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Feminizing technopolitics. Leaderless movements in Southern Europe, from 15M to *Ni Una Menos*¹

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Abstract: The purpose of this text is to analyze the interaction between tecnopolitics and “femilisation” within the Recent Global Social Movements in Southern Europe. Specifically, assuming the hypothesis that the political tool of new technologies could be considered inside the framework of the Epistemologies of the South, the perspective is to consider them also related with the feminist critical thoughts about political organization. This theoretical frame deals with the issue of social movement’s non-hierarchical form of organization, that was firstly developed, inside Europe, from the feminist movements of the XX century and that is now one of the main focus of the new technopolitical social movements.

The text tries to analyze contemporary forms of organization in Southern Europe – the PAH in Spain and the platform Obiezione Respinta in Italy – as they could represent examples of “epistemology of the feminine” in tight connection between political organization and new technologies

Keywords: Social movements, technopolitics, feminization, Southern Europe.

Introduction

The purpose of this text is to propose some tools for the analysis of the so-called "Recent Global Social Movements" [henceforth referred to as RGSM] (Sabariego, 2017, translation mine), or social movements of the contemporary era, following the cycle of struggles against the global economic crisis of 2007-2008. I would like to focus on Southern Europe - not as an abstract and homogeneous geographical entity, but as a crucible of activation of social movements with common characteristics, starting from the historical conditions in which the global economic crisis has been developed in this specific area, including Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain [together referred to with the intentionally derogatory abbreviation PIGS].³

¹ A first version of this text was developed during the seminar of “Transnational social movements” 2017/2018, directed by prof. José Manuel Mendes into the PhD program in Postcolonialism and Global Citizenship at the Centro Estudos Sociais, Coimbra.

I would like to acknowledge my fellow Johann Salazar for comments that contributed to improve the text.

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³ I am considering this specific representation of Southern Europe developed during the economic global crisis as a case of “reproduction of Souths inside the Global North”, according to Boaventura de Sousa Santos formulation (Santos, 2017).

In this paper, I will examine the cases of Spain and Italy, since these two countries seem to be united by two fundamental characteristics in relation to the points my analysis is focused on.

First, Spain and Italy are countries where, starting from the economic crisis, social movements have made widespread and innovative use of social networks and internet: the so-called *tecnopolitica*. I will try to briefly address this issue from the point of view of its close connection with Boaventura de Sousa Santos' *epistemologies of the South* (Santos, 2017).

Secondly, both countries – although suffering from a certain crisis in the social movements that have commonly passed through the PIGS after the 2008-2011 cycle of struggles – are characterized by an enthusiastic reactivation of feminist movements since 2011 and the emergence of so-called "fourth-wave feminism"⁴ that is distinguished by the use of technology, and social media in particular, to further the feminist cause.

These specifications are necessary to clarify in what perspective I would like to try to reflect: the proposal is to insert the RGSM of Southern Europe into an analysis of new uses of technology from a feminist and non-Eurocentric perspective. The purpose is to propose new analysis tools on a specific aspect of these movements: the way they relate to power, not only as counterpart to dismiss, but especially from the way in which the movements themselves imagine the production and collective sharing of power.

This issue historically questions the knowledge archive of feminism, including white feminism; on the other hand, I would also like to suggest that the traditional approach of movements to the issue of power is part of an internal mechanism of the epistemologies of the global North. In this sense, the aim is to try to identify, within the recent social movements of Southern Europe, an implicit or explicitly critical form of rupture with the conventional attitude to the construction of power within social movements; I define this power as masculine and western, to underline how the innovative elements on which I will elaborate are, instead, possibly referable to a perspective of epistemology of the South - which is articulated, I would like to add, also in terms of an epistemology of the feminine.

I will try to investigate *technopolitics* not as a simple practice among the others, but, rather, as a symptom of this generation of movements; a practice that characterizes them, among other things, because it reflects and translates particularly well the same organizational structure that these movements make up: the "*net*", as I would like to propose, is not just a space for action of the movements, but rather becomes the same form of organization of the movements.

Feminization or feminism? Not only a lexical issue

The concept of feminization arises within the reflection on the transformations of global capitalism, and in particular on the transformations of labor and of the forms of exploitation in post-Fordist capitalism in the global North.

The background of these reflections is the classical feminist critique, which in the 1970s had placed emphasis on the feminine dimension of work, that is, those tasks performed by

⁴ The feminist movement which, starting from Latin America, is characterized as one of the major global movements active in this historic moment. This movement, that we can identify with the slogan "Ni una menos", is characterized by the centrality of the issue of violence against women and exploitation. It has been activated in Europe around the second half of 2016, obtaining enormous global resonance.

women that were relegated to the ‘domestic’ sphere and therefore not considered ‘work’. These domestic activities were characterized by being "service" activities, linked to reproduction and care – of the children, of the husband, of the home – within the traditional articulation of the heteropatriarchal family.

In the United States, the beginning of the critique of feminized work can be traced back to a video of 1975, entitled *Semiotics of the Kitchen*: the writer and activist Martha Rosler showed the public the kitchen tools she used daily to work, but challenging them aggressively as if they were weapons; so, for the first time "The warm and welcoming kitchen became the place of maximum frustration for hundreds of thousands of women forced to the role of housewives for decades".⁵

That same year, in Italy, several feminist thinkers published their reflections on the relationship between productive and reproductive work from a Marxist point of view; despite working within it, they posed a harsh critique of the entire Marxist tradition (Del Re, 1975; Federici, 1975). The point was that the classical theory of the *working class* and of the exploitation of its productive labour ended up with a blind spot: it failed to see the exploitation of reproductive labour, that made possible the existence of the working class in the first place. This labour was based on the exploitation of women and on the use of specific means of production, which were no longer the machinery of the factories but the bodies of women and the machines of domestic work.

Thus, emerged the existence of unrecognised work, historically entrusted to the women: not just feminine work, but more accurately feminized labour. The allocation of tasks to women was based on a principle of naturalness of this association: the essential feminine characteristics drove women – as if governed by instinct – to take care of things and people, to mobilize affection and dedication, to maintain a consistent emotional production, that corresponded to the production and donation of free services, alongside the production of goods by the male working class.

Starting from the 2000s, the analysis of the transformations of contemporary capitalism – with the elaboration of the concept of *post-Fordism* – also brought with it the idea that the main axis of capitalist production had moved – at least partially – from material to immaterial production – i.e. the production of relationships, emotions, feelings and care as commodities rather than the production of material goods. This shift of centres of accumulation from goods to services: the so-called capitalism of services, meant that feminine labour was no longer a specific kind of production restricted to the home. Thus, in the analysis of this new reorganization of capitalist production, the issue of female labour inevitably came into play, since the production of services is exactly what socially and historically has been attributed to women.

Taking as reference the text of Cristina Morini (2010), *Per amore o per forza. Femminilizzazione del lavoro e biopolitiche del corpo*, we can affirm that the paradigm of the relationship between women and work changes radically: from the emergence of feminized work, to the *feminization of work* as a whole. That is, what is analysed in the work of Morini is the issue of feminization as a lens of analysis of contemporary capitalism, no more than a

⁵ For the review written by Anna Simone to the book of Cristina Morini *Per amore o per forza: Femminilizzazione del lavoro e biopolitiche del corpo*: <https://www.zeroviolenza.it/videolist/item/1464-per-amore-o-per-forza-femminilizzazione-del-lavoro-e-biopolitiche-del-corpo-un-libro-di-cristina-morini>

specific segment of labor-power and production (women and domestic work) but of the whole system of capitalist exploitation.

What emerges from this analysis, then, is the image of a capitalism that has learned to value globally exactly those characteristics that were historically naturalized as feminine: the ability to create, weave and cultivate relationships; the flexibility of working time and its – now unavoidable – overlap with the times of life⁶ – and with the production of life; the constant coexistence of several productive activities, that take place at the same time or in different moments of a “working day” of the same person; and above all, the lack of recognition of an increasing number of production activities into the pattern of what is names as “work”; as a consequence, the same activities are increasingly unpaid – because they are not “work”, but “life attitudes”.

The same paradigm that was historically the norm in the case of domestic work of women. This work was unpaid just because it was not recognized as work; it was considered, instead, an activity carried out because of a natural, emotional and affective tendency to "want to do" it. This paradigm gradually begins to be valid for an increasing number of daily activities performed - inside and outside the home – both by men and women, with different means of production.

Unpaid work – or at least, work that is not immediately considered as bound to wages – from a specifically sexualized exception – based on a specific and historical relationship of hegemony between the genders – becomes the norm of the global organization of work (Coin, 2017).

In this sense, it is easy to understand how the concept of feminization is a very useful lens for analysing and understanding the job precariousness that are now the norm of the contemporary labour market in Europe; this situation that has become even more paradigmatic after the global economic crisis and in the places of the world where it has manifested itself in a more violent way, i.e. in Southern Europe.

Within this global overview in which I tried to incorporate the concept of feminization – not as a question specifically linked to the work of women, but as a lens for investigating contemporary work – I would like to focus on something that does not seem to be marginal in this configuration. As Remedios Zafra (2017) recently remarked in the text "El entusiasmo. Precariedad y trabajo creativo en la era digital", there is a sector of production that embodies, particularly deeply, this contemporary articulation of immaterial work; the same sector that, nowadays, is part of every sector of the labour market and every production activity – including those traditionally linked to the production of material goods: the digital work.

Digital work exists in a large number of different nuances, from those more directly related to a properly "immaterial" production – the service, creative, intellectual, cognitive jobs – to the more mixed forms. In fact, all forms of production, even those linked to material goods, are partially or completely involved with digital work.

Moreover, digital space is characterized by a series of mechanisms of constant collective production – or, better still, of constant extraction of surplus value starting from collective activities. What I refer to is the fact that digital production is, par excellence, a space in which

⁶ I am referring here to the assumption that in the fordist Capitalism the articulation of labour is manly divided in three different parts, during a worker's day: 8 hours of work, 8 hours of sleep and 8 hours of “free time”. In the so-called capitalism of service – and, as we are articulating, in the case of femininized labour – there is not clear separation between the hours dedicated to work and the hours dedicated to personal issues, thus worker's life is part of his/her labour performance.

the separation between user and producer almost does not exist: in the digital space, the processes of enhancement are structurally composed of a production activity involving, at the same time, those who offer a service and those who benefit from it. The effective production of surplus value is based on the constant circulation of information, emotions, opinions, desires and consumption choices that we are part of – social networks are an obvious example, as well as the whole system of digital advertising.

The immateriality of online production has been well suited to the creation of one of the greatest deceptions of contemporary capitalism: the idea that the immateriality of production corresponded to an equivalent immateriality of work. Both in the case of a more classical work activity – such as those described in the first case – which, a fortiori, in the case of this widespread and constant production that we have described in the second, digital work is increasingly difficult to recognize as such, and consequently paid less.

Digital work, therefore, best embodies the characteristics of feminised work. It is undertaken alongside the whole course of our daily activities – it does not provide, therefore, a separation between life time and working time; it is often undertaken from home or from places not conventionally defined as ‘workplaces’, such as a factory or an office; it is intermittent and constantly reconcilable with other activities; it is based on the production and reproduction of relationships, social networks, affections, moods and creativity; provides the almost "natural" ability to use machines that constitute means of production but which are almost considered objects of daily life (washing machines and blenders once, computers and smartphones today); it is, finally, frequently unrecognized as work, and at least only partially – or not at all – paid.

What I would like to conclude is that the contemporary forms of exploitation, which produce our contemporary subjectivities, are forms of exploitation based on the feminization of accumulation mechanisms. They are exercised on *precarious subjectivities* – in life as in work – and which move – for life as for work – constantly on the edge between the real world and the digital one: so much so that the same clear separation between the two spheres appears at least artificial.

What is important, however, to emphasize is that these same identical subjectivities are those that have animated – and that animate – contemporary social movements, born and developed, especially in Southern Europe, precisely in opposition to these new mechanisms of exploitation.

This position of vulnerability (Butler, 2004) becomes, therefore, a political opportunity for these movements to start and develop; can it therefore also be the same key for analyzing the new forms of organization of these movements?

In recent years, the concept of feminization has been resignified by southern European social movements. Operating through a process of *détournement* – typical of the tradition of feminist and queer theory – the recent social movements initiated a reappropriation of the concept, emptying it of its the negative connotations and claiming it as a political proposal.

"*Feminizing politics*"⁷ has become a claim; that is, the proposal to build new forms of political organization starting from the reappropriation of those feminine stereotypes that were historically used to force women to free services: when care, affection, cooperation,

⁷ In particular, the term gained currency following its use by the Spanish movements and its frequent use by Ada Colau, the current mayor of Barcelona.

relationship are not impositions aimed at exploitation, but political choices taken with the prospect of changing power relations even within movements, what forms of politics and of political organization are produced?

First of all, this is the hypothesis, a radical critique to the traditional – and masculine – *power* and the way it is produced; then, the tension towards a new political organization, anti-hierarchical and cooperative. In the following paragraphs I will try to investigate how this tension is influencing recent social movements in Southern Europe, and how the digital dimension of these movements is a clear reflection of feminizing politics: if the virtual world is the feminized space of exploitation, can it also be true that the social movements of the digital era are, structurally, feminized movements?

A politics of affections: #15M and the *tecnopolítica*

The dimension that I have just mentioned, that of activism and social movements linked to the digital space, is exactly the dimension in which techno-politics is inscribed. This word does not designate an autonomous area of activism with goals and objectives that are specific to and within the net; on the contrary, what we want to indicate is a practice – or rather, a set of practices – that articulate social movements within the digital space and in connection with their life practices existing in the non-virtual world.

This deliberately broad definition does not cover all the possible forms of cyberactivism – which can unfold in many different ways, from hacking to the latest forms of digital populism; on the contrary, the notion of technopolitics, within the study of the RGMS, evokes a precise genealogy. What I refer to is a tendency of recent social movements to make a ruthless and reappropriative use of the network, as a space for mass communication from below but also as a real reappropriation of the means of production (Sabariego, 2017).

This trend has been well represented and embodied by youth movements linked to the Arab springs and, within Europe, by the Southern European movements against the austerity measures imposed in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, especially the #15M in Spain.

The case of the Spanish movement of 2011 is particularly well known as an example of technopolitics precisely because of the close articulation between the Internet and the squares, between social networks – twitter, in particular – and *redes sociales* that were created, disintegrated and constantly reformed in the squares occupied: the contemporary network joined the spatial coexistence in the square.

This connection between physical places and virtual networks is at the centre of technopolitical practice; as Jesus Sabariego (2017: 357) points out:

A apropriação política emancipadora da tecnologia funciona a partir da inteligência coletiva, da capacidade representada pela experiência nas praças, nas ruas, na autogestão e auto-organização e na prática, habitando o político, construindo a política. É esta inteligência coletiva, este senso comum das pessoas, criativo, inovador, instituinte, uma política próxima, de perto, feita pelas pessoas, a partir de baixo, face uma política distante, hegemónica, em que as pessoas são um argumento – um pretexto – para ganhar as eleições, o fator primordial para explicar a apropriação tecnopolítica.

This definition very suitably anticipates the reflection that I would like to propose: which element, in fact, welds activism of the squares to that of the network? It is precisely the emotional, relational, creative and emotional dimension that is the hinge – too often underestimated – of the experience of technopolitics, that defines it and makes it different from other forms of cyberactivism that only exist in the network space.

On the contrary, flows of information and words – the hashtags – *translated* – thanks to

live tweeting – and, at the same time, *addressed* the Spanish squares of #15M: they were, above all, flows of emotions and feelings, of affectivity and opinions, which created new bonds and rearticulated the production of the political space.

We are essentially speaking of the same mechanism of collective circulation and production of intangible value that, in the proceeding paragraphs, we saw as being the object of the constant expropriation of capital: the same production of mobile and reticular value, based on emotions, that we can define feminised; in the case of technopolitics, it takes place within a process of reappropriation of the means of production and of the value produced.

This "process of collective, horizontal re-historicization, characterized by reciprocity, which implies the visibility and rewriting of practices and contexts that escape from the meaning and the hegemonic definitions" (Sabariego, 2017: 357, translation mine), has been defined as an "epistemology of the South" (Santos, 2014), as a process of generating new forms of inter-relationship and interdependence.

What seems equally important, however, is precisely this feminized dimension inherent in these processes.

From the square to the network – through the tweet storming, the actions of mass counter-information, the tam-tam of appointments – and from the network to the square, through the creation of opinion flows, interests and needs in which collective recognition occurred "in the difference and in heterogeneity" (Sabariego, 2017: 361, translation mine), compatibility rather than identity, within the interchange of themes and issues that, as characteristic of this cycle of South European movements, were closely connected to life itself, rather than to its ideological dimension: they were a perfect metaphor the *mareas*, or the thematic and temporary mobilisations, articulated and rearranged between the discussions on twitter and the actions in the streets, clustering subjectivities around issues such as health, the right to housing, and education.

In this sense, there is no technological autonomy of the network space; on the contrary, "these initiatives are a reflection of a way of doing politics. The participation networks must coincide with something bigger; its existence requires a strong political project with an elaborate discourse" (Pizarro and Labuske 2015, *apud* Sabariego, 2017).

But what is the "way of doing politics" that is reflected in technopolitics, so in this articulation defined as reticular, emotional and therefore, as I have tried so far to show, feminized?

If we are interested in analysing technopolitics as a space for reticular, anti-hierarchical and cooperative politics, if we want to look at the feminized dimension of the policy we want to define as inherent to technopolitics, we can only raise the question of the collective reappropriation of the product value as, also, a question of the production and distribution of power.

The question of how to radically change the very articulation of masculine power, and not just to become part of it, is a theme that has always been present in classic feminism: the critique of the power-building system as masculine, regardless of whether or not power is held only by men, and the struggle to change the distribution of power and not merely have more women occupy these same positions of power.

“No estas sola”. A Spanish case study: the PAH

In what way is a feminized construction of power reflected, starting from the collective and reticular practices of movement we have tried to talk about? How is a redistribution of power produced? This empowerment – the *empoderamiento* –, is affected through *circulation*, as opposed to *verticalization* – of the power produced by the social movements themselves.

In this sense, the feminized dimension of the #15M tecnopolitics seems to me to enter into a close resonance with the historical presence, in the Spanish State, of mutual aid social platforms focused on the housing question: the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH).

The PAH is an "association and social movement for the right to housing worthy",⁸ born in Barcelona in 2009: exactly starting from the dramatic real estate crisis that constituted in many countries – in Spain as in the USA – the first explosive symptom of the economic crisis, in 2008.

With the outbreak of the "housing bubble", the price of houses in Spain had risen by 180% over a period of 10 years; with the beginning of the crisis, and consequently with the enormous increase in unemployment, a disproportionate number of people and families found themselves unable to pay mortgages, and at the same time they had already invested all their savings in purchase; the need of the southern European State to guarantee economic coverage to the banks gave way to massive eviction proceedings from the first houses, decreeing a real social drama.

The PAH, whose first faction was set up in Barcelona, serves as a supportive platform for disobedience, which collectivised the defense of the right to housing. First, by preventing evictions – both through legal support and through direct actions. Next, by helping families already evicted to find alternative accommodation. And, above all, by occupying empty houses. Moreover, The PAH also promotes political campaigns of debt cancellation and moratorium of evictions.

This solidarity network was deeply involved in the explosive proliferation of social movements against the crisis – the 15M – and turned into a coherent movement which was present, in a dislocated way, across the entire territory of Spain.

What is important to underline is that the PAH is not just a political project based on the achievement of specific objectives: it is, above all, a network of support and affection, a shared emotional dimension with the primary objective of bringing the victims of the economic crisis out of the isolation that it produced; the purely feminine dimension – ‘It is important to highlight the fact that, as is often the case in movements for the right to housing, the activists and militants were mostly women – is explicitly contained in the structure itself of the platform, in the effort to imagine new organizational forms capable of constantly reproducing that anti-hierarchical and shared dimension of the circulation of power, with the purpose of *empoderar todas y todos*.

"No estas sola",⁹ is one of the claims on which Pah is founded: the politicity of affective and human relationships as a social practice certainly has something to do with the history of feminism, yet at the same time it anticipates something new, an innovative and powerful element that would soon be echoed in the social movements of Southern Europe, implying a feminised political practice even in not properly and explicitly feminist movements.

⁸ <http://pah-vallekas.org>.

⁹ <http://pah-vallekas.org/no-estas-sola-hablemos-sobre-la-dimension-afectiva-de-pah-vallekas>.

The feminism of the 4th wave: an epistemology of the South?

Santos (2014) formulates the Epistemologies of the South as a struggle against patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism that trace abyssal lines that cross the world and produce the metaphorical ‘South’ that exists even within the ‘North’. However, the way in which feminism features in this formulation is problematic because it defines the action space of feminism as an ambiguous space.

On the one hand, in the struggle against patriarchy feminism always and necessarily constitutes a ‘south’, but on the other hand, despite constituting itself as an antagonistic epistemology, feminism remains internal to the epistemology of the North because its genealogy is largely inscribed in the Global North, and it therefore carries the potential for hegemonic exclusion. This points to the possibility that feminism – or at least a part of it – may not come out of the same dichotomous power structures imposed by the patriarchy of the global north and merely attempt to take power within it. And therefore, like the Epistemologies of the South that do not aim for a reversal of the relationships of power – that is, to "put the South instead of the North" Santos, 2017) keeping unchanged the structure of the power – feminizing politics, or producing an epistemology of the feminine, must attempt to radically change the structure of power themselves.

In this sense, I have tried in the previous paragraphs to describe how a specific feminization dynamic has been determined within recent social movements in southern Europe, reflected in a different organization of the movements themselves – at least in certain areas of action – and that it is strictly in connection with the use of the Internet for anti-hierarchical organization and sharing of power, in the specific conditions of interaction with the social movements described above.

Social movements against the economic crisis in Southern Europe have been exhausted roughly between 2011 (Italy) and 2014 (Greece); in the apparent lack of new mass social movements that is often lamented in this region, there is a strong presence – particularly strong, precisely in Southern Europe and especially in Spain and Italy – of the so-called *fourth wave feminist movement*.

This new feminist wave arises well before arriving in the global North. Around the worrying escalation of femicides, the women's movements had already been active for some years in Latin America, especially in Argentina.

In the perspective of the Epistemology of the North, the analysis of the global social movements starts always with the assumption the they are developed in the Global North and then emanated to the Global South; Unlike this classical interpretation, the diffusion of the NUDM movement follows the direction opposite to that of the relationship center-peripheries product by Eurocentric knowledge of social movements.

Ni una menos is a local movement that has become global. It has challenged the structure of the Eurocentric power system from its origin "on the other side of the abyssal line" (Santos, 2007): a movement connected to the knowledges of the South – both the global and the epistemological ones – in more than a connotation, being both a southern and feminine knowledge. A movement that carries a very marked *decolonial* heritage, so much so that it is difficult its translation in the global North – how to translate, in fact, out of the colonial dimension, the slogan "Ni la tierra, ni las mujeres somos territorios de conquest"?

We may at first observe that this movement was well-received within the interior South to the global North, almost filling, in the European case, the void left by the movements against the crisis in the countries that were the main performers.

We can also observe how, once again, this movement has had an immediate global

techno-political resonance,¹⁰ but that in particular has reactivated an archive of knowledge shared by that same generation that, protagonist or at least involved in the cycle of struggles against the crisis, it had made the reappropriation of network tools a real claim to court.

The virtual space, once again, has characteristics that are structurally consonant with the needs of these new social movements, with the feminine connotation that animates them as reticular, non-hierarchical movements, closely linked to the themes of affections and social life.

A case study in Italy: the platform *Obiezione respinta*

One of the issues on which the current feminist movement has focused is that of the right to abortion. Hand in hand with the diffusion of *Ni una menos*, new mobilizations have been produced all over the world for free and guaranteed access to the interruption of pregnancy: a right that not only in many countries is still forbidden by law but also in the last years has been progressively limited even in countries where it was sanctioned.

In the case of Italy, the voluntary termination of pregnancy is governed by Law 194 of 1978, considered one of the historical achievements obtained by the feminist movement of the “second wave.”

However, this right is constantly called into question, within the violent reaffirmation of the repressive paradigm that has characterized Europe in recent years – with a widespread return of the triad capitalism-colonialism-patriarchy within the new affirmation of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos defines “social fascism” (Santos, 2007).

In particular, I am referring to the so-called “*obiezione di coscienza*” – conscientious objection: the possibility given to doctors, gynaecologists, above all, of refusing to practice abortion according to their own moral and religion believes.

This practice has reached an enormous diffusion throughout the territory, with a national average of 70% of medical objectors in public facilities – and with regional averages that reach 90%.

Furthermore, the “*obiezione di coscienza*” is exerted far beyond what is guaranteed by law, considering that it concerns only the doctors and the medical practice of pharmaceutical or surgical abortion; however, currently in Italy it is also practiced in the form of refusal to prescribe the “morning after pill”¹¹ or refusal of pharmacists to sell it.¹²

Starting from the widespread diffusion of this phenomenon, in March 2017 the digital platform “*Obiezione respinta*”¹³ was created. This is a website associated with a Facebook

¹⁰ I will not deal here with the global phenomenon linked to the hashtag #metoo, born from the United States as a system of denouncing gender violence in a public and anonymous manner, and becoming a real movement within a few months. In December 2017, the well-known Times magazine pointed to the hashtag #metoo as a character of the year; this is the first time that this recognition belongs to an entity not directly associated with a human being; in 2011 for the first time the character of the year was a faceless person: “the protester”, or the multitude of young protagonists of the movements against the crisis.

¹¹ Only during the last year, a new law removed the obligation to the medical prescription for this pill, that now can be directly buy in the pharmacy by adult women. However, that decision is still being contested by catholic association of health, and several doctors and pharmacists still hide this information to uninformed people.

¹² According to Italian law, pharmacists do not have the right to practice conscientious objection, because selling contraception or morning after pill is not considered as taking part to an abortion. However, several religious organisations of pharmacists claim the refusal to own in their shops this kind of medicines and to sell them.

¹³ <https://obiezionerespinta.info>.

page and a twitter account. The website is mainly composed of an interactive map of the entire national territory. On the map there are pins of different colors that correspond to the "reports" of users regarding their experiences at hospitals, pharmacies, clinics, consultants and, in general, any place providing health-related services and reproductive and sexual health services in particular.

The reports can be positive – *indicated by a green pin* – or negative – *indicated by a red pin*, which basically signals the presence of objectors and / or cases of obstetric violence. They may also be accompanied by comments, accounts of experience, clarifications and useful information such as timetables or names. The information and comments link to a discussion forum in which each report can be deepened with questions.

The reports can be sent by any user anonymously through the same site, the Facebook page or with the associated hashtag on twitter.

In the example above we can identify certain characteristics that demonstrate the connection between technology and feminization of recent social movements.

First of all, the anonymity of both users and page managers; this feature, in addition to providing a guarantee space – a "safe zone" in digital form – reduces to the point that it almost eliminates the separation between those who use the service and who provides it: the operation of the site is based on collective construction and sharing of knowledge, and widens its potential and its range of action only on the basis of the multiplication of sensitive nodes that interact with the project; without a community of reference and only in the form of a service provided by someone who starts from the possibility of sharing their knowledge, this would neither be possible nor would it have as much power.

Secondly, and in a way related to the previous point, this system is structurally anti-hierarchical and is based on the spread of network nodes in different places in the world, since participation in the project does not necessitate coexistence in the same physical space – significant feature considering the tendency for nomadism that accompanies the lives of the protagonists of recent social movements.

Thirdly, it is, first and foremost, a space of support and solidarity: by investing directly in the personal and emotional dimension of politics, it implies a constant use of a shared vulnerability.

Finally, the project overflows from the digital space, moving in direct connection with the social movements of the non-virtual world; the Facebook page was launched in conjunction with the global women's strike of 8 March 2017 – reaching, in the first 24 hours, around 3000 likes. In addition, the website is associated with a telephone number for emergencies and branches of legal and health support that are organized in various cities of Italy, in order to provide immediate support, but also training, so as to make available to all the knowledge about their rights and the conditions of the health services they may be trying to access.

Technopolitics, therefore, also fits in this case in a dimension of political care and claim, in which the same forms of organization are determined and closely interconnected with the network-form: a feminized dimension of collective reappropriation of life and social production.

Conclusion. Time for *leaderless movements*?

What I have tried to describe so far is a possible line of interpretation of some features that seem to me fundamental in recent social movements to Southern Europe.

This interpretation mobilises the epistemologies of the South as well as elements of feminist critique, in an attempt to rethink one of the central objectives, whether or not they address it directly, of these recent social movements, i.e. the way in which they engage with

a critique of, both, Eurocentric as well as patriarchal power

In this sense, situating ourselves in the epistemologies of the South serves to decolonize our own classical analysis of social movements, in which the question of power always seems to be addressed in terms of the seizure of power – and of those who *take* power – rather than from the point of view of how to *change* the power.

On the other hand, a feminist perspective helps to provincialize the subject that enacts the seizure of power; that is, it helps to harshly criticize the issue of *leadership*, from which the male and western conception cannot free itself; it helps to bring focus to the question of how power is multiplied and spread and how this power changes us.

The concept of "leaderless movements", recently proposed by Micheal Hardt and Antonio Negri in the text *Assembly (2017)*, arises precisely from the observation of the two major global movements of recent years: *Black lives matter* and *Ni una menos*. It is not by chance that these movements develop the issues of race and gender; that is, they are at the margins of that abstract and homogeneous subjectivity - the white male – which stays at the center of abyssal thinking (Santos, 2007). Though these movements grow from local to global movements, they do not produce leaders or verticalizations, because they are expressed in the collective power of social networks – the digital and the human ones.

Technopolitics, in this sense, seems to be useful in encouraging us constantly to force the categories of analysis of social movements.

But within it, it seems important to see a more general dynamic of radical change in the nature of social movements: in the network form is embodied a good metaphor of a mechanism of articulation and constant, displaced and multiple re-articulation, able to intersect subjectivity and technologies in a more complex relationship than the one between workers and means of production. It is these new *assemblies/assemblages* of the construction of power that today are in constant resonance – that is not just lexical - with the *assemblies* of the squares and the quarters: a new reticular nature that constitutes, perhaps, the future of social movements, once abandoned the corpse of the white and masculine subject of Western history, finally entered in its crisis.

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