any organizational efforts, in this case marking the end of a Unit which, whit all its limitations, appeared to be working according to the accounts of the people interviewed.

Beyond issues related to exhaustion, lack of resources and strategical planning, local organizing is hampered by another factor, that is the difficulty of stabilizing participation in the long term. As we have already seen, levels of participation in Momentum groups are significantly affected by waves of enthusiasm and outrage triggered by political events concerning the electoral cycle – with each election framed as a one in a lifetime opportunity to put the left in power – and Corbyn's fight against intra-party adversaries. When activists manage to harness the nationally rising tide of participation and to offer enthusiast supporters effective ways to engage locally, participation rises and groups develop; but when the tide lowers, only a few activists remain. The most successful local groups can count on thousands of adherents, but the number of activists engaged on a regular basis never exceeds twenty. This reflects on many aspects, that is the result of local elections, often quite poor even if held a few weeks after a successful national campaign (Nunns, 2018) as in 2017, but also on the fight for reselections; as already seen, while Momentum manages to push the party to lower the threshold for triggering the

[65] Retrieved at: https://labourlist.org/2021/02/as-a-former-community-organiser-heres-why-labour-should-keep-the-unit/

deselection of a MP, the results in these selections have been very disappointing. The thousands of Momentum mebers are simply not reliable to turn out for a two-step process such as deselecting a MP and then voting again to select another one. Therefore the difference in results between membership-wide and local contests is stark:

> It is easier for Momentum to mobilise its mass membership and supporters towards changing the composition of Labour Party organs like the NEC or the NCC, with nationwide OMOV ballots and low-cost participation, than for high-cost activism through locally organised physical selection meetings (Skogan, 2020: 52).

At the local level, the Corbyn movement is a downright reserve army (Goodall, 2019; Seymour, 2017), ready to mobilize even at the local level if the Corbyn leadership is in danger or if special opportunities for short-term conquest of power are opened up. But it lacks the ability to create a movement that is able to go beyond merely occasional mobilising (Cant, 2019); in some cases, the existence of strong local conflicts or particularly unpopular right-wing leaders can provide a stimulus to local activism (Goodall, 2019; Skogan, 2020). But it is important to notice as in any case the ability to mobilize of the local groups of Momentum is only in minimal part endogenous; that is, local structures are not capable of planning and calling their members to arms on the basis of rational and strategic planning of priorities. There is only a fluid core of activists who have to be able to intercept waves of participation of exogenous origin and exploit them to achieve local objectives. This of course makes the work of gaining power locally very complicated, as well as that of reforming party structures and selecting new MPs.

But why does this happen? It is possible to make essentially two hypotheses. The first concerns the nature of Corbyn's supporters. Many of these are young and/or show a strong preference for movimentist and elite-challenging forms of participation, and as such are mobilizable especially for activities with high emotional and conflictual intensity; on these occasions, this kind of activist can give much, but it can also show some aversion to more standardized and routinized forms of participation, as Dalton has already shown effectively (2008a, 2008b, 2009). To this it must be added that the nature of local parties is particularly repulsive for this type of activists; activities that are extremely repetitive, non-innovative and engaging, and older activists have a competence and habit in bureaucratic closure that often manages to disarm the innovation attempts by new activists and the left in general. In addition, local politics might be for most less exciting than the major national events; in such a context there is need for commitment mechanisms that are not exclusively purposive, that can lead the members to develop stakes in the organization, both because it is capable of distributing material incentives

or because of socialization. In fact, in the long run, most of the members of the left who remain active are those who get official positions within the party. This issue of the incentives and commitment mechanisms regards the second reason that explains the difficulty to move from mobilizing to organizing, that has to do with the logic of the distributed organizing typical of Momentum. As seen above, digital parties adopt an organizational logic similar to that adopted by Bond and Exley in Sanders' campaigns: the strategy is developed centrally, the local units are spaces of action in which the plan is implemented, but they have no weight in the decision-making of the organization nor are there any formalized linkages or possibility of advancement for activists. Local groups are entrepreneurial spaces but without powers and with stakes in the organization that are exclusively tied to the purpose of winning an election. Such an organization, fundamentally resource poor, cannot be institutionalized, and indeed can only mobilize to the extent that it is not institutionalized and regenerates itself in cycles of activation and deactivation, with the perennial alternance of phases of abeyance and return to the *statu nascendi*. Organizations like Momentum are structurally contrived as to diffuse calls to action coming from a center; and therefore it is logical that then the sources of the mobilizations, seen from the local level, are almost always exogenous.

Finally, a last order of problems concerns the need to divert some of the energies dedicated to movement building to meet the campaigning needs dictated by the numerous national and local election deadlines for which the five-year period 2015-2020 stood out and by the efforts to obtain offices in local parties. In cases where the left has been successful, this has led to processes of institutionalization (A), in the sense of a progressive normalization of the repertoires of action in line with the sphere of activity and priorities typical of activism in the Labour Party. This has probably alienated most of the movementist activists, who have not found in the party and in the activities with an electoral focus a repertoire of actions consonant with their desire for conflict and profound social change (A, E, I). The electoralism of the party and the succession of deadlines significantly undermines the possibility of innovating such repertoires of action, since the stakes are too high and the inertia of the already run-in routines too strong (I). In general, then, the energy and time of activists has been literally sucked by activism in the party, by deadlines and internal conflicts, greatly reducing the possibility of unleashing new forms of action and to build linkages with social movements:

> If, if we had done the work—ourselves together and done the work and not been distracted by local party stuff, we might often catch those people engaged through the main form and be more active part of what

> was happening but we got pulled into bullshit by the Labour right and everywhere. And that's where, people's arguments for their what's the point of being in the Labour party when they fucking hate you (J).

Thus, electoral politics and party organization tend to destroy movimentist politics, by sucking activists into the logic and dynamics of institutional politics (Milburn, 2019). This is by no means a new phenomenon. Chapter 7 has already shown how the New Left, starting from a vast project of social change and construction of the alliance with social movements, ended up being reduced to fighting for conference motions and to elect its leaders in the party and representative institutions. Thirty years after the end of the New Left epic, the new activists of the movimentist left are calling the veterans of the left with the nickname of "Labourists", identifying their attachment to the logics of parliamentary-centered politics. Therefore, at least from the point of view of the collective imaginaries, already with the New Left the triumph of inertia that drags the party in the wake of representative politics over the attempts of movementization is almost undisputed. The same result is largely confirmed thirty years later with the new wave of mobilization of the left.

Surely, the Labour left has not had time on its side. In the few years in this window of opportuty, which have been marked by two national electoral deadlines and two leadership contests, it managed to take control of several local sections, including many at the city and contituency-level. More difficult has been the access to local government: but this was largely due to the fact that the electoral cycle is normally 4-5 years long, and therefore in many cases there was only one opportunity or not even one to attempt the assault. Local elections in 2020 would probably have ensured left-wing breakthroughs in cities such as Bristol and Manchester, while in others such as London, Liverpool and Tameside it is already strong enough. But the objective fact remains that attempts to innovate the repertoires of party action, however substantive, are in fact very feeble and subject to an adverse inertia that in the medium term tends to sink them.

Conclusions

Before concluding this work, I will summarize the main findings of my research. First, I will discuss the location of the case study within the theoretical frame and the historical picture developed in chapters 1-4. Second, I will turn to the most salient issue emerged by the analysis of organizing and mobilizing in Momentum and the Labour Party, that is the relative unbalancement in favour of the latter form of engagement.

1 The Corbyn wave and the Silent Revolution

Here and there I have already emphasized the aspects of continuity between the concepts elaborated previously and the events narrated in these last chapters, but to give the exposition greater clarity I think it is necessary resume them within this conclusive outline.

The libertarian populism of Generation Left

The study of Corbyn's support base showed interesting confirmations of Norris and Inglehart's theory (2018) with respect to the effects of the economic crisis on the values of Western citizens. In particular, it is evident that the deterioration and proletarianization of some sectors of the middle classes has not necessarily led to the development of populist-conservative positions; in many cases, especially in urban areas and among the younger generations, deterioration of material conditions and retention of a libertarian worldview go hand in hand. This means that when these groups mobilize, they do so within projects that merge post-materialist demands, linked to the quality of life and of social relations, with materialistic demands linked to the increase of social protections. The history of Corbynism, however, questions at least in part Milburn's framework (2019): if the young age is a good predictor of the vote for Labour, it is not a predictor of activism, which remains firmly in the hands of middle-aged people – on average the new Labour members are 51 years old, although of course first time joiners are younger. It confirms, however, the presence of poor graduates as a force that is not majoritarian but certainly significant within the movement, to confirm Gerbaudo's thesis on connected outsiders (2019).

Moreover, the Brexit issue shows that Corbyn's supporters are not content to fight for bread and butter social democracy. On the contrary, central to many of these is the new cultural war between open society values and regressive populism. This aspect shows a split between

Corbyn's economicist approach, which sees the EU as an instrument of capitalist domination, and the culturalist approach of a large part of its supporters, defending EU membership as a symbol of the rejection of the model of chauvinistic and asphyxiating society proposed by the Tories. This culturalization of the conflict above economic issues is evidently a result of the Silent Revolution, which had the role of translating social conflict into cultural and identitary conflict.

The collapse of materialist and corporatist Labourism

The history of the Labour Party since New Labour is a history of profound transformation in the internal structure of the party, especially because there is a progressive disarticulation of the relationship between unions and PLP. The Labour Party, it should be remembered, was born as a party whose aim has been to give political legitimacy and parliamentary representation to trade unions; it is therefore an emblematic case of corporatism typical of the postwar consensus, in so far as it is dedicated to attempting to incardinate unions in state government. The limits of traditional Labour trade-unionism are very strict: in the classic labourist view, the fundamental interest of the working class is to improve its material condition; morover the interpretation that Labour gives of the political emancipation of the working class points to the predominance of parliamentarism. This conception is violently questioned, by the Bennite left in the 70s and 80s, but will be definitively destroyed by the modernizers of New Labour. After the failed "revolution" from the left, a group of modernizers, taking advantage of the anti-bureaucratic and anti-corporative sentiments spread since the Silent Revolution, launched an attack on the unions and the model of delegate democracy, promoting a new model of individualized and plebiscitarian party. The trajectory of deconstruction of the pact between PLP and unions and contemporary individualization of intra-party relations culminates in Corbyn's election: on the one hand, unions are finally willing to side even with a marginal candidate, since they have lost their influence on more powerful intraparty actors; on the other hand, the exponential increase in power in the hands of individual members in selections allows them to influence the fate of the party with less organizational mediations – at least at the moment of the choice of the leader.

The populist situation: the Labour variant of the elite-challenging turn

Increasing voting rights for individuals, disarticulation of the intra-party bureaucratic-corporatist pact and rejection of the political system by increasingly critical citizens resulted in

an unprecedented situation within Labour, leading to a radical simplification of internal power relations along the vertical axis. The legitimization of the new leader first of all at the base, which is not only a party base but extends well beyond it, produces a violent reaction in the parliamentary group that sees in this patterns a risk for its dominance. Some authors have pointed to a supposed populist mindset in Corbyn's discourses and behaviours; here I preferred to refer to the structural situation, in which the change in values and the declining political weight of the unions following the collapse of the social democratic compromise weakened the previous organizational configuration, leaving the field open for unprecedented forms of political relations. Only once the field is freed from the alliance between unions and PLP it becomes possible for individuals as such to play an important role within the Labour Party and elect a leader who fairly transparently represents the main opinion movement of the moment. The whole Corbyn affair is a matter of defiance to the elites of the party, both in discourses and deeds; it must be remembered, however, that Blair had already used such rhetoric, although his target was totally different, meaning as elites the "self-selecting" activists and the residuals of bureaucratism of the post-war consensus.

Libertarian watchwords in organizing: democracy and bureucracy

In chapter 7 I showed the deep connections between the New Left, the Corbyn movement and libertarianism. The New Left was of course a radical left project, aimed at socializing production and promoting a radical reorganization of the capitalist economy; but it was also a response to the decline of socialdemocratic parties generated by the anti-bureaucratic and libertarian critique stemming from the Silent Revolution and put forward by the moltitude of new social movements of the 60s and 70s. To the risk of marginalization the New Left responded with an ambitious project, revolving around the reorganization of the party in favour of the direct participation of members in decision making and the progressive abandonment of the exclusive focus of the party on parliamentarism through the construction of strong links with social movements. With the Corbyn movement, we witness once again a project combining a focus on redestribution and reorganization of capitalism, albeit this time in a less radical anti-austerity and neo-keynesian vein, with the pursue of the elite-challenging and movementist agenda of the post-70s left. What in the New Left was a visionary end-point, in the Corbyn movement was the starting point: the Silent Revolution had already won over the left's costituency, which flooded the party through the anti-austerity movement.

Libertarianization and the link with social movements are not, in this case, something that is aimed at from within the party, but rather a fact that the party might or might not decide or be able to accomodate with. In both cases, however, the actual pace of organizational change in much slower than ideational change, and most reforms are parked at least until the adversaries of the left pick them up, as happened with members' direct vote in selections. Morevoer, focus on parliamentary-centred activities and conflicts swallows both insurgencies, proving path-dependency to be stronger, at least in the short-medium term, than reform efforts. What is clearly achieved is that now it is consolidated that a significant portion of the party comes from and dwells with social movements, as it is that the newly proletarianized and precarized portions of the former urban middle and aspirational class take for granted the intersectionalist view that posits material and civil liberation as going hand in hand.

As seen in chapters 9 and 10, libertarians watchwords stemming from the Silent Revolution are key in Labour organizing during the left's regency. The vessel of democratization inspired and justified almost any discourse and choice regarding Momentum's structure, albeit in much contradictory directions. The call for individualizing democratization cemented the alliance between founders and members against "Trotskist" infiltrators and determined the renounce of a delegate-based model in favour of a stratarchized form of digital democracy, based on individual voting rights stripping local groups of any influence. As already happened in libertarian and digital movement parties, however, the empowerment of individual members has the effect of erasing the intermediate strata of organization, depleting internal linkage and producing centralization of decision making at the top and stratarchization of the different layers. Members therefore revolt against their previous decision and vote into the leadership a group of reformers promising a new third way between individualized and group-based democracy. But in the process, the legitimacy and prestige of the organization are gravely depleted by the protest of libertarian members. The other watchword in organizing is the opposition to party bureaucratism; this translates in the proposal of more informal, horizontal organization at the local level, as well as in more plural and engaging repertoires of action and interaction patterns, in the wake of the libertarian social movements from which many activists come – and decide to return, at some point after the end of the Corbyn project. This aspiration repeatedly clashed with local Labour power groups, consolidated routines, organizational cultures and formal rules and structures. Sometimes the left has the upper hand, but almost always electoral duties and intra-party conflicts swallow the innovators' energies, which

struggle to institutionalise their achievements; provided that it is even possible to institutionalise and project in the long term these de-institutionalising tendencies. What is most clearly achieved through these conflicts is that in many places the left makes inroads in local groups, while often sacrificing their radical reformist stance in favour to adaptation to the party organization logics. But of course, once the genie is out of the bottle, it might be hard to put it back in; despite ultimate failure, the experimentations have taken place and have deeply impacted the cultures and imagination of the Labour left, and without doubts will be taken up once again in the future as happened with the heritage of the 70s New Left. To paraphrase Wainwright: Labour's structure might not have changed that much, but the soul of a significant part of its membership has welcomed change and, with alternate fortunes, has been pushing for the same agend for more than fourty years – from Benn to Corbyn.

2 The elefant in the room: has mobilizing been more effective than organizing?

The successes of the Labour left have defied expectations many times. Even though looking retrospectively it is possible to identify structural and conjunctural factors paving the way for the insurgency, not even the protagonists of this story could predict that they would be able to get control of the party in 2015. Again in 2017, the left's project appeared to be doomed due to very poor opinion polling; but then again, a surprising albeit sociologically explainable mobilization transforms Corbyn from an outsider to a serious contendent for Downing Street. However, even though the left has been able to defy negative expectations in national contests, its performance has been defined as quite disappointing in local contexts by most of the activists involved. In chapters 7, 9 and 10 we have seen how much the activists of the left have valued organization building and linkage with the civil society and social movements, but only in a few major cities these afforts have been successful. And even there, electoral incumbencies and intra-party conflicts have swallowed energies away from the re-organizing of the grassroots towards more traditional labourist practices and repertoires. Looking through Han's (2010) categories, it is clear that when Labour has defyied expectation, performing much better than anybody could predict, it has essentially practiced mobilizing. While in organizing it has been much less surprising, as seen in the conclusions of chapter 10. Therefore we should inquire why mobilizing has outperformed organizing, and which of the factors underlined in the theoretical framework might have played a role. And after that, it is important to question the implications for participation in party politics of this alleged supremacy of mobilizing over organizing.

Looking more closely, it is possible to assert that the difference in performances is not so much explained by the adoption of a mobilizing or organizing framework by the left, but by the fact that in some situation the left has benefited from resonant effects. In Chapter 4 I have analyzed how the rise of digital technologies has favored the emergence of what Tormey (2014) defines as resonant politics, that is a form of participation based on the rapid dissemination of viral contents, the immediate and direct involvement of individuals and the disappearance of traditional forms of gatekeeping in such a way as to allow fluctuations in public opinion to easily result in bursts of participation. As seen in chapter 5 and 6, Corbyn has benefited largely from forms of resonant politics: at all critical moments of his leadership, from his candidacy to the election of 2017 through the Chicken Coup of 2016, he has benefittedit from participation earthquakes fuelled by the development of an online movement and by the wise use of digital tools. Dramatized conflicts between Corbyn and internal opponents and electoral deadlines, whose importance has been amplified by the social media ecosystem fuelling the insurgency, have led to waves of outraged and enthusiast mobilizations, facilitated by Momentum's digital tools. Discourses, social movements, individual frames and technological infrastructures all resonated in some specific moments, creating and irresistible impetus. Local activists have been able to benefit from these waves of participation in their organizing efforts any time it has been possible to link discoursively and organizationally local and national events; but when this has not been the case, local activism has not have had the chance to overwhelm traditional local power groups and has fought an often exhausting war of position, the results of which have often been disrupted by the violent fall of the left.

New technologies, combined with looser organizational forms and greater individual skills, allow individuals to converge and act directly and without organizational mediation in favour of the causes they hold more dear. In short, the internet allows a freedom of expression that is perfectly in line with the values of post-materialist citizens, who are increasingly interested in acting and organizing unmediately in favor of elite-challenging causes. More complicated is the adhesion to long term organizing efforts, which requires both long term commitment and selective incentives; as regards the former, we have seen how citizens are becoming less and less available to long term commitment, especially in organizations such as political parties that often allow only relatively bureaucratized patterns of interaction and hamper entrepreneurial engagement. As regards incentives, we have seen how organizations such as Momentum have

chosen for both economic and political reasons not to enfranchise activists by distributing resources and offices.

Moreover, the Labour party, with its routines, rules and discourses has been put more than a century ago on the track of electoralism and parliamentary-centred politics. Even if the New Left and the Corbyn movement have challenged traditiona Labourism, they both have been swallowed by the workings of the party and have been consumed by tiring electoral deadlines. The left has correctly understood that the only way to enhance its prospects in changing the country was to perform positively in election, thus establishing its credibility as a mainstream and solid actor; at the same time, internal opponents have seen in electoral sabotage and defeat a chance to dethrone the radicals. This means that the left has faced the forced choice to invest much in internal and national election, and this has deprived from time and resources other areas of investment. To this must be added that in the last five years there have been many important electoral deadlines, exhacerbated by the Brexti issue and by intra-party conflicts. Therefore the left has had repeteadly to focus all its resources on mobilizing to grant itself some chances of survival, and this has led to chronic underinvestment in organizing. In summary: organizing is less adapt than mobilizing to benefit from the resonant impetus generated by a dramatized public arena caracterized by the spread of partisan digital media and mobilizing tools. In addition, the caracteristics of party politics, as well as the preferences of libertarian and movementist activists point to short term and momentuous involvement at the expense of long term commitments.

What are the implications of this alleged dominance of mobilizing? The key issue is that in mobilizing only a few activists hold responsibility and leadership positions, since the whole mechanism is based on an organizational center formulating calls to action and providing disenfranchised participants some tools to be effective in their efforts, but without giving them influence or promising theme any particular advancement within the organization. On the contrary, organizing involves much more people on a more regular basis, and this allows them to develop leadership and organizational skills. As long as Momentum continues to work as a vehicle for mobilizing and revolves around the mechanism of distributed centralization, it will fail in building a strong left. Activists might develop their skills by taking part in the Labour Party, but once again this might end up being a fairly traditionalist choice, insofar as it is not easy to innovate the party as such; the innovative potential of the left might be destroyed, by

both being swallowed within traditional party structures and dispersed by the dissolution of a weakly linked stratarchical organization such as Momentum.

There might be a structural problem here. As discussed in chapter 4, digital organizing in many cases might entail lower costs for organizations, and this might appear quite attractive for resource poor and new organizations such as Momentum. Moreover, investments in digital mobilizing might give higher returns on investment in the short term, therefore discouraging long term investment in organizing when resources are scarce. This could lead to lowly institutionalized organizations (Han, 2010; Tufecki, 2017) and underinvestment in the human infrastructures. This might initiate a vicious cycle, not because mobilizing is not important for achieving political objectives, but because it stymies the construction of diffused leadership and organizational intelligence. While organizations strong at organizing might at any moment convert to mobilizing, since they have the leadership resources and capabilities at the center, the reverse is not as easy, since cultivating the linkages with and the skills of a wide number of intermediate leaders is a long term effort that requires continuous investment. To be fair, the distribute organizing model facilitated by digital technologies typical of Momentum is able to empower local activists, by delegating to them the implementation of the centrally defined plan; but it is not able to link activists with the organization on the long term. The symbiosis with the Labour Party might at least in part supplement this deficency, but as we have seen activists have to be willing to invest time and recources committing to a fairly traditional party, and this appears to be quite problematic.

Appendix – List of interviews

Interview code	Role, local affiliation	Topic of the interview
A	Momentum activist, Wardsworth	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
B	Momentum Activist, Leeds	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
C	Former Momentum chair, Manchester	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
D	Momentum chair, Sheffield	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
E	Momentum activists, Bristol	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
F	Momentum chair, Glasgow	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
G	Labour activist and Momentum member, Stroud	Local organizing
H	Momentum chair, Cambridge	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
I	Labour and Momentum activist, Hackney	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
J	Momentum and Labour chair, Reading	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
K	Labour activist and Momentum member, Hornsey and Wood Green	2017-2019 elections, exploratory interview on ground campaigning
L	Labour chair and former Momentum chair, Hendon	2017-2019 elections, local organizing

M	Momentum activist and Forward Momentum candidate, Bristol	Local organizing, NCG elections 2020
N	Momentum activist, Dudley	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
O	Momentum chair, Bradford	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
P	NCG member and founder, Momentum Renewal candidate, London	Momentum's history, NCG elections 2020
Q	Regional Labour chair (North-West), Mayor (Tameside), Momentum, Labour and Young Labour activist (Manchester, Tameside)	2017-2019 elections, local organizing, Momentum's history, NCG elections 2020
R	Momentum chair and Momentum Renewal candidate, Leeds	2017-2019 elections, local organizing, NCG elections 2020
S	Momentum chair, Westminster	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
T	Momentum activist, Manchester	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
U	Momentum chair, Birmingham	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
V	Community Organizing Unit director, London	Community Organizing Unit
W	Momentum chair, Rossendale	2017-2019 elections, local organizing
X	Labour activist, Broxtowe	2017-2019 elections, local organizing, Community Organizing Unit

Y	MP candidate, Reading West	2017-2019 elections, local organizing, exploratory interview on ground campaigning
Z	Labour activist, Sunderland	Exploratory interview on ground campaigning

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