

Ethnography of Conflict: Art vs. Politics in Protests

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Abstract

This paper describes a study of contemporary European protests, and shows how ethnography is well-suited, as a method, to capture the wide diversity of voices present in specific protest events. One set of voices commonly neglected in the mainstream social movements literature is that of artists: producers and performers of music, street performances, art projects and other creative expressions. On the strength of ethnography's ability to capture the full complexity of a contentious event—its polyphony and multiple forms of communication—the paper argues that art in protests is not only instrumental to movement leaders' political agenda but also makes important unique contributions to social change. The paper is based empirically on participant observation data, as well as framing-content analyses and interpretative discourse analyses of photos taken and texts collected at four protests in France, Italy, and the UK. Four purposes of art in protest are described.

Introduction

Giving more serious and pragmatic attention to the creative expressions in protests without assuming the instrumentality of art to politics (in protest), this paper explores the explicit and implicit purposes attributed to art by its full range of creators and promoters. More generally this paper aims to study the relationship between art and politics in protests and to establish whether art has become a distinct voice, distinct from politics, in the pursuit of social change. My definition of "art" is empirically based: every activity, product, expression which involves a high content of creativity and aesthetic sensibility, and recalls forms of expression of conventional arts such as visual art, literature and music, and less conventional arts such as graffiti, cinema and photography. My definition is not concerned with the quality or originality of the creative expressions, or with the

recognition of such expressions as art, but with the understanding of the act of making art today. My definition of “politics” is empirically based too. It is constituted by all the voices (not only the statements from social movement leaders) concerned with political issues brought to protests by activists working in socio-political organisations. Normally they take the form of leaflets, speeches, workshops and slogans.

The data come from my participant observations at four European protests: a demonstration against the war/occupation in Iraq, which was held in London on the 20th March 2004; an European Social Forum, which took place in London from the 13th to the 15th October 2004; a protest against the privatisation of public services, which occurred in Paris on the 19th November 2005; and a protest against an immigration policy, which was held in Rome on the 3rd December 2005. These protests were selected because they were associated with social movements categorised as different by the literature (e.g. organisational and instrumental perspectives such as in Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, and expressive perspectives such as McDonald 2006). My purpose was to investigate whether these protests and therefore movements actually share a transnational discursive field where art plays a distinct role (versus politics) across all the cases.

This research relied upon one main method of data collection: participant observation. Doing participant observation allowed capturing all the voices—even the silent ones (e.g. puppet performances)—expressed at collective actions, understanding protests in context, acquiring documents and recording performances or speeches otherwise excluded by the analysis. But ultimately, the analysis of the documents delivered at protests became an important complementary part of the research process.

To begin with, the paper describes the relevance of this study to the social movements literature, as well as other literatures addressing the relationships among art, politics and social change. Then it shows how instrumental art—the category predicted by the social movements literature—is only one of the four purposes motivating creators and promoters of art in protests.

The small number of theoretical and empirical studies of art in protests fail to recognise art’s autonomous status in pursuing social change. On the one hand, American scholars present art as instrumental to the political struggle narrowly defined (e.g. Adams 2002). On the other hand, studies influenced by the European NSM theory present a less instrumental understanding of art, as a means of collective expression which is able to reach the broader culture (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). With few exceptions, however, they neglect the individual dimension of resistance produced by art, and do not conduct sufficient empirical research on the actual art expressions to which they attribute such cultural significance.

Given the limited attention paid to art in the social movements literature, a second section examines studies of art and social change outside the social movements literature. I ask whether other disciplines have recognised peculiar properties in art that might lead to an autonomous way of pursuing social change, distinct from contentious politics. I will contend that there are three main approaches, which I call romantic, critical, and pragmatic. The first approach highlights the role that aesthetics can play in fostering social change, but it is highly theoretical and positively biased: art is a value to protect (e.g. Marcuse 1978). The second

approach is empirically based, but considers art as an illusion to dispel—aesthetics is associated more with privileged art worlds than with individuals interested in pursuing social change (e.g. Bourdieu 1991). The third approach is still empirical but seeks to comprehend the meanings attributed to art by its producers and users. It sees artworks as factors of transformation with peculiar properties, but it is “agnostic” towards the relation between art and (progressive) social change (e.g. Heinrich 2004). This approach includes studies which try to acknowledge the art, and the role of aesthetics, outside the “art world” (Wills 2005). This approach is central in this study because it allows me to analyse the role of aesthetics and other properties attributed to art by its creators and users (e.g. rhythm, sound, etc.), abandoning the normative attitude of the first approach.

It will be argued that art in protests is more than what the social movements literature says it is: instrumental rituals or cultural representations which help to achieve political aims and/or consolidate collective identities. Although art can indeed be instrumental to the political or cultural aims of movement leaders (“politics through art” and “culture through art”), there are also artist-activists and political activists who see art as a form of resistance in itself. For these people, art is an alternative form of resistance, disconnected from the formal, collective, political or cultural aims around which social movement leaders mobilise. Their resistance does not involve pre-fixed collective identities to consolidate (“we”), social injustices to fight, enemies to defeat (“them”), and aims to achieve. Instead, it encourages people to be themselves, to express their own visions and emotions, free of the standardised and diminishing (for some people) categories which regulate neoliberal societies.

The Study of Art in the Social Movements Literature

Analyses of social movements have tended to neglect the subject of art (Adams 2002: 22). Aside from a few exceptions (Adam 2002; Eder, Staggenborg and Sudderth 1994-1995; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Jasper 1997), when they have mentioned art at all, they have done so only in passing (e.g. McDonald 2006; Aminzade and McAdam 2001; Jasper 1998; Morris 1984). These works have cast light on either the instrumental or the expressive role of art.

The Instrumental Role of Art

The existing empirical works which focus on artistic expressions in protests tend to convey instrumental understandings of art. Art is seen as useful in movement processes, such as framing, resource mobilisation (including emotions useful to the political struggle), and collective identity formation.

From examining the case of arpilleras—appliqué pictures in cloth—produced by the prodemocracy movement against the Pinochet’s regime in Chile, Adams argues that framing was carried out in three ways: the arpilleras allowed the communication of emotions useful to contention; engaged new recruits in the collective making of art; and provided information about the bad conditions of life in Chile (2002: 33-39). Art can help

social movements to communicate not only with the larger society but also internally. For example, religious songs in the Civil Rights Movement served as a communications bridge between the students and the other, less-educated blacks, and with outsiders (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). Art can be the venue of oppositional voice and convey meanings and values which imperceptibly lead to the erosion of the regime (Wicke 1992).

In terms of resource mobilisation process, art can help to mobilise protest by raising consciousness in potential recruits (Eder, Staggenborg and Sudderth 1994-1995; Eyerman and Jamison 1998), to collect or earn money (through sales of art), to stir up political pressure from abroad (Adams 2002) and emotions useful to the struggle. Aminzade and McAdam interpret songs as “emotionally laden rituals”, instrumental tools for the management of emotions—arguably a necessary task for achieving political goals (2001: 41). Music can be particularly helpful in removing negative emotions for the movement such as fear and despair (Morris 1984: 56). Chaffe has found that street art under authoritarian regimes can become a form of psychological warfare against the dominant culture and elite, revealing the existence of an emerging subterranean movement. The act of producing street art creates a collective sense, and breaks the complicity of silence (1993: 30).

Eder, Staggenborg and Sudderth show how art can facilitate the consolidation of collective identities, along with shared emotions useful to contention. The art in question is the National Women’s Music Festival (NWMF), a music festival held annually in Bloomington, Indiana. “The NWMF was successful as a lesbian-feminist community in two ways: first, it succeeded in creating a climate in which women feel nurtured and empowered. Second, the festival affirmed a positive collective identity for lesbians (1994-1995: 492). Moreover, art keeps people active in and committed to a movement once they have already joined. One of reasons why people continue to participate to movement is that collective art-making helps them develop bonds with other movement members (Jasper 1997: 193) and create a feeling of unity (Falasca-Zamboni 1997: 5).

In other words, empirical researchers of social movements typically treat culture (art) as a “frame” oriented strategically to what social movements are really about: politics (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 10). Art is interpreted as useful in many movement processes but it does not add any meanings on its own. The role played by aesthetics is only marginally touched—for example, when Adams argues that “the arpillera, with its crudeness connoting sincerity and poverty, was a gateway to the heart” (2002: 39)—but never explored. It is immediately read as instrumental to politics as conceived by movement leaders. No other ways of expressing resistance are associated with art.

A criticism to this understanding is that art can operate at a less cognitive and intellectual level. Music can produce pleasure and collective effervescence by transporting participants onto another atmosphere, more ethereal than reality (Jasper 1997: 118). Music from old social movements is able to conjure up emotions which are likely to inspire new movements (Ruzza 1997).

The Expressive Role of Art

NSM scholars, being sensitive to the study of culture and the meanings brought in protests by participants, established the basis for a non-instrumental understanding of art. According to Melucci, in a culture where communication becomes the means and content of domination, silence and retreat (often associated with forms of art such as puppets and mime) have become two forms of resistance through which alternative models of life are experimented. He wrote:

Some movements are starting to bring to the surface and act towards the elaboration of precisely this neglected side of human experience: the need for silence and meaning.

The message of such movements is their action itself—not what they state for record or claim as its content, because they often do even not ask (for goods, advantages, reforms), they bring (make visible new meaning through their practice). This, then, represent a completely different way of challenging the institutional power (1996: 183).

Melucci wrote this passage without making any reference to creative or artistic practices. Among scholars influenced by the NSM theory there is still little attempt to focus empirical analysis directly on the cultural work that is actually done in social movements (Johnston and Klandermans 1995). However, Melucci's words resonate in McDonald's understanding of the role of puppets, and other artistic expressions, in "antiglobalization movements" (2006). He argues that all movements produce culture, but in the case of puppets is the production of culture (art in my definition) that is itself the medium of action.

The grammar of puppets is experiential: puppets emphasize action over dialogue, and go beyond the limits of language. [...] The puppets can be seen in the tradition of the clown, estranged symbols of humanity at once full of life and hope, but also at a loss in world they do not control, beings who connect through communicative embodiment rather than through rational discourse (ibid.: 101).

McDonald goes beyond the instrumental and symbolic dimension of culture (art). He argues that the experience of puppets allows participants to move beyond the violent, instrumental and collective dimension of traditional contentious politics. The grammar of experience involved in making and carrying puppets is radically different: puppets are fragile, temporary, vulnerable—they exist only for the event. They are grotesque and beautiful at the same time, and this allows one to encounter with one's self (ibid.: 103-104).

McDonald contends that the same function of creating a sense of magic and imagination is achieved by practices such as the storytelling and wearing mask from the Zapatista Movement. Marcos's storytelling is an expression of magic realism or myth. Myth is an answer to that domain of experience which goes beyond one's capacity for action. While

ideology promises to fill the gap, myth explores it. The same is for the use of the mask from the Zapatistas: the mask is not a symbol of an identity; wearers of the mask claim the memory as their own, it is a tool for remembering that they do not have a face, a name, outside the forest (McDonald 2006: 134).

The strength of McDonald's account is twofold. First, he moves beyond an instrumental understanding of art. Second, he casts light on the limitations of an understanding of culture (art) as disembodied messages, systems of signs, just texts. He suggests that movements such as the Zapatista and the puppetistas make more sense using categories such as magic, imagination, music, rhythm and presence. He emphasises that they function through resonance: "resonance is a sensual experience, and is achieved where differences do not merge into sameness, but mutually intensify in the presence of the other, as when colours or different notes resonates" (ibid.: 225). This makes possible a conceptualisation of resistance as involving shared experience and emotions—rather than collective identities, meanings, goals and strategies. However, in identifying a clear shift from social movements oriented to collective identities (e.g. NSM) to experiential movements (e.g. antiglobalization movements), McDonald misses the opportunity of exploring the interaction among different grammars of action within contemporary movements. An empirical investigation of contentious arenas might allow a broader definition of the role of art in contemporary resistance.

Another example of a non-instrumental understanding of art in social movements is the study from Eyerman and Jamison on folk music and how this—reinterpreted by social movements—has affected the broader culture (1998). This is an important study because it brings together the two generally accepted meanings of culture: as a way of life and representations of ways of life. Along with a broad understanding of culture as concerned with meaning and identity, Eyerman and Jamison reinstate the ancient understanding of music, and art generally, as truth-bearing cognitive forces. At the same time, they bring together the two dimensions that have divided sociological discussions of culture: the subjective and the objective. Music as experiences and performed within social movements is at once subjective and objective, individual and collective in its forms and in its effects" (ibid.: 369).

Eyerman and Jamison do a good job in linking art and contentious politics but they only focus on the work of art aimed to diffuse and spread political ideas developed by social movement leaders. They emphasise the didactic role of music where lyrics have replaced political speeches. Although, as pointed out by McDonald, the problem with generalising the didactic role of music is that it does not account for forms of music where sound and sensual experience are more central than lyrics (2006: 224). Besides, the individual dimension is considered but only as something that will eventually join a collective identity. Individual interpretations of resistance are not considered. So, although they reject the use of culture as a tool for politics, they still see it only able to elaborate and spread political ideas as conceived by movement leaders, unable to develop its own meanings and use its own dimensions (e.g. aesthetics, rhythm and body) to produce social change.

Art, Politics and Social Change Outside Social Movements Literature

Although the relationship between art and politics is a neglected question within the social movements literature, it has been tackled by scholars in other disciplines (other areas of sociology, philosophy, rhetoric, political science, history and art history) who have provided relevant insights for the analysis of my data. These disciplines have adopted three main approaches to the relationship among art, politics and social change: a romantic approach; a critical approach; and a pragmatic approach.

The Romantic Approach to Art

The romantic approach interprets art as a liberating force, able to foster social change. A champion of this approach is Marcuse. Marcuse's re-examination of art was an attempt to refute Marxist notions about the function of art in society, which he saw as utilitarian, didactic, and naïve. This viewpoint on art—as we have seen—is still prominent in the most social movements literature. In his opinion art needs not support progressive politics directly in order to be progressive. Rather, the indirect ways in which art operates may prove to be more significant and profound. Of this he writes:

I shall submit the following thesis: the radical qualities of art, that is to say, its indictment of the established reality and its invocation of the beautiful image... of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art *transcends* its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behaviour while preserving its overwhelming presence. Thereby art creates the realm in which the subversion of experience proper to art becomes possible: the world formed by art is recognized as a reality which is suppressed and distorted in the given reality (1978: 6).

For Marcuse, art is both a physical and a psychic space of freedom. Art in the mind “allows for a recombination of experiences, a suspension of the rules that govern daily life, a denial of gravity. [...] Art presents the possibility of a fulfilment, which only a transformed society could offer” (Becker 1994: 117). This reminds us of the use of myth from the Zapatista movement explored by McDonald (2006: 134).

The strength of this theory is the recognition of art's potential to link aesthetics to resistance and social change, without necessarily having to pass through politics. The problems with this theory is that, first, it refers to specific avant-garde movements in the world of art which are more the exception than the norm. Second, it is not based on, or validated by, empirical research.

Edelman points out that art feeds politics, not just the reverse (1995). This is possible because art can never reproduce reality, “the real world” or “everyday life” as they are. Rather, “art *creates* realities and worlds. People perceive and conceive in the light of

narratives, pictures, and images. [...] The political meanings of works of art, then, are never given, but always ‘taken’, by political leaders and followers” (ibid.: 7).

Despite promoting diverse political interests, art does strengthen democracy and social change in some respect. That is:

It excites minds and feelings as everyday experiences ordinarily do not, it is a provocation, an incentive to mental and emotional alertness. Its creation of new realities means that it can intrude upon passive acceptance of conventional ideas and banal responses to political clichés. For that reason art can help foster a reflective public that is less inclined to think and act in a herd spirit or according to the cues and dictates provided by a privileged oligarchy” (ibid.: 143-144).

Edelman highlights the close relationships among art, (contentious) politics and everyday life, and the power of art in shaping perceptions and beliefs, through novel and unpredictable combinations of elements that constitute a new way of seeing. However, since Edelman emphasises more the generalised and unconscious process at work in art, and less the conscious understandings and therefore uses of art by its creators and users, he fails to identify specific ways with which art is created and used to produce social change.

The Critical Approach to Art

The critical approach to art and its ability to produce social change is the most diffused in the field of sociology of culture, as many sociologists have followed the pioneering work of Becker (1974; 1984) and Bourdieu (1991; 1993). Becker was interested in the social interactions and interdependencies at the basis of the recognition of a piece of work as a piece of art. Consequently, he studied the organisational aspects related to the production, distribution and consumption of art. His argument challenged the understanding of art as autonomous from society—which is one of the main contribution of the sociological study of art—but in doing this he set aesthetics aside. This is problematic because, although art is a social product, it is not reducible to social and political factors (Wolff 1993: 7). Without engaging with the question of aesthetic from the point of view of artists and users of art, we cannot understand the production and reception of art (Heinich 2004).

Bourdieu’s application of his sociology of domination to the art field pointed out that art production and art reception are strongly linked to the positions occupied by actors in society. Familiarity with art was interpreted by Bourdieu as a luxury of the leisured bourgeoisie, serving as a marker of that class’s objective distance and subjective sense of distinction from the realm of brute material necessity inhabited by the dominated classes in society (Bourdieu 1991: 111-112).

Becker and Bourdieu and their followers have restricted the realm of aesthetics to the “art world” and reduced the question of aesthetics to something mirroring the dominant elites in society and instrumental to their hegemony. Both approaches stress the plurality of actors involved in the art world, their concrete interactions, and the role played by the context. This way, they dismantle the idea of art as an individual enterprise, the product of art genius, and they break down overly general categories, such as public, art milieu, etc. Consistent with the positivist project, they want to account for how “reality” works, without going through actors’ interpretations. They consider those interpretations as illusions to dispel, corrupted by beliefs about the autonomy of art from the social and the singularity of the artist.

This critical approach has the advantages of being empirically based and of showing how the social and cultural fields are related and interdependent (casting light on the multiple extra-aesthetic elements involved in aesthetic judgement). However, it dismisses actors’ beliefs and values, and the intrinsic qualities of artworks. Their restriction of “art” to what is defined as art by the art world also sets aside creative expressions not officially recognised as art. Finally, in light of the enormous transformations occurred in contemporary art since the 1960s, Bourdieu’s theory of art’s reception seems anachronistic. It ignores that those transformations have made art a less elitist social practice, in both production and reception, and have blurred the distinction between high and popular art (Prior 2005). These transformations include the increasing attention to the experience of being “human” (Berger 1969) and the development of new and popular media of expression (e.g. cinema) (Prior 2005).

The Pragmatic Approach to Art

Recently a more pragmatic, comprehension-oriented sociological approach to art has emerged. In this approach artworks are interpreted as factors of transformation, having intrinsic properties (literary, musical, bodily, etc.) which affect emotions, cognitive categories, systems of value and modalities of perception of participants in art practices. In this approach art is like a part of society that can be studied in its functioning, and looking at the value and meanings attributed to it by its creators and users (Heinich 2004: 96-97). Heinich’s pragmatic approach to art involves studying what artworks and art expressions *do* in their context, the conduct of art producers and users, the meanings and values attributed by them to artworks, the interactions and behaviours provoked by artworks (ibid.).

However, these studies only focus on art officially recognised as such. This excludes the comprehensive study of creative expressions which take place outside art venues, but which nonetheless possess the properties attributed to official art.

Everyday Life Aesthetics

Some studies have tried to extend the definition of art outside the art world. Aesthetics have been interpreted as something meaningful for some people—regardless of whether they are artists or not, a way to develop and represent meanings, emotions and identities also outside the official “art world” (Wills 2005).

In particular, according to Wills, it is time to move beyond the criticism of the view that participation in art produces culture (high culture for the few) and show that actually culture (as way of life) produces art—or at least that there is a dialectic tension between them. “Cultures are intertwined with and produce everyday forms of aesthetic experience, only a small part of which is precipitated textually, only a small part of which is preserved, only a small part of which is consecrated as ‘art’” (2005: 74). Therefore, ‘aesthetics’, far from being explicable only as a bounded and delimited entity synonymous with ‘art worlds’ and dominant elites, is actually contiguous and continuous with the overall flow of everyday life practices, carried out not only by specialists called ‘artists’ but also by everyday actors in their mundane activities (ibid.). Wills contends that:

If the term ‘arts’ is given an altogether wider definition as sharing daily terms with its equal partner, culture, then it will be seen that everyday life is full of expressions, signs, and symbols through which individuals and groups creatively establish their very presence, as well as important elements of their identities, purpose and meaning (ibid.: 74).

In this vein, Boal—Brazilian theatre director and creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed—argues that all human activities are cultural, and art is the product of people who possess an unusual need and capacity to express themselves aesthetically (2006: 101).

This is relevant for this study as this aims to investigate purposes of art taking into consideration not only extrinsic characteristics of art but also intrinsic characteristics such as aesthetics, rhythm and embodiment, and whether those contribute to an autonomous approach of a part of art to social change.

Purposes of Art

This analysis highlights the only partially correct view of the existing literature by showing how some of the documents actually circulated at protests attribute and use art in ways contrary to what theory predicts. The types of purposes of art anticipated by the literature are indeed present, but they are only two of the four types that are actually present. The identification of two extra types of art in protest is the contribution of this paper to the literature.

The purposes attributed to art by its creators or promoters can vary on two dimensions: the *appreciation of art*, and the *impact attributed to art*. Regarding the first dimension, art’s creators or promoters appreciate it either for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons. An

intrinsic appreciation of art occurs when an artwork or art performance is distributed or performed in protests for the same reasons that artists make art in the first place: because of a creative drive and an aesthetic sensibility, to express intimate emotions and meanings, and to develop (musical, bodily, literal, etc.) connections between those intimate emotions or meanings and the broader society. For example, an intrinsic appreciation of art occurs every time someone performs music for its unsettling, liberating rhythm and sound and/or every time someone manifestly discusses and appreciates those intrinsic properties of music. In contrast, an *extrinsic appreciation of art* refers to circumstances where an artwork or performance is presented primarily because of its extrinsic qualities, such as its ability to deliver a message, to raise money, to attract audiences, etc.

With respect to the second dimension—the kind of impact that authors and promoters believe art can have on society—art can contribute to either political change or cultural change. By *political change* I mean changes in policies by either the national state or international institutions (a definition I call narrow) or changes in political issues and conditions not necessarily through formal socio-political institutions (a broader definition). By *cultural change*, I refer to changes in terms of collective meanings, identities and emotions (a broad definition), or changes in the field of art (a narrower definition).

The combination of these two dimensions establishes a four-fold typology of the purposes of art in protests. For shorthand, I call these purposes: 1) politics through art; 2) culture through art; 3) art for politics; and 4) art for art (i.e., for culture, narrowly defined).

TABLE 1. Ideal Types of Purposes of Art		
Impact of art	Appreciation of Art	
	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Political	Politics through Art	Art for Politics
Cultural	Culture through Art	Art for Art

Table 1 shows that a first strand of art is performed or promoted to pursue the same political aims and visions as movement leaders, fitting comfortably the description of “politics through art”. In this category, art is considered useful, because it makes a political message more spectacular and appealing, because famous artists are popular, and because this popularity can thus serve to raise money and create positive emotions in protestors. A second category of texts still sees art instrumentally, but this time to cultural change (e.g. some texts promote art to diffuse minorities’ meanings and identities into the broad culture). I call this “culture through art”. A third category is constituted by the implicit purposes of art. Here I coded artworks and art performances by people who bring art to protests but do not provide any direct clue about how their artistic expressions are relevant or connected to either the political agenda defined by movement leaders or their own. For this reason I call this category “art for art”. My interpretation of the purposes of this type of art, in light of ongoing changes in contemporary art since the 1960s (e.g. the

increased focus on human experiences (Berger 1969); new popular forms of art (Prior 2005)), is that it embodies and/or celebrates intrinsic qualities of art which are antithetical to the qualities associated with neoliberal societies (e.g. ultra-rationalisation; competition). It also represents a rejection of a certain approach to resistance which has embraced features of neoliberal culture. This interpretation is partly reinforced by a fourth category of purposes of art in protest: “art for politics”. In this category, authors and promoters of art make explicit the use of art as something intrinsically liberating for individuals, and present individual liberation as the truest way of achieving political aims (with “politics” defined broadly).

Therefore at least some of the art in protests (“art for art” and “art for politics”) is meant by its creators to provide a unique contribution to resistance. It not only supports social movements leaders’ aims, either political or cultural, as stated in the literature, but also embodies and expresses meanings and emotions not contemplated by movement leaders.

The paper continues by presenting the distribution of the four purposes of art in the art and political texts across protests. It follows with a discussion of each category unifying fieldnotes and document analysis.

Table 2 below illustrates the distribution of the purposes attributed to art by its creators or promoters in the four protests. The numbers in the table represent the number of explicit or implicit statements about the purposes of the art in protests—not the number of art texts and political texts. These statements are the product of my analysis of art texts, political texts, photographs (all dedicated to capture art performances in protests) and my fieldnotes. There were 159 artistic statements revealing their purposes, out of 92 art texts, 52 photographs, and 15 fieldnotes about art performances in the street or other demonstration venues not recorded by other documents. Only 24 political texts and political speeches on the stage, recorded through my fieldnotes, discussed the use of art.

Categories of Purposes	Types of Texts		
	Art	Political	Total
Politics through Art	75 (47%)	21 (88%)	96 (52%)
Culture through Art	3 (2%)	3 (12%)	6 (3%)
Art for Art	47 (30%)	0 (0%)	47 (26%)
Art for Politics	34 (21%)	0 (0%)	34 (19%)
Total	159 (100%)	24 (100%)	183 (100%)

Table 2 shows that political texts and so movement leaders and political activists are sustainers only of the category “politics through art” and only in three instances of “culture through art.” Artist-activists, in contrast, are the authors of artworks and art initiatives embodying all four different types of purposes of art. This shows that an

instrumental understanding of art is predominant among movement leaders and political activists, but another group of participants at protests understand and use art in relation to social change both in instrumental and other ways. I will now discuss the four purposes of art in protests in turn, providing examples of the types of artworks, art projects and performances which are associated with each category.

Politics through Art

Doctorow wrote:

At issue is the human mind, which has to be shocked, seduced, or otherwise provoked out of its habitual stupor. Even the biblical prophets knew they had to make it new. They shouted and pointed their fingers to heaven, but they were poets too, and dramatists. Isaiah walked abroad naked and Jeremiah wore a yoke around his neck to prophesy deportation and slavery, respectively, to their soon-to-be-deported-and-enslaved countrymen. Moral values are inescapably aesthetic. In the modern world it is the moral regime of factual reality that impinges on the provinces of art. [...] The creating, advertising, packaging, and marketing of factual products is unquestionably a fictional enterprise (1977: 162).

Doctorow captures the “normal practice” of movement leaders (dating back to biblical times!) of using aesthetic tools in order to seduce potential followers. Although the sentence “moral values are inescapably aesthetics” suggests a philosophical relationship between moral values and aesthetics, the nature of art involvement in contention is seen by Doctorow as an instrumental one: protest leaders know by experience that they have to use artistic tools in order to pursue their political and moral agenda.

In this category I mostly coded art performances/initiatives promoted by movement leaders in their leaflets or on the stage. Movement leaders are not artists and do not make any statements regarding the art performances themselves which they encourage. In their statements they concentrate (1) on the political message that they want to deliver and/or (2) the mood/emotions that they want to create with the art performances. In some instances (3) they encourage rank-and-file protesters to participate in music parties in order to raise money. Finally, (4) they thank the artists for the *number of people* involved in those events, struck by the message, or galvanized by their emotions.

This category also includes those artistic initiatives by artists who work closely with movement leaders supporting their political aims and messages. In these occasions their art production is motivated more by supporting movement leaders and by exploiting the extrinsic qualities of their art (e.g. their notoriety, possibility of addressing a message) than by the intrinsic ones, although they are both present. Examples of art for politics by artist-activists are: concerts; playing music at parties; interviews on the stage; selling their CDs for fundraising; and flags, stickers, banners with a high content of graphic design.

In other words, in these cases social movements leaders and artists show and exploit what I call the *extrinsic appreciation of art* for pursuing movement leaders' *political aims* (attracting audiences, making a message spectacular, creating certain emotions). Art is not brought in because it adds its own contribution to the struggle. Maybe it would (e.g. because of the meanings or emotions people would derive from the CDs they bought to finance the campaign), but this is not the reason for its presence in protests.

An example of “art for politics” employed by movement leaders is the balloon release at the protest against the war in Iraq organized by the Stop the War coalition leaders. After eight speakers Lindsey German invited all the people to look towards the back of the square [Trafalgar Sq.]. The massive net containing hundreds of black balloons was released. She said: “This is dedicated to all the people who lost their lives in this unjust war—not only the British and American soldiers, but all the Iraqis” (London STW PO).

At the rally organised at the end of the ESF 2004, the leader of the organisation Global Resistance, Chris, said from the stage: “I want to thank all of you for dropping flowers in front of the American Embassy. We wanted to show all our solidarity to all the victims of this war and occupation” (London ESF PO). In both cases movement leaders do not show us their personal emotions through these symbolic actions, nor do they use art to express meanings which they did not and could not express in their political leaflets. On the contrary, they use the stage to provide demonstrators with a clear interpretation of the political aims of these art performances: to show solidarity to the people who died in the war in Iraq, without discrimination between British and Iraqi. They do not encourage protesters to construct their own meanings or to experience their own emotions during these performances. They are interested that their message come across clearly.

Concerts by established musicians at the end of rallies were organized and promoted by the leaders of both the antiwar movement and the ESF 2004. “Asia Dub Foundation will play at the end of the rally”, informed the STW leaflet. “JOIN THE CONCERT/Trafalgar 17:00-19:00/Peter Doherty, Dot Alison (Massive Attack), Asia Dub Foundation and Others!” was written in the official programme of the ESF 2004 distributed at the forum. As we will see in the category “art for art”, 72 music events from more or less musicians were published in the programme. In the other three protests, I encountered many out-of-programme music performances: groups of drummers, people playing guitar, harmonicas and making sounds using penny whistles. However, the types of concerts advertised by movement leaders on the stage and in their leaflets were the ones from famous musicians. Their use of music therefore seems to be motivated more by the popularity of the musicians than by any other aspect of music.

A party to raise funds for the political campaign was announced on the stage at the end of the antiwar demonstration in London: “One of the members of the coalition announced that on Saturday 20th March at the bar Lorca in Brixton there will be a drum and base party for raising money and invited is everyone to go” (London STW PO).

In Paris the coalition of unions organized a balloon parade at the demonstration. “Hundreds of balloons of all colours were floating in the air in Place de l’Italie. Looking

at them more closely, each of them has the name of one of the social movement organisations who organized the protest” (Paris protest PO).

In each of the four protests I was given stickers with a high graphic design content, which made the message more attractive and immediate. For example, at the antiwar protest the STW coalition distributed a sticker with a green missile behind a peace symbol, immediately recalling the symbol of the antinuclear campaign. Another example is the stickers from the “Sortir du nucléaire Campaign” in Paris which promoted clean energies against the nuclear energy representing a small house, the Earth, a energy propeller from the wind and a tree, all realised using a simple, naïve and cheering style (simple drawings, bright yellow background) which seem to communicate the appeal of natural and simple things. Also, all protests included dozens of flags, T-shirts, signs and other tools with a similar high symbolic/artistic content but supporting political ideas well established in the movement. For example, I counted 16 Che Guevara’s portraits, 22 umbrellas and flags with multicoloured stripes either meaning peace (especially in Rome) or the gay rights movement.

Finally, in London I was given advertisements of journalistic books on anti-capitalism, the Islamic world, democracy, globalisation, Marxism today and other political themes (Oneworld Publications Leaflet). These books, in contrast with the fictional or photography books which focus on the intimate aspects of movement leaders and normal people which I will present in the next categories, aim to extend and deepen ideas exclusively political and already part of the movement legacy.

In the rare instances when the social movements literature has acknowledged the role of art in contention, it has suggested that art plays an instrumental role, especially for processes such as framing, resource mobilisation, and the consolidation of collective identities (Adams 2002; Staggenborg and Sudderth 1995; Jasper 117). The contribution of art to contention is typically considered minor and optional for movements’ success, compared to the role played by the seizure of political opportunities, the development of effective organisations and the clear articulation of problems and goals by movement leaders. In contrast, Doctorow suggests that the use of art by social movement leaders is a necessity—a proposition arguably validated by the ubiquity of art in all of the protests in my sample. And, as the third and fourth categories suggest, the connection between art and resistance is more than only instrumental.

Culture through Art

In this category I have included all the individuals or groups in protests who believe in cultivating art for achieving changes at the level of the broader culture. For example, people in this category see art as a key resource for creating knowledge of, and acceptance of, minority cultures in the broader culture of a society, or creating better citizens (in the sense of more active, thoughtful, cultivated, integrated, respectful and open). Art then is interpreted as a tool of cultural change.

In Rome, the organisation *Todo Cambia* supported and promoted the project *Pakaritambo*, an initiative of a small experimental multiethnic theatre in Milan which aims to give an art venue to “the thousands of hidden and lost artists, who are often forced to do other types of jobs”. *Pakaritambo* wants to offer a stage to “their voices, bodies and, especially, their souls” for creating a truly multicultural and open society which is the result of active and integrated citizens from different ethnicities. “The underlying idea is to give voice to the polyphony of the local communities, being aware that active and integrated citizens are the ones who not only have access to essential rights but who also actively participate in the production of culture and meaning”¹ (*Todo Cambia Leaflet*).

Some groups see art and cultural events as a fundamental social service, something that allows people to develop politically progressive, pro-collective meanings. For this reason art and cultural events should not be regulated by the logic of profit and market. Art should not be a luxury good for people who can afford it in the market, but should be accessible to everyone as it has a cultural impact and helps to form better citizens (oriented to the collective). For example, in a leaflet distributed from *Attac* at the demonstration in Paris, culture (capital c) is seen as a “fundamental right”, and a way to cultivate the most important values or virtues of the National Republic of France: equality, solidarity and fraternity. *Attac* criticises the next ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as—it is said—it aims to accelerate the privatisation of many public sectors (art is one of those), transforming all the human activities in merchandising.

To fight this neoliberal logic, *Attac* and other organisations have decided to mobilize and present their claims. WTO: 10 years is enough! [...] In a common call, we demand: [...] that the GATS negotiations exclude water, health, education, culture, and housing, which constitute fundamental rights² (*Paris, Attac Leaflet*).

¹ Original text in Italian: “*Pakaritambo* è una parola Quechua che significa ‘casa dell’aurora’. Questo gruppo nasce per cercare di far emergere con forza le migliaia di talenti artistici nascosti e dispersi che spesso devono svolgere tutt’altro genere di mestiere a Milano. *Pakaritambo* vuole dar voce a quei talenti nascosti, offrendo il palcoscenico che meritano le loro voci, i loro corpi, e soprattutto le loro anime. [...] L’idea di fondo è quella di dare voce alla polifonia di fatto delle comunità locali, a partire dalla consapevolezza che si è cittadini attivi e integrati non solo quando si accede a diritti essenziali, ma anche quando si partecipa attivamente alla produzione di cultura e di senso” (*Todo Cambia Leaflet*).

² Original text in French: “La prochaine conférence ministérielle de l’Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC) a pour objectif d’accélérer les processus de libéralisation des marchés dans de nombreux secteurs, de poursuivre la transformation de toutes les activités humaines en marchandise. Pour lutter contre cette logique néolibérale, *Attac* et différentes associations ont décidé de se mobiliser et présentent leurs revendications. OMC : 10 ans ça suffit ! [...] Dans un appel commun, nous demandons : [...] Le retrait des négociations de l’AGCS de l’eau, la santé, l’éducation, la culture et le logement qui constituent autant de droits fondamentaux”.

Art for Art

Art is the specific and exclusive aim pursued by a component of the movement. The organisations and individuals in this category perform art, embody art or support high culture events in protests without making any explicit connection with the political issues at stake (or other current socio-political issues). Although their presence in protests makes their actions political, the political meaning of their actions is latent or unspecified. Instead, they enjoy and appreciate intrinsic characteristics of art, such as creativity, rhythm, aesthetics and bodily expression. These self-oriented manifestations of art, apparently disconnected to any political or social issue, were present in all four protests I attended, testifying both to their importance, and to the fact that they cannot be products of peculiar and local circumstances, since they are a systematic way of protesting and resisting.

There are several examples of “art for art” in the protests I have analysed: (1) leaflets promoting art and cultural events outside protests (excluding advertisements for fundraising activities); (2) spontaneous music performances by unknown artist-activists; (3) graffiti; (4) street theatre and performances in which people use their bodies, styles, clothes, costumes and scenographic objects (e.g. puppets) for expression. I discuss each of these in turn.

Promotional Leaflets

Among the leaflets that I collected at protests were programmes for alternative theatre, advertisements for theatre performances and films, and advertisements for art courses. For example, at the London antiwar demonstration, I was given a leaflet advertising a theatre performance named “A Place with Pigs”. The piece tells the story of Pavel, a man who deserted from the army during the Second World War and who has been hiding himself amongst the pigs for ten years. The piece explores his will or right to give himself up, exploring his motives for rejecting war (Bridewell Theatre leaflet).

At the ESF 2004 in London, I collected a leaflet for a screenwriting course aimed at people seeking to pursue a career in screenwriting and, above all, wanting to tell stories and make their voices heard. “Getting an idea from your head to a sheet of paper means a journey of just eighteen inches. Approach the journey in the correct way, and you will arrive safely. Start this journey unprepared and you will end up wandering and confused, your idea locked inside you – the eighteen inches might as well be a million miles” (Raindance leaflet).

In Rome I was approached by an employer of a small publisher, Edizioni dell’Arco, based in Milan. He asked me if I was interested in immigrant literature, and explained to me that:

Italy started to have immigrants who chose to write in Italian only recently. Italian publishers tended to not publish these works because they were not

considered of high artistic level and because they didn't have a lot of market. They used to be works of social criticism, autobiographical, aimed at communicating the experience of being an immigrant, the reasons for being an immigrant and the problem of racism. However, recently, many immigrant writers have moved on, overcoming their autobiographical, critical purposes. They write great books (Rome protest PO).

He recommended several books written by immigrant writers, which he had with him in a big bag. He added:

Since big publishers don't publish these types of books this literature is almost invisible and it circulates only because of the commitment of small publishers, social organisations, a few scholars and people genuinely interested in hearing different voices (Rome protest PO).

The presence of these types of documents suggests a reciprocal interest between the world of art and the world of resistance: on the one hand, some people/activists express their resistance through art (see also below); on the other hand, activists are considered a potential audience by some art institutions sensitive to social issues.

Music Performances

Looking at the programme of the ESF 2004, along with the concerts featuring popular artists such as Peter Dinklage, Asia Dub Foundation, etc., largely promoted by social movement leaders (Murray and Lindsey 2005), the number of concerts from more or less unknown music groups was impressive: of 233 "cultural" events published on the programme, 72 were music events. In the other three protests, music from unknown musicians wasn't in the programme, but when I was marching I encountered many music performances: particularly groups of drummers, and individuals playing guitars and harmonicas. In the antiwar protest in London:

I have noticed two separate groups of African dancers and players of bongo and jambè, with neither flags nor banners displaying their identity and message. They were just playing and people around them were dancing. In Trafalgar Square I reached one of the two groups: it was made of four tall, dreads-hair guys, smiling and beating the drums with strength. Speakers on the stage were coming and going but the drummers seem to be uninterested. They kept playing vigorously, sometimes taking a few minutes' break. However the performance was for the protesters and for the "general climate" because once movement leaders stopped to go to the stage, they stopped playing (London STW PO).

Graffiti

At the ESF 2004 and at the demonstration in Rome, along the path of the march, I found freshly executed graffiti: either just writings in different styles (from the use of a simple chalk to the use of sophisticated fonts applied with spray) or images defined by more personalised graphic design. According to Hundertmark, street graffiti such as the latter represent more personal and cutting edge elaborations of “urban art activism” (2006: 32). Figures 1-3 provide examples.



Figure 1. *Nihilists for Nothing.*

In London, during the ESF 2004:



Figure 2. *Beauty will Come.*

From the demonstration in Rome:



Figure 3. Flying Creatures.

Bodily Performances

At each protest I observed and photographed individuals acting and/or presenting themselves (through clothing, costumes, etc.) in unusual ways, displaying “expressive behaviour” (Brekhus 1998). They dressed in unusual ways, with eccentric clothing, hairstyles, and/or accessories, such as puppets. As an example, a family marched at the antiwar protest in London with “a sort of peace tank. It was pink, and had doves drawn on it, kids inside it, and pink balloons all around” (London STW PO).



Figure 4. Peace Tank.

In Paris I shot this photograph:



Figure 5. Hippie Couple.

In Rome there was “a group of young people with Mohawk haircuts, white makeup on their faces, body piercings, metallic and pointed accessories. They were holding an all-black flag” (Rome protest PO). They did not allow me to photograph them.

The common feature of all these groups was their use of aesthetic signs, styles, their bodies and creative activities to express an approach to resistance which is well known and taken seriously in studies of art, but much less so in studies of contentious politics. In contrast with wearing T-shirts with the image of Che Guevara or other political icons, these styles embody and express meanings or subcultures which developed outside politics. Some of them could be associated with movements in art (especially in literature and music) such as the hippie movement and the punk movement. The support by the hippie movement for the civil rights movements and anti-war movements in the 1960s is well known. Today, since direct references to the hippie movement, or other movements associated with art, are rare and expressed individually, they go almost unnoticed in protests. However, here I want to make a point about the connection between these art movements/subcultures (only residual in the protests I have analysed) and the broader presence of art in contemporary protests at the centre of this research. Although these art movements are less visible and significant at a collective level than in the past, they might have affected the art in protests more than is normally recognised. According to many recent publications celebrating the 40th anniversary of May 1968 in Paris, the artistic strands in the movement did not always just support movement leaders’ political

vision and aims: in some cases they had their own vision of resistance, that is non-adversarial, cultural and compassionate (Hoyland 2008; Vertigo 2008).

Art for Art: Beyond Subcultures

Artistic acts that are non-instrumental to mainstream contentious politics—as in the phrase “senseless acts of beauty”—are not new in the study of resistance (McKay 1996). However, they have previously been associated only with subcultures. In contrast, in this section dedicated to the “art for art” in protests, I have shown that subcultures are only one component out of four in this category (“Bodily Performances”).

Art in general seems to have embraced some views once advocated by the hippies and other subcultures alone. Various scholars provide reasons for thinking that contemporary art—not just a few subcultures—may have changed into a potential ally of contemporary resistance, distinct from movement leaders’ approach. Weber, describing the world of art, pointed out its autonomy from and opposition to the “intellectualism and rationalization” of the modern age.

For under these conditions, art becomes a cosmos of more and more consciously grasped independent values which exist in their own right. Art takes over the function of a this-worldly salvation, no matter how this may be interpreted. It provides a *salvation* from the routines of everyday life, and especially from the increasing pressures of theoretical and practical rationalism (in Gerth and Mills 1958: 341).

I do not share Weber’s view of art as something antithetical to “intellectualism”, but this study confirms the aspiration of some art to develop its own meanings and values, different from the ones promoted by the mainstream rationalised culture of contemporary societies, and even from most political resistance (which has been affected by the same rationalisation). By rationalised culture I mean a culture which functions mostly on the basis of standardised, generalised and objective categories (even when the task is finding meaning in one’s own existence). Rationalisation in capitalist societies entails systematic organisation of each aspect of society in order to increase efficiency on the market. Individuals need to be competitive—that is, to meet standardised categories for their development, skills, body and success.

Some contemporary art reflects the condition of people who are not able to navigate the market successfully and enjoy the opportunities it promises. It shows the reasons, condition and consequences of “failed existences”, and yet their legitimacy, humanity, and sometime beauty. Berger outlined this new mission of contemporary art (which I see reflected in the “art in protests”): to preserve the human, to teach to be human, to appreciate the uniqueness of each human being beyond the market, as an answer to our ultra-rationalized and competitive society. About this shift in art, Berger wrote:

Today the position of the artist has changed. He is no longer valued as the producer of his work, but for the quality of the vision and imagination as expressed in his work. He is no longer primarily a maker of art: he is an example of a man, and it is his art which exemplifies him. This is true at an appreciative and philosophical level even under capitalism, where works of art are treated on the market like any other commodity. In the artist's new role there is no place for comparative competition. One cannot properly compete to be a representative of Man (1969: 152).

The scholars mentioned above seem to suggest that to cultivate art today can be a way of rejecting, or rebelling against, the hyper-rationalisation of the present age. Even if art is internal to society and thus subjected to the same influences—especially to the competition in the market which incorporates and rewards anything that sells—there are artworks which address the new forms of oppression and standardisation of our societies. They also qualify as an illusion the idea that the concrete and standardised goods and achievements available on the market are accessible and good for everyone. On the contrary, they cast light on ways of living that are marginalised or devalued by the market, showing their beauty or *raison d'être*.

This is art's contention. Like modern capitalism, it emphasises individuality and subjectivity. But it also often challenges the kind of individuality promoted by the market. In fact, contemporary art often gives voice to people who could not fit the system. The fact that then their art sometimes gets caught by the market does not cancel the different path followed by artists and does not invalidate their criticism of the system.

Art for Politics

In this category I have included all the individuals or groups in protests who believe in and cultivate art, emphasising its intrinsic qualities (such as its ability to promote self-expression, beauty, knowledge, etc.) for achieving socio-political aims. The people in this category see art as a complementary or alternative way of realising socio-political goals: their aims can be the same as, or distinct from, the political aims of movement leaders. In this category, artist-activists, and a few political organisations (normally working on traditional political issues) make manifest how they believe art can contribute to social change, making explicit in the process some of the latent and maybe unconscious purposes of “art for art”.

At the ESF 2004 in London, I attended the seminar of the organisation ABC.com, a local organisation based in London but with global ambition, which believes in the potential of art—creative writing, in this case—for fighting social exclusion. Here is the project in my fieldnotes from participating at the seminar:

“Telecatching” is a programme that trains volunteers in creative mentoring skills, methods for encouraging and progressing creative writing. These skills are used to enable and assist socially excluded people to develop their

creativity and communication. “This project can help homeless people who have lost their confidence and who feel that society has excluded them for ever, who feel lonely and without hope, to express themselves and the world as they see it, and discover that there is no much difference between them and a famous writer” said Mark, one of the authors of the project. Participants’ stories then could be placed on a website and be read by the members of the community. The authors consider their project a way to empower people who are excluded from things that normal people take for granted—a place to live, money, skills to access new resources such as the internet—and so they are in a situation that prevent them from making the most of opportunities, and from seeing what is possible. The project got funds from the Arts Council of England to get started in December (2004). The speakers were looking for volunteers for this local project that “has global validity and potential”. Five of the young people in the audience left their names to get involved (London ESF, PO).

After the seminar I spoke with Mark for a while. He told me the “long story” of the project:

Initially the ABC.com was created for business: he worked on it alongside quite famous British editors. But when the website stopped being productive and risked closure, he thought of a way of doing something good with it. He told me that he was always struck by how privileges reinforce themselves, sometimes independently by the value of people involved, and that he wanted to do something to show to excluded and disadvantaged people their value. Using the expressive qualities of creative writing, and the potential of internet for networking, he wanted to offer a tiny chance to those people who need only to be rehabilitated and empowered to get their lives back (London ESF, PO).

One of the most striking music performances I saw in London was from the group Rhythms of Resistance. They were many and colourful, and people around me were looking for them. Their effect on the people nearby was to involve them in clapping and dancing. However, I didn’t categorise them under “art for art”—as I did with many other music and street-carnival performances—because they also prepared a leaflet in which they explained the meaning of their art for resistance. They are one of the art groups who have elaborated a direct connection between their artistic practices and their social-political objectives. In their self-description they make clear that their objective is fighting capitalism through the empowerment they gain from, and transmit with, music:

[We are] a drum band that plays at demonstrations and direct actions that fall within the broad definition of ‘anti-capitalist’. [...] We consist of a fluid number of members from all walks of life who have an interest in empowerment for themselves and others, and in main the energy of solidarity and of creative action against the interwoven constructs of those

who feel like they need to suppress the humans and other animals of this beautiful planet (Rhythms of Resistance Leaflet).

According to this group, empowerment is achieved through the intrinsic qualities of music and street carnival. They define their approach as carnival bloc, as opposed to the white and the black blocs, the other two tactics in protests according to them. The carnival bloc “offers an alternative way to criticise and disrupt capitalist social relations without getting locked into a dialectic of escalating physical force between young able bodied militants and the cops” (Rhythms of Resistance Leaflet). They think that music and its immediacy speaks a different language than the other types of approaches inside the movement.

Carnival as an experience brings into question, subverts and overturns the hierarchical dualities that shape our thinking under capitalism. These thought patterns structure our everyday lives and lock us into patterns of behaviour which value and privilege duty above pleasure, work over play, society over nature, male over female, straight over queer, white over black and above all, the power that abstract wealth and money over our directly experienced sense of our human needs and desires. [...] Carnival is a sensory feast, which allows us the space to give expression to our dreams and desires (Rhythms of Resistance Leaflet).

This reminds us of Marcuse’s idea of art as both a physical and a psychic space of freedom, where a suspension of the rules that govern daily life and fulfilment are finally possible (1978).

Finally, in this category I coded leaflets, films, and works of literature and photography oriented to show intimate and private aspects of political issues (such as the situation of Palestinians) overlooked in the ideology of movement leaders. An example is provided by the reasons motivating the showing at the ESF of four Palestinian films. These works, selected by the Ramallah International Film Festival, were meant to overturn the stereotypes about Palestinians as people warmongering who are unable to enjoy life anymore because violence has made them angry and suffering. An article distributed at the Forum points out that while some films were intended to show the “overwhelming reality of refugees, occupation and ongoing conflict” others—especially by women—focused on the creativity, humour and capacity of love of Palestinians (Ramallah International Film Festival Leaflet). For example,

Nahed Awad, the 29-year-old filmmaker of *Going for a Ride*, was inspired by artist Vera Tamari’s installation of cars crushed by the Israeli Defense Force during incursions into Ramallah. In the film, Awad finds photographs of the cars before they were destroyed lovingly framed in images of wedding parties and families driving to daily appointments. The film implies a sense of how women are drawing creativity from the ashes of war (Ramallah International Film Festival Leaflet).

Conclusions

As seen above, art is used in protests instrumentally—“politics through art” and “culture through art”—but also for promoting social change independently from the political aims and collective identities endorsed by movement leaders. This is done latently or unconsciously (“art for art”) and manifestly or consciously (“art for politics”).

In contrast to “politics through art” and “culture through art”, “art for art” and “art for politics” address an intimate side of human experience and provide an alternative to macro-ideologies or formal goals that largely ignore subjectivity (e.g. solidarity and equality). These types of art highlight the ways that people experience social problems, and foster subjective answers to these problems; they are also less satisfied with institutional changes supposedly valid for everyone.

Therefore, artistic expressions in protests are not entirely instrumental to social movements leaders’ aims (at the level of political system, collective, etc.). At least some art in protests embodies an alternative form of resistance which ignores conventional political ends and institutions, and works instead to forge different types of minds on the basis of subjective experiences. Addressing deeper or more universal concerns and emotions than the specific ones associated with the political issues at stake, this art allows for a resistance which avoids politics and their mundane rules but is interested in addressing socio-political problems.

In this chapter I mostly described and/or interpreted the claims of protesters, including those which do not correspond to instrumental or symbolic actions normally recognised as proper resistance by social movements scholars. This focus was not only an intellectual choice, it was also an ethical one.

My first intention was to give voice to all the people in protests, without filtering those voices according to prior definitions of what is proper resistance. One of my criticisms of mainstream approaches in the social movements literature is that, moved by sympathy with movement leaders’ causes, these approaches cast light specifically on the voices of the latter, as they are more coherent, focused, and resemble “politics by other means”. Scholars so far have not been willing to pay attention to all participants, especially those who, in their eyes, make protests confusing, less effective, and less credible. On the contrary, I believe that acknowledging the different approaches to contention within familiar social movements is a matter of respect and openness towards all their protagonists. The same point has been illustrated by McDonald who finds intellectually and ethically problematic “filtering out all the experiences and movements that do not correspond to the grammars of action and culture that emerged [or became predominant] in the context of Euro-American modernization” (2006: 39). That is deliberative and symbolic. He argues that “an awareness of civilizational grammars opens us out to different ways of being selves and experiencing the world, to different ways of experiencing embodiment and relationship to the other, to different grammars of social critique” (ibid.).

Representing the different voices in protests was also intellectually important as they show that contemporary struggles are neither over distribution (instrumental) nor over classification (symbolic). Most artist-activists showed uncertainty about what the problem is and how to fix it, they sought expression and explorations. These artist-activists and the people at the centre of their work cannot identify with social movement leaders' claims (which effectively say "we are better and we have the solution"). The problems they are concerned with are of a different nature: they are located at the level of subjectivity. Consequently, artist-activists respond with techniques of resistance at this most basic level, where problems hit them. At this level then, music, creative writing, etc. start to make sense as techniques of empowerment.

Analyses of social movements miss some of the problems, goals, and sensibilities present in contemporary protests, at least in industrialised Western countries like France, Italy and the UK. One problem of a minority of people in these societies is that they cannot cope with the "tests" society asks them to pass. The problem is not precluded access, unjust rules, etc. but the fact that they cannot cope, or do not want to cope, with the rules of the system. Many art statements and art projects delivered in protests were there with the purpose of making sense, giving a sense of worth, a legitimacy, or a possibility for redemption to these failed existences (according to mainstream definitions of success).

Although the kind of projects proposed by artist-activists are not able to stop unjust corporations or change unjust rules, they are able to help people who are suffering at the individual level. This should be considered just as a different form of resistance, not as inferior. It works on a different level, it is complementary of the political resistance. Besides, it casts light on some critical aspects of the latter (e.g. over-simplification of contention, lack of irony, etc.). Inside a movement there is space for both instrumental and expressive goals; the two are often interconnected. As pointed out by Armstrong and Bernstein, "a challenge to the system of cultural classification (even at the personal level) is often a precondition to the reallocation of resources [...]. A multi-institutional politics perspective helps to make sense of internal contradiction within movements" (2008 :86).

This artistic strand of resistance does not strengthen movements or protests as conceived by the leaders. Protests may well be more weakened than strengthened by their heterogeneity of claims, for achieving political aims at the level of the political system. But the kind of problems and solutions proposed by some artist-activists may be very relevant and poignant because they represent a different set of problems affecting individuals in our society: they talk more of emotional and psychological problems, experienced at an intimate level, as embodiment. The kind of collective, instrumental resistance advocated by the leaders does not mean very much to the people described in these texts. Whereas intimate, emotional, aesthetic answers could potentially tackle these kinds of problems associated with globalisation by scholars such as Touraine (2000) and McDonald (2006).

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