CESARE DI FELICIANTONIO

Exploring the Complex Geographies of Italian Queer Activism

WHEN I WAS invited to write about queer activism in Italy, my reaction was totally enthusiastic, as it would be a chance to combine my PhD research issues (the geographies of social movements) with my interest and engagement in queer politics. Nevertheless, when assembling ideas and developing the main argument, I struggled to identify a unitary social movement I could refer to as queer activism in Italy. Looking back on the literature on the diffusion of queer theory and practice in Italy (e.g. Pustianaz 2010; 2011; Scarmoncin 2012), I realized the source of my concerns: the reception and translation of *queer* (intended as a theory, an adjective, a noun, a verb, and/or a political practice) among Italian activists beyond the academic sphere. Who is currently using the adjective/verb queer to identify their political practice of sexual dissidence in the Italian context? Do the people I think of, and refer to, as queer activists really define themselves as queer subjects? What are the relations between the use of *queer* and that of *frocia* (literally *fag* in the feminine form) among militants?

Starting from these general concerns, the article analyzes the emergence of queer activism in Italy through a geographical lens as it focuses on the multiple scales queer militants rely on for their strategies, actions,

and the construction of relations. In doing so, the analytical perspective of the "geographies of social movements" is adopted. While LGBT mainstream politics appears to be centered mostly on the national scale, demanding legal changes to achieve full citizenship rights, queer activists seem to privilege microscale politics, notably those of (their own) bodies and the places and spaces they occupy daily (e.g. universities and places of political engagement). Nevertheless, urban and (inter)national networks maintain a strategic importance (also representing a source of inspiration), this leading to an overlapping of scales and places, making their geographies complex. The article is based on my personal (direct and indirect) experiences as a queer militant in Italy, so it makes no claim to objectivity, "right distance," and/or comprehensiveness. In that sense, it is framed within the non-normative ontology of queer theory (Browne and Nash 2010), as it recognizes the situated character of knowledge (e.g. Haraway 1988; Rose 1997), thus requiring the "subject" (myself) to position itself. I conceive positionality to be a significant practice, not a way to fix taken-for-granted identities. The article might appear "Rome-centric" and "post-2006-centric," not because I believe Rome is a meaningful paradigm of queer activism in Italy, nor because I find the years following 2006 to be the most important: it is just because I have been engaged in queer politics in Rome since 2006. In fact, I share some commentators' concerns about the need to investigate queer lives (and engagements) outside the main metropolitan areas (e.g. Brown 2008). Moreover, I think we have been able to engage with queer politics in the last years thanks to the extraordinary social and political legacy we have inherited from the 1970s, making Rome and other Italian cities active laboratories of grassroots' political self-organization (Hardt 1996). This political ferment appears to have been intensified by the current debt and financial crisis, with a massive reemergence of squatting initiatives in many Italian cities, notably in Rome, addressing issues not just around housing, but mainly about the *commons*[1] (Di Feliciantonio 2013). So I here position myself as a militant within both the queer and the squatting movement, and also with a previous engagement in the student movement. The cases explored in the article

are taken from my direct experience – I participated in them, or I have a close connection to the people involved. While recognizing that the ideas presented in this article have been forged by collective discussions, I have developed them on my own; this work results indeed from the "in-between" place of my multiple positionalities (Katz 1994; Sultana 2007). This is to stress that I am not speaking on behalf of any of the political groups I am part of.

Before presenting the structure of the paper, I need to explain what I mean by "queer activism and politics" in this article. While "queer" has often been used as an umbrella term to include all kinds of sexual dissidents (e.g. Gorman-Murray 2007), here I use it firstly "as opposed to homonormativity as it is to heteronormativity. Queer celebrates gender and sexual fluidity and consciously blurs binaries. It is more of a relational process than a simple identity category […]. It is infused with a creative 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) ethos that prefers thrift shop drag to the latest designer labels […]. Queer revels in its otherness, difference, and distance from mainstream society (gay or straight), even as it recognizes that this distance is always incomplete" (Brown 2007, 2685). Nevertheless, I think "queer" should assume a broader perspective in addressing hegemonic powers and formations, beyond the domains of gender and sexuality. Indeed, "queer" should depict all those subjectivities challenging, not only hegemonic gender identities and sexual behaviors, but more generally any kind of norm(ativity). This way, "queer" can be reframed as a political position of becoming, thus connecting a multiplicity of social and economic issues, far beyond questions of gender and sexualities (e.g. Wilkinson 2009). As a matter of fact, queer politics is inevitably a politics of intersectionality (e.g. Rahman 2010; El-Tayeb 2012); this appears to be relevant also in the Italian context, where queer groups and subjectivities have paid attention by taking part in social movements and actions around several issues (e.g. antiracist politics, antifascism, and general strikes), differentiating from the mainstream LGBT associations and groups, rarely involved in these events.

The remainder of the article is made of six sections. After briefly discussing the way the word "queer" has been used, appropriated, and

challenged in Italy, in the section after I will give a brief overview of the geographical literature on social movements. The section thereafter focuses on the microscales of queer engagement, first the body and then the everyday spaces and places of political action, looking also at how intersectional politics is materially shaped through the participation and engagement of queer activists in broader leftist contexts, notably social centers (*centri sociali*) and universities. In the following section I analyze, by using the literature stressing the importance of the urban scale for social movements, the importance of urban coalitions and initiatives as strategic ways to (re)capture visibility. This focus on microscales does not collide with the importance of (trans)national networks and actions; this is the object of the last section that, through the recent example of Orgogliosamente LGBT, shows how, being a leftist intersectional politics, queer activism can not overcome political differences under a common queer umbrella. This leads to the conclusions in which I summarize the discussion emphasizing how this instability of queer politics can be generative of proliferation and multiple possibilities.

"Queer Activism" in Italy?

In order to fully understand the geographies of queer politics in Italy, this section deals with the reception of *queer* in Italy and its tension with the legacy of leftist, sexual liberation politics from the 1970s, embedded in the current use of the term *frocia*, to identify bodies and subjects not conforming to the heteronormative male/female binarism. Indeed, critique of heteronormativity and gender binarism was one of the main features of the Italian sexual liberation movement in the 1970s and early 1980s, calling for bodily direct action and experience (e.g. Prearo 2012), as highlighted by the theoretical manifesto of the movement, Mario Mieli's *Elementi di critica omosessuale* (1977).[2] Indeed Mieli's political contribution consists of both a severe critique of normativities, through a Marxist-Freudian lens, and a repertoire of political acts, challenging the bigotry of public discourse and norms. For instance, his coprophagist actions are still very well-known and often cited among Italian LGBT activists. According to Massimo Prearo (2012), the success and

affirmation of queer theory in Italian academia has favored the dismissal of Mieli and sexual liberationists' call for engaging with experiential politics. This way, he traces a foundational tension leading him to distinguish between a "theoretical queer" (originating from Anglo-Saxon academia and influenced by theorists such as Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari) and an "experiential queer" (intended as a dissident proposal, developed by authors being mainly militants, including Mieli himself, Monique Wittig, Guy Hocquenghem, and even Teresa de Lauretis). The main role of this tension in shaping queer theory and politics in Italy emerges also in Marco Pustianaz' collection of interviews with Italian queer activists published in 2011, *Queer in Italia: Differenze in movimento*. Taking the example of Porpora Marcasciano, one of the most well-known Italian trans activists engaged since the end of the 1970s, she states:

> My journey starts in the 1970s inside the rich/racy movement moving/shaking the scene, when the words queer, gay or trans did not exist yet, thus the word I made as mine or, better, we made as ours collectively was *frocio,* or better *frociA,*[3] the same word I believed to translate as queer some years later. *Frocia* was a term going beyond those identitarian boundaries in which the [GLBT] movement was canalized during the 1980s, functioning as a neuter and, at the same time, being over and beyond the different parts, therefore both gays, lesbians and trans could indifferently define themselves as *frocia*. [...] Over the time the meaning I accorded the term queer has progressively changed, following the stimuli arising from the theoretical elaboration within feminism, though I keep the primitive meaning I felt represented by, i.e. *frocia*. (Marcasciano, in Pustianaz 2011, 115–6, author's translation, italics added)

In the same line, I can report here the debates I had with my comrades in the summer of 2011, when we decided to create a new collective in Rome, combining non-identitarian politics with concerns for social and economic issues, and we discussed what to name the collective. We worried that many people would not understand what we meant by the name

we finally chose, QueerLab, or that they would associate it only with a series of nightlife parties, that had been taking place for the last seven or eight years, attracting mainly a gay crowd without making any reference to sexual dissidence. In a context, characterized by strong invisibility and stigmatization of LGBT issues, like the Italian one, we feared that we would reinforce this invisibility by not making explicit our sexual dissidence (a similar argument is developed by Giovanni Campolo in his interview in Pustianaz 2011, 60).

Despite these preliminary concerns about the difficult path towards the appropriation of "queer" as a political term in Italy beyond academia (without underestimating the importance of various forms of academic activism, e.g. Fuller and Kitchin 2004), I still believe we can think of, and talk about, a queer movement in Italy, made of minoritarian, small groups and collectives (mostly of students and precarious researchers), and individual subjects linked in different ways to leftist (anticapitalist, anarchic, or autonomous) politics and spaces. Embedded in the sexual liberation perspective from the 1970s, afterwards these political actors have been influenced by the diffusion of queer theory (even if the Italian translations of some of the main queer theory texts has been particularly slow and is still incomplete, most of these activists have links to academia so they read English), and the examples of direct actions by international queer groups, such as ACT-UP.

Place, Scale, Space, and Networks: Exploring the Geographies of Social Movements

Sociologists and political scientists have typically been the ones most engaged in developing research programs on social movements' formation and functioning (e.g. Tarrow 1998; Della Porta and Diani 1999; Tilly 2004). Nevertheless, human and social geographers have recently developed in-depth analysis of social movements' spatial strategies and concerns (e.g. Miller 2001; Routledge 2003), focusing on how place, space, and scale affect their organizational forms, claims, and actions. The main task for geographers being "not to show how one form of spatiality is more important than another, but rather to show how these

spatialities articulate with one another in actually existing social movements" (Nicholls 2009, 78).

In this respect, networks assume a foundational importance, since social movements are constituted by different groups, organizations, and individuals sharing a collective goal through non-conventional forms (e.g. Diani 1997; Nicholls 2007). Stressing the importance of place-based (relational) networks, Walter Nicholls recently introduced the concept of "social movement space" (Nicholls 2009), meant as "an aggregation of individual places [...], the process of aggregating these places produces qualities and dynamics that are very different from those found in the places constituting it" (Nicholls 2009, 91). Of course if envisioning a more-than-local goal, these different places have to connect with each other, but many barriers hinders this process, mainly in terms of economic and cultures, making the geographies of social movements extremely complex.

Although social movements are built and develop their action on different scales and spatialities, cities seem to occupy a privileged position resulting not just from a renewed attention to "urban social movements" (e.g. Pickvance 2003; Mayer 2006), but mainly from a widespread rediscovery (both in academia and politics) of the Lefebvrian idea of the "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1968). However, the use of this Lefebvrian idea has been so massive that it became empty and meaningless, and also appropriated by conservative groups and mainstream institutions (e.g. Harvey 2012). For this reason, critical scholars have stressed the necessity to engage in the (re)theorizing of this notion, in line with the Lefebvrian project of social justice (Marcuse 2009; Harvey 2012). From a geographical perspective, Uitermark et al. (2012) have recently pointed out that the literature on the "right to the city" is limitative in obscuring claims having a larger perspective than the urban one; this way, the city itself seems to be the final end of struggles and claims. Instead, they call for the adoption of a relational perspective on the importance of the urban scale for social movements, since "cities breed contention because they produce a wide variety of grievances among its inhabitants and offer opportunities for developing ties between proximate

activists. The city concentrates the conduits through which relations are formed but also represents a privileged point of attack for all kinds of movements because it concentrates power and prestige" (Uitermark et al. 2012, 2550). In the same vein, Nicholls (2008) has emphasized how, even if it can not be isolated or over-estimated as the final end of struggles, the urban remains the privileged scale for social movements' construction and their (territorial, cultural, political, and institutional) embeddedness. This is explained by making reference to Granovetter's ties;[4] strong ties are seen as creating and strengthening shared norms, trust, a shared interpretative framework of information and political events, and, finally, the emotional energy needed to face challenges and develop solidarity (Nicholls 2008, 846). At the same time, weak ties are seen as favoring the cooperation between groups, necessary to establish long-terms ties, and thus creating interdependencies that lead to the establishment a common culture of resistance (Nicholls 2008, 846–8); in this way, we see how (economic) geography concepts, such as tacit, stratified knowledge, and interdependencies, can be used to analyze the urban nature of social movements.

Through this brief overview of the contributions by geographers to the analysis of social movements, we have seen how space, scale, place, and networks affect social movements' strategies, actions, and perspectives at different levels. This perspective can be applied when analyzing queer activism in Italy. In everyday actions, what scales and networks do queer activists rely on? What places and spaces do they intervene in? Through various examples, taken from my personal experiences, I will explore these issues in the following sections, starting from the microscales of everyday political action and construction, emphasizing the intersectional nature of queer politics.

Queer Activism as an Everyday Intersectional Politics of the Body

In this section, I focus on the microscales of queer activism in Italy, that is, I believe, very different from mainstream LGBT politics. In fact, like in other Western countries (Duggan 2002; Nast 2002; Cooper and

Monro 2003; Carabine 2004), since the parallel eruption of HIV/AIDS pandemic and the neoliberal policies in the 1980s – the latters favoring the emergence of new spaces of visibility especially in the metropolitan areas of the Global North (e.g. Binnie 2004) – LGBT mainstream politics in Italy have been caught up in the neoliberal discourse of equality, freedom, gay marriage, and full national citizenship (e.g. De Vivo and Dufour 2012; Bertone and Gusmano 2013). In this respect, Luca Trappolin (2004; 2009) traces a divide between "radical" and "liberal" gay and lesbian groups. Influenced by the liberationist politics of the 1970s, the former address revolutionary claims around multiple issues of social and economic justice, and attack hegemonic socio-economic institutions (marriage, patriarchy, and so forth), while the latter legitimizes the homosexual/heterosexual divide, their claims mostly targeting sexuality and discriminations. Among LGBT mainstream groups this process has led to a progressive dismissal of the political practices of the sexual liberation movement of the 1970s, centered on the bodily experiences, with most of the demands now directed to the national government, concerning gay marriage and the approval of a law against homophobia (Ross 2009; Holzhacker 2012; Santos 2012). Instead, influenced both by theorists like Butler (e.g. 1990) or Preciado (2002) stressing gender fluidity and the importance of (sexual) body practices, and by the feminist political practice of "starting from the self" (e.g. Busarello in Pustianaz 2011), queer activists attach great importance to the body as the starting point for political reflection and action. In a Foucauldian perspective power/resistance, body, desire, and personal experience are seen as primary tools to challenge hegemonic social relations concerning gender, sexual orientation, shameful behaviors, and beyond (see definitions above).

In order to make this point clear, I here present the practice of "self-inquiry" (*autoinchiesta*) developed by Laboratorio Smaschieramenti in Bologna, highlighting how the analysis of social reality and the forms of political intervention of queer activists, start from the self and personal experiences. Following the very large demonstration against violence against women of November 24, 2007, Antagonismogay, a collective of

mostly gay men active in Bologna since 1999, launched a call to organize a gender/sexual orientation mixed laboratory to explore collectively how diverse subjectivities (re)produce male power in their everyday life. That marked the starting of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, whose aim is to:

> [I]nterweave glances on maleness, on the historical and social conditions of its constitution and transformation, in order to encourage the emergence of multiple gender positions, free and aware of their partiality, not dispatching the issues of violence and asymmetrical power between men and women, and sexual majorities and minorities. *Starting from bodies and pleasures, we question desires, sexual practices, and identities* – secular or just invented, but acting as stereotypes of normalization. (Smaschieramenti 2014, author's translation, italics added)

The practice of the Laboratory aims at challenging masculinity and the social construction of maleness, starting from the interrogation of each one's personal experiences, i.e. "self-inquiry." This led to the construction of a questionnaire asking people about personal experiences and practices, avoiding the representative "politically correctness" of leftist culture. The questionnaire was indeed submitted to the attendants of various city social centers; 180 questionnaires were returned and a public meeting to discuss the results was organized during the Festival of Antifascist Cultures (for a full description of the experience of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, see Acquistapace 2011). Afterwards, the very same practice has been employed again to investigate "other intimacies" (*altre intimità*) in a new laboratory around the issues of personal affective relations, based on the assumption that there is a widespread desire for new forms of relations that goes beyond monogamy and the hetero/homosexual opposition.

So the body is thought to represent the first site of political engagement and construction, the entry point to change reality and challenge hegemonic relations. In geographical terms, this highlights the need to consider the body as a primary microscale of analysis; indeed, following feminist reflections, several geographers have already recog-

nized the body as a geographical scale (for an overview, see Minca and Bialasiewicz 2004), especially when analyzing queer lives and migrations (e.g. Gorman-Murray 2007; 2009; De Rosa et al. 2013). But in which (political) spaces and places do these bodies and personal experiences meet each other everyday? What claims do they bring? How does the "starting from the self" generate an intersectional politics?

In the case of Italian queer activists, I suggest we can answer these questions by looking at leftist spaces where they engage on a daily basis, bringing a queer perspective to social movements. Looking at the different life paths followed by queer activists around the country (as highlighted in Pustianaz 2011), there is clear evidence that queer engagement in larger leftist projects takes place mainly at universities and in social centers, i.e. spaces that have produced some of the most intense moments of contentious politics in Italy, at least in the last fifteen years (for an overview of the history of social centers, see among others Mudu 2004; 2012; on the students' movements, e.g. Aringoli et al. 2006; Arruzza et al. 2008; Internazionale surfista 2008). This is not to say that the presence of queer militants and groups within social centers or larger social movements has always been unquestioned, or that it did not generate tensions. On the contrary, machoist and exclusionary practices have been denounced and challenged on several occasions. I will now present some examples related to queer activism inside both universities and social centers.

Sapienza – the largest university in Rome (and Europe) – hosted the first group featuring the word "queer" in its name: Queering Sapienza, a students' collective created in 2002 and active for about three years,[5] consisting of dozens of people. The activists met on a weekly basis at the Faculty of Humanities and Philosophy, and so they were able to attract new people who could easily reach them, knowing in advance about the meetings taking place. The main idea was "to have a space to socialize, to discuss our experience inside and beyond the university, to organize moments to be publicly visible and to *queer* university nightlife, [...] we brought issues of gender, bodies, and desires in a machoist context of students' militantism" (P., personal interview, author's translation, ital-

ics added). Following a long-standing tradition of political militantism at universities, and the massive social mobilization around the Genoa G8, the early 2000s were years of widespread activism at Sapienza, with most of the faculties having a (leftist) students' collective and with two "central" networks including them. Thus, Queering Sapienza was active in a period of intense political ferment, establishing relations with other students' groups, to which they brought a queer perspective on students' claims (e.g. the right to education, the fight against the privatization and commodification of knowledge, and students' welfare).

Following the end of the Queering Sapienza experience and the emergence of a new massive students' movement in the fall of 2005, that brought many new people who became engaged in university politics, a new collective was created in 2006: Sui Generis, that was active until the EuroPride of 2011. Unlike Queering Sapienza, Sui Generis was created by lesbian and gay students already involved in university politics, but lacking a specific space to discuss issues of discrimination, power relations on the basis of gender and sexual orientation, sexualities, and desire. They stressed the need to develop and bring a queer perspective to this new phase of university politics. Sui Generis was active during the next massive students' movement of 2008 (L'Onda), and they initiated a discussion about on which (gender and sexual) power relations the movement was based. Beyond the weekly collective meeting, we engaged daily in the occupied faculties (October – December 2008), creating connections, and spreading knowledge and awareness about how diverse subjectivities feel different needs and address different claims. Despite being a collective of (LGBT) students, we were also part of other metropolitan networks and social movements, e.g. Rete Anticrisi (Anti-Crisis Network), and Rete Antifascista Metropolitana (Metropolitan Antifascist Network). Moreover we have been the promoters of another network, Indecorose e Libere (Disreputable and Free), created in 2011 (see the next section). A similar students' collective, Tiresia, was active in Naples at the same time, and strongly engaged in dismantling the machoist and sexist imagery and practices of antifascist militants.

Concerning the links between queer activism and social centers, we

see that they are long lasting and include both groups and individuals developing countercultural queer projects. A well-known example of the latter case is that of WarBear[6] and his well-known (at least in the Roman underground cultural scene) party PhagOff, being held at different social centers from 2003 to 2008. Deeply linked to the rave (counter)culture of the 1990s, PhagOff was the first openly queer party in the city (I stress here the use of queer not as an umbrella term for sexual dissidents, but as explained above). As many friends and comrades of mine used to say, "PhagOff was the beginning of everything," referring to the proliferation of queer self-proclaimed parties after the end of PhagOff. In the words of the inventor of the party, PhagOff opened "the possibility to intervene, challenge, and generate crisis inside the heterocentric totem of sex, gender, and sexuality – both in social centers and in the GLT community, highlighting how identity and power reflect each other. […] PhagOff favors self-managed places, dispersing itself in contexts always different through a nomadic lens" (Ziguline 2009, author's translation). While PhagOff maintained a very strong (leftist) political identity, the new parties following it, although still labeled "queer," have progressively lost the connections with social centers and other leftist groups.

QueerLab, the collective I am actually part of, is a queer group based on and engaged in a squat. Created in 2011, since the spring of 2013 the collective has engaged in a squat project, Communia, whose key claims concern fighting real estate speculation, and promoting mutual aid. In order to highlight how we have framed our engagement within the squat, I quote the following part of a document we published in May 2013:

> [S]o we started the new challenge we are currently carrying on: squatting a place. We know that Cassero of Porta Saragozza and the Mario Mieli7 started as squatted places, giving a space and a body to the struggles of the 1970s. Nowadays, in order to raise our struggle *we must restart through squatting to reappropriate spaces of life and sociability* […]. Our squatted place is not aimed at being a closed space just for our friends and ourselves, but *a "common" space for holding self-managed services and*

creating moments for sharing. […] This challenge, called Communia, embodies that alliance among social struggles, very often invoked but rarely practiced, leaving behind the time of slogans […]. Because aimed at mutual aid and self-organization, this path brings the attempt to put into practice […] a new welfare model. […] Let's fire our struggle through desire; let's reopen abandoned spaces.[8] (Author's translation, italics added)

I presented these examples to show how queer activism is embedded in the microscales of the body and of leftist spaces (notably universities and squats); inspired by queer theory, and by feminist and sexual liberationist practices of the 1970s, activists use the body as a primary tool to understand and challenge the hegemonic power relations, and shape social reality. This "politics of body" is developed and practiced everyday in larger leftist spaces of engagement, where "queer politics" assumes its full meaning (as shown above), deploying its intersectional character. In this way, queer activists go beyond an abstract claim on intersectionality, putting into practice what Gibson-Graham (2006) has defined as a "politics of possibilities," referring to the capacity of social movements to develop alternative political imaginaries through combining anticipatory imagination, language politics, and everyday practices. Indeed queer activists not only bring a queer perspective on leftist "universal" claims, but also question how each of us reproduces hegemonic relations in everyday life, starting from body and affects. Nevertheless, (bodily) action is not confined to the places we live and engage in everyday; one of our main goals is to become more visible in public (urban) spaces, this being the object of the next section.

Taking the (Urban) Streets, Conquering Visibility

"Occupying" public space as a political practice of claiming visibility, represents a well-known strategy of feminist politics in diverse contexts (e.g. Borghi and Camuffo 2012), the same practice as featuring LGBT politics through Pride marches. Analyzing Pride marches as performative demonstrations, Lynda Johnston highlights how bodies and places

are co-constitutive: physical features, and gender and sexuality expressed by these bodies assume a specific meaning according to time and place (Johnston 2005, 31). Challenging public hegemonic discourse on "shame" and "decency," female bodies are now uncovered; "inappropriate" "sexual" gestures, notably gay and lesbian kisses and touches, are now manifested openly; the abominable fat body gets naked and reveals itself. According to Johnston (2005, 64), this kind of bodily expression in public space is aimed at provoking in the viewer (in the street or on Internet), what Kristeva (1982) defined as "abjection," i.e. the desire to separate and differentiate oneself, combined with the awareness of its impossibility. The claim on visibility appears to be particularly relevant in a context like the Italian one (Ross 2008), where homo- and lesbo-phobic attitudes are still prevalent in public discourse and institutions (e.g. Rinaldi 2013), and some bodies are associated with "danger" and "risk," not only by the hegemonic discourse but also by the law (Simone 2010). Queer activists have been strongly engaged in bringing "risky" and "dirty" bodies into the public space to challenge the public discourse that denies them legitimacy, and then reappropriate that space, denouncing its false "neutrality." This way, they take back urban spaces, conceived in relation "to the binomial right/wrong, licit/illicit, homo-/heterosexual. These categories become the parameters through which [urban space] is thought and managed. We can then read through space (especially the urban one) all those mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion reflecting the discursive construction of genders" (Borghi 2009, 22, author's translation).

I examine the case of the network Indecorose e Libere, as it highlights the main importance accorded by queer activists to public urban spaces. Indecorose e Libere was created in 2011 by a number of feminist and queer groups (linked in different ways to social centers or leftist parties), as a response to hegemonic discourse and practices, both criminalizing and victimizing (migrant) sex workers, as highlighted by the following:

1) After Berlusconi's sexual scandal with a young Moroccan-born woman (a presumed escort), women linked to the Democratic Party – the main Italian center-left party, created in 2008 through an union

between Democratici di Sinistra, a leftist, (post)communist party, and Margherita, a Christian centrist one – together with many second-wave feminists launched a group called Se Non Ora Quando? (SNOQ, If not now, when?). SNOQ launched a big campaign about the deep gender inequalities shaping Italian society, attacking also the representation of the female body in popular media and discourses (Zanardo 2010; Ottonelli 2011). Nevertheless, they ended by reaffirming that "the dignity of women is the dignity of the Nation" (one of SNOQ's most popular slogans), giving visibility to "good" women of success, mostly family mothers, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals. For instance, on the day of SNOQ's main sit-in in Rome (February 13, 2011), the organizers invited a nun to speak on the stage, while they rejected the proposal to let Pia Covre, representative of the main Italian association of sex workers, speak.

2) Since 2008 the municipality of Rome has approved an administrative order (*ordinanza amministrativa*), prohibiting street sex work and asserting that sex workers represent "a risk for cars' circulation" (Simone 2010). Moreover, the major had encouraged women to dress properly in the streets in order to avoid being fined, because they were mistaken for sex workers by the police (Simone 2010).

Indecorose e Libere responded to this criminalizing discourse by organizing a bloc on February 13, featured by red umbrellas and clothes (it was cold, so few people could stand naked or topless). This bloc remained inside the main sit-in only for the first hour, and then left for a "*manif sauvage*" (a practice introduced by the students' movement in 2010 to block the city in unexpected ways) all around the main streets of the city center and arriving close to the Parliament. Dressed up following the hegemonic representation of sluts and bringing red umbrellas (the icon of sex workers' struggle), we (women, men, straight, gay, lesbians, trans) blocked the streets of the city center to show and give visibility to "shameful" and "dirty" bodies and desires, denouncing the hypocrisy of the "good girl" discourse that was on stage in the SNOQ sit-in.

Thus, taking back urban streets and conquer public visibility represent two fundamental aspects of resistance and counterpowering in a context

shaming our bodies and behaviors under the discourse of "decency" and "risk." In this way we see how urban space represents a main field of contention for queer politics, requiring the formation of intersectional urban coalitions (in the presented case feminists, queers, students, and social centers' activists). This confirms the main role assigned to cities by the literature on the geographies of social movement, as shown above. But can the city itself be the ultimate scope of queer politics and coalitions? Does queer politics have deeper roots? Which is the role of (trans) national networks and ideas? Have queer activists in Italy been able to create national or transnational networks? We are going to explore these issues in the next section.

Thinking and Acting (Trans)nationally, Constructing Queer Networks

As seen above, networks play a crucial role in shaping social movements, facilitating the circulation of ideas, practices, and claims; this process has been made easier, faster, and more accessible through the Internet and mobile technologies, leading some authors to analyze massive uprisings as resulting from social networks' diffusion (e.g. Castells 2012). Without venturing deeper into the large debate on the role of social networks and technologies in social movements (for an overview, see Miconi 2013), it is still important to highlight that networks play a main role in the case of queer activists in Italy also. This role concerns keywords, as well as analysis and ideas (as we can see in the recent diffusion among queer activists in Italy of terms like "homonormativity," "homonationalism," and "pinkwashing," derived from transnational contexts and theorizations), and actions (e.g. pink blocs inside demonstrations and parades). Indeed, queer activists in Italy have on several occasions tried to organize national meetings (and invited international guests as well), aimed at building stable networks.[9] In recent years one of the largest efforts in that direction is Orgogliosamente LGBT, a network created in 2010 around a big dispute concerning the Pride march in Rome. The Roman Pride march has traditionally been organized primarily by the Circolo di Cultura Omosessuale (CCO) Mario Mieli, the main LGBT association based in

Rome, which, despite a mainstream orientation (a focus on gay marriage and a law against homophobia), has kept a leftist profile, "guaranteeing" the presence of queer, leftist, and anticapitalist groups linked to the social centers, in the Pride organizing committee, avoiding a purely commercial drift of the parade. In 2010 something changed: the LGBT associations closer to the institutional left (the Democratic Party) together with (few) LGBT businesses decided to manage the organization of the Pride; the CCO Mario Mieli and leftist, queer groups decided to boycott the Pride, and made a public call, "We won't be there" (*Noi non ci saremo*), supported massively by leftist groups, associations, and individuals all around the country. This led to the creation of the abovementioned Orgogliosamente LGBT, a leftist network aimed at constructing a transnational anticapitalist pink bloc in the EuroPride parade the following year in Rome, for which CCO Mario Mieli was the organizer. Along the way to the Pride, Orgogliosamente LGBT organized national meetings and debates on several issues linked to queer activism, e.g. gender fluidity, alternatives to the family-based welfare regime, and lesbian invisibility. On a transnational level, we tried to spread the news of a pink bloc at the EuroPride, and to explain why, for us, that demonstration was a chance to reappropriate the idea of Europe from below, challenging the mainstream discourse around the "modern Europe of rights" as opposed to a "backward" Italy. Nevertheless the response was weak on both a national and an international level: the main assembly preceding the demonstration was attended by around thirty people, the project of constructing a stable network did not receive support by groups and individuals belonging to different leftist areas. In fact, 2010 and 2011 were years of deep fragmentation among leftist groups (not solved yet). They began to regain a shared perspective only after the 2011 referendum about remaking the water management public. Despite a successful bloc at the EuroPride parade at the national level (very few comrades from abroad were there), when finally many activists from various social centers took back the streets for the Pride march, the project of building a nationwide queer network could not overcome the political fragmentation of the Italian left. This is proven also by the following considerations:

1) After the EuroPride, Orgogliosamente LGBT reshaped its goal from to create a network of leftist groups around issues of practices, discrimination, and desire, towards a queer collective (and thereby losing most of its members, including myself).

2) In the mass demonstration of October 15 the same year, a pink bloc was organized by the autonomous queer area within the overall autonomous bloc of the demonstration.[10] Concerning QueerLab, given the impossibility for us to place ourselves inside a fixed bloc in such a kind of demonstration, each of us decided to stay in the bloc whose political position s/he shared.

I briefly presented this example to show how in Italy (trans)national queer networks are extremely important for the circulation of actions, ideas, and claims, but so far they have not led to the formation of permanent queer blocs and/or networks, engaged in issues beyond sexual politics. This shows how queer activism is embedded within larger leftist projects, to which they bring a queer perspective, thus it is not aimed at creating a "queer unity," essentializing subjectivities through the lens of gender and/or sexual orientation. In this sense, queer activism embodies the ontology of intersectional politics contaminating diverging leftist horizons, rather than a politics shaped by closed and well-defined goals.

Conclusions: Proliferating Queer Eruptions

The reception of "queer" in Italy has been controversial and nonlinear, as it collided with the legacy of the liberationist politics of the 1970s. So the results of queer politics are deeply embedded within larger leftist projects, aimed at subverting norms, hierarchies, and hegemonic relations shaping the whole of society, including the spaces of activism in everyday life. Inspired by the feminist principle of the "starting from the self," queer activists analyze and challenge hegemonic social relations of power, starting from their own experiences, and accord a main importance to the bodily experience. In this sense, queer politics is a "politics of the body" played out firstly in those places militants live and engage everyday, notably universities and social centers, where they question the power relations these same spaces are based on. This engagement

embodies the intersectional character of queer politics around a wide range of social issues, marking a long distance from mainstream LGBT politics, focused only on the claims of "sexual minorities." As highlighted by the literature on the geographies of social movements, cities represent a fundamental scale of analysis, the main spaces of contention towards "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner and Theodore 2002); this is the case also for Italian queer activists, who struggle to conquer visibility as "abject" and "risky" subjects through occupying public urban space. Although fundamental, microscales are not all-encompassing; indeed, queer activists rely also on (trans)national networks, favoring the exchange and circulation of ideas, practices, and claims. However several attempts to create permanent (trans)national networks have failed, thereby revealing the impossibility of creating a common queer agenda on issues beyond sexuality, discrimination, and practices. This is not a pessimistic statement; on the contrary, it opens up immense possibilities for a proliferation of queer practices and perspectives within different leftist groups, without the need to engage in a difficult process of bargaining for a sterile unity of intents among queer activists coming from different backgrounds. In this way, "queer" assumes a wider sense as a verb, rather than as an adjective or noun: *queering practices, perspectives, and spaces* fully express the politics of becoming, inherent to queer thought, as it challenges fixed and taken-for-granted identities. Indeed, all those engaged in this process of *queering* open new, albeit temporally limited, spaces "not limited simply to being play spaces that offer a certain degree of safety for sexual dissidents and gender outlaws. Freed from the sexual and gender constraints of the quotidian world, participants in these queer autonomous spaces often find themselves questioning the social relations that normally restrict the free expression of their sexuality" (Brown 2007, 2696).

Nevertheless more scrutiny within future research is needed to fully understand the consequences of this process of *queering*. What tensions and conflicts are involved in the queer critique within leftist groups or social movements? Which forms of negotiation occur? How do queer militants intervene to shape new political subjectivities within these

larger formations? Which moments are perceived as fundamental *to become queer*? How is the carnivalesque character of queer politics perceived by other militants? How does the practice of decentering hegemonic subjectivities work in practical terms, especially in the case of white, straight, machoist male leaders? These are only some of the issues queer militants face in their everyday "politics of possibilities" as they try to contaminate places, groups and horizons, challenging norms and hegemonic relations.

CESARE DI FELICIANTONIO has been engaged in LGBTIQ politics for several years at the Roman metropolitan level where he has militated in different leftist collectives (Sui Generis, Orgogliosamente LGBT, QueerLab). Cesare is currently enrolled in a PhD program in (Economic) Geography between Sapienza, University of Rome and KU Leuven.

REFERENCES

Acquistapace, Alessia. 2011. "Relazioni senza nome: Reti di affetti, solidarietà, intimità e cura oltre la 'coppia eterosessuale obbligatoria'". Master diss., University of Bologna.

Aringoli, Alessio, Giulio Calella, Danilo Corradi, Cristina Gargiullo, Luca Gori, Antonio Montefusco, and Tatiana Montella. 2006. *Studiare con lentezza: L'università, la precarietà e il ritorno delle rivolte studentesche*. Rome: Edizioni Alegre.

Arruzza, Cinzia, Giulio Calella, Salvatore Cannavò, Daniele D'Ambra, Antonio Montefusco, Giorgio Sestili, Massimiliano Tomba, and Giovanna Vertova. 2008. *L'onda anomala: Alla ricerca dell'autopolitica*. Rome: Edizioni Alegre.

Bertone, Chiara, and Beatrice Gusmano. 2013. "Queerying the Public Administration in Italy: Local Challenges to a National Standstill". In *Queer Presences and Absences*, edited by Yvette Taylor and Michelle Addison, 260–78. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Binnie, Jon. 2004. *The Globalization of Sexuality*. London: Sage Publications.

Borghi, Rachele. 2009. "Introduzione (ad una geografia de genere)". In *Geografie di genere*, edited by Rachele Borghi and Antonella Rondinone, 13–32. Milan: Unicopli.

Borghi, Rachele, and Monica Camuffo. 2012. "Genere/Gender". In *Mediterranean Lexicon – Lessico Mediterraneo*, edited by Paolo Giaccaria and Maria Paradiso, 103–16. Rome: Società Geografica Italiana.

Brenner, Neil, and Nik Theodore. 2002. "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually

Existing Neoliberalism'". *Antipode* 34.3:349–79.

Brown, Gavin. 2007. "Mutinous Eruptions: Autonomous Spaces of Radical Queer Activism". *Environment and Planning A* 39.11:2685–98.

–. 2008. "Urban (Homo)Sexualities: Ordinary Cities and Ordinary Sexualities". *Geography Compass* 2.4:1215–31.

Browne, Kath, and Catherine J. Nash. 2010. "Queer Methods and Methodologies: An Introduction". In *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*, edited by Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash, 1–23. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Carabine, Jean. 2004. "Lesbian and Gay Politics and Participation in New Labour's Britain". *Social Politics* 11.2:312–27.

Castells, Manuel. 2012. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chatterton, Paul. 2010. "Seeking the Urban Common: Furthering the Debate on Spatial Justice". *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Politics, Action* 14.6:625–8.

Cooper, Davina, and Surya Monro. 2003. "Governing from the Margins: Queering the State of Local Government?". *Contemporary Politics* 9.3:229–55.

Della Porta, Donatella, and Mario Diani. 1999. *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

De Rosa, Simona, Cesare Di Feliciantonio, and Kaciano Barbosa Gadelha. 2013. "Complessità e fluidità dei percorsi migratori: Il caso della concentrazione dei *bohemians* a Berlino". In *Oltre la Globalizzazione: Prossimità/Proximity*, edited by Cristina Capineri, et al., 311–20. Florence: Società di Studi Geografici.

De Vivo, Barbara, and Suzanne Dufour. 2012. "Omonazionalismo: Civiltà prodotto tipico italiano?". In *Femministe a parole: Grovigli da districare*, edited by Sabrina Marchetti, Jamila M. Mascat and Vincenza Perilli, 203–9. Rome: Ediesse.

Diani, Mario. 1997. "Social Movements and Social Capital: A Network Perspective on Movement Outcomes". *Mobilizations: An International Quarterly* 2.2:129–47.

Di Feliciantonio, Cesare. 2013. "Grassroots Responses to Economic Crisis and Austerity Urbanism: The (Re)emergence of Squatting in Rome and Barcelona". Paper presented at the workshop *The Real Estate/Financial Complex*, Leuven, December 3–4.

Duggan, Lisa. 2002. "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism". In *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, edited by Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson, 175–94. Durham: Duke University Press.

El-Tayeb, Fatima. 2012. "'Gays Who Cannot Properly Be Gay': Queer Muslims in the Neoliberal European City". *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19.1:79–95.

Fuller, Duncan, and Rob Kitchin, eds. 2004. *Radical Theory, Critical Praxis: Making a Difference Beyond the Academy?* ACME ebook series, Praxis (e)Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. 2006. *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gorman-Murray, Andrew. 2007. "Rethinking Queer Migration Through the Body". *Social & Cultural Geography* 8.1:105–21.

–. 2009. "Intimate Mobilities: Emotional Embodiment and Queer Migration". *Social & Cultural Geography* 10.4:441–60.

Granovetter, Mark S. 1983. "The Strength of Weak Ties". *American Journal of Sociology* 78.6:1360–80.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective". *Feminist Studies* 14.4:575–99.

Hardt, Michael. 1996. "Introduction: Laboratory Italy". In *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, edited by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, 1–9. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Harvey, David. 2012. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London and New York: Verso Books.

Holzhacker, Ronald. 2012. "National and Transnational Strategies of LGBT Civil Society Organizations in Different Political Environments: Modes of Interaction in Western and Eastern Europe for Equality". *Comparative European Politics* 10.1:23–47.

Internazionale surfista. 2008. *L'esercito del surf: La rivolta degli studenti e le sue vere ragioni*. Rome: Derive Approdi.

Johnston, Lynda. 2005. *Queering Tourism: Paradoxical Performances at Gay Pride Parades*. London: Routledge.

Katz, Cindi. 1994. "Playing the Field: Questions of Fieldwork in Geography". *The Professional Geographer* 46.1:67–72.

Kristeva, Julia. 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lefebvre, Henri. 1968. *Le droit à la ville*. Paris: Anthropos.

Marcuse, Peter. 2009. "From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City". *City* 13.2–3:185–97.

Mayer, Margit. 2006. "Manuel Castells' *The City and the Grassroots*". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30.1:202–6.

Miconi, Andrea. 2013. "La primavera araba, i social network, la scienza dei media: Alcune riflessioni teoriche". *Comunicazione politica* 2:185–98.

Mieli, Mario. 1977. *Elementi di critica omosessuale*. Turin: Einaudi.

Miller, Byron A. 2001. "Many Paths Forward: Thoughts on *Geography and Social Movements*". *Political Geography* 20.7:935–40.

Minca, Claudio, and Luiza Bialasiewicz. 2004. *Spazio e politica: Riflessioni di geografia critica*. Padua: Cedam.

Mudu, Pierpaolo. 2004. "Resisting and Challenging Neoliberalism: The Development of Italian Social Centers". *Antipode* 36.5:917–41.

–. 2012. "At the Intersection of Anarchist and Autonomists: *Autogestioni* and *Centri Sociali*". *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 11.3:413–38. http://www.acme-journal.org/vol11/Mudu2012.pdf (accessed 2014-11-12).

Nast, Heidi J. 2002. "Queer Patriarchies, Queer Racisms, International". *Antipode* 34.5:874–909.

Nicholls, Walter. 2007. "The Geographies of Social Movements". *Geography Compass* 1.3:607–22.

–. 2008. "The Urban Question Revisited: The Importance of Cities for Social Movements". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32.4:841–59.

–. 2009. "Place, Networks, Space: Theorising the Geographies of Social Movements". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34.1:78–93.

Ottonelli, Valeria. 2011. *La libertà delle donne: Contro il femminismo moralista*. Genoa: Il Nuovo Melangolo.

Pickvance, Chris. 2003. "From Urban Social Movements to Urban Movements: A Review and Introduction to a Symposium on Urban Movements". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27.1:102–9.

Prearo, Massimo. 2012. "Le radici rimosse della *queer theory*: Una genealogia da ricostruire". *Genesis* 11.1–2:95–114.

Preciado, Beatriz. 2002. *Manifiesto contra-sexual*. Madrid: Editorial Opera Prima.

Pustianaz, Marco. 2010. "Qualche domanda (sul) queer in Italia". *Italian Studies* 65.2:263–77.

Pustianaz, Marco, ed. 2011. *Queer in Italia: Differenze in movimento*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS.

Rahman, Momin. 2010. "Queer as Intersectionality: Theorizing Gay Muslim Identities". *Sociology* 44.5:944–61.

Rinaldi, Cirus, ed. 2013. *La violenza normalizzata: Omofobie e transfobie negli scenari contemporanei*. Turin: Edizioni Kaplan.

Rose, Gillian. 1997. "Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics". *Progress in Human Geography* 21.3:305–20.

Ross, Charlotte. 2008. "Visions of Visibility: LGBT Communities in Turin". *Modern Italy* 13.3:241–60.

–. 2009. "Collective Association in the LGBT movement". In *Resisting the Tide: Cultures of Opposition Under Berlusconi (2001–2006)*, edited by Daniele Albertazzi, et al., 204–16. New York: Continuum.

Routledge, Paul. 2003. "Convergence Space: Process Geographies of Grassroots Globalization Networks". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28.3:333–49.

Santos, Ana Cristina. 2012. *Social Movements and Sexual Citizenship in Southern Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scarmoncin, Laura. 2012. "Gli studi lgbtiq in Italia: Uno sguardo multidisciplinare". *Contemporanea* 15.4:691–724.

Simone, Anna. 2010. *I corpi del reato: Sessualità e sicurezza nella società del rischio*. Milan: Mimes Edizioni.

Smaschieramenti. 2014. "Chi siamo". http://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/chi-siamo/ (accessed 2014-09-11).

Sultana, Farhana. 2007. "Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research". *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 6.3:374–85. http://www.acme-journal.org/vol6/FS.pdf (accessed 2014-11-12).

Tarrow, Sidney. 1998. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, Charles. 2004. *Social Movements, 1768–2004*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Trappolin, Luca. 2004. *Identità in azione: Mobilitazione omosessuale e sfera pubblica*. Rome: Carocci.

–. 2009. "Lotte per il riconoscimento e ruolo dei mass-media: I significati del 'Gay Pride'". *Partecipazione e conflitto* 1.1:123–45.

Uitermark, Justus, Walter Nicholls, and Maarten Loopmans. 2012. "Cities and Social Movements: Theorizing Beyond the Right to the City". *Environment and Planning A* 44.11:2546–54.

Wilkinson, Eleanor. 2009. "The Emotions Least Relevant to Politics? Queering Autonomous Activism". *Emotion, Space and Society* 2.1:36–43.

Zanardo, Lorella. 2010. *Il corpo delle donne*. Milan: Feltrinelli.

Ziguline. 2009. "Sign O' The Times", February 12. http://www.ziguline.com/sign-othe-times/ (accessed 2014-09-11).

NOTES

1. In the last years, the defense of the *commons* has become one of the main key-issues within the Italian left. For a theoretical discussion about the commons as a political project, see among others Hardt and Negri (2009) and Chatterton (2010).

2. Mieli's book was also translated to English, *Homosexuality and Liberation: Elements of a Gay Critique*, Gay Men's Press 1980.

3. Here Porpora is playing with the gender binarism of Italian language, firstly declining the word in the masculine form (*frocio*), then in the feminine one (*frocia*).

4. Granovetter (1973) distinguishes between *strong ties* – such as the ones linking households, friends or long-time colleagues – and *weak ties*, meant as links derived from everyday meetings and contact.

5. To avoid relying solely on my own memory, I interrogated three comrades I know personally that were part of Queering Sapienza.

6. WarBear is an Italian artist currently living in Berlin but engaged in the Roman

underground, countercultural scene for many years from the early 1990s.

7. Cassero di Porta Saragozza in Bologna and Mario Mieli in Rome were squatted in the 1980s by LGT militants to get a place for their groups. (I here use LGT instead of LGBT because when looking at the history of LGBT politics, the B component is usually acknowledged to have appeared at the end of the 1980s, while during the first years only lesbians, gays and trans were engaged.)

8. The document is available online on the Facebook page of QueerLab.

9. One of the main attempts to establish a national network was Facciamo Breccia (Let's Make Inroads) – recalling the Breccia di Porta Pia that occurred in 1870 and lead to the conquering of the city of Rome by the Italian kingdom – created between 2005 and 2006 by a number of queer and feminist groups as a response to the increasing meddling and attacks by Vatican institutions in Italian politics. Facciamo Breccia was also part of Orgogliosamente LGBT.

10. At the demonstration of October 15, 2011, the pink bloc was organized by some activists linked to the San Precario (autonomous) political area.

SAMMANFATTNING

I Italien har anammandet av begreppet "queer" inte varit helt oproblematiskt, då det har skapat spänningar till det italienska ordet *frocia* som är ett arv från 1970-talets rörelser för sexuell frigörelse. Efter att ha beskrivit dessa spänningar, studerar artikeln queeraktivismens framväxt i Italien genom en geografisk lins och fokuserar särskilt på den mångfald nivåer som militanta queera personer grundar sina strategier och aktioner, och sitt konstruerande av relationer på. Detta görs med hjälp av ett analytiskt perspektiv som bygger på "sociala rörelsers geografier". Artikeln tar avstamp i författarens egna, direkta engagemang och den är således präglad av ett militant synsätt. I enlighet med den feministiska principen "utgå från dig själv", spelar (mikro)nivåerna kroppen och de platser där aktivister lever och verkar dagligen, framförallt universitet och sociala center, en framträdande roll i analysen av queeraktivismens spatialitet. Artikeln undervärderar dock inte andra nivåers betydelser och lyfter fram städer och (trans)nationella nätverk, samt betonar att queeraktivismens resultat är delar av ett större vänsterprojekt för social och ekonomisk förändring.

Keywords: queer activism, Italy, geographies of social movements, coalitions, cities