

The No Ombrina/No Triv protests in Abruzzo: organisational models and scales of action.

Introduction

On 23rd May 2015 the small town of Lanciano, a centre with less than 40.000 inhabitants on the hills at the core of the region Abruzzo, hosted one of the largest environmental demonstrations in the recent Italian history. About 60.000 citizens protested against the construction of the off shore oil drilling project *Ombrina Mare*, receiving a deep support from institutions, religious actors, and professional associations. In addition, a very wide galaxy of national networks and of local committees opposing to unwanted infrastructures in other parts of Italy participated to the event, manifesting in this way the intention to coalesce and shift their action to the national level, at the same time maintaining a focus on local participation. About three months later, the national coalition *Coordinamento No Triv* launched a referendum campaign on oil drilling, which brought the Italian citizens to vote on 11th April 2016. Moreover, numerous other national organisations, including actors that sustained the demonstration of Lanciano, are currently collecting signatures to call for a second referendum campaign, which focuses among other things on oil drilling and on the opposition to locally unwanted facilities.

This article discusses in detail the evolution of the complex no oil mobilisation in Abruzzo, observing the mechanisms that allowed the inclusion of a long lasting regional protest in a series of initiatives of national relevance. In the first section, I describe the emergence of the no oil milieu in the region. Even though the environmental activism against oil infrastructures in Italy is on the rise, the academic literature does not offer a strong attention to this phenomenon, and the media tend to discuss the *No Triv* experiences recurring to buzzwords, without focusing on the specific local characteristics of the mobilisations. Therefore, I dedicate a consistent part of the paper to present one of the key geographical contexts where this form of activism emerged, describing the actors involved in the protest, the relationships between the oil issue and the broader environmental movement, and the evolution of the regional no oil network in its ten years long history.

Together with this case-centred purpose, the paper has two additional goals, which are more general. The second section observes the development of the no oil milieu in Abruzzo under the lens of the academic discussion on the organisational changes that most environmental movements are experiencing in the western countries (e.g. Diani & Donati 1999; della Porta & Rucht 2002; Rootes 2003). The organisational evolution of the local branch of the WWF, the tendencies to centralise and professionalise the main environmental organisations, and the division of work between different kinds of actors shed light on several aspects of the local evolution of the no oil network, and of the creation of national initiatives.

The third section aims at contributing to the discussion on the connexion between local and national environmental protests. National aggregation of struggles seems an exception in the environmental initiatives (Rootes 2013; Diani & Donati 1999), in particular when the activists oppose to a local infrastructure, instead than to a national policy (Rootes 2013). Relying on the classic social movement concept of scale shift (McAdams *et al.* 2001), I explore how the no oil issue succeeded in shifting in scale, starting from some elements of novelty that I observed both at the local and at the nation level of actions.

1 Roots, emergence and evolution of the no oil protests in Abruzzo

1.1 Historical context: the activists' perceived connections with previous mobilisations

The protests against oil drilling in Abruzzo ground their roots in a complex local environmental movement and in preceding campaigns in the region, during which a solid network of organisations started to form and to elaborate its recurrent strategies of action. Even though it is impossible to describe in this paper the interactions between the no oil experience and the broader (in space, time, and issues) regional environmental movement, in the interviews and in the documents related with the *no Ombrina* struggle the activists mentioned two moments of local resistance, which strongly influenced the current mobilisations. The no oil activists inherited connections and strategies from these previous struggles, and referred to them to describe the ongoing protests as a last step in a continuous history of local resistance (see e.g. Della Porta & Piazza 2008: 83-115 for a similar mechanism).

A first, crucial point of reference for the *no Ombrina* activists is the campaign against the *Sangro Chimica* project. From 1971 to 1976, numerous local actors opposed to the proposal of installing an oil refinery in the municipality of Fossacesia and to a general conversion of the area of the Val di Sangro to the petroleum industry (IW5, IW2). Due to the positive outcome of this campaign, the area experimented a different pattern of industrialisation, which privileged the development of the automotive industry, together with the preservation of the touristic and the agricultural vocation of the area.

The project of the company “Sangro-Chimica S.p.A.”¹ and of its local and national political supporters (mostly linked with the Christian Democracy party) encountered strong opposition from a composite and very large coalition. The local Communist Party, allied with sectors of other leftist and liberal parties, played a crucial role in maintaining the mobilisation through time and on different scales (Ciancio 2004: 127), succeeding in including in the struggle a positive attitude toward forms of industrialisation not related with the petrochemical sector. In addition, the coalition included a very strong agricultural component (organised through the cooperatives and the leftist peasants' organisation *Alleanza dei Contadini*), one of the first

¹ (For a detailed reconstruction of the events, see Graziani 2009; Ciancio 2004; Felice 2009: 86-129; Felice 2010: 151-152; AA.VV 1972; Rosati 2003; Fiorentino 2009; Sabella 2004; Casmirro 2010)

Italian environmental organisations (*Italia Nostra*), tourism professional associations, municipalities, and an influent network of local intellectuals. Furthermore, even if with some resistance at the national level, the three main Italian trade unions slowly adhered to the struggle (Graziani 2009: 97, 108).

This campaign, which preceded the events described in this paper of about 40 years, is inspiring in different ways the current struggles. The contemporaneous no oil activists are similarly conceding a primary role to local institutions and municipalities, and they are collaborating with the professional associations that represent the economic sectors negatively influenced by the project. In particular, the involvement of the agricultural and touristic sectors permitted in both cases to oppose a local economic perspective on growth to the one that the oil companies elaborated. Finally, one of the leader of the *Sangro Chimica* struggle, Enrico Graziani² created a direct link between the mobilisations, becoming advisor of the organisation *Nuovo Senso Civico*, participating in numerous no oil events, and explicitly connecting the two protests in his book on the history of the *Sangro-Chimica* (Ibid.).

A second campaign that the activists have often cited (IW2, IW4, IW5, IW6, IW8) successfully opposed to the construction of a 7 km tunnel under the Gran Sasso, the highest mountain in the region and in the Appennini range³. Three main types of actors sustained this campaign, which peaked in 2002 (see Hoedeman & Kishimoto 2010: 223, Abruzzo Social Forum 2002). First, ten amongst the main Italian environmentalist organisations (with a prominent role of the WWF, which is particularly active and radical in Abruzzo) coordinated their action forming a common committee, the *Comitato per la tutela delle Acque del Gran Sasso*⁴. Second, a large number of local administrations of different levels, including three provinces and a national park, actively participated in the actions. Third, together with almost all the political parties of the centre-left and with the local CGIL, the Abruzzo Social Forum decided to adhere to the protest, in a moment in which the process of the Social Forums in Italy was significantly shifting its attention to local issues, and in particular to the theme of water.

In this campaign, too, it is possible to observe two important elements that can help to understand the successive development of the no oil mobilisations in the region. First, the activists adopted a very high level of collaboration with local politicians, municipalities and provinces:

[...] We are aware that it is impossible to organise these demonstrations alone, you do it weaving a network of relationships of institutional nature, in connection with the institutions. In the demonstrations, we always had a connection with the local administrations. Well, during the Gran Sasso tunnel, there was a parade of the municipal banners, then.. I don' know, the concert of Jovanotti at Isola del Gran Sasso,

² Former mayor of Paglieta and former communist senator

³ The Gran Sasso Mountain stands on the way between Rome and the Adriatic Coast. Two tunnels, part of the Italian highway 24, currently connect these two areas of the country. One of these tunnels also communicates with the National Laboratories of Nuclear Physics, an underground scientific infrastructure hosted in the mountain. The project blocked by the mobilisation intended to build two additional workrooms to the laboratories, and an independent, 7 km long third tunnel connecting the scientific area with the outside, in the direction of L'Aquila.

⁴ Committee for the protection of the Gran Sasso waters

with more than 10.000 people. The Province payed for it, you know. [...] There is strong relationship with the institutions, but always in a form that is... I do not arrive at saying conflictual... in short, through continuous actions we lead them to a participation, because local administrations tend to follow popular participation. (IW2)

Secondly, the campaign introduced in the local environmental movement a new and different component, linked with the Social Forum experience and later with the Forum of Water Movements, which provided to the protest new resources of participation and of media visibility. Starting from this campaign, the traditional environmental organisations – and in particular the WWF – experimented interesting and advanced forms of division of labour (see Diani & Donati, 1999:29) with this new component, but also with local committees and single experts, giving life to complex mechanisms of collaboration and competition. The development of these relationships is currently influencing in a strong way the no oil experiences in Abruzzo, and in particular the *no Ombrina* mobilisation.

1.2 First no oil mobilisations in Abruzzo (2006-2012)

The organised opposition to the project *Ombrina Mare* – culminated with a large demonstration in Lanciano (23rd May 2015) and indirectly linked with the Italian referendum on oil drilling of April 2016 – is the last of a series of mobilisations against oil infrastructures in Abruzzo. These protests started in 2007, and their development influenced in numerous ways the loose networks of committees that are contrasting oil-related facilities in other parts of Italy.

Before dedicating their entire attention to Ombrina, the activists in Abruzzo mainly opposed to two other oil infrastructures, the so-called *Centro Oli* of Ortona-Tollo, and the drilling of the lake Bomba (both in the province of Chieti). Through these campaigns, local committees and environmental organisations started to develop a detailed discourse on oil, centred on the idea that the activists were contrasting a political attempt to degrade Abruzzo, transforming the “Greenest Region of Europe⁵” in a polluted oil district (IW8; Lanci 2009:120; Natura Verde & Impronte 2009). In this section, I describe these first mobilisations, together with two processes that characterised the first years of struggle against oil facilities in the region: the rise of the local network *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo*, and the first steps of the national *Coordinamento No Triv*.

Centro Oli

The campaign that paved the way to the protests on oil related projects in the region regards the so-called *Centro Oli*⁶ of Ortona. The expression indicates a centre of oil processing, with a unit of hydrodesulphurization, which the Italian multinational company ENI was planning to build in an agricultural area close to the Adriatic coast, between Ortona, Tollo, and Miglianico (see Fig.1). While the company obtained its first ministerial authorisation to build in April

⁵ *Regione verde d'Europa* is a recurrent slogan, adopted to indicate the very high percentage of land in Abruzzo that is included in protected reserves (about a third of the total regional area).

⁶ Oil centre, a label that the activists consider euphemistic

2002, the opposition of local actors started five years later, in spring 2007, when the project became visible in the official acts of the municipality of Ortona (Graziani 2009: 110-111; Primadano 2007). With a campaign sustained for about 3 years, independent local committees and associations (mainly *Natura Verde* and from 2008 *Nuovo Senso Civico*), together with larger organisations grouped in the network *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo*, successfully opposed to the project, receiving a growing support from municipalities, provinces, and even from the Abruzzo regional council. In these years, the militants convinced part of the local trade unions and an incredibly wide portion of the political parties (from Rifondazione Comunista to the extreme right of Forza Nuova) to adhere to the committees' position, finally obliging ENI to abandon the project in 2010 (but see Di Salvatore 2012).

One of the main elements that characterised the campaign against the *Centro Oli* was the variegated range of social actors that adhered or supported the protest. In particular, winemakers and wine cooperatives actively sustained the struggle, and the danger that the oil industry was representing for wine production was a key theme in the entire campaign. Furthermore, the activists solicited the participation of local administrations, and they succeeded in obtaining the crucial official involvement of the Catholic Church:

For the first time ever the Bishops' Conference Abruzzo Molise intervened - and this is the first time that a Bishops' Conference publicly intervenes - against that project. [...] it seems that... When the Church thundered, everything stopped. (IW8)

Another specificity of the campaign against the *Centro Oli* is the presence of a prominent activist, who highly influenced the development of the events. While, among others, the documentarist Antonello Tiracchia and the constitutionalist Enzo di Salvatore reached interesting levels of diffusion with their videos and books on oil during the struggle, every interview and document assigns to Maria Rita D'Orsogna a central role in activating and sustaining the protest. Maria Rita D'Orsogna is an Italo-American professor of mathematics at the California State University – Northridge, and her family lives between Abruzzo and the United States. She became active against the *Centro Oli* in October 2007, after having received a phone call from a friend (Picchetti n.d.). Alternating physical presence in Abruzzo and computer mediated activism while in the US, she strongly engaged on the *Centro Oli* campaign, quickly extending her activism investigating the impact of oil related infrastructures in other geographical contexts.



Figure 1 Map of the main no oil conflicts and actors in Abruzzo

More in detail, Maria Rita D’Orsogna contributed to the success of the campaign in different ways. In particular, she created with her single-themed blog *No all’Italia petrolizzata*⁷ (and from 2012 with articles published on the online version of the newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*) a complex “counter discourse” on oil, becoming the main cultural point of reference for the Italian no oil drilling disperse community. Furthermore, D’Orsogna imported from the Californian context part of the US frames adopted in oil-related protests (on fracking, airguns, marine platforms), and from the library of her university information on the chemical products involved in the transformation of oil. Finally, she introduced in the local struggle interesting forms of action (e.g. massive sending of hundreds of technical observations to the national institutions evaluating the projects), and played a crucial role in convincing the local church and bishops to intervene.

⁷ <http://dorsogna.blogspot.com>

Oil Drilling at Bomba

The second project that the activists of the region contested regarded the town of Bomba and the homonymous lake (see fig.1), where the U.S. based corporation Forest Oil obtained a permission of research, planning to drill five gas wells and to install a gas treatment facility (Brown 2008; D’Orsogna 2015; Forest Oil 2010). The project started its procedure of evaluation and approval in 2009, but it encountered a fierce resistance from the small local committee *Comitato Gestione Partecipata del Territorio*, and was finally rejected by the Italian Council of State the 18th May 2015 (D’Orsogna 2015). Even though the *Comitato Gestione Partecipata del Territorio* and the eight hundred inhabitants of Bomba constituted the front line of the protest, most of the actors involved in the struggle on the *Centro Oli* (e.g. D’Orsogna, *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo*, WWF, *Nuovo Senso Civico*) sustained the committee from the behind, as explained in the following quote.

There was an extraordinary committee, the *Comitato Gestione Partecipata* of Bomba, and their first action was to call us [the WWF and *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo*], and me. I went there, with [an activist] of *Legambiente*, because the [local committee] never opposed to oil corporations, and even less in environmental impact assessments. We said, taking the experience of the *Centro Oli* in mind, that knowledge should come first; in order to oppose to a big oil facility like that, or like Ombrina, you need geologists, chemists, physicists, biologists [...]. We did our part, too, we made our [technical] observations, but with a sort of lightness, knowing that they were able to act on their own. [...] . So, then, they had been heroes, they completely deserved that we finally won. (IW8)

Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo

The oil issue in the region tended to overlap for a consistent part of the actors with other contemporaneous environmental struggles. In particular, numerous organisations involved in the previous oil campaigns were part of the network *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo* (EAA), which was active with different internal compositions from 2008⁸ to 2014⁹ (IW8, *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo* 2008). This network, now dissolved, created a regional, permanent infrastructure of collaboration and resource sharing among about sixty organisations, coming from very different milieus. Just to cite some of them, the Abruzzo Social Forum and the connected *Forum Abruzzese dei Movimenti per l’Acqua*, environmental organisations like the WWF, *Legambiente*, *Italia Nostra* and *Marelibero*, but also the local ARCI, the Beppe Grillo Meetup of Chieti, the AGESCI scouts of Pescara, the *Ecoistituto* Alex Langer, together with numerous committees and independent activists participated to the experience. EAA intervened in numerous environmental controversies, with a particular attention to water, toxic wastes (mainly regarding the enormous polluted area of Bussi sul Tirino), artificialisation of landscapes, and – of course – the mentioned oil drilling infrastructures.

Within this network, the activists perceived the foreseen transformation of the region in an oil district as part of a broader “environmental and democratic threat¹⁰”, that the “[...] little

⁸ See *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo* (2008) for its initial adherents

⁹ See *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo* (2014) for the composition of *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo* in 2014

¹⁰ Interestingly, the expression evidences that the network was starting to link the environmental issues with a broader political discourse, centred on democracy and on the self-determination of local communities.

fairy tale of an Abruzzo greenest region of Europe and safe haven” could not cover anymore (Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo 2008: 3). In most cases, *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo* backed the activities of small local committees, providing them with technical and legal support, and with a greater basin of activists. Furthermore, the network refused to indicate visible spokespeople, an anti-oligarchic measure that reduced the visibility of the larger and most famous environmental organisations.

Coordinamento No Triv

After having obtained their first achievements, some of the activists of the no oil networks in Abruzzo participated to attempts to connect their protests with those of other Italian regions and of other Mediterranean or Adriatic countries. For what concerns the cultural production, for instance, Maria Rita D’Orsogna increasingly reported on her blog episodes of oil related struggles in Italy, and the regional branch of the WWF produced an extensive national dossier on offshore oil drillings (WWF 2013). For what concerns the creation of coalitions and stable national structures, a first attempt arrived in 2011, when institutions and organisations of four regions –Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia, and Basilicata – gave life to a joint demonstration at Termoli (Molise, 7th May). About one month later, they met to constitute a “National network of associations for the defence and the valorisation of the Adriatic and Ionian seas”. The charismatic Italian singer Lucio Dalla played a significant role in both events.

However, the most visible and persistent structure of national coordination for the oil-related struggles is the *Coordinamento No Triv*¹¹, founded the 14th and 15th June 2012 in a meeting held in the former ENI village of Pisticci Scalo, Basilicata (IW7, No Triv 2012). The initiative initially grouped about sixty organisations, linked with various territories. In particular, the increasing contacts between the experiences in Abruzzo and in Basilicata played a key role in the experience. Since these first steps, the *Coordinamento No Triv* identified a national formal objective of action, planning to oppose to the liberalisation and deregulation of the oil framework included in the article 16 of the so-called decree *Crescitalia*¹². Some prominent activists of the Abruzzo became highly engaged in the process, and the constitutionalist Enzo di Salvatore – author of two books and of a regional bill on oil drilling – assumed the role of spokesperson for the network.

Due to evident internal tensions at the moment of gathering the data (summer 2015), some of the activists that I interviewed openly criticised certain characteristics of the *No Triv* experience, even though they contemporaneously recognized its positive aspects and the individual qualities of its activists. In particular, the *No Ombrina* core militants depicted the *Coordinamento* as a fragile infrastructure, incapable of increasing the level of political participation on the regional and national scales, yet opposing to the idea of sharing the role of national coordination with other actors. Furthermore, some interviewees described the *No Triv* experience focusing on the small core of its spokespeople: they perceived the

¹¹ The term “No Triv” very probably emerged in 2007, in Sicily, where it identified the main no oil committee active in the area of the Val di Noto. It currently tends to identify both initiatives of the *Coordinamento No Triv* and of other local committees.

¹² D.L. 1/2012, as converted by the Law 27/2012

Coordinamento No Triv as a small organisation, instead than as a national network of committees.

[...T]his *Coordinamento No Triv* is [made by] few actors, more or less everywhere in Italy, but single cases, they do not have a network. [...] We do not see a real organisation except for... I repeat, single people that are surely talented and competent, but unfortunately isolated. [...] They are useful, it is useful what [the spokesperson] does, but then they are unable to organise popular movements, or to have a network that is somehow useful for the community out there. (IW5)

Even though it is surely wrong to depict the *Coordinamento* as an organisation detached from the national network that gave life to it, in 2015 this actor was lacking a clear internal structure (IW7) and a payed central office (IW8). Centred on actions at the national level, but relying on resources of participation of completely independent local committees and networks, the *Coordinamento* was experimenting in the first half of 2015 low levels of visibility and participation in Abruzzo, in particular if compared with other regional no oil actors. Nevertheless, it is surprising to observe how its role changed in a radical way during the second half of the year, thanks to some ambitious and well-designed political choices of its leaders. Even if poor in resources, the *Coordinamento* proved to be able to revitalise its connections and to act in an effective way at the national level, giving life to a national referendum against oil drilling: a relevant political event, even though it did not reach the minimum number of voters that is necessary to declare the vote as valid.

The *Coordinamento No Triv* represents, in my opinion, a quite unconventional organisation, able to maintain through time a feeble but persistent mandate of action on the national and institutional scales from a disperse community of local mobilisations, which are not principally interested in shifting their actions to a higher geographical level.

1.3 Opposition to Ombrina Mare (2008-2015)

While the core of the no oil discourse in Abruzzo emerged during the campaign against the *Centro Oli* of Ortona, the mobilisation that attracted the higher number of protests and media attention regarded the planned exploitation of the off shore oil field *Ombrina Mare*. Euphemistically named after a fish, *Ombrina* is an oil deposit located at about 7 kilometres of distance from the coastline (Scandol 2007; see fig. 1), close to the village of San Vito Chietino and to the Trabocchi Coast, a beautiful littoral area that the environmental organisations were planning to include in a national park (IW4; IW6; IW8).

On 22nd March 2008, the company Medoilgas Italia obtained the authorisation to install a first exploratory jackup rig¹³ in the area, confirming in May the presence of oil. In December 2008, Medoilgas submitted a request of concession to the Italian Ministry of Economic Development (Subsea IQ 2013), asking the authorisation to install in the area five wells connected with a

¹³ Ministero dei Trasporti – Capitaneria di Porto di Ortona, Ordinanza N°13/2008, available on the personal web storage of Maria Rita D'Orsogna <www.csun.edu/~dorsogna/byron/Galloway.doc>.

FPSO¹⁴, which is a 350-meter long vessel able to stock and treat in place about 50 thousand tons of oil (WWF 2010). Successively, the project entered in a long process of environmental evaluation¹⁵ that the activists and the local institutions contrasted at every step. The opposition to *Ombrina*, therefore, tended to follow the same timeline of the environmental evaluation, with a first wave between 2008 and 2010 and two remarkable peaks in 2013 and 2015.

The opposition to *Ombrina Mare* started almost immediately: the temporary rig attracted the attention of the activists already opposing to the *Centro Oli*, and in particular of the network Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo, of the local WWF, and of the blog of Maria Rita D’Orsogna. In particular, they insistently linked the struggle against *Ombrina* with the one against the *Centro Oli*, presenting the FPSO floating unit as a new *Centro Oli* moved off shore. This initial wave of opposition produced three relevant demonstrations in less than four months, with a strong institutional presence in at least two cases. On the 18th April 2010, some thousands of people reached San Vito Chietino in an event organised by *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo*. On the 30th May, *Nuovo Senso Civico* organised a demonstration with the official support of the municipality of Lanciano and of the province of Chieti. On the 25th July, sixty-six municipalities co-organised a demonstration at Fossacesia, together with the province of Chieti, five committees and the local yacht club. Following these demonstrations and the almost contemporaneous Deepwater Horizons oil spilling in the US, *Ombrina Mare* seemed to receive a definitive stop in 2010, when the Italian government prohibited the extraction of oil within 12 nautical miles of the coast (Legislative Decree 128/2010).

However, in 2012 the successive government leaded by Mario Monti revoked this limit for the processes of concessions already in place, thanks to a norm in the so-called *Decreto Sviluppo*¹⁶. The protests against *Ombrina Mare*, therefore, restarted in 2012, reaching a peak of popular participation in spring 2013. In particular, a sequence of news contributed to this rise. On 21st February, the local press (e.g. Primadanoi 2013) and D’Orsogna’s blog (2013) reported a first ministerial approval for *Ombrina*, which the activists interpreted as definitive. The regional government, formally opposed to the project, did not send its official comments to the ministerial commission evaluating *Ombrina*: this ambiguous behaviour significantly eroded the militants’ confidence in the institutional channels of intermediation, stimulating a shift toward direct forms of protest (IW6).

In the following two months, the entire regional society seemed to be mobilised against *Ombrina*. Atypical actors, who had already supported the previous struggles, in this case contributed to take the initiative. For instance, a representative of the local dioceses launched an appeal on the national media to “Stop Ombrina and oil drilling in the Adriatic, and defend the Creation” (Il Messaggero 2013), and the Regional Council unanimously approved a resolution against the project. More significantly, the local confederation of enterprises (*Confcommercio Chieti*) was one of the first actors to call for a demonstration, which it contributed to organise together with a large coordination committee of the “associations and

¹⁴ Floating Production Storage and Offloading unit

¹⁵ See e.g. Legambiente 2013 for a summary.

¹⁶ Legislative Decree 134/2012

movements struggling against the drifting of Abruzzo towards oil". The demonstration, held in Pescara the 13th April 2013, attracted tens of thousands of people (40000 according to the organisers), obtaining the support of the region, of 178 organisations, 3 dioceses, 3 national parks and 47 local municipalities (see fig. 2 for the institutional support). Notwithstanding this heterogeneous participation, the demonstration officially maintained a traditional environmental focus, linking in their slogan *No Ombrina, Si Parco* the no oil issue with the request to transform the coastal area in a national park.

The activists dedicated the successive two years to contrast *Ombrina Mare* in the parliament and in tribunals, increasing their pressure on the government and collecting signatures for the introduction of the National Park of the Teatina Coast. Due to this continued participation, the Minister of the Environment of the newly elected Letta cabinet, Andrea Orlando, forced Medoilgas to submit an Integrated Environmental Authorization (IEA): Medoilgas appealed

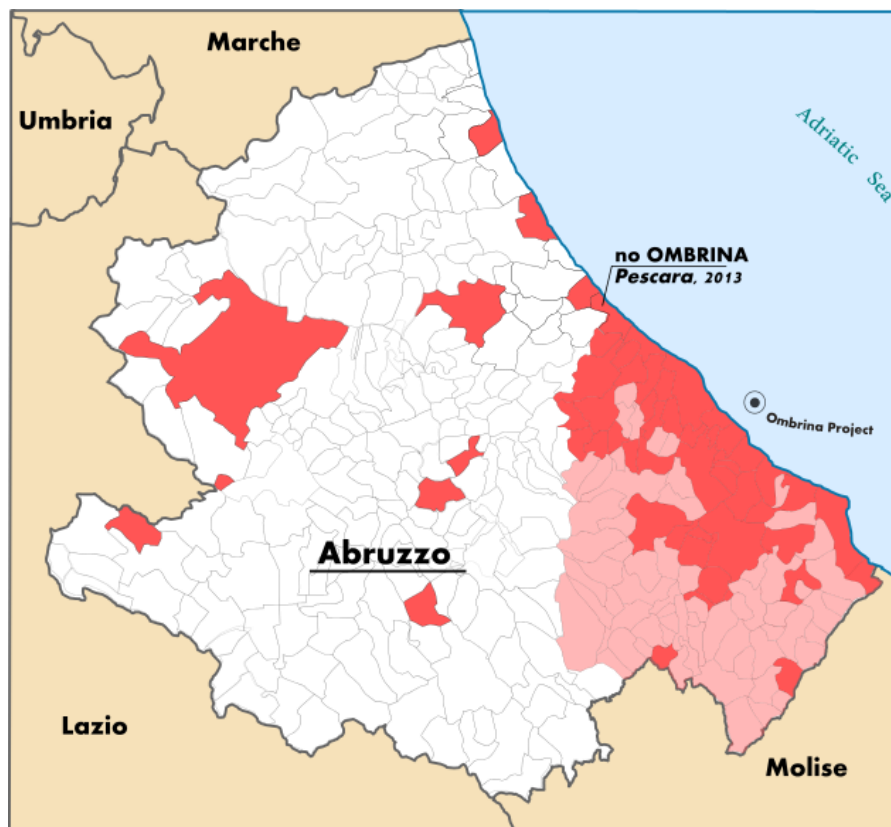


Figure 2 Municipalities and province (semi-transparent) that adhered to the 2013 demonstration. The area of Chieti and its province is still predominant

against the resolution, but on 16th April 2014 the Regional Administrative Court of Lazio confirmed the decision¹⁷, considerably slowing down the process of approval of *Ombrina Mare*.

The project received a final acceleration in September 2014, following an additional change of government. In the so-called decree *Sblocca Italia*¹⁸, the cabinet led by Matteo Renzi

¹⁷ TAR Lazio, 16 April 2014, N. 04123

¹⁸ Articles 35, 36 and 38, chapter IX of the Legislative Decree 133/2014, converted in Law 164/2014.

identified the activities of survey, search, and extraction of the hydrocarbons, and the underground storage of gas as “urgent and non-delayable works”, drastically limiting in this way the possibilities for the regions and for the local communities to oppose to these projects (for details, see e.g. Dommarco 2014). Concentrating the decisional power in Rome, and reducing the role of the regions, this new legal framework encouraged the rise of the national campaign *Blocca lo Sblocca Italia*¹⁹, an attempt to connect multiple local struggles (on oil, wastes, water, highways and other infrastructures) and to give to the local communities the opportunity to shift their action to the national scale.

In this framework, numerous actors opposing to *Ombrina*, with a prominent role of the *Coordinamento No Triv* and of the *Forum Abruzzese dei Movimenti per l’Acqua*, participated to a two-days-long picket in front of the Chamber of Deputies the 15th and 16th October 2014, together with about 180 other committees and organisations. The event proved to be relevant for at least three reasons. First, it contributed to connect numerous territorial struggles among them and with pre-existent national network, such as the No Triv, the Italian Forum of Water Movements, and the *Coordinamento Siti Contaminati*. Second, the actors arriving from Abruzzo constituted a first nucleus, which reactivated the protests against *Ombrina*. Third, the traditional environmental organisations (WWF, Greenpeace, and Legambiente) decided to adopt a completely different form of action, giving life to a press conference and to a meeting with the deputies on the 15th October, with the spokesperson of the *Coordinamento No Triv* participating to both events (IW7, IW6, IW8, IW2). This physical division evidenced a tension between grassroots committees and traditional environmental organisations, which influenced the steps that gave life to the crucial demonstration of the 23rd May against *Ombrina*.

On 29th March 2015, about 500 citizens participated to an assembly hosted by the Social Centre *Zona 22*, and organised by a core that included *Forum Abruzzese Acqua*, *Coordinamento No Triv*, *Zona 22* and *Nuovo Senso Civico* (actors that participated to the picket in Rome):

The day of the first assembly, the one of the 500, [...] at Zona 22, occupied social centre, the whole world entered, all sort of people. From the mayors of the Democratic Party to the Confcommercio and the small business, which is a population that we never talked with before. (IW4)

The assembly launched the demonstration of the 23rd May, elaborating a detailed document that described in eight points the forms of actions that the different participants should adopt (Globalproject 2015). The traditional environmental organisations, not included in the first coordination committee and therefore playing a minor role in the assemblies, decided to sign this document only at the very last moment, or adhered to the demonstration without endorsing it (IW7, IW6).

Following a long debate, the activists decided to organise the demonstration in the relatively small provincial town of Lanciano instead than in the bigger and more populated Pescara, in

¹⁹ Literally, “Block the Unblock Italy”.

order to remain closer to the territory affected by *Ombrina*. In this way, they aimed at adhering to a tradition of decentralised struggles in Italy:

Why Lanciano? Because, we said, from the Val di Susa to Niscemi, passing through all the Italian provinces. [...] not in Torino but in Val di Susa, not in Palermo but in Niscemi, not [Cosenza] but Corigliano Calabro. (IW4)

The demonstration, which created its own hymn²⁰, attracted 60000 activists in a town of about half that size, covered with the newly designed *No Ombrina* flags. The event, once more characterised by a strong participation of the local municipalities (See fig. 3), proved to be at the same time an enormous success and a moment of “traumatic evolution”, if not rupture, in the local no oil network. In particular, the traditional environmental organisations marched at the end of the parade (IW2; IW8). Furthermore, even in this case the activists refused to concede spaces to recognisable spokespeople: as a result, some of the organisers prevented Maria Rita D’Orsogna from speaking from the stage.

The day following demonstration, the organisations that gave life to the event hosted a national assembly of the campaign *Blocca lo Sblocca Italia* in Pescara. During this follow-up,

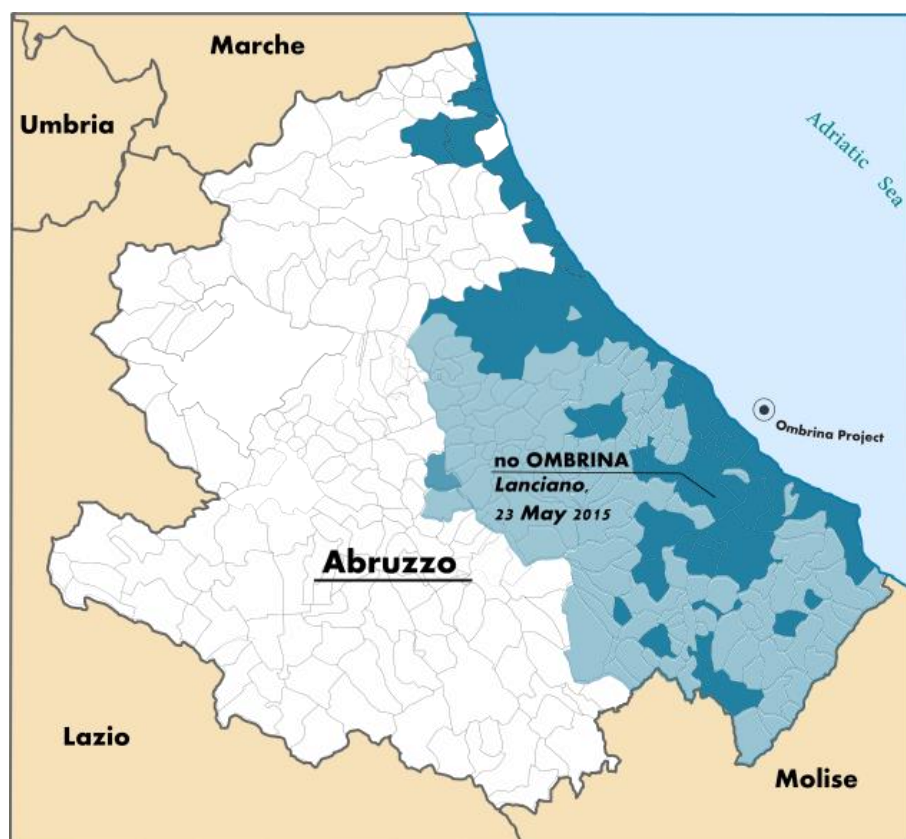


Figure 3 Lanciano, 23th May 2015. The municipalities and provinces (semi-transparent) that adhered to the demonstration embraced almost the entire coastline.

the national network started to elaborate proposals that aimed at producing a shift of the

²⁰ 35 artists of the region produced a collective and moving cover of the Lucio Dalla's song "Com'è profondo il mare", see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kyda15TjCtk>

action toward the national level, including a possible multi-issue referendum campaign (Stop Ombrina 2015). Contemporaneously, the actors that gave life to the demonstration started to mobilise on a supranational scale, opening connections with the countries on the opposite shore of the sea, and adopting the slogan *No Ombrina / Save the Adriatic*.

1.4 The No Triv Referendum and the first steps of the Referendum Sociali

The *No Ombrina* struggles gave life to several, and somehow rival, attempts to transfer the action to a national level. In particular, two independent referendum campaigns emerged after the event, the first of which brought the Italians to vote on 17th April 2016, while the second is currently moving its first steps.

In summer 2015, one of the actors that organised the demonstration, the *Coordinamento No Triv*, proposed with the organisation *ASud* six referendum questions to the 20 Italian regional assemblies, recurring for the first time to the power of the regions to call for a referendum²¹. The action, which surprised the other *no Ombrina* organisations, was completely detached from the *Blocca lo Sbocca Italia* process. While this last coalition aimed at bringing the Italians to vote in 2017, the *No Triv* and *ASud* opted for a fast campaign, in order to stop the oil drilling projects that were about to obtain a final approval. Backed by a signature collection on Avaaz.org and supported in August by 130 organisations and numerous intellectuals (No Triv 2015), the request obtained on 11th September a unanimous approval from the Conference of the Presidents of the Regional Assemblies (Conferenza Parlamenti Regionali 2015). In the following days, ten regions²² officially called the referendum.

The initiative obtained a first success in December 2015, when the government and the parliament introduced some amendments in the Stability Law (Law 208/2015), accepting most of the modifications requested by the regions and by the *No Triv*. In particular, the law reintroduced the prohibition to search hydrocarbons and to install new platforms within the limit of 12 nautical miles, stopping in this way – among others – the contested *Ombrina Mare* project.

Taking into account these changes, the Italian Constitutional Court decided to cancel five of the six referendum questions, in part satisfied by the governmental action, admitting to the vote only the remaining one. On 17th April 2016, the Italian citizens had the opportunity to cancel a single phrase in a norm (Art 3, point 17 of the Legislative Decree 152/2006), which permitted to the companies to continue the extractions from already existent platforms within the 12 miles limit, until the depletion of the local oil or gas fields.

Only the 32% of the electors voted in the referendum, which did not reach the required threshold of 50% valid votes, and therefore was declared not valid. However, the campaign proved to be partially successful, at least in two ways. First, the government accepted part of the requested modifications in the months that preceded the vote, in particular abandoning

²¹ Italian Constitution, article 75

²² Basilicata, Calabria, Veneto, Puglia, Marche, Sardegna, Liguria, Campania, Molise, and Abruzzo.

the *No Ombrina* project. Second, the referendum in Italy seem to be able, at least for short periods, to increase the level of collaboration between organisations: in this case, actors that were initially hesitant (the main Italian environmental organisations, part of the trade unions, the 5 Stars Movement, and the Italian Forum of Water Movements) slowly adhered to the campaign.

During the months that preceded the No Triv referendum the remaining actors of the *no Ombrina* network – and in particular the Abruzzo Social Forum/*Forum Abruzzese dei Movimenti per l'Acqua* – continued to open collaborations with other networks, in order to launch a referendum season on multiple issues in autumn 2016 or spring 2017. This campaign, named *Referendum Sociali* and still at its start, will regard four themes: schools, oil drilling, the national plan on incinerators, and the privatisation of commons (Stop Devastazioni 2016). The initiative include among the key organisers the Italian Forum of Water Movements, a vast network that gave life to two referendums on the privatisation of water in 2011. That experience is in part inspiring the current campaign, which similarly aims at reaching high levels of participation, creating a dense network of local committees (Ibid.) and giving life to intense interactions with the citizens during a phase of signature collection. The assembly that launched the *Referendum Sociali* initiative openly declared its support to other, independent referendums: to the *No Triv* consultation described in the previous section, to the actors campaigning for the “No” in the constitutional referendum of October 2016, and to a possible additional referendum that the Italian trade union CGIL might organise against the so-called Job Act (Ibid.)

2 No oil activism in Abruzzo and the organisational changes in the environmental milieu.

Since its start in 2006, numerous factors influenced the evolution of the almost continuous campaign against oil infrastructures in Abruzzo. For instance, complex relationships with the local and national party system (IW4, IW7), partial overlapping with other environmental issues (IW2, IW6, IW8), and a constructive interference between elections and peaks of mobilisation (IW6, IW4) surely affected the campaign development. However, in most interviews a single theme emerged as a leitmotiv able to shed light on the evolution and on the internal tensions in the regional no oil milieu: the organisational changes in the structure of the traditional environmental organisations, and in particular of the local WWF.

In a lively academic debate started in the nineties, different scholars (e.g. Diani & Donati 1999; della Porta & Rucht 2002; Rootes 2003) have evidenced some recurrent transformations of the environmental movements and actors, which are happening in similar forms in numerous western countries. Roughly simplifying, two main themes appeared in this debate. First, the authors noticed and investigated the increasing centralisation, professionalization, and institutionalisation of the most famous environmentalist organisations. In particular, the traditional environmental actors seemed to readapt their internal structures and their actions,

limiting the activities of their local branches, creating centralized campaign offices composed of media oriented professionals, and participating as experts or representatives in public consultations. Second, the scholars observed that the shift of these organisations toward mediated and institutional actions was limiting their ability to promote direct participation at the local level. Therefore, different or new organisations (in particular committees, grassroots groups, single-issue networks opposing to infrastructures) tended to appear, relying on resources of participation that the most visible organisations could not control anymore.

The cited scholars, however, described these phenomena in more nuanced, less linear terms, introducing elements of complexity. In particular, they affirmed that shifts toward professionalization and towards less disruptive forms of actions are separate and not necessarily coexisting phenomena (Diani & Donati 1999). Furthermore, they observed that traditional organisations and local actors tend to create networks of collaboration, in which internal tensions (della Porta & Rucht 2000) and constructive division of labour (Diani & Donati 1999) often coexist.

The no oil campaign in Abruzzo emerged in a similar context of transformation and (sometimes-difficult) collaboration among traditional environmental organisations, local committees, and highly engaged individuals²³. Obviously, following the indications of Diani and Donati (Ibid.), it might be too naïve to describe the complex relationships between the no oil organisations in Abruzzo in terms of two opposed and competing blocks, the first including the traditional environmental organisations, and the second informal grassroots actors. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that in summer 2015 the local branches of the “traditional” environmental organisations lamented a marginalisation²⁴ within the local no oil networks (IW8), and that this situation slowly emerged following a long lasting internal transformation of the regional WWF, and a rising diffidence at the local level toward the national strategies of Legambiente.

In particular, a brief (and necessarily partial) overview of the evolution of the regional WWF – focused on some key events already outlined in the historical section of this paper – can shed light on the broader effects of this development of the no-oil network. First of all, it is important to note that the Abruzzo’s branch of this organisation has a rich tradition of direct action, participation and diffuse membership in the region, which continued in the early 2000s, and which the local WWF activists are still trying to maintain.

The WWF played a significant role [...] because the WWF always had a somehow radical line in Abruzzo, highly oriented to participation, street leafleting, public assemblies, and so on. (IW2)

²³ In the interviews, the activists referred to the issues related to the organisational changes in the environmental milieu in a very frequent way. In my opinion, these references indicate not only that the militants consider the theme as relevant, but also that they are currently analysing their movement using the concepts already emerged in the academic debate. In some cases, a need to contrast centralised and less direct models of environmental activism guided the action of some among the key militants. The theme is becoming crucial in numerous Italian networks of activism (for instance, in the Italian Forum of Water Movements), creating in some cases serious frictions among their internal components.

²⁴ For some interviewed activists, a self-marginalisation (IW2, IW6)

At the regional level, the organisation had some full-time, paid activists, a locally centred professional structure in part connected with and financed through the activities of environmental protection. In contrast with my expectations, this decentralised professional network seemed able to increase the levels of participation, and to maintain the radical tradition of action of the organisation.

I am part of the movements, too... Firstly of the [one opposing to the] G8, so we went to Genoa, the WWF even organised the train to go to Genoa. (IW2)

As the previous quote well attests, this atypical focus on direct local actions favoured the emergence of collaborations of the regional WWF with actors deeply linked with the Social Forum experience, such as the contiguous organisations Abruzzo Social Forum/Abruzzo Forum of Water Movements. As the struggles against the third Gran Sasso tunnel shows, however, the WWF initially conserved in this collaboration its identity of traditional environmental organisation, forming with the other historical green associations a separate “coalition in the coalition”. Following the suggestions in literature (Ibid.), it is possible to interpret this collaboration as a shift in the environmental participatory model in Abruzzo: in order to maintain its ability to organise local direct action, the WWF (but also, and to a larger scale, other traditional environmental organisations) relied on participatory resources and confrontational actions of leftist networks and of committees.

A similar division of work characterised the experience of *Emergenza Ambiente Abruzzo*. Indubitably, *Emergenza Ambiente* had a visible strength: in this network, the first generation of environmental organisations, the committees, and the local radical movements combined their resources. Therefore, the coalition could rely on scientific experts and good relationships with the media, on the ability to mobilise small communities on single issues, on a diffused network of militants ready to participate in demonstrations. To give life to this collaboration, however, the WWF and the environmental organisations had to accept some important restrictions, and in particular the alternation of the spokespersons, which limited the visibility of the bigger groups (IW8).

During the last years (approximately since 2010), due to a decrease of members and resources, the national WWF entered in an intense phase of reorganisation. In particular, this restructuring severely limited the number of paid activists at the local level, centralising the infrastructure and the organisation of campaigns. In Abruzzo, an anomalous region in an anomalous national context for the international WWF, this change caused an outflow of professional activists (voluntary leaving, or dismissed) from the organisation. In at least two cases – in part thanks to the participation of the local WWF to broader coalitions of action – these militants continued to work in other organisations involved in the no oil struggles, transferring in this way expertise and resources to these groups. As it is easy to understand, these “broken links” resulted in frictions within the coalition, and in a broadening gap (in the forms of action, collaboration during the assemblies, and even in the participation to national campaigns) between the historical environmental organisations and other actors, in particular for what concerns the *no Ombrina* experience.

Besides these practical and biographical motivations, some *no Ombrina* actors maintained a certain distance with the traditional environmental organisations because they were aiming

at promoting different models of participation, not compatibles with those of Legambiente or of the WWF.

[...W]e say that, luckily, there have always been the WWF and Legambiente, because they blocked in their own ways, with their own methods, a lot of projects that were harmful for our territory. But, with their own model of doing things, they always produced a [tendency to] delegate... So: 'In any case there is the WWF! In any case, there is Legambiente!'. Regrettably, the attack of capitalism is very strong and the associations... none of them is enough in this battle [...]. [W]e cannot allow divisions among ourselves, and the production of a tendency to delegate. (IW4)

The distance between the environmental organisations, on one side, and the coalition between *Zona 22*, *Nuovo Senso Civico*, and *Forum Abruzzese Acqua* on the other, became visible during the picket in front of the Chamber of Deputies in October 2014, when the two type of actors adopted different forms of action. Interesting, in that occasion the *Coordinamento No Triv*, which lately gave life to the independent 2016 referendum campaign on oil extraction, was the only actor to participate both to the picket and to the press conference of the environmental organisations.

3 Moving the action to the national level: models of scale shift









The environmental protests against the construction of infrastructures and industrial facilities generally concentrate the actions and the construction of activists' networks on the affected local level (Diani & Donati 1999). However, in a small yet relevant number of cases the militants shift their action to the national or transnational level, directly addressing the country institutions and intensifying their collaborations with struggles perceived as similar. According to Christopher Rootes (2013), local environmental networks can adopt and combine three strategies to rise the scale of their action: they can represent their issue as an instance of a broader one; they can build networks of collaboration with other local communities active on the same topic; they can connect with the most important national and international environmental NGOs. Combining in different forms these three strategies, the no oil actors in Abruzzo succeeded in shifting the scale of their actions to the national and the international (Mediterranean and Adriatic) levels. More precisely, they organised a series of interdependent upward shifts in scale, which highly differed for what concerns the involved actors, the final goals, the applied strategy, the stability and persistence of the action, and to some extent even the theme of the mobilisation.

In this section, I briefly introduce these partially separate scale shifts (McAdam *et al.* 2001: 331), observing in particular the interactions between three 'mechanisms' that McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (*Ibid.*) link with these changes in the scale of the protest. First, I observe how the militants differently recurred to the alternative paths to scale shift that the authors named *diffusion* (i.e. spreading the struggle through pre-existent, solid connections among organisations) and *brokerage* (i.e. spreading the struggle connecting with new, separated mobilisations). Second, I describe how the main scale shift initiatives differently applied the so-called mechanism of *attribution of similarity*, describing their action in order to present it

as part of broader national struggles or campaigns. I consider this last mechanism as highly linked with the idea of framing: in order to permit the participation of actors with different characteristics to a national initiative, the promoter are obliged to adopt a broader frame, and the shift in scale can require a contemporaneous shift in the issue linked with the mobilisation.

Table 1 lists ten national or transnational campaigns and actions that the no oil activists of Abruzzo at least contributed to create. The list includes phenomena with different degrees of relevance, presenting together long lasting national networks, temporary campaigns, isolated actions and recurrent behaviours of the activists.

Tab 1: No Oil actions, networks and long lasting campaigns at the national/transnational levels

NAME or description	Issue	Characteristics
<i>Articles and meetings of Maria Rita D'Orsogna with other local no oil communities</i>		Media; new informal direct links
<i>Direct relationship with MPs</i>		National action
<i>COORDINAMENTO NO TRIV</i>		National network; umbrella organisation of coordination
<i>BLOCCA LO SBLOCCA ITALIA</i>	Multi-Issue, territories	National network; campaign; new and pre-existent links
<i>National NGOs campaigns (Greenpeace TRIV ADVISOR, WWF Dossiers...)</i>		Media and institutional campaigns
<i>Grassroot networking with other communities of resistance: CAMPEGGIO TRIVELLE ZERO...</i>	 & others	New and pre-existent informal direct links
<i>REFERENDUM NO TRIV</i>		National campaign; institutional action; network of support
<i>NO OMBRINA – SAVE THE ADRIATIC</i>		Demonstration; attempt to rise to national/Adriatic network
<i>STOP DEVASTAZIONI</i>	Multi-Issue, territories	National campaign; new and pre-existent network of support
<i>International Adriatic meetings (Split, Solta Island...)</i>		International coordination
<i>REFERENDUM SOCIALI</i>	Multi-Issue	National campaign; institutional action; networks of support

The diffusion / brokerage dichotomy presented above provides a useful lens to observe these different initiatives. On one hand, following the *diffusion* path, some of the actions mainly aim at reinforcing existent ties, directing the action of a pre-existent network to a new common objective: this is the case, at least in part, in the campaign *Blocca lo Sblocca Italia*, the camping *Trivelle Zero*, and the *Referendum No Triv*. On the other hand, in a broader number of cases, the no oil initiatives need to shift their scale of action recurring to the *brokerage* path: the no oil organisations start to search new local contexts affected by similar phenomena, opening new ties and collaborations closely connected with the oil issue. The use of media and the organisations of meetings seem to be the most used way to connect different local context, and to support the creation of two different kinds of networks of support.

A closer look to the main no oil actions that reached the national level can better explain how these mechanisms combined and acted in practice. For instance, the no oil discourse of Maria Rita D'Orsogna quickly shifted to the national level, mainly thanks to the space in the online sphere that she proved to be able to obtain. The collaboration with the online newspaper *Ilfattoquotidiano.it* and the frequent references to her articles on the website of Beppe Grillo contributed to increase her visibility, giving her the possibility to create links with other no oil communities following the brokerage path. The shift in scale that emerged was mainly informal, and cultural. D'Orsogna did not try to transform the local contacts between no oil communities in stable structures of coordination, but it is probable that her action contributed to create a sense of "shared destiny", which might have reinforced successive attempts to attribute similarity to distant no oil struggles. In addition, the no oil Italian scenario relied on another, slightly less focused network of diffused support: as I observed in the case of the *Trivelle Zero* camping held in San Vito in 2015, various no oil communities sustain among them and share contents thanks to the informal contacts among social centres and radical leftist militants. The link with the experiences of resistance in Val di Susa (Della Porta & Piazza, 2008) and with the idea of struggle elaborated in that context is evident. Consequently, this network of highly engaged activists can easily recur to forms of attribution of similarity that are not necessarily isolated to the no oil discourse, relying on a more elaborated idea of local resistance, instead.

Focusing on more structured initiatives, brokerage and diffusion interestingly combined in sustaining the connected campaigns *Blocca lo Sbocca Italia*, *Stop Devastazioni* and *Referendum Sociali*, which are linked in Abruzzo with the *No Ombrina* experience. I can describe the *Blocca lo Sbocca Italia* campaign, the first of the series, as a serious attempt to transfer to the national sphere (characterised by low levels of protest) the numerous episodes of intense participation happening in Italy at the local level, in particular in relationship with unwanted infrastructures. In this sense, the campaign relied on the mechanism of brokerage. At the same time, a solid network of highly connected actors gave life to the campaign, in part in order to redirect resources to a new, broad political project. In this sense, the campaign relied in its core on the mechanism of diffusion. In order to understand the complex relationship between 'old' connected actors and 'new' local nodes that characterises these initiatives, a detailed social network analysis might be necessary. However, it is interesting to note that these campaigns are somehow obliged to apply very broad frames in order to attribute similarities to the previously unconnected political actors: in particular, the focus tends to shift from the oil discourse to the ideas of the communities of resistance, of self-determination, of environmental destruction, and of local democracy. In the case of the *Referendum Sociali*, the mobilisation tries to create a collaboration between highly different networks, active on school, water, oil, wastes and to a certain extent job rights.

Finally, the *No Triv* national coordination and the homonymous referendum initiative interestingly maintained a strict focus on oil related actions. In my opinion, this choice might result from a smaller composition of the initial network that gave life to the *Coordinamento No Triv*, which emerged as an episode of brokerage. Furthermore, as I explained in the previous sections, the *Coordinamento* and its spokespersons received from numerous committees a certain degree of freedom of political action, with the obvious limitation of

concentrating the action on a single issue. Shifts in issues and broader attributions of similarity are probably at the same time necessary and easier to promote in networks that include a core of long lasting relationships between militants.

Conclusions

This article proposes a detailed analysis of the emergence and the evolution of a series of connected mobilisations on a single issue, the opposition to oil infrastructures, in a single geographical area, the region Abruzzo in central Italy. This exploration aims at two separate purposes. On one hand, the paper maintain a focus on the specificity of the regional context and on the complexity of the no oil struggles in the area. The recurrent use of common labels to describe the galaxy of local no oil protests has promoted, in my opinion, an idea of homogeneity between highly different actors and struggles. To contrast this tendency, I concentrated my analysis on the local emergence of the no oil discourse, focusing on one of the regions that contributed most to the rise of this issue within the broader environmentalist actions, on the historical roots of the mobilisations, and on the relationships among the involved organisations. Notwithstanding the complexity and the internal fragmentation that seems to emerge, this investigation shows how a well-defined and “universal” theme of struggle can arise from complex and locally rooted dynamics.

On the other hand, the analysis moves from the single regional case to explore some recurrent processes that characterise social movements, in particular the environmental ones. First, the development of the no oil mobilisations in the region, and the tensions between organisations that emerged through time, are easier to understand taking into account the organisational changes that numerous environmental actors are experimenting in the Western countries. Second, the case of the Italian no oil struggles permits to observe in detail the processes that can bring a local issue to become a national or transnational one. More in detail, a focus on the shifts to the national scale shows how the pre-existent networks of activism or the construction of new links with separate local struggles differently influence the resulting national campaigns.

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Interviews

IW1 – Woman, president of a Croatian environmentalist association, part of the network S.O.S. Adriatic

IW2 – Man, key activist of the *Forum Abruzzese dei Movimenti per l'Acqua Pubblica*, with a strong background as environmentalist (former WWF activist)

IW3 – Woman, founder of the association *Marelibero*, activist of the Forum Abruzzese dei Movimenti per l'Acqua, candidate as mayor of Pescara in 2014

IW4 – Man, key activist of the social centre *Zona 22*

IW5 – Man, president of the association *Nuovo Senso Civico*

IW6 – Man, key activist of the *Forum Abruzzese dei Movimenti per l'Acqua Pubblica* and of the *Abruzzo Social Forum*

IW7 – Man, constitutionalist and co-founder of the *Coordinamento No Triv*

IW8 – Woman, president and spokesperson for the WWF in the area interested by the Ombrina project

Two additional interviews (IW9 – Man, co-founder of the *Coordinamento No Triv*; IW10 – Woman, professor and prominent figure of the no oil struggle in Italy) are not included in this paper due to a technical problem in the recording. However, I did my best to take the opinion and ideas of these two activist into account.