

Ethnographic restitution: Antonio Vesco*

Naples, l'Asilo, 7 November 2020 (remote on-line)

Part One (presentation)

I've tried to choose the items that seemed to me the most useful for us to discuss. Above all, I'd rather not spend too much time talking about topics that you all know well. Most of the people in this group are well-informed on these subjects and have many years of experience in both reasoning and action on these topics. This, however, does not mean that we won't touch upon them.

I'm going to try and briefly introduce the project to allow those people with whom I haven't yet spoken to better understand what this project is about.

The project is called “Heteropolitics: Refiguring the common and the political”. It is funded by the ERC (European Research Council), which finances European institutions and universities for various types of research projects. The project coordinator is Alexandros Kioupkiolis, Associate Professor of Political Theory at the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece. Professor Kioupkiolis is a political philosopher, who has put together a team of social scientists to study “alter-politics” (heteropolitics) ethnographically.

I believe that this project is important for its methodology: the latest one consisted of recruiting people to go out into the field and find out more about the reality of groups of activists, thus creating real exchanges and discussions that are truly shared and not, as often happens in political science, from the “top down”.

The project involved three countries from Southern Europe. Anthropology usually talks of “Mediterranean countries”, occasionally distinguishing the northern borders from the southern ones and continuing the usual Mediterranean story, which has often been defined as vague and of little importance. This given category of South Europe allows us to discuss EU countries suffering the same economic crisis, which means enduring the same stigmas and living under the same economic and political control of the European Union. The nominated countries for the project are Greece, Spain and Italy.

Manuela Zechner was in charge of Spain with case studies in Barcelona and Madrid, Aimilia Voulvouli worked on case studies in Greece and George Dafermos studied the digital common ground.

In studying the Italian situation, I've isolated several case studies and gone into greater depth with the experiences in Naples and Turin and to a lesser extent in Bologna. The main reason for choosing Naples is because it is impossible to ignore it. The project coordinator, from our very first meeting, already assumed that we would have dealt with the experiences in Naples. The importance of these Neapolitan experiences is generally shared by those who deal with commons in Italy. Turin, where I

* The restitution and subsequent discussion transcribed here can be read in the light of the reports on the Italian case studies of the Heteropolitics project, published on this same website. Cf. A. Vesco, *Report 4, Case studies in Italy*.

have lived since 2006, is the city that has tried to follow the Neapolitan experience. The Cavallerizza community owes much to the Asilo, with whom it continues today to create bridges (with a series of difficulties which have been my main focus in the Turin case study).

I realised I was faced with two very different cases but that there was a dialogue between the two cities. The Turin process, as you know, has been conditioned by the attempt on the part of many at the Asilo and the whole network of Neapolitan movements for the commons to “save” Cavallerizza.

Bologna is the third case. I haven't been able to study the city in adequate depth in the sense that I haven't done what the anthropologists and sociologists call ethnography. I didn't immerse myself within a community, as you have seen me do in Naples, and spend time in close contact with the people there. This research method

represents a series of involvements that are part of the research process. Bologna hasn't been studied in depth because:

a) it was necessary to strengthen the dialogue between Naples and Turin and b) it would have been necessary to create a different type of study.

The Bolognese communities that deal with commons in a similar way to the Asilo, in particular the Làbas community, are not representative of the way in which the Bologna model has been constructed. Bologna has initiated a very institutional process. It is a process that sees the institutions as protagonists and for this reason, it is difficult to introduce a real grassroots push from the bottom up. In Bologna, they have even created a foundation (the Foundation per Urban Innovation), which has the precise and evident aim to preserve the institutional character of the process. And lastly, the Neapolitan model, which I have explained in my report and takes into account what you call the “creative use of law” and “common law” within an urban context. From a legal point of view, Maria Francesca de Tullio, Nicola Capone and Giuseppe Micciarelli have studied and written much over the years, as have many others within the community, and not only in an academic context.

As an anthropologist, during my research, I couldn't help but find my own positionality on the matter. Taking a stance is an act that you all know well and is part of the dynamics of being in an assembly. It is a stance that you all often adopt in everything that concerns the active life of the community. So, what you are all doing is not very different to what an ethnographic researcher does: that is, to know one's own role within a certain process as well as the constructive processes of one's own take on that community.

For my ethnography in Naples, it has been fundamental to think of myself as a southerner that turns to a community of southerners, even through commons processes created elsewhere (I'm thinking of the Turin group) and to my activities on the water referendum when I was a youngster getting my PhD in Siena. In short, these are all contexts that are completely different from one another.

I had to choose which community to approach for my study on Naples and the network of Neapolitan commons and I chose the Asilo. Why the Asilo? It is certainly because the Asilo has an important role from a point of view of theoretical elaboration, presence in the city and the awareness that its community of inhabitants has of its role. This is a fundamental aspect: an address of self-awareness on the part of the Asilo inhabitants that establishes the identity of the group. I'll speak more about this later.

This is not an ethnography like the others. There is a whole line of critical anthropology that studies how to meet up with the communities of activists that we study and with whom we have contact and that initiates discussions on social movements. Therefore, the dialogue between who does the research and who is within the movement also creates a study of its own because we often meet communities made up of scholars and people who are able to explicitly reflect on what they do.

A large part of the philosophical, legal and political reflections that I have elaborated and then written in my reports is fruit of dialogue on a purely intellectual level with many of you. For this reason my positionality must take into account the fact that I have been in dialogue with people who have their own theoretical view of these issues. I've met with people doing intellectual work: legal practitioners, philosophers, poets, painters and scholars of cinema and the imaginary etc. This has led me to some deep questions on what it is that I was doing. These questions set off a series of mechanisms that can become competitive. Not in the sense that I need to assert myself as a scholar but because my knowledge is an anthropological knowledge, it is a fragile learning because it is continuously being questioned by the very same anthropologists. It is a knowledge that risks being quashed by clearer, more definitive and assertive reasonings (for example, the legal discourse but not only). In short, it has been somewhat messy doing research on commons with you and for this reason I continuously found myself having to question a whole series of aspects of my work.

Another important aspect to take into consideration is that I was almost a novice in my approach to the research on commons. My only other practical experience in the field was the water referendum. I had had other meetings but compared to the level of discussions that were brought forward at the Asilo, I wasn't coming from a position of deeper, specific studies. I immediately clarified the fact that my process was different. Before this research, I had studied political parties, institutions, electoral support at a local level not only from a socio-anthropological and philosophical point of view but also from a political science viewpoint. At the same time, I have always kept up with studies on organised crime and the institutions. Therefore my approach to commons was veered towards the topics of institutional politics. I had to take into account the fact that I was meeting up with a community from which I had much to learn and I had to remind myself of my positionality as researcher.

The interviews that I have done have been characterised by two main factors: 1) isolate the aspects that I needed to deal with and 2) intercept a knowledge that allowed me to retrieve reference literature.

The explorative phase of my research was to speak with comrades and think about which texts and authors I crucially needed to recuperate.

At the beginning, my approach to the community was silence. It wasn't a mere strategy or a banal form of respect for a scholarly journey that needed to be understood before being able to express myself (always with great respect towards what one listens to). It was also necessary to put myself in the position of listener to better understand exactly what we were dealing with, or in other words, what exactly were the commons in Naples. On my part, there has never been the need to pigeonhole the Asilo's processes within my own anthropological categories. My studies have inevitably influenced the choice of what I decided to observe. During the many months spent in Naples, I met up with an enormous number of people that were researching these topics. They had various focal points to their research projects, which were all interesting and very different from one other. In my case, a careful attention to the political and institutional context of a determinate territory certainly

conditioned my thoughts. From this point of view, and from my perspective, the dialogue between the Asilo and the Council of Naples (and therefore the use of legal tools that then became practical tools for this process) were fundamental.

We all know the socio-political context in Naples and I believe there is no one among us that don't have ties with Naples. Therefore, I'll just say a couple of brief things about it. De Magistris's arrival in the Council marked a step away from 20 odd years of previous political direction towards a centre-left political hegemony. De Magistris entered the scene after a break from a local political power that had had alternating phases and paradoxical results. We all know how Bassolino's term finished and it was the same with Iervolino. I believe that these accounts are important and I'm putting them into my papers and articles when I write about Naples and the Asilo because I believe that this political situation was also formed based on anecdotes that are relevant to an embracing of a new style of commons practiced within the city's social movements. The inauguration of De Magistris's council was an opportunity, a gap which allowed movements that were experimenting with new political pathways, movements that came from years of repression and knew that the moment for a political summary hadn't yet arrived. So, they had to be able to open up to dialogues with the institutions.

I'm not saying that the merit of these circumstances is all down to a conscious strategy on the part of De Magistris, who, at the time of his inauguration, knew little or nothing about commons. Without the help of the activists, he wouldn't even have been able to embark on such a journey. It goes without saying that the institutions have appropriated, in varying public events, from the rhetoric on commons and in bringing water to the mill, so-as-to-speak, have thus also created consent. In saying this, with De Magistris's committee, a window for dialogue has been opened up between activists and institutions.

This is where the socio-anthropological part of my reflection comes into play. A new local government needs time to settle in. The administrative machine is still tied to the old government and to the old ways of understanding the city. This criticality is also faced with seeking out new alliances that are found, in the strictest sense, outside the political system. The new council committee needs the social movements as interlocutors to create a possible dialogue and to take root within the city. The instrumental reasons that have favoured this pooling of efforts are varied and must not be neglected, they aren't secondary aspects.

The fact that De Magistris would have had to reach out to the intellectual, urban elite is fundamental. For example, we can lead the former councillor Alberto Lucarelli and others to the more hybrid spaces in the city, like the Philosophical Studies Institute. Spaces with which this council has had dialogue.

It is also fundamental to underline the need for this intellectual elite to find their place in the new urban government seeing that they haven't ever been part of the previous administration. This is the same mechanism that we have seen on a national level with Ugo Mattei and other scholars, who tried to open up a dialogue with the past government (Northern League-5 Star Movement) and create a space to fill with content and dealing with a government that, in the end, didn't have much content.

These are aspects that I'll only mention briefly because you have already discussed these issues in depth. But I remember them as they are important aspects. My research takes into account the power dynamics and the elements that are useful to certain social groups that have been

protagonists in this process (i.e. those elements pertaining to commons).

This leads us to the next aspect – Why is the installation of De Magistris's council so important for the commons movements in Naples?

De Magistris puts a precise rhetoric into play, that of completely overturning the political processes that had been in place in the city until that moment. He sits in open contrast to the previous governments. He demolishes the Bassolino/Iervolino term, at least in his public and political communication. He presents himself as an outsider, a man that is far from the logics of party politics as he hasn't had any real experience of party politics during his political career in the city. This rhetoric works for him. What does De Magistris oppose? The same old stories of Naples that we all know well: cronyism, corruption and also the experiences that started well but then at a certain point degenerated and they found themselves having to play those same dynamics that characterised decades of politics in Naples (I'm talking about Bassolino's terms).

People who study politics in Naples have a vast array of literature available on the matter. This often means simplifying, for example, the proposals of external observers who don't take part in the life of the city. We certainly do have more cautious political scientists but others really don't realise what actually constitutes the political fabric of Naples. In addition there is plenty of material available on this argument. Within this material, there is the important work by the historian Gabriella Gribaudo on how the Naples story has been told. For example, together with the historian Luigi Musella, she dealt with how the “Tangentopoli” story was related in various areas of Italy in the 1990s. While the judges in Milan told a story based on how it was necessary to keep money circulating continuously, the judges in Naples, who had a much clearer idea of the context in which they worked, returned with the story of buying votes and a tangle of mafia-politics. We find ourselves in a context that has always been perceived as corrupt, conditioned by the presence of the Camorra. It has often been represented as a society irreparably characterized by these mechanisms, a society irreparably clientelistic.

In his book “AltreNapoli”, the philosopher Mario Pezzella tells of how literature has dealt with the working classes in Naples, portraying the political character of the working classes and the hegemonic dynamics that blossom in the city. Here again, a working class emerges that is hopelessly subject to these dynamics.

On the other hand, the anthropologist Stefano de Matteis reasons on the theatrical nature of the city and attempts to draw a line that doesn't always hide behind the usual clichés but tells of the parallel between the theatrics and the way in which Neapolitans are fully aware of the serious nature of the stories about them. This is a central point of my argument about Naples. That is, Neapolitans' awareness of the narratives circulating about them.

All this is to say that a figure like De Magistris installs himself as a Neapolitan that understands the dynamics widespread in the city. When I speak of De Magistris, I'm not talking about a single person because, for however much he might seem an autocrat, politics is always a collective effort. Therefore we are talking about a group, a team who understands these dynamics and decides to found a counter-narrative in opposition to the old rhetoric on the city. So, “*Naples has always been a city of cronyism and corruption. Fine, well now it will become a transparent and politically engaged city*”. It is into this operation that we can insert the rhetoric of commons and dialogues with the activist movements.

There is, however, a paradox here that backfires against him. In his public outings, De Magistris has very much insisted on a subject that sociological studies (above all the French studies) have studied carefully and that is the theme of “nearness”, the proximity between the elected and the voters, between the institutions and people who participate directly in political action or hold a local political power. *Nearness* is a term that De Magistris himself cites in his public appearances, just like the one that I listened to in Cavallerizza in Turin. In the past I have studied the concept of nearness with the politics of Raffaele Lombardo (former regional president of Sicily) and the construction of his hegemonic politics in eastern Sicily. Although they are two very different figures (one is a former magistrate and a champion of legality, the other is a politician repeatedly accused of electoral crimes and more), I found many common elements between these two politicians as regards their adopted public rhetoric. The idea is to do politics that lower to the level of the interlocutor and thus create relations on an equal level. The concept of nearness is very ambiguous and “more connoted than denoted”, as Christian Le Bart and Remi Lefebvre say, who studied this phenomenon within the local governments in France. De Magistris has used this practice well, he manages to create an efficient counter-narrative and establish a fruitful dialogue with the activists. I don't believe that anyone, not even among his detractors, has any doubt about the positive results of the Neapolitan process. At a certain point, however, this party line backfires as the politics of nearness, the image of a political class that is close to the city inhabitants is somewhat similar to a party line that we could define as populist. And also, when we evoke the concept of nearness in Naples, we are evoking at the same time the spectre of cronyism and personal relationships. Here emerges the paradox I mentioned earlier. Cronyism is a stigma that anyone who has done and continues to do politics in Naples has had to contend with. They are concepts that harm the construction of the identity of anyone who does politics in Naples because our self-awareness is also always mediated by what the public debate says about us. In other words, if everyone says that Naples practices favouritism, in some way we internalise this stigma, and fortunately we manage this in a critical manner. In short, I have done some research on De Magistris from local newspapers and the words populist, familist etc show up already in the headlines and trigger a process of necessary delegitimization from this rhetoric and these stigmas.

We have, therefore, a vicious circle: De Magistris presents himself as opposing the “traditional” party line of Neapolitan politics (party lines that were simplified anyway because it doesn't actually mean anything that Naples has always followed a cronyism approach to politics). But at a certain point, if we simplify matters, it is the same political action on the part of De Magistris that has had him noted as a politician that practices the policy of buying of votes with the activists in the city. This is also all found in the legal-judicial processes of the relationship between De Magistris and the social movements for commons and has had a strong impact on the public debate.

This party line hasn't had a result at a judicial level (the inquiries on the deliberations have pretty much run aground) but it has found space within public debate. Even if it is less than expected, the activists who do politics for common goods in Naples, haven't had to face a strong stigmatic campaign in this case.

I have been able to experiment with this first paradox (De Magistris's rhetoric that backfires on himself) in daily life by observing the people within the network of Neapolitan commons. This is where my help with the comparative settings of the research project “Heteropolitics” comes in. In continuing to analyse the two case studies Naples and Turin, I have also had to inevitably reflect on the way in which the South is portrayed within the circuits for common goods in the cities of the

North. Naples is a symbol of southern Italy, many still perceive it as the “capital” of southern Italy. This is very much engraved in the way everything that happens in Naples is judged and on the forms of delegitimization that are put into play, on the forms of orientalism and discrimination (sometimes even positive) that Neapolitans endure.

Let me give you an example that concerns Bologna. The Bologna process is very institutionalised, as I said. There is a stringent bureaucracy that governs the process of common goods. They themselves counterpoint the Neapolitan method, which is perceived as “anarchic”. This anarchic dimension obviously has nothing to do with anarchy in the political sense but is a throw back to the presumed incapacity on the part of the Neapolitans to be able to have anything to do with the law.

We have seen this attitude also on other occasions in recent times, and under very different circumstances. For example in the comments about the demonstration against the Covid containment measures. Among the more interesting observations, we find comments by Andrea Colasio, Padova's Culture Councillor, who has brought out all of that sociological literature on the stigmas attributed to Naples that he has legitimised over time. He brought out Edward Banfield on “amoral familism” and Robert Putnam on “civicness”. These are all things that anyone who has studied social sciences reputes to be outdated but that have nevertheless slipped into public debate and they still talk about these things with the air of people who have done research.

What we must take care not to do when we study politics in territories like Naples (and therefore southern Italy), is to give in to these orientalist dynamics, dynamic traps that even the very same sociological and political science studies fall into.

Here, for me, in the moment in which I start a research project on Naples, all of this is part of the context that I study. It is a process that one cannot ignore, above all because you have to understand the way in which who does politics in these contexts relates to these processes, how they are used, how they take them on board and how they give them back.

The way of facing these stigmas on the part of the activists at the Asilo and the ability to take them on board seems to me to be ways that the community knows all about.

When, for example, there was the hearing at Turin council (with the council commission that dealt with the process of common law in Cavallerizza), Giuseppe Micciarelli was invited to talk about the Naples model and common law. On that occasion, Giuseppe explicitly referred to this party line, saying that it was clearly a toxic line according to which all Neapolitans would be incapable of doing politics in an efficient manner. He said that it isn't true that Naples has scant regard for the rules and that this toxic story has to stop.

Going back to the Naples case, how has a community like the Asilo (and the wider circuit of common goods in Naples) responded to these stories? There have been various plans for replying. Some plans respond to the way in which we do art and culture and the way in which we talk together in conversations and meetings that have happened with other communities outside the Neapolitan context. The talent lies in their ability to approach everything with irony. When I speak of irony, I mean an analytic category and not a banal sentiment. I mean the way in which anthropologists have studied irony, sarcasm and the ability of the weak to use them as tools and weapons. It is for this reason that many of these studies have been undertaken in Mediterranean contexts where irony is above all fruit of the awareness of these mechanisms and to be able to deal with people that orientalize and discriminate (negatively or positively). I have often heard these

stories which Giuseppe opposed in the council meeting in Turin. Stories that I have heard in both Bologna and Turin. On the one hand, we have the institutions that hold Neapolitans up to be “anarchic and crazy”. On the other hand there are the activists (who tend to be younger people involved in politics outside the institutions) that relate these stories in a positive light. For example, according to the comrades from Cavallerizza in Turin, it is fundamental that their Neapolitan comrades are like this. And it is thanks to this that the Neapolitan comrades succeed where the Turin comrades don't.

I quote a passage from an interview with an inhabitant of the Asilo, with whom I was talking about the difficulties of the Cavallerizza community in Turin, the internal rift within that community, and the relationship between Cavallerizza and the Asilo. He said:

I've had many chats with people from Cavallerizza, from various orientations. I've also spoken with many people that have frequented Cavallerizza but didn't want to take a stance and didn't want to be considered as belonging to one faction or another. It has often happened that the Cavallerizza comrades have come to the Asilo to get a better understanding of why things weren't working for them. Each time that I started to reason with my advice, they stopped me before I could start because, according to them, my reasonings didn't take into account the fact they they were “Savoys” and, according to them, I didn't understand exactly what they meant. They meant that they left no room for uncertainty. There was no room for our “non-resolved” or our “that's fine too”. For us, on the other hand, if there is a negative outlook but some small part is positive, you must enjoy the positive part of it, otherwise you're fucked. The Turin people think that they lose that positive aspect because they are Savoys and continue to bang on about the negative aspect.

Some of you fully understand how these stories impress on the idea of “doing politics” within the communities. My sensation is that you put into a play an attitude that I have tried to define as “listening despite dissent”. I speak of the ability to interact in a useful way with other movements and with other people even when you don't agree. I speak of that ironic ability to take the other person seriously despite not being in agreement.

This irony is the result of interactions whilst being fully aware of the stigmas that weigh down on the community and the wider context (meaning Naples).

Stigmas can be appropriated in many ways and this is often an ironic operation. An ability to take on board a stigma and knowingly turn it into a virtue. This is what the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld defines “cultural intimacy”. Cultural intimacy is “ the recognition of those aspects of an officially shared identity that are considered source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality”. It is that dynamic by which the common defects of a group contribute to creating a cohesion within that same group to a much greater extent than the common virtues. It is the idea of togetherness as stigma-bearers of something that other people perceive as a defect.

We are still talking about ways of defining a city from the point of view of its political character. By this I mean its political relations and the way of imagining and creating a life in common. They are all aspects that are very much characterized by a political point of view.

In the case of the Asilo, a large part of this community's pride comes from the knowledge that its speciality is also based on the answers that are given to these types of mechanisms. A strength of this community lies in the awareness of counteracting these widespread stories and in the determination of putting them into discussion, along with the facts.

These things are questioned alongside the fact that the Asilo has become a point of reference not only within the urban context but also beyond city and national borders within an entire network of social movements for commons. Even if this has never been explicitly stated, it is evidently a reason for the community to be proud. This is inevitable and I believe that a community should also be able to get something back from these understandings. It is, however, important to get to the root of why this pride exists.

We started off with De Magistris and how his rhetoric backfires on him and moved on to the awareness of how we maintain a dialogue in a congenial fashion with the institutions, always being careful not to fall into the traps of the old stories on this city.

In all of this, there is an everyday problem that I believe is important to analyse on a sociocultural and identity level. A level that has to do with the construction of ones pride in being a focal point for the network of commons.

All of this is a characteristic of the Asilo community. The Asilo also bases its strength on the pride of being a community aware of the stigmas they, and the world around them, are subjected to.

For this reason we need to overrule the old cliché and “take Napoli for a little walk” around the world and contribute to putting the city in a positive light. I believe that this isn't secondary to the political process at the moment, because it conditions and determines the way in which it relates to the other social movements. I'm not saying that every time a person from the Asilo deals with someone from Turin he or she has explicitly in mind this particularity (“I'll teach you, I'm a good Neapolitan”), but inevitably this factor has an effect, even if it remains below the surface and is never clarified.

So, the paradox that I seem to be able to individuate is this: the ambiguous nearness that the administration has with the social movements and the awareness that the movements have of this dynamic. And their ability to subvert, with irony, this dynamic. This ability to have relations with people from the institutions in such an explicit and knowledgable way is a political tool, a weapon that the Turin people envy you for very much. And their regret is expressed in that, “We are, unfortunately, Savoys. We aren't like you”. In Naples, there is the awareness that these stigmas harm their very political identity. Appropriating them means using them in politics to overturn the asymmetrical way of managing politics. The Asilo community shows maturity when it knowingly uses this dynamic.

In the past I have done research on people that use these stigmas in a different way when they do politics. I was studying the politicians that use this old cronyism story to justify their own way of doing politics and to create forms of identification with the voters. The Asilo, on the other hand, affronts the existing stigmas and plays with them through a conscious appropriation of a story that is important to overturn.

A second paradox that I have encountered is that which regards the identity of the Asilo community. It is an identity that is based on a non-identity. During an interview, a representative of the community said to me:

L'asilo has always tried to keep heterogeneity as its founding principle. I don't even want to say non-identity, as is often said, because identity for me is something that you build yourself despite yourself... Heterogeneity is also an identity figure: I am heterogeneous. L'asilo has always been configured as ‘the space of the possible’. I don't want to mention Deleuze here... but it is so. It is a

place where you can truly make meetings possible that could not have happened in the city before. Ours was a breach action. Well, we started a conversation with mayor de Magistris but, at the same time, we strongly believe in the possibility to start other conversations. The most significant projects (Stop Biocide, Massa Critica, Non Una di Meno and many others ...) were born in l'asilo not because l'asilo offers the space – that is necessary but it is also secondary –but because at l'asilo you can meet your enemy starting from exactly the same position. The ex OPG was born shortly after l'asilo and immediately they gave more importance to their positioning, that is, they set themselves a political, programmatic objective. Which for me it is absolutely not something to condemn, indeed sometimes I feel sorry that we are not like the ex OPG, because sometimes I'd like to have a clear objective and to work for that...

In transcribing the interviews, I have found a lot of references to this construction of the heterogeneity. One of you was telling me that during the first year, a list containing twenty odd terms was created that it would be preferable not to use because every time they were used, hours of meeting time were wasted examining those terms in depth. This means that everyone was very careful not to give too much of an univocal meaning to the terms and concepts. You tried to maintain a heterogeneity in the design of relevant political themes.

The second paradox is therefore the process of constructing an “identity-non-identity”. This is the peculiarity of a community that realises it is peculiar and that its peculiarity lies in its being made up of components that continually question the path they are taking, interrogating the processes of the construction of consent within the community. The constant questioning of ones own positionality and the questioning of the path that they are taking aren't prerogatives exclusive to the Asilo community. But what is certainly more evident at the Asilo is the awareness with which one questions the process.

There is a solid preparation (political, theoretical and practical) within the Asilo community. We can't not take into account, in this sense, the sociocultural composition of the community. A large part of it is composed of individuals that, as intellectuals or artists, approach these themes from different disciplinary angles. For this, the level of questioning is inevitably high, it is a level of one who knows the argument inside out. This awareness, which is fed by a sense of pride in the way of getting a process going that is very much constantly questioned, creates a strong internal cohesion.

In this sense, the identity of the community is based on the ability to not be “identity”, in the constant open-mindedness towards other possibilities and towards the unknown.

I'd like to say that in a context like that of the Turin movement for commons (to maintain a comparative approach to a reality that you know), it is difficult to see working that ability to be vague, to use irony, to give value to the marginal and the infinite possibilities that allow all of us to find a space, those casual yet fortunate meetings, those “Oh wells” that are the strength of the Asilo.

So, this paradox consists in the fact that in Naples and at the Asilo things work thanks to that margin of possible error. Things don't work when the assembly worked or when the plenary meetings managed to conclude without anyone shouting. Things work above all when they don't work! Because it is within that non-functioning that margins are created, that give the possibility of constructing the politics of the possible.

I come now to a last paradox, that upon which you reflect more often (because it is always through a paradox and irony that, in my opinion, one can construct a process at the Asilo). This last paradox regards the use of the rules and regulations. At the Asilo, we are dealing with a process that is both

formal and political (the “civic use” regulation and the ways and the rules of using the space).

Paradoxically, on a practical level, this route consists clearing the way for a political path that faces the continual questioning of the same rules. The legal and political tools that you have produced (meaning “civic use” and the regulation), the rules that you follow are nothing more than the formalization of a way of doing politics that constantly challenges those same rules. I will avoid going into length here on what you define as “the creative use of law”.

I believe that this is the point of contact between the two macro-worlds that are created at the Asilo. Please allow me to use an awful simplification with which in general we can individuate two large factions: one being a stickler for rights and the other can be perceived and defined as more libertarian. It is a simplification for sure but one which pinpoints two important feelings within the community, which are constantly being questioned between the two groups. This reasoning process, which I have defined as “listening despite dissent”, stops relationships breaking down within the community and allows one to have a conscious respect towards the approach of the other person. This dialectic between the “jurists” and the “libertarians” sometimes assumes the outskirts of the conflict and even a heated discussion can happen. However, I believe that the awareness of a continual possible questioning of the tools is the point of contact between these two factions and is that which permits the community to continue sticking together.

In addition, this reasoning fuels the resource that we have defined “non-identity”, thus creating a constant synthesis between individuals that comprehend the rules very differently. It is not a banal mechanism that is taken for granted.

Speaking therefore of the use of regulations and the concept of them within the community, we can reason on the concept of “practical rules”. In general, the rules are separated into formal rules and informal rules. Those which we call informal rules, however, are actually very formalized and follow precise codes of conduct. Unwritten codes of conduct but nevertheless followed by a community.

The anthropologist Jeanne-Pierre Olivier de Sardan explained that behaviours that don't follow the normal rules, in general follow other rules, those aforementioned informal rules. At the Asilo, we can't speak of formal rules but we can't speak of informal rules either as the code of conduct that regulates them (even if officially) is constantly questioned by the community. Here it would be better to speak of “practical rules” (to use the definition by the same Olivier de Sardan), that is rules that define themselves in their creation. The “practical rules” indicate the reference framework within which everyone's interactions are confronted without ever adapting completely. I believe that at the Asilo, this use of practical rules, by which I mean the rules that question the rules, comes about in a very conscious manner.

From the point of view of the moral conception of your own political path, many of you have reasoned on the ethical dimension of activism. Many of you have reasoned explicitly with the awareness of having tried to elaborate a certain “ethics of the self” (inevitably recalling Michel Foucault) because the way in which we realize commons always passes through the understanding of the self. For Foucault, the ethics of the self is “an urgent, fundamental, politically indispensable task”. It is “a point of resistance to political power”. It is “a work of ourselves on ourselves as free beings”.

I think however that an important point to underline is the ability to refer to a consequentialist ethic

(as Didier Fassin calls it, that of the mutual concept of “ethic of responsibility” in Max Weber): I do what I do not because it is right nor because I identify with it but because I am fully aware of the consequences that could come out of it. And because I am fully aware of the political path that I have in mind and I believe in the objectives of that path. In other words, I am fully aware of what is moral in the field of commons.

I have also thought about this last aspect comparing the Naples case with the Turin case, where the rules became a caging mechanism, that is something that defends the community from the outside and every member of the community from the other members of the same community. This happens when a political path degenerates. When that happens, we can't entrust it to a doctrine as has been followed in the past in the collective policies of the Occupied Social Centres. We don't have a “gospel” of reference that can show us the way. We have rules, that are completely depoliticized, that have the function of organising a political process that is still ongoing. The political participation is therefore in conflict with the fear of the other. This is what I define as “participatory distrust”, that is, a political action that is based on mistrust.

The aspects that I have listed are only some of those covered in my research on Naples and on the Asilo but they are the ones that I really wanted to talk to you about this time. Then there are many other issues that I addressed in my report, but we can talk about those in the future.

In conclusion, to sum up the circumstances that have rendered possible the Asilo experience and, more in general, the so-called “Naples case”, in my opinion, three factors can be identified.

In first place are the changes that have invested the political practices of the movements. After a phase of tiredness and conflicts (that were experienced in Naples up until 2011), they realised that there was no time left to sum up and search for political conclusions but, instead, it was the moment to gather together and unite the forces against something that was advancing, namely souverainism, racism and rampant fascism. It wasn't a bad time only in Naples but in the whole of the country. In Turin for example, we had a lot of direct experience of the repression of the last decade, both the soft repression of the eviction of Cavallerizza and that of the military one of the garrison of the police after the clearing out of the Occupied Asilo (another political collective in Turin that has the same name).

In Naples, from this point of view, the network of commons was right to start listening and initiate a dialogue with the institutions because in doing so, they created new possibilities and new political prospectives.

A second factor that has contributed to the success of this experience is that of the collapse of the party system and the system of government that had governed the territory for several decades. The parallel between Naples and Turin is also interesting in this case because both cities had experimented a long urban hegemony on the part of a centre-left administration that had become a real local power. If we can talk about Turin as a real “urban regime”, for Naples this concept is perhaps a little strong because the experience under Bassolino is controversial and less linear than that of Turin.

And finally, the last factor; the choice to take advantage of the stigmas against Naples and the ability to make the most of what are considered vices in the Neapolitan political context, appropriating several practices and transforming them into processes that sustain efficient forms of political action.

Part two (discussion with the Asilo inhabitants)

Gregorio Turolla:

I'd like to thank you because I've never heard such a detailed account of the Asilo, which has put all of these aspects of the process together.

Giuseppe Micciarelli:

There are many things that I'd like to discuss with you. I hope that we'll be able to render this analysis public one day because I think it's clear to everyone how powerful a reasoning of this type is. It is one of the discussions that gives us, in addition to some courage, the awareness of how important what we do is, in the face of the many toxic stories that have existed for decades about our city. To reason on these aspects gives us strength and an important recognition for what we do at the Asilo. From the very beginning we've wholeheartedly believed in the importance of the social movements's contributions, during the first Di Magistris administration. I think that this is a contribution to the city, for which I'd like to consider together on how to render it public.

Antonio Vesco:

I think you all know that research takes a long time. I believe, however, that two articles in English could be published in a relatively short space of time. And regarding the possibility of rendering this restitution public, we could think about opening this discussion up to the outside world, even if this intimacy has been wonderful. One day, it would be great to try and imagine something at the Asilo in which we could talk together about the socio-cultural part and other aspects that have already been discussed, like the judicial and economic aspects. I would like to imagine a second restitution together that is face to face (and not online) and one that sees us sitting in a circle to discuss everything.

Marco Sallusto:

The reflections on the rules have resonated with me, like how they aren't followed in Naples but that this absence is capable of creating a self-managed and self-regulated space. One question – how long did your research take?

Antonio Vesco:

In truth, I was in Naples from the autumn of 2018 to the spring of 2019. This is the time when I formally spent on the field in Naples. I then successively returned many times because I couldn't not return, but this is tied to the fact that while you do research, ties are also created. I felt part of a

process but the positionality of an ethnographer is a problematic process because I felt very close to you all. Therefore the real and proper research lasted those months I mentioned.

Fabrizio Elvetico:

There are things that are easier to see from the outside. From the inside you're caught up in the flow and follow reasonings that aren't then made a problem of enough. I wanted to ask you something – what do you think about rendering the audio from this recording available online?

Antonio Vesco:

That's fine by me. We could talk about what to cut, even if I don't think there is anything that I wouldn't say in public. Regarding the external view that you were speaking of, mine is only external up to a certain point. Because the relationship with stigmas that I talked about is also present in a Sicilian, for which my long-distance view is more due to my emigration, that started 18 years ago and that has allowed me to develop a viewpoint from the North towards the South. I used the concept of orientalism to trivially express the construction of the other in the Italian context, in the North-South relationship. It is a discrimination from the other part, often also positively, like a pat on the back or the person that expresses themselves with enthusiastic considerations like “What great coffee you make!”.

Maria Francesca De Tullio:

Are there distortions between how we talk about ourselves and how you have told our story? Also without going into detail about which of the two visions is more objective, otherwise we risk losing ourselves. I mean to say, do we tend to talk about ourselves in a very different way compared to how you have seen us?

Antonio Vesco:

I believe that the amazing thing about this whole journey is that the Asilo is an extremely self-reflecting community. It is a self-reflection based on solid knowledge, which isn't lacking in an awareness of the world around us. For this reason, to answer your question, I believe that the story is partly coinciding and that the awareness of the use of ironic forms, of playing with the stigmas, of doing politics in a way that tips over the power relations is absolutely a conscious decision at the Asilo. Perhaps one doesn't think about it everyday as it is an introjected and incorporated aspect, it is an attitude. But I think I can say that there is a keen awareness of this story about Napoli amongst you all. There is a deep understanding of the process and whenever we question the process, it's always done in an ironic manner. That irony allows you to pull things out of the hat that would otherwise be impossible, to produce that margin that permits you to do politics and that gives space to react. To give you a concrete example, what the Asilo jurists do, who often concentrate on the formal and judicial questions, is extraordinarily capable of relating to the community and putting that specialist knowledge on the plate to render it available to a heterogenous community. The debates brought forward by the jurists are always open to the community. I turn the question back to

you all, is there anyone who has a completely different story to tell than that which I have just told? In general, the Asilo's pride isn't a pride based on a typical collective politics, it is a pride based on the awareness of its heterogeneity. I think this aspect is evident for many of you.

Adriano Cozzolino:

I've got a lot of questions that perhaps we can go into another time. Here my question to you is if, in the project, you also evaluate a more systematic and political criticism of common goods and their ability to trigger more general processes of transformation. What is their ability to make headway with commons? And then, there are lots of questions. I believe we all agree about orientalism but on the other hand, there is a whole debate that is tied to some of the dimensions within the city of Naples that need a rather deeper consideration. It came to mind the fact that at the Asilo, we have often been subjected to forms of aggression or arrogance. This is a type of “*camorra* approach” that is still an aspect to be taken into consideration and that tells us much about some of the city's dynamics that are often kept silent. There is a whole debate tied to relationships of arrogance and bullying that, in a certain sense, break with the classic story of orientalism (cronyism and *a population of shirkers*) that need to be addressed, assumed and understood within their specific dimension, within their real dimension and without a mythicizing of the underclass or of a certain mentality, which compared to the more radical left wingers, remains very ambiguous. There is a keen polarization also in conjunction with tough, unpleasant episodes, like robberies that finish badly, but this leads the argument towards a polarization of violent phenomena that should be understood in greater depth. We've lived through these dynamics at the Asilo and they are part of our experience and help us to understand.

Another very interesting point is that of the rules, *I am possibly a bit Savoy* and I see a certain ambivalence in the norm. Of course, the norm can create rigidity in a liquid that flows happy and free but that norm, which isn't necessarily “law” but can be ethical or moral, often protects a weak person. There are billions of examples of legislation that protects the working classes or the countryside against the arrogance of the building trade speculations, but I feel that the ambiguity of the norm has been handled with a certain creativity of law without falling into the trap of the approach that the norm is only an imposition.

The other interesting thing that you were saying regards the overturning of that asymmetrical relationship between the institutions and the Asilo. I don't know how much the Asilo tells of Naples and how much Naples tells of the Asilo. I don't know to what extent the Asilo is a “product” of Naples, it could well be in part but in part it isn't. I believe that it isn't by chance that the Asilo has remained on the outskirts compared to the Neapolitan movement. The Asilo lives a recognition/non-recognition because it isn't part of a series of dynamics that are maybe more Neapolitan, in the sense that these dynamics reproduce certain attitudes that are typical of the social and political movements. These issues are controversial so I will stop here. But they are probably issues that need analysing.

Antonio Vesco:

I'll try and answer from the last point backwards.

The Asilo is in no way a point of observation on Naples, in the sense that the Asilo doesn't respect the Neapolitan reality, nor is it representative of a social movement or network dynamic that is already heterogenous and within which the Asilo defines itself by "being different". The Asilo constructs its whole identity on being different. The Asilo is fully aware that it is distinct and that it distinguishes itself, this is a mechanism that is there. For this reason, it is a point of observation only if one takes into account this dynamic, if one takes into account that the Asilo in no way wants to reproduce dynamics that occur within other movements. It's true that the Asilo isn't seen as being "similar" in the part it plays in the Neapolitan movements. Regarding the old story of its people, the problem is somewhat different. Anyone who has done militant politics has had experience of the fact that the people "are beautiful only when you could mythologize them bucolically". That population there was created from popular Italian culture and from the studies on popular traditions.

The discussion on Naples is different because some collective politicians risk mythologizing people that aren't exactly bucolic or even "likeable". There a big problem opens up that we can't resolve here. The fact remains that every left wing government that has faced the problem of the people (from whatever "grade of red" that left wing has), has appropriated from that population up the point that it has been convenient for them to do so and when that population has behaved badly or when it wasn't liked anymore, it has put the people to one side.

In my report, there is a very long section entitled "Beyond the Asilo", which is dedicated to the relationships between the Asilo and its neighbourhood, to the way in which relationships are managed with people that aren't part of the Asilo because they are from very different social extractions. In this section I talk of your relationships also with the youth from the nearby restaurants and with all those realities, which outside the Asilo space question the Asilo inhabitants compared to their social extraction. The comparison with these realities opens up to reflections upon which the "illuminated bourgeoisie" usually compares itself when it deals with the proletariat, like a sense of guilt. This dimension is part of the report.

Adriano Cozzolino:

I remember when, several years ago, an immigrant worker was literally stoned to death on the Naples seafront by a group of kids. And an anthropologist colleague of yours, who works in Denmark, underlined the fact that even this group of kids were part of a certain marginality...

Antonio Vesco:

Yes, the battle between the have-nots etc etc. But to go back to us, I believe that the Asilo is capable of dealing with these topics in a complex manner and for some people, it has been a complex choice, that of affirming to be doing another type of activity (more cultural and less social). Without, however, denying that a different social reality exists, that often doesn't mirror the social composition of the community. But I see that this is a source of pain for the community and I realised that many times when I was in the meetings. The word "kids" turns up many times in my report because the "local kids" have brought the issues of the community into the light of day. Not *wrong things* but they have brought out of the closet questions relative to how the community questions itself. Speaking of the relationship with the population brings us to consider what we mean by "politics" and what we are actually doing. What counter-hegemonic dynamics do we want

to build? And for this, perhaps, within the Neapolitan context, the Asilo is known as a “radical chic” space, which is in part a way of recognising that there is a powerful political elaboration within the Asilo. In saying this, on the question of orientalism, I agree with Adriano but Naples, in my opinion, deals with this in a less taken for granted way than elsewhere, in a manner that is less inclined to the exotic towards the population and because Naples is also subjected to the population. In considering the project, however, we need to think about the fact that the research takes into consideration the commons movements of three different countries and reflects on how these forms of *alter-politics* are implemented (from the childcare in Barcelona to the Patrasso case passing through all the Italian cases). In the report there are more than 600 pages of theoretical synthesis written by the coordinator, who had however written them whilst bearing in mind the case studies. However, I believe that overall the report deals with the aspects that you have talked about.

Gregorio Turolla:

I very much appreciated the concept of irony that you used to talk about the Asilo. In the last months that same irony is pretty difficult to attain and in this sense, your version is fairly “amarcord”. To be able to get a picture of a situation that, at the moment, isn't there anymore due to everything that's happening (the pandemic and everything else). As regards the norms, in my opinion, there is a certain ossification. The fact that the central assembly is conceived as sacred and unassailable, in my opinion, isn't discussed enough. The central assembly represents an accumulation of power, dividing it up into various assemblies could be a way of decentralising the power. I really liked what you said but I would have expected it to have created more problems for us, to render our self-reflections more enthusiastic. I would like then to deal with the debate on leadership, a term that has remained impressed on me from when I was at the “Elfi” community in Tuscany, where they had dedicated a whole assembly to leadership. As you said, a series of things that happen at the Asilo are physiological because we are all human and for which the problem of leadership exists and continues to rear its head.

Antonio Vesco:

I confess to you all that this presentation is the result of a specific moment. Therefore I have unintentionally selected those aspects that are perhaps less problematic within the community. This is perhaps because I also needed an “amarcord”, it was as if after many months of observation only the best part of the community came to the surface, the aspects that have allowed us to keep going up until now. All of us have criticisms over the way of doing things at the Asilo but in the moment that I make a summary, I can't help but notice that, for example, while Gregorio says that he doesn't agree on the fact that several norms aren't discussed, in reality he is already questioning them. I remember that Gregorio and I had an argument with Mariapia, when a gentleman arrived during the assembly who, whilst exiting ruffled and rather angry, had brought back those power dynamics that I had noticed during the assembly. Therefore yes, it is inevitable that hegemonies are created but this is residual compared to the overall justice that we can give on this line. For example, I started believing again compared to when, at the start of my research, a certain legal knowledge had alarmed me in particular. Slowly slowly, I realised that this knowledge had already been questioned within the same community. Groups are created just as inequalities exist between the inside and the outside. Also the debate on whether or not to publish this restitution or keep it between ourselves

has been interesting. It is obvious that the borders of a community like the Asilo are blurred and not clear and it is also obvious that there are leaderships and hegemonies within the community. But the tone in which the community questions itself, without forgiving itself many things and whilst being not very magnanimous with itself is its real strength. For this I believe that a positive vision prevails in my report.

Adriano Cozzolino:

I am reminded of when a local government member from Milan, while he was trying to do things with Macao, defined the Asilo as a “guappata”, which in Neapolitan we call a “guapparia” [from “guappo”, which indicates a camorrist and arrogant individual, and which in turn derives perhaps from the Spanish “guapo”; it is another epithet to identify the inhabitants of Naples in a derogatory and racist way]. But I’ll stop there.

Andrea De Goyzueta:

I'd also like to thank you for what has been said. It has been a wonderful occasion to make a “phase analysis” that is always difficult at the Asilo. It has been a way of looking at ourselves through different eyes, to be able to turn in on ourselves, to give a series of names to things that I feel inside and that have never been codified, from the question of pride to that of irony. And, by the way, I am sorry if I've been a bit depressed recently and haven't been able to be ironic as in the past. I'll be back to *take the piss*, I promise because it was a key manner that I used a lot at the Asilo. I'd like to say a series of things that I'd noticed. First of all, if we google the Asilo, we find a mainly “Savoy” approach. In the sense that the Naples part of the Il Mattino newspaper or other newspapers, have been constant and continuous rivals for us and that, at least in the early years, they reproached us for the lack of rules or for our “Oh well!” approach. We have tried to tear down a dimension of conformism, also between the administrators. The steps that the employees and the local council officials have made over the last few years are enormous. There has been a kind of process of liberation that has led them almost to depression, when they realised that all of this was actually really complicated. We come from ten years under Iervolino, from a Naples that was completely suffocated by an excess of party hack politics, from an excess of order and regulations that didn't even touch Neapolitan anarchy but simply suffocated every possible energy. De Magistris, then, found himself surfing on the crest of a wave, he was a man without political parties, who knew how to lean on the movements and he had to create himself a party structure that was also familist, propping himself up on this wave of participation and a Naples that had already caused the PD and the PDL to fall and that had then turned to the *outsider*, who had a new communicative capacity.

The cronyism question is also a kind of obsession for us. We came from a very ordered management of cronies. From 2008 to 2011, 44 council properties were gifted in a direct manner to the single associations. We came from the Culture Forum [the former function of the building where the Asilo is now located]. It was a space that was accessible only to clients of that party or to that councillor, who also happened to be the curator and also the president. That cronyism dimension was extremely clear to us and for that reason this complex yet simple manner was created in the hospitality. Being impartial and accepting everyone and everything whilst receiving had become a mantra because we knew that we had to tear down a dimension of cronyism. I find that to be a

natural dimension, a tendency that is part of human nature, that of finding a rapport with the administration, an unwitting favouritism with the administrator. We can say that all of the spaces and all of the occupied social centres have lived through a favouritism power dynamic. For example, the Officina 99, which is totally detached from rapports with power, had a cronyism rapport with Iervolino, who spent €1.5 million to buy that space. The specificity of the Asilo's process, that was then welcomed by a council committee that really wanted to respect that dimension, ended up that no ownership existed. I have dedicated myself to the Asilo since 2012 and I have no document that says that this space belongs to myself or my friends and that I can continue to stay here. If someone wanted to kick us out, we can't fall back on the courts. It's a situation of trust. We often say that "the Asilo will close down in six months", not because our friend De Magistris will leave in six months but because in six months, a certain political dimension will leave. Concerning the rules, we have followed the norm, we have tried a normative structure to help us create a free space, that there was freedom within that space. Because we realised that imagining a normative structure in which that space was truly free, created a really devastating dynamic and didn't create, for example, the passive dimension that we found in Bologna. I don't want to be a person who shows exaggerated attachment to my city but there we met with a passive dynamic; everything came from the top down, regulated by the administration. The same in Turin and in France, where the Constitution provides for a participation but it is a participation granted by the State. It is unlikely that next year will bring an administrator who will value a trustworthy relationship with the city's inhabitants. For example, our terrible Regional President has no trust whatsoever in the citizens, doesn't believe that we are capable of managing and for this reason acts like a sheriff.

Antonio Vesco:

President De Luca is the other face of the stigma of Naples about which we spoke about earlier. De Luca too is trying to control the population with an iron fist, a population that has always been portrayed as undisciplined. There is a widespread sense of guilt under his manner of administration. And he is using it to govern. The thing that shocks me most is that the categories like cronyism have started to become part of our way of being in the world. I believe that from this point of view, the important answer from those who have understood these things is the ability to set up one's own political action through an appropriation of these negative labels. This setting up is capable of using that label to stimulate forms of reaction to the same stigmas. This is firmly in the mind of who does politics today. I know that the Asilo was started because it opposed certain ways of doing politics in Naples. Cronyism is indeed an old tale but it is also a phenomenon, a real way of doing politics and administrating culture. But, at a certain point in the process, more or less consciously, one is able to not be quite such a moralist to respond to that situation with a simple submission to the rules. That is the route that anyone would have taken. One needs to be really ironic to overturn this rule, taking on board with self-awareness and irony even those stories that tell of De Magistris giving property to the movements. One can't not recognise in a concise manner that a political line has been drawn up together, the administrations with the movements and with a reality like the Asilo. And there is a risk, it has actually happened, that only the administrators have taken responsibility.

Andrea De Goyzueta:

I'm going to tell a quick anecdote. The leader of one of the small groups that wave the flag of conformism, where the law asserts itself on practical experience because it is reassuring, has spoken of the favouritism relationship between the Asilo and the administration, pointing everything at an email that the Asilo sent to the administration and that started with "Carissimi amministratori [beloved administrators]. It was me who wrote that email and, in 80% of my communications, I begin with "Carissimi" because it's the way I am, it's my way of writing. The attacks on the Asilo were done to bring out a familism in the way that we shot ourselves in the foot many times in order to create something that was even more difficult. We wanted to play around with this non-proprietary dimension because this was for us the more public dimension, closer to the concept of democracy.

Cesare Di Transo:

I find myself in difficulty because we could talk about this subject for three or four days. I'd like to make more of a provocation than a speech; one of the many things I was thinking about while I was listening was one of the trips to Ikaria that I usually do in the summer. Because one of the characteristics of Ikaria is that one never talks about the community's way of having relationships and the permanent research into a better life together. As soon as it is spoken about, it weighs down that same community. For this reason, I feel very torn; we always speak very little about the practicalities that have space in the occupied social centres but it is this fact that we have said very little that has allowed things to take their natural course. The *phase analysis*, that should render collectives and the communities more aware, often end up by reducing the opportunities as they focus only on determinate aspects and losing part of the complexity.

Another reflection concerns those behaviours that we call "defensive", the tensions that we all have and that don't allow us to be constantly aware of the complexity of the practicalities. It happens that, in certain moments, the small groups or the single individual goes too far and completely cancels space in the disagreement. We also speak too little of this. The difficulties that are brought about by the speeches and the defensive tensions are a fundamental part of a complex community. Those difficulties are always going to be there. The moment in which the attention is clearly directed towards "what to do to not have problems", has been a strong stimulus for the construction of the community. Even if nowadays I don't often "feel" this community because unfortunately we can't meet in person. And I'm not able to speak well on this computer.

Antonio Vesco:

The only question I'm going to answer is that of Ikaria. And I'll reply to you as a social scientist by telling you that the conditions, not only geographical, are very different between the two communities. Even if I start by saying that who does things differently is always a good thing, I don't feel like saying that a limit of the Asilo is that of talking and analysing too much.

Cesare Di Transo:

I think that the limit isn't one of talking too much but one of not getting to the bottom of some arguments. I mean that the theoretical tension to the pacified space kills it. When the assembly is

fluid it means that it is of no use because it hasn't given stimuli. It might be useful from a practical point of view but not from a political point of view. The best assemblies are those where there is a high level of difficulty but followed with the most serenity possible, even if while making mistakes. We speak little of this.

Antonio Vesco:

Margins are created in this blockage. Therefore we are in perfect agreement.

Ana Sofia Acosta Alvarado:

One thing that has struck me, also for the person that I am, not Italian, a non-EU immigrant, is your definition of a heterogenous community. I'd like to ask you how you define this heterogeneity because, from my point of view, the Asilo community is very homogeneous. The comparison with the ex OPG [another commons space in Naples], which attracts only one type of community, is correct but for the Asilo's mission there are things that resonate with me because looking around, it doesn't seem like this to me, but I don't have the tools for saying that the community isn't heterogeneous because I'm neither an anthropologist nor a sociologist.

I wanted to stop and look at the aspect of self-narration. If it is true that the Asilo goes around talking about itself, it is also true that many people talk about the Asilo in a manner that isn't correct, almost with the intention of spreading disinformation about the Asilo in order to upset a political decision. And this happens because the Asilo lets the others speak, a confrontation with who speaks negatively isn't done with antagonism. I'll also add that from a job we did last summer for a European project, a reflection on the time of the Asilo came out. The time of the Asilo is a time for healing and also of non-action, that one can reflect on the resignation of absolute control and efficiency of the organisation and logistics of some things. This apparent slowing down might seem like something that impedes the process but one that needs to be borne in mind to reach a different outcome.

Antonio Vesco:

As regards the Asilo's heterogeneity. In reality, you are absolutely right. It depends on which point of view we talk from about heterogeneity. That label of "radical chic" that is often attributed to the Asilo corresponds to the vision of a fairly homogenous group from a social point of view but in this sense, we also talk about a heterogeneity compared to how the process is perceived, otherwise it would be impossible to move forwards in such an efficient manner. What I was referring to isn't a real heterogeneity but a narration of heterogeneity, which is very strong. It is a performative mechanism: to continuously say that "we are heterogenous" allows us to construct that "pride" in managing to summarize and to also listen to different things. This is important. I think that we would be less proud of the Asilo project if we all had the same idea on those two or three basic aspects that characterize the process.

Giuseppe Micciarelli:

It would be great to open up another discussion on the last few things that Cesare said. But there isn't time now. I'd like to take advantage of Antonio's presence to ask something precise; Cavallerizza was split up on the division between the "artistic" part and the "political" part where the politicians were saying, "this is the rule and if you don't follow it, get out!", whereas the artists were saying, "you're not as active as us in the space so therefore get out!". These are similar tensions to those that we get at the Asilo when we talk, for example, about jurists and "craftsmen or artists of the scene". Ok, I ask you, where have we been good at managing these tensions that exist in many political processes? And how can we improve? In addition, how you translate the opening up of our community in anthropological terms, the fact that there isn't an "us" or a "you plural", something that we repeat also in this case in a performative manner. Because for who comes to the assembly for the first time, it is evident that there is an "us" and a "you plural", it's not as if we pretend not to know each other. But to say that there isn't an "us" or a "you plural" is a way of saying, "if you want, you are already part of this 'us'".

Antonio Vesco:

Thank you Giuseppe, you have indeed brought up a key point. I have to say that the comparison with Naples has very much helped in observing Turin, because the dynamics in Turin that you remind us of, I have always observed them thinking that the Asilo worked in a different way. It was complicated to write the report, as an anthropologist, to use the term "community" because it is a term that, in anthropology, has always evoked homogeneous forms of ways of understanding the world. Fortunately, anthropology has moved on and the term "community" today contemplates also the opening up. There are communities that build their own sense of openness, that are based on this paradox of opening up. Concerning what you were asking me, meaning what we have done to not implode and what we can do to avoid an implosion, I'll tell you this: already the fact that you, as a very much connoted person, as a jurist, you asking me this is a sign of openness. Yours is a sincere form of readiness towards the community. Often, when one studies, one tries to find thorough explanations. But very often there are emotional dimensions that explain the process far better than other explanations. I believe that the type of ties that you manage to create at the Asilo is a large part of the answer. It seems a little naïve as an explanation but it is so. The counter-position that was created at Cavallerizza, between artists and politicians, almost never creates friendly or esteemed relationships, something that I have found instead at the Asilo community. For this, the dynamic at Cavallerizza is deeply "grillina" [meaning followers/voters of the 5 Star Movement], a dynamic of "participatory distrust", that is also part of all the populist movements. There are people that participate but at the same time hold a deep-seated mistrust and need rules to protect themselves from others. For this reason, the way of doing things is, "you haven't respected the rules, therefore you're out!". A real, equal discussion is one in which the heterogeneous contribution is accepted. This was never so in Cavallerizza. The politicians component never gave even a hint of credit to anyone who had something artistic to say and vice versa. And then we can also resort to explanations of a cultural character, reminding ourselves, however, that culture isn't something that people have but something by which people relate to each other. As happened to Cesare, when the people from Cavallerizza said that they were Savoys. To answer your question, therefore, I believe that there is already a certain amount of dissatisfaction in the community. The Asilo is constantly feeding itself on dissatisfaction, meaning that it is constantly dissatisfied with wanting to be recognised by others. I don't want to say that it is narcissistic but one feels the need to check the

validity of ones own contribution to the process. And this happens a lot at the Asilo. And it goes without saying that you (as a jurist) and Cesare (as a libertarian) will never understand each other. Or if I speak to Armando, he'll give me a completely different view of the Asilo compared to yours. My version really is a mosaic that is created thanks to this type of rapport. For this reason; I don't want to compare the Asilo too much with Cavallerizza because the preliminaries were different and trust was lacking right from the very beginning with the Cavallerizza community. And, from the beginning, many people and groups were kicked out of that community. And then the choices that were made were very different, the choice to establish an inhabited space, for example, created many problems. These are factors of the context that render the two experiences completely different.