"BOLOGNA IS A SCHOOL OF ACTIVISM":
TRANSFEMINISTQUEER AUTONOMY AND URBAN SPATIAL PRAXIS

DARREN J. PATRICK

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Abstract

"'Bologna is a School of Activism'" is an activist ethnography of the Bologna-based transfeminist and queer autonomous collective Laboratorio Smaschieramenti (Laboratory of/for Demasculinization/Unmasking) and a history of Atlantide, the occupied and self-managed space that was its home from 1998 to 2015. The dissertation presents the Laboratorio's distinctive approach to autonomy and argues that its praxes comprise a queer urban ecology of autonomous praxis. Positioned as an intervention into urban political ecology and queer geographies, I adopt a transversal and translational understanding of both autonomous social movements and the spatio-political praxes that sustain non-institutional knowledge production. The dissertation's multi-method approach integrates activist archive-making, life-historical and semi-structured interviews, participant observation, media analysis, translation, and *auto-inchiesta*––or, collective self-inquiry––a method rooted in the Italian social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Across six chapters, I describe the evolution of the Laboratorio and Atlantide and develop the notion of ecologies of praxis to situate the place-based production of radical theory. Chapter 1, "Towards Ecologies of TransFeministQueer Autonomous Praxis," reviews the literatures of urban political ecology, feminist and queer ecologies, geographies of sexuality, and feminist/queer geographies, and presents a critique of the disciplinary divergence of queer from feminist geographies by way of the former field's appeal to queer of color scholarship and intersectional analysis. Chapters 2 and 3 build on the work of collective activist archive-making both to describe the epistemopolitics of transfeministqueer knowledge production and to situate Atlantide as a distinctive kind of space in which the traditions of autonomous Marxism have been actively recomposed. Chapter 4 details the evolution of the Laboratorio and describes its four main areas of political praxis. Chapters 5 and 6 tell the story of the Laboratorio's and Atlantide's engagements with the municipal government of Bologna and detail the circumstances that led to the eviction of Atlantide in 2015. As a whole, "'Bologna is a School of Activism'" argues for an ecological understanding of the intersectionality of political struggles.

For Simone

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iv

trusting me and taking time to teach me the way of the Smaschie, for bringing me to the lost continent of Atlantide, for reclaiming our knowledge and keeping the flame of struggle burning no matter how dark the times. The worlds we make are beautiful and necessary.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction:

Bologna is a School of Activism

The "Trip": (Re)Turning to Bologna

The message blipped onto my screen sometime in mid-April 2013: "I have some news. I don't think it's going to change your travel plans, but we should talk soon." It had come from Babs––my friend, my comrade, my lover––who was traveling and visiting friends in México. Babs and I had met in Budapest in 2010 while we were both pursuing master's degrees at Central European University. I was based in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, but many of my friends––including Babs––were in the Department of Gender Studies, located one floor above Sociology in Nádor 9, the main university building.

Though we had stayed in touch after I left Budapest to begin my doctoral studies in Canada, we hadn't seen each other since my first visit to Italy in the summer of 2011. We had casually discussed a return visit the following year, but I was gentrified out of my apartment in Toronto, so we had to defer our plans. The year after that, in 2013, I had finally settled into a stable living situation and found a rhythm with my studies, so I booked a ticket to spend a few weeks in Bologna.

Babs had always joked that I should just let them know when I was at the airport and they would pick me up. So, owing to our unplanned sensibility, I was mildly surprised when I saw the message, which came just a few weeks before I was scheduled to depart. I was curious what news they might have to share. I also had my intuitions, which faded in and out of my mind as the distinctive drip-drop ring of Skype filled my bedroom in Toronto. The video popped up and the pixels gradually assembled themselves into the likeness of a face that I hadn't seen in nearly two years. They were in a beachfront bar near Zipolite. We both smiled

widely and made some small talk for a moment before I asked, "Well, what's this news?" A beat, a half-smile.

"I'm pregnant."

I let out a joyful scream and congratulated them. For about an hour, we talked about their travels, their dreams, and how excited we were to see each other that summer. A few weeks later, I left for a month-long visit to Italy.

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 Babs and I spent our time that summer laughing and word playing with their inventive English and my occasional ability to speak Italian, which we had always joked was attributable to possession by a demon. We devised responses to the quizzical looks of the old Italian men who relentlessly tried to figure out if this twiggy, queer-looking American could possibly be The Father. We fervently developed a theory of human parthenogenesis as we spent many hours poring over a new favorite website: butchesandbabies.com. We attended concerts and summer festivals and ate many, many meals at the seaside.

On the last night of my visit, we drove to Babs's mother's place in Pieve Cesato (fig. 1),[1] less a town than a tiny collection of houses located in the southern reach of the *pianura padana*, which is among the largest and most fertile flatlands in Europe. It's not far from the Apennine Mountains, where many anti-fascist resistance fighters hid away during the Second World War. Babs's ancestors had lived there for hundreds of years. They told me stories of their great-grandmother running through the fields with a baby under each of her arms to escape the bombs that the Americans were dropping on the fascists. We looked out at the long-since reclaimed swampland as we ate crispy fried zucchini flowers in the garden with

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all photos are by the author.

Miranda, Babs's mom, and Lele, Babs's uncle, an affable welder and, like many members of their family, a self-taught musician.

Figure 1. Via Quaglia, Outside Babs's mother's house, Pieve Cesato, Italy, 2013

As the sun set over the blue mountains in the distance, we gathered ourselves to return to Santerno––a nearby small town where we had been staying––for our last night together. On our way out, Miranda, who speaks very little English, looked at me and eked out a question: "See. You. In. December?" The due date. Babs and I looked at each other as if we were two teenagers whose peculiar and delicate dream-world had been interrupted by an innocently knowing parental question. Wordlessly, we agreed that we needed to discuss. We said our farewells to Miranda, Lele, and the family dogs and drove away. Once back in Santerno, I began to gather my belongings and all of the little things that I had acquired over the course of the month.

"So, Miranda really nailed it with the question," I said, breaking the melancholic quiet of my packing ritual. I could tell that Babs was nervous, not so much about the prospect of my return, but about everything that the word "December" had come to mean. My departure somehow made it more real. They made it clear that they would like me to return.

"Okay," I broke into a smile and nodded, "I want to give you an answer right now, but I shouldn't." Yes, it was an immediate and definite feeling of yes. "I need to put it in my suitcase and see how it feels when I get back to Canada. I won't take long."

Two weeks later, I booked a return ticket with ten days on either side of the due date.

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Just after two o'clock on the morning of December 8, 2015, I was awoken by Miranda: "Darrrr-en. Darrrr-en. Wake up." I shook my eyes open; my body was already moving. "It's time. To go." We grabbed the pre-packed bag and piled into the car. The night was thick with winter fog. Apart from Babs's occasional groaning in the pain of contractions, the ride was quiet.

When we arrived at the hospital in Faenza, a twenty-five-minute drive from Pieve Cesato, there was nobody there to receive us. We waited in the dark until the OB/GYN on-call could be summoned. Though we were in a public hospital, a priest was walking the hallways.

"Is that a fucking priest," Babs whispered in disbelief.

I swallowed my laughter.

Solemnly, he walked over and asked, "*Avete bisogno*?" Do you need anything?

"*Sono atea.*" I'm an atheist, Babs replied, leaning into one arm propped on a table, raising the other in a gesture of refusal. He nodded briskly but walked away just as slowly as he had approached. Miranda and I, who still could not communicate because my Italian was poor, made eyes.

By first light, labor was in full swing. Family, friends, and comrades from Figlie Femmine, Babs's first feminist collective, had begun trickling into the visitor's area; nearly twenty people had gathered. Around eleven o'clock, Babs and I shuffled through the sliding doors into the delivery room and were soon surrounded by a coven of midwives. Someone drew the blinds such that the oversized room was illuminated only by the diffuse light of the winter sky. I bounced on a yoga ball next to the birthing pool and followed the lead of the head midwife, Paola, whose thick, curly hair framed a confident, reassuring face. She spoke little English, but Babs occasionally and miraculously managed to translate; it was obvious enough what needed to be done.

At 12:40 p.m. on December 8, 2013––the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception–– Simone was born. Baby Sagittarius. An hour later, I carried her through the doors of the delivery room and handed her to her great-grandparents, her grandparents, her cousins, and her comrades.

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Over the next year, it became exceedingly clear to me that the only way I could ensure that I would regularly see both Babs and Simone––for whom I had an immediate, inundating, and overwhelming love––was to locate my research in Bologna. I began to align my mind and heart. Over the course of that summer, Babs and I began to discuss the possibility of me working with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, the autonomous transfeminist and queer collective of which they had become a member some years prior. The name Smaschieramenti is a portmanteau that can be roughly translated with the dual meaning of Unmasking/Demasculinization. Babs and I had already been musing and talking about gender roles and parenting; I was searching for the semblance of a subjectivity adequate to a situation in which I had never imagined finding myself. Smaschieramenti made sense.

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As "Let's Spit on Hegel," the striking manifesto of the 1970s Roman feminist separatist

collective Rivolta Femminile, headed by former art critic Carla Lonzi, puts it:

> With maternity, a woman achieves a moment of deculturalization: she runs
> through the early stages of life again in an emotional symbiosis with the child.
> The outside world seems to her like an alien product quite foreign to the
> primary needs of the life she is reliving.
>
> Maternity is her "trip." Her consciousness turns spontaneously backwards to
> the origins of life, and she questions herself.[2]

Babs had introduced me to this text early on in our relationship. A copy of it hung on the wall

of their apartment. It is the first Italian feminist text that I ever read; reading it for the first

time brought me to tears. When they were pregnant, they had described the experience as the

"final frontier" of their feminism. They had expressed concerns of being *de facto* excluded

from politics on the basis of parenting. I could plainly understand the basis of this concern;

nobody else in the Laboratorio had a child. The prevailing atmosphere was much more

informed by and experimental "no future" mentality than a "what about the child" mentality.[3]

As I spent more time with them, it became clear to me that their "trip," their

deculturalization, was already underway and that it would unfold quickly.[4] I could either be

along for the ride or drift out of the picture. I cannot say that I was unequivocal about taking

this trip; I was not. I can say that I began my journey to living and to understanding the deep

meaning of unmasking and demasculinization as a personal-political praxis in the moment

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[2] Rivolta Femminile, *Let's Spit on Hegel*, trans. Veronica Newman, (New York City: Secunda, 2010), http://blogue.nt2.uqam.ca/hit/files/2012/12/Lets-Spit-on-Hegel-Carla-Lonzi.pdf. Lonzi was not a mother herself, so her work on maternity is derived from the collective reflections of Rivolta Femminile more so than from her personal reflections. In relation to transfeminism, there is obviously a need to reconsider her emphasis on maternity as the sole provenance of women. At the same time, my use of this quote here is a heuristic device that demonstrates my first forays into the complexity of the Italian autonomous tradition and the distinctiveness of autonomous feminism and feminist separatism in the autonomous context.
[3] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2004).
[4] I return to the metaphor of "the trip" in Chapter 3.

that I witnessed Simone's birth. Nothing could have prepared me. The paradigm of decision-making was a mask. The truth is, I was already traveling. I had never been masc.

The argument of this dissertation is embedded in that truth. *Bologna is a School of Activism* is my response to a question long posed by anyone not "successfully" socialized into hegemonic masculinity to anyone who has been: How can you be otherwise? I had already responded to this question in relation to sexuality when I came to understand that my options were not actually limited by the binary of hetero/homo. I learned this, in part, through my scholarly engagement with queerness as a form of subjectless critique, namely, as a mode of critique that translates personal/political disidentification with the demands of the hetero/homo binary into disidentification with the scholarly demands to take "proper" objects in our research. And yet, subjectless critique had taught me little about how to shift my relationship with hegemonic masculinity as a matter of everyday practice. Why was it so difficult to get out from underneath of hegemonic masculinity in this scholarly mode even though I had been living otherwise for as long as I can remember? It was not until I began my work with the Laboratorio that I came to understand the link between my lifelong experience as a fagabond––a faggy vagabond––and my emergent understanding of myself as non-binary person. I did not walk into this work thinking that I would change in this way. And yet, I emerged utterly transformed. This is what Bologna, that school of activism, taught me. And it taught me this in a political language to which I had never been introduced prior to my trip in Italy.

In scholarly terms, this dissertation contributes one itinerary for the everyday work of unmasking and demasculinization by way of positioning and translating transfeminist queer autonomous praxis as an intervention in the fields of urban political ecologies and queer geographies. Working between these two fields, I elaborate a queer urban ecology of

autonomous praxis. In so doing, I follow Isabelle Stengers, whose notion of an "ecology of practices"––which she describes as a "tool for thinking"––informs my understanding of ecology.[5] Herself following Deleuze's notion of "thinking *par le milieu*"––where *milieu* carries the double sense of "middle" and "surroundings or habitat"––Stengers writes:

> "Through the middle" would mean without grounding definitions or an ideal horizon. "With the surroundings" would mean that no theory gives you the power to disentangle something from its particular surroundings, that is, to go beyond the particular towards something we would be able to recognize and grasp in spite of particular appearances.[6]

Prompted by an unexpected set of circumstances, my "trip" occasioned the proliferation of middles: between the personal and political, between the university and the movements, between transfeminist and queer, between Babs and me... I traveled to Bologna––to Atlantide and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti––wanting to understand how queerness shapes and takes shape in the context of urbanization. I brought the "tools" of queer ecology with me, namely, its emphasis on denaturalizing the heteronormativity and reprocentricity that dominates social and political life and its insistence on queerness as a way of *making strange*. Could these tools be useful to a collective whose mandate is to unmask/demasculinize? As Stengers writes:

> "[W]hen we deal with 'tools for thinking,' habit must be resisted. What is at stake here is 'giving the situation the power to make us think,' [...] The relevant tools, tools for thinking, are then the ones that address and actualize this power of the situation, that make it a matter of particular concern, in other words, [that] make us think and not recognize."[7]

My contribution is to think with the situation of transfeministqueer autonomy in Bologna and to translate how that situation has made me think such that its praxes may become a matter of concern for scholars working in these fields to which I have ongoing scholarly commitments.

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[5] Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," *Cultural Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (March 2005): 183–96.
[6] Stengers, "Ecology of Practices," 187.
[7] Stengers, "Ecology of Practices," 185.

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That summer in Bologna, I began to meet the comrades, the *Smaschie*. Owing to my previous trips to Italy, I had already become close with Babs's family and friends in the countryside and bonded with some of their old-school feminist comrades in Bologna. Our regular visits to autonomous spaces like XM24––an Occupied and Self-Managed Social Center (CSOA) whose anarchist farmers market supplied our weekly supply of *verdure clandestine*––had given me a sense of the deeply political atmosphere of the city, but I had little understanding of either the extent of this ecology or of its historical roots. Though I had already met Monica, Babs's roommate––who, between the time that Simone was born and the time that I returned to Bologna in 2014, had left the Laboratorio to pursue training to become an herbalist––everybody else was new to me.

And yet, becoming more involved in the Laboratorio also felt familiar. As Dionne Brand writes:

> When you embark on a journey, you have already arrived. The world you are going to is already in your head. You have already walked in it, eaten in it; you have already made friends; a lover is already waiting.[8]

My first trip to the city in 2011 had quietly begun to teach me that Bologna is a school of activism, even though those precise words would come to me belatedly from Aldara, a Spanish anthropologist and Smaschieramenti comrade who came to Bologna to write a dissertation on the Laboratorio. (She did write it and, then, never left.) My memories of that trip are a jumble of graffiti––"'Pain' is just a French word to say bread"; "Stay on the barricades for a better education"; "*Padania* is ~~not Italy~~ *merda*; *Teronia* is ~~not Europe~~ the world"––shot through with faces of the children, women, and queers that I saw glazed onto the tiles that comprise a memorial honoring anti-fascist resistance fighters and

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[8] Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001), 115.

commemorating the August 2, 1980 bombing of Bologna's main railway station by a neo-fascist terrorist group (fig. 2).[9] I recall our visit to the Archiginnasio, a 16th century building housing the municipal library, and which, up until 1803, was the seat of the University of Bologna, the oldest in the so-called western world. We visited numerous university buildings, many of which were occupied by their students, all of which were covered by weathered fliers for demonstrations long since passed. We roamed the fifty-three kilometers of *portici* that hover over every sidewalk, giving the central city an oddly interior feeling. As we walked, Babs pointed out the empty and bricked-over façades of evicted squats and abandoned social centers that dotted the old city-center. Every meal that we ate outside house, we ate in restaurants and bars owned by comrades or at XM24, where we could take in a merciful breeze as the sun set behind a collection of long-unfinished towers in the distance (fig. 3).

Figure 2. Memorial to anti-fascist resistance fighters from World War II, Bologna, Italy, 2011

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[9] Despite the conviction of numerous neo-fascists in a lengthy series of trials, speculations about the perpetrators of the attack, which killed 85 people, continue to this day.

Figure 3. Sunset as seen from XM24, Bologna, Italy, 2011

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    It was not until the following summer––2014––that I would stand before the doors of

Atlantide, the last remaining occupied and self-managed space in the city-center. Atlantide

forms one half of the Porta Santo Stefano––the Gate to Tuscany, one of the twelve original

entry points to the medieval walled city––originally built in the 13th century (fig. 4). The

building that stands there today was reconstructed in the 19th century; it stands opposite an

identical mini fortress, which houses the Circolo Berneri. In 1971, the latter space was

consigned by the municipality to a group of anarchists as a token of appreciation for their

sacrifices during the anti-fascist resistance. I briefly stood between these two buildings at the

outset of a counter-pride march––organized by Smaschieramenti––in which I participated in

full drag, with the baby (fig. 5). I hadn't been able to find heels in size 42, so I wore 41. My feet

blistered and bled for days. When I wasn't carrying Simone, the sign I carried read: Who will

defend queer babies without Atlantide?

Figure 4. Left to right, Simone, Babs, and the author, Bologna, Italy, June 2014 (Photo by Marilia Faraone, used with permission)

Figure 5. Atlantide, Porto Santo Stefano 6a, Bologna, Italy, March 2015

That same summer, I had met a few members of Smaschieramenti during a site visit to an abandoned coffin factory in Via del Porto, a side-street at the edge of the central city. A small group of comrades from Atlantide had been negotiating with the municipal government in an effort to avoid a forced eviction. Atlantide––which, since 1998, had been home to Antagonismo Gay, Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's predecessor collective, Clitoristrix, a feminist and lesbian separatist collective, and Nulla Osta, a group of punks––was already swimming in the salty waters of state recognition. A right-wing neighborhood politician had been leading an(other) effort to evict the collectives after fifteen years with no complaints from the neighbors. Sympathetic center-left officials from the municipal government's office of cultural affairs had tentatively signaled their willingness to contribute €100,000 to renovating the massive factory in Via del Porto so that it would be suitable for use by the collectives, which had diverse needs with regard to the space. When we visited the main production floor was still covered in sweet smelling sawdust from the manufacture of coffins.

A few days later, as I learned more about Atlantide's political situation, Babs and I began to devise a research project with the Laboratorio. Babs was anxious to return to politics and organizing, which, as was the case for so many of the comrades, had been a central part of their life since they participated in occupations of their high school in the 1990s. We had already been trying to imagine how we might support each other. For me, that necessitated conversations about how my existing research in queer ecologies might be adapted to working with autonomous political movements, generally, and the Laboratorio, specifically. For Babs, that required a deliberate commitment to sharing the responsibilities of childcare and social reproduction in such a way that they could reclaim a small amount of time to attend weekly assemblies, which they had not been able to participate in since the latter part of their pregnancy. I was determined to make it work. For their part, Babs was enthusiastic about

returning to politics and confident that the Laboratorio could benefit from the presence of someone with time, resources, and energy to devote to both long-existing and long-envisioned projects.

So, one day that summer, while Simone was napping, we sat down on our bed and began to create a schema for the research, including a map of the SomMovimento nazioAnale, or natioAnal UpRising, a network of Italian transfeminist and queer collectives and individual activists in which the Laboratorio had been instrumental in organizing in 2012. As we discussed the trajectories of events and organizing that had informed the formation of the transfeministqueer autonomous movement and the natioAnal network it had spawned, we began to evoke dimensions of the work that I had done for my master's degree in Budapest, which involved tracing the intersections of urban, environmental, and spatial politics in the redevelopment of New York City's High Line. Babs, who was educated as a philosopher at the University of Bologna, had already significantly influenced my research by way of long discussions about the role that vagabond plants played in reconfiguring cruising landscapes. For them, the ecological nature of autonomous spatio-political praxis was obvious. For me, it would take the work of this dissertation and the challenges of both building a relationship with the Laboratorio and maintaining my relationship with Babs and Simone to cultivate a deeper understanding of that obviousness. For both of us, there was an inherent appeal to devising a collaborative and collective research project that would center the long-standing work of both the Laboratorio and Atlantide. I returned to Toronto wanting not simply to include Bologna as one location in a larger research project––which, prior to my visit that summer, I had been planning to do––but to focus exclusively on the work of Smaschieramenti, Atlantide, and the SomMovimento nazioAnale. It was a significant risk on

numerous levels, but I intuitively knew that I was going to take it. My trip had already begun; I had already arrived.

When I returned to Bologna in December 2014 to celebrate Simone's first birthday, Babs organized a meeting with Renato Busarello, a longtime activist and founding member of Atlantide, Antagonismo Gay, and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. The initial seeds of a collective archive-making praxis were sown the night we met. Over the course of the next two months, I began to devise a proposal for a project that would meet otherwise apparently widely divergent needs: to support my partner as a co-parent, to contribute to the Laboratorio as an activist-researcher, and to cobble together a livable, queer, transatlantic relationship. This unwieldy and ambitious experiment began in earnest when I arrived in Bologna for my fieldwork on March 5, 2015, the same day that my labor union began a five-week strike in Toronto. I felt guilty about leaving my union comrades, but excited to begin the work.

My arrival to the Laboratorio's assembly by way of my relationship with Babs (and Simone) all but guaranteed that I would receive a very warm welcome. Beyond the fact that Babs is an experienced, well-respected, and highly-valued comrade, the Laboratorio has a history of working with academic researchers and, indeed, counts numerous academics both among its membership––which, in 2015, numbered approximately fifteen people––and in the wider networks of which the Laboratorio and Atlantide are a part. Those networks involve hundreds, if not thousands, of activists and researchers, to say nothing of allied collectives. I was already a part of this queer urban ecology.

While my mode of arrival certainly eased my transition to everyday political life in Bologna, from the very beginning of my time there, balancing multiple roles and subjectivities––partner, co-parent, language-learner, visiting student, comrade, institutionally-based academic researcher, activist-scholar––proved extremely challenging. Traversing these

roles and embodying and understanding the intimate histories and praxes that manifest and

sustain them has required an enormous labor of practical and political translation. This

dissertation comprises one facet of that labor and takes shape as both a scholarly project and a

contribution to the struggles from which it is derived.[10]

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I have come to an engagement with the theories and literatures of autonomous

Marxism largely as a consequence of the work documented in this dissertation. Knowledge of

these literatures was not required to enroll in classes at Bologna School of Activism.

Autonomy taught by example and guided by necessity. Even so, in light of both the multiple

influences that have shaped the academic literatures of autonomous Marxism and the

tendency of dominant citational economies to emphasize the tradition's U.S.–American,

Italian, and/or French iterations, I have had to learn to understand autonomy's inherently

international dimensions. As Harry Cleaver writes in the outline of a syllabus for a course on

autonomous Marxism at the University of Texas:

> [T]he tradition is not only internationalist but has evolved rapidly in several
> different countries on both sides of the Atlantic. It is easy to identify groups of
> American, or French, or Italian militants as well as their contributions. But at
> the same time, in each case, those militants were self-consciously connected in
> their thinking and sometimes their organizing to many other parts of the world.
> As a result, despite the importance of local factors, none of those working in
> this tradition think in local or national terms. It would therefore be somewhat
> misleading to speak of "the Italian" contribution, or the "American"
> contribution.[11]

Following Cleaver's outline, I have learned of the influence of the U.S.-based Johnson-Forest

Tendency, which comrpised three main members––C.L.R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and

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[10] I describe the distinctive genealogy of transfeminism and unpack the notion of political translation in scholarly
terms in Chapter 1.
[11] Harry Cleaver, "Economics 387L: Autonomist Marxism," *University of Texas*, accessed July 28, 2019,
http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/387Lautonomistmarxism.html..

Grace Lee Boggs––whose personal and political trajectories crisscrossed the world. Always already in motion, they write from Trinidad and England to the Ukraine/USSR and the United States. The Johnson-Forest Tendency initially worked within the Anti-Stalinist/Trotskyist Fourth International. Following multiple splits, James and Dunayevskaya––and later Boggs––would eventually form the group Correspondence, which was the collective vehicle through which their most influential publications were produced and circulated.[12] The trio's political influences ranged from the Haitian Revolution and the organization of Black auto workers in Detroit to wildcat strikers in the Appalachian coal fields and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In turn, they influenced the French group, Socialisme ou Barbarie, which had also split from the Fourth International. Its principal theorists––the Greek-French philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort––exerted a strong influence on the emergence of autonomist tendencies in the French and German contexts, largely through critiques of state bureaucracy.[13] Socialisme ou Barbarie and its eponymous journal influenced the emergence of collectively produced Italian autonomist journals like *Quaderni Rossi* and, later, *Classe Operaia*. Guy Debord, who had also been a member of the group, founded the Situationist International in Italy in 1957.[14]

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[12] C.L.R. James, "Resolution on the Russian Question," *Marxists.org*, 1941, https://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1941/09/russia.htm; C.L.R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee Boggs, *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2013); Raya Dunayevskaya, "A New Revision of Marxian Economics," *The American Economic Review* 34, no. 3 (1944): 531–37; C.L.R James, Grace C. Lee, and Cornelius Castoriadis, *Facing Reality*, (Detroit: Bewick Editions, 1974). See also Paul Buhle, *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary*, (London: Verso, 1988); Stephen M. Ward, *In Love and Struggle: the Revolutionary Lives of James and Grace Lee Boggs*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

[13] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987); Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, ed. John B Thompson, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986); David Ames Curtis, ed., *Socialisme Ou Barbarie: An Anthology*, (London: Pluto Press, 2016).

[14] Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action," in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Ken Knabb, (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), 25–43.

Like autonomist tendencies situated elsewhere, those rooted in the Italian context not only broke away from institutional and party lines on international communist strategy, they were also significantly influenced by anti-colonial struggles in Vietnam, the 1973 coup in Chile, and the anti-war, Black Power, and feminist movements in the United States and elsewhere.[15] Research and writing by Italian autonomists has elaborated a number of key themes, including: class composition (notably, in the current called *operaismo* or workerism/compositionism), autonomy vis-à-vis the state, party, and labor unions, and global struggles connected to social reproduction, unwaged work, and housework. The principal contributors to these elaborations are: Mario Tronti, Sergio Bologna, Raniero Panzieri, Romano Alquati, Franco "Bifo" Berardi, Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno, Michael Hardt, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Silvia Federici, and Leopoldina Fortunati.[16] The diverse scholarship and activism of these authors reflects both the historical and contemporary engagements of

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[15] Dan Georgakas, "Italy: New Tactics & Organization," *Radical America* 5, no. 5 (1971): 3–38; Red Notes Collective, *Italy 1977–8: "Living with and Earthquake,"* (London, UK: Red Notes, 1978); George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1987); Georgy Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life*, Updated Edition, (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006); Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978*, (London: Verso, 1990); Maud Anne Bracke, *Women and the Reinvention of the Political: Feminism in Italy 1968–1983*, (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2014).

[16] Mario Tronti, *Workers and Capital*, trans. David Broder, (London: Verso, 2019); Sergio Bologna, "The Tribe of Moles," in *Italy: Autonomia Post-Political Politics*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, (New York City: Semiotext(e), 1980), 36–61; Raniero Panzieri, "Seven Theses on Workers' Control (1958)," trans. Asad Haider, *Viewpoint Magazine*, September 9, 2014, https://www.viewpointmag.com/2014/09/09/seven-theses-on-workers-control-1958/; Raniero Panzieri, "Socialist Uses of Workers' Inquiry (1965)," trans. Arianna Bove, *Transversal*, April 2006, https://transversal.at/transversal/0406/panzieri/en; Devi Sacchetto, Emiliana Armano, and Steve Wright, "Coresearch and Counter-Research: Romano Alquati's Itinerary Within and Beyond Italian Radical Political Thought," *Viewpoint Magazine*, September 27, 2013, https://www.viewpointmag.com/2013/09/27/coresearch-and-counter-research-romano-alquatis-itinerary-within-and-beyond-italian-radical-political-thought/; Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*, trans. Francesca Cadel and Giuseppina Mecchia, (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext[e], 2009); Antonio Negri, *Revolution Retrieved: Writings on Marx, Keynes, Capitalist Crisis, and New Social Subjects (1967–1983)*, trans. Ed Emery, (London: Red Notes, 1988); Antonio Negri, *Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse*, trans. Jim Fleming, (South Hadley: Bergin & Garvey, 1984); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, 3rd ed. (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1975); Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*, (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004); Leopoldina Fortunati, *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*, trans. Hillary Creek and Hilary Creek, (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1995); Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, eds., *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

autonomist thinkers like George Caffentzis, John Holloway, and Harry Cleaver and connects

with struggles in contexts ranging from Europe and North America to Latin America,

Southeast Asia, and Africa.[17] While he doesn't have much of anything to say about feminism,

Steve Wright has documented the multiple trajectories and debates that forged the

workerist/compositionist approach, which is largely what distinguishes autonomous

Marxism's Italian elaborations from those situated elsewhere.[18]

Notwithstanding the breadth and depth of the scholarship, political strategy, and

activism that gathers under the rubric of autonomous Marxism, the work of this dissertation is

decisively focused on elaborating transfeministqueer autonomous praxis as a transversal

intervention into two scholarly fields: urban political ecology and queer geography. Scholars

working in these fields have yet to engage in a deep and sustained way with the "area" of

autonomy that I describe above, not least because many of its key texts remain untranslated.[19]

Even so, such a lack of engagement is notable, especially in light of the ways in which

autonomist approaches reclaim and rework core Marxist concepts, confound traditional

spatio-political hierarchies, challenge extractive practices of knowledge production, and

continue to reshape understandings of politics, social movements, and collective political

subjectivity and subjectivation.[20] At the same time, scholars whose research is located in the

diffuse area of autonomy have scarcely appreciated the self-organized contributions that

[17] Silvia Federici, Ouesseina Alidou, and George Caffentzis, eds., *A Thousand Flowers: Social Struggles Against Structural Adjustment in African Universities*, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000); Midnight Notes, *Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local and Global Struggles of the Fourth World War*, (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2001); John Holloway and Eloína Peláez, eds., *Zapatista!: Reinventing Mexico's Revolution*, (London: Pluto Press, 1998); Harry Cleaver, *Rupturing the Dialectic: the Struggle Against Work, Money, and Financialization*, (Chico: AK Press, 2017); See also: Harry Cleaver, *Reading Capital Politically*, (Leeds: Anti/Theses, 2000).
[18] Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2002); Steve Wright, "Mapping Pathways Within Italian Autonomist Marxism: A Preliminary Survey," *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 4 (2008): 111–40, https://doi:10.1163/156920608X357747.
[19] I discuss the notion of the "area of autonomy" further in Chapter 4.
[20] See Michal Osterweil, "In Search of Movement: Italy's '*Movimento Dei Movimenti*,' Theoretical-Practice and Remaking the Political" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2010), https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/44558d62g.

transfeminist and queer activist-intellectuals have made both to autonomous Marxism and to the decades-long struggles that have enabled its creation of radical theories of revolution. These mutual occlusions would seem to suggest the need for a dissertation that emphasizes the theoretical potential of transfeministqueer autonomy to reconfigure academic research in autonomous Marxism. Such an approach would arguably require positioning transfeministqueer autonomous praxis as a nascent specification of the ostensibly more general and encompassing tradition of autonomous Marxism.

      Bologna is a School of Activism takes a different tack. I locate and unfold what scholar Macarena Gómez-Barris has, following Édouard Glissant, called "submerged perspectives."[21] My immersion in the everyday life-world of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis––and my effort to translate that praxis into scholarship and political praxis beyond this everyday lifeworld––has taught me that it is much more than a modified perspective on extant autonomous approaches to Marxism. Indeed, the name of the space in which Laboratorio Smaschieramenti emerged––Atlantide––refers to the mythical submerged city of Atlantis. I argue that the transfeministqueer autonomy (re)claimed and (e)labor(at)ed by Laboratorio Smaschieramenti comprises an urban spatial praxis that is best understood in ecological terms. To be sure, Smaschieramenti's approach appropriates and adapts a key praxis-based methodology of autonomous Marxism––namely, *auto-inchiesta*, or collective self-inquiry–– which insists on developing theory from everyday collective struggles for self-organization, self-determination, and collective liberation.[22] At the same time, through engagements with feminist separatism, transfeminism, and both Italian and Anglo-American queer theory,

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[21] Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Extractive Zones: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

[22] In its political usage in Italian, the prefix "auto-" evokes a collective relationship much more so that the English prefix "self-," which normatively suggests a liberal individualism.

Smaschieramenti has developed a range of praxes that push beyond autonomous Marxism's pre-occupation with discerning, theorizing, and locating a singular revolutionary subject. Even so, Smaschieramenti's approach by no means constitutes a full break with or wholesale indictment of autonomous Marxism. Instead, by heretically experimenting with the tradition's necessary openness to the revision and to the recomposition of its core theoretical elements, Smaschieramenti has productively contaminated and decomposed autonomous Marxism's enduringly masculinist tendencies in whose place the stowed away seeds of an alternative approach to autonomy have once again bloomed.

Laboratorio Smaschieramenti has co-cultivated what I call an ecology of praxis. This ecology is rooted in Atlantide, a distinctive kind of occupied and self-managed political space that, from its very beginnings, was a living archive of the enduring possibilities of self-organized and self-managed collectivities to produce knowledge, culture, and social relations in the service of *an otherwise*. Driven by necessity and characterized by invention, the Laboratorio's experimentation has yielded a political imaginary that encompasses sophisticated critiques of collective subjectivity, social relations, labor, healthcare, neoliberal urban spatial politics, and institutionalized feminist/queer knowledge production. Born in 1998, Atlantide's first breath inhaled the Zapatista's January 1, 1994 declaration––"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH"––and exhaled a cry that echoed all the way to Seattle on November 30, 1999–– "Another world is possible."[23] Like the Smaschieramenti comrades whose *percorsi politici*–– political pathways––had led them to the doors of Atlantide, I too arrived, exhausted and

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[23] General Command of the EZLN, "First Declaration from the Lacondon Jungle, EZLN's Declaration of War: 'Today We Say 'Enough Is Enough!' (*Ya Basta*!)," *Brown University Library Center for Digital Scholarship*, 1993, https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-3-mexico/primary-documents-with-accompanying-discussion-questions/document-9-first-declaration-from-the-lacandon-jungle-today-we-say-enough-is-enough-ya-basta-ezln-command-1993/; Philippe Pignarre and Isabelle Stengers, *Capitalist Sorcery: Breaking the Spell*, trans. Andrew Goffey, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.

dreaming. I had, as Philippe Pignarre and Stengers write, become the "child of an event."[24] As

they write: "The event creates its own 'now' to which the question of a certain 'acting as if,'

which is proper to children when they make things (up), responds."[25]

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One morning, in the spring of 2015, as Simone and I sat alone together eating a

breakfast of strawberry yogurt, she looked at me quizzically and asked: "*Baba*?" Daddy? For

days beforehand, she had been running around the apartment babbling. Among her

phonemes, one kept recurring: bi, bi, bi, bi, bi, bi...bibi. At some point, Babs and I, who had

been embroiled in a quiet panic about what I should be called––even adult Italians had

trouble pronouncing "Darren"––discovered that *bibi* was not nonsense, it was me. Simone was

already in daycare and had already been taught by many books that babies have a *mamma*

and a *baba*. But who is this *baba*? Is it you? I looked back lovingly at her round, yogurt strewn

face and affirmed what she had taught me, "*Io sono la tua bibi, amore.*" I'm your bibi, love. She

paused, then nodded a resolutely approving nod. I am not The Father; I am the child of this

moment.

Outline of the Dissertation

Bologna is a School of Activism unfolds across six chapters. Before outlining their progression

and contents, a note on methods and methodology: Owing to the multi-method approach that

I developed in collaboration with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti––which is comprised of

activist archive-making, life historical and semi-structured interviews, participant observation

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[24] Pignarre and Stengers, *Capitalist Sorcery*, 4.
[25] Pignarre and Stengers, *Capitalist Sorcery*, 4.

in assemblies and demonstrations, media analysis, translation, and *auto-inchiesta*––there is no separate methodological chapter in the dissertation. Instead, I describe the methods and methodologies that I engaged over the course of the research in Chapters 2, 4, and 5. I situate the archiving praxis and life-historical work that informs both Chapters 2 and 3 at the beginning of Chapter 2. Chapter 4 outlines the activist approach that guided my interviews and participant observation, which also informs my work both in that chapter and in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 further specifies my reliance on popular media analysis in both that chapter and Chapter 6. Notwithstanding the distinctiveness of the methods that I describe in the chapters themselves, my overall approach can (and should) be understood as embodying the methodology of autonomous praxis itself, namely, that theory is produced both *in* and *from* (and, hopefully, *for*) everyday political struggles.

Chapter 1, "Toward Ecologies of TransFeministQueer Autonomous Praxis," encompasses a review of the literatures of urban political ecology, feminist and queer ecologies, geographies of sexuality, and feminist/queer geographies. In discussing these literatures, I situate the dissertation as an intervention that calls for the transversal engagement of scholars working in urban political ecology and queer geography both with each other and with the ways in which everyday ecologies of autonomous political praxis conjugate the universalizing tendencies of Anglo-American theory into particular situations. Initially, I build my review on an understanding of transversality as the intersection of differently positioned and conditioned spaces, subjectivities, and struggles. In light of the distinctive foci of the scholarly literatures and debates that I review throughout the chapter, I emphasize points of contact between and among these fields. I do so in order to set the stage for my demonstration throughout the dissertation of how the myriad influences that have shaped the emergence of transfeministqueer autonomy in Bologna reconfigure scholarly

understandings of both "the urban" and "the natural" by way of an emphasis on the politics of

collective subject formation and through the development of Smaschieramenti's distinctive

approach to spatial praxis. As the chapter unfolds, I hone in on transversality as an extant

political mode, one which subverts both the tendency of disciplinary knowledge production to

emphasize division and divergence in scholarly praxis and the tendency of interdisciplinary

knowledge production to emphasize its political potential even as it increasingly encounters

the distinct limitations of what scholar Roderick Ferguson calls the "will to institutionality." I

substantiate my critique of these tendencies by way of tracing the scholarly divergence of

queer geographies from feminist geographies, largely articulated through the former's

adoption of the notion of subjectless critique, or critique without a "proper object." Honing in

on the differences between subjectlessness as a mode of critique and subjectlessness as a way

of doing politics, I invite a critical (re)reading of queer geographers' appeal to both

intersectional analysis and queer of color critique as ostensible antidotes to the paradoxes that

obtain when disciplinary divergences stabilize as what feminist scholar Robyn Wiegman calls

"identity knowledges." Then, as a bridge between the work reviewed in Chapter 1 and the

work of the subsequent chapters, I proceed to outline the genealogy of European

transfeminism and to define the notion of political translation.

Chapter 2, "The Eccentric Archive," focuses on the political, emotional, and embodied

labor entailed in transfeministqueer archiving-as-praxis. By way of reading an unpublished

essay by Renato Busarello, one of the founding members of Atlantide and two of its

collectives, Antagonismo Gay and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, I focus on the relationship

between the affects of rage and frustration and the construction of counter-hegemonic

archives, which both nourish and sustain the incessant production of transfeministqueer

knowledges by autonomous social movements. My translational and political reading of

Busarello's essay, which is titled "'I Hate Your Archive!,'" not only demonstrates how the movements themselves have translated, adapted, and experimented with the insights of anglophone feminist and queer theory, it also highlights how these translations have been contextualized and mobilized to critique the mainstreaming of LGBT politics at various levels of the state in Italy and the European Union, more widely. I close the chapter by considering the distinctive epistemopolitics that subtend two queer theoretical texts recently published in Italy; one has been translated into English, the other has not.

Throughout the chapter's description of both archiving-as-praxis and the political mobilization of such archives, I draw on the approaches that I discuss in Chapter 1 to track the relationship between the universal and the particular. I do so with an interest in the ways in which the political translation of foundational texts in anglophone queer and feminist theory into Italian (re)configures modes of heterolingual address that implicate both the Italian academy's exclusion of queer and feminist theory and the Anglo-American academy's relative indifference to explicitly non-institutional forms of collective political praxis. I distinguish institutional/disciplinary notions of anti-identitarianism from those that operate in non-institutional/anti-disciplinary contexts in order to substantiate my call for a transversalization of queer geographies and urban political ecology. I argue that transversalization productively exploits the heterogeneity that distinguishes modes of subjectivation/textual production rooted in Anglo-American economies of citation from those that (re)compose subjectivities and texts in ecologies of praxis. Again noting the difference between subjectlessness as a mode of critique and subjectlessness as a mode of political organizing, my work in Chapter 2 presages a deeper analysis of the implications of articulating a distinctively transfeministqueer approach to autonomous Marxism.

Chapter 3, "Navigating toward Atlantide," continues to engage with the Eccentric Archive, but shifts focus to the founding of Atlantide, the self-managed and occupied space that became home to multiple collectives––which I describe in Chapter 4 as inhabiting the space in a mode of mutually co-existing separatisms––over its nearly twenty years of existence. Reading two fliers announcing the opening of the space, I turn my attention to the relationship between autonomy and ecology such that the stakes of articulating transfeministqueer autonomy as comprising a queer urban ecology of spatial praxis become palpable. In so doing, I situate the founding of Atlantide with respect to masculinist traditions of autonomous Marxism, with which Atlantide's founding documents both engage and disidentify. Proceeding from this reading, "Navigating toward Atlantide" (re)vindicates an alternative genealogy of autonomous praxis that emphasizes the far-reaching spatio-historical influences which have enabled the emergence of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis in Bologna. Engaging with the lifework of three key scholar/activists and public intellectuals–– Sandra Schiassi, Mario Mieli, Porpora Marcasciano––I trace the ecologies of praxis that have rendered Bologna and Atlantide as central nodes for the creative production of transfeministqueer autonomous knowledges and practices.

I begin by drawing on a life-historical interview that I conducted with the late Sandra Schiassi, one of the foremost Bolognese feminists of her generation. Attending to Schiassi's own travels both within and beyond Italy, I show how "historical" feminism is not a singular point in a progressive chronology of divergence, but an enduring presence suffused with memories and premonitions, including both the memory of lessons derived from the victories of so-called second-wave feminisms and the premonition of theoretical engagements that ecologically link autonomous praxis with the politics of decoloniality. In contrast to anxious operations of citational exclusion and inclusion that dominate anglophone scholarly

representations of second-wave feminism, I show how ecologies of praxis instead invite both

creative engagement with feminisms' mistakes and multiplicities through the cultivation of

loving intergenerational relationships among feminists and queers and how they open up

space for difficult and necessary conversations between autonomous feminism and

decoloniality. In outlining the implications of this turn toward autonomy, I draw both on

work by Georgy Katsiaficas, one of the most prominent chroniclers of the global social

movements that have developed autonomy, and by Walter Mignolo, whose understanding of

autonomy has emphasized its decolonial dimensions. In light of these multiple and

overlapping (re)routings of autonomy, I show how attending to autonomous praxis embodies

Cindi Katz's notion of "minor geographies."[26] Reading Katz's interventions through my

engagement with archiving-as-praxis in Chapter 2, I contend that the everyday work of

transfeministqueer collective subject-formation effectively challenges the depoliticizing

paradoxes that accompany the reproduction of Anglo-American queer and feminist

scholarship as a form of homolingual address. Such paradoxes are embodied in Katz's

critique, which, among other things, expresses frustration at the way that so-called major

theory often proceeds as if it cannot understand the critiques and complaints of those it deems

minor. Specifying this contention with regard to Bolognese autonomy, I recast the concept of

the right to the city in line with the Take Back the City Movement––and, relatedly, with

Lefebvre's concept of territorial *autogestion*––and argue for the necessity of a shift in critical

urban theory *and* queer geographies toward a transversal engagement with autonomous

ecologies of praxis.

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[26] Cindi Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 4 (1996): 487–99; Cindi Katz, "Revisiting Minor Theory," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35, no. 4 (2017): 596–99, https://doi:10.1177/0263775817718012.

I then outline Mario Mieli's iconoclastic synthesis of Marx and Freud in the recently re-translated book *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, which offers a landmark theorization of the universality of homosexual desire. Mieli develops numerous concepts that are central to Smaschieramenti's praxes. As I detail further in Chapter 3, my discussion of Mieli's work is primarily interested in its contents, which are central both to articulating a distinctive approach to gay liberation/communism and to positioning that approach as an alternative to masculinist autonomous traditions. Building on my reading of Mieli, I then consider the "alchemical" writings of legendary public intellectual Porpora Marcasciano, which remain untranslated. Taking both Mieli's and Marcasciano's approaches as evocative of the foundational roles played by historical forms of gay and trans liberation in the contemporary articulation of transfeministqueer autonomy, I show how techniques of (re)reading––such as those proposed by both Jennifer Nash and Roderick Ferguson, whose work I discuss in Chapter 1––and (re)translating occasion a deeper consideration of place-based articulations of autonomous praxis in the wake of the collapse of the first wave of autonomous organizing and theorizing that took place during Italy's long-1968. My reading of Marcasciano, in particular, not only refigures the ostensible perils of identity politics by attending to the stubborn particulars of place, voice, and genre, it also invites a more thoroughgoing account of the frequently unacknowledged continuities between masculinist autonomy, autonomous feminism, and transfeministqueer autonomy.

The implications of situating transfeministqueer autonomy in this way take further shape in Chapter 4, "The Birth of Smaschieramenti," in which I describe the evolution of the gay male separatist collective Antagonismo Gay into the transfeministqueer Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. Nestling further into a "minor geographical" register, I conjugate my reading of autonomy's minor, ecological, and decolonial dimensions in Chapters 2 and 3 by

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way of describing the immediate political circumstances that prompted Antagonismo Gay's evolution into Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and by detailing Smaschieramenti's adaptive reuse of the classic autonomous Marxist praxis of *auto-inchiesta*. I show how, from its very beginnings, Smaschieramenti has developed a distinctive form of politics that variously undertakes to respond to the masculinism of the wider movement and its repertoires of political praxis, to disrupt the incessant reproduction of normative forms of intimacy, to cope with conditions of work/non-work confronted by transfeministqueer subjects, and to invent and sustain forms of self-managed transfeministqueer collective self-care/healthcare. Throughout my account of the emergence of Smaschieramenti's praxes, I argue that transfeministqueer autonomy constitutes an active experimentation in *re-/displacing* the traditional locus for organizing collective revolutionary subjectivity––namely, the factory, knowledge-based or otherwise––by multiplying sites and modes of politicized engagement.

"The Birth of Smaschieramenti" demonstrates how transfeministqueer autonomy turns the historical praxes of the movement in on themselves by reclaiming the traditionally factory-centric praxis of *auto-inchiesta* to (re)map the blind spots and exclusions that have prevented the so-called "mixed movement"––the analogical equivalent of which would be masculinist formations of critical urban geography––from incorporating and taking seriously the constitutive roles played not just by gender/sexuality (among other axes of power), but also by the affirmative and active (re)composition of autonomous collective subjects in quasi-separatist and strategically essentialist ways. Here again, distinctions between a scholarly commitment to subjectlessness and an understanding of subjectlessness as a mode of political organizing emerge and point toward the necessity of (re)composing autonomous Marxism by way of reviving, (re)inventing, and experimenting with submerged movement histories. Such (re)compositions play with the purity of the form of the "laboratory" by ceaselessly seeking to

contaminate politically mixed, masculine, mainstream, and institutional spaces, processes, and social relations with mutated (i.e. queered) forms of their own praxes in turn revealing the longstanding role that gendered and sexualized relations have played in identifying the horizons of autonomous praxis. Contamination conjures ecological conditions of disturbance and political modes of provocation, irony, and subversion, all of which lend themselves not only to thinking in "minor registers," but also to committing to collective praxis as one pathway toward radically altering the ways that geographers (and others) might relationally conceptualize, engage, and transform everyday urban ecologies by creating new kinds of political spaces and relations. I argue that, while transfeministqueer autonomy cannot easily be understood as an "ecological politics" in any conventional sense insofar as it does not deal with easily recognizable manifestations of "green nature," I demonstrate that it nonetheless has *everything* to do with the places we "minors" would seek to call home––our bodies, our spaces, our cities, this earth––through its emphasis on the exercise of collective self-determination and its development of practices that rework the everyday politics of belonging. I use ecology in an intentionally "perverse" way so as to play at its valences, including both its metaphorical and its queer senses. In the first instance, ecology-as-metaphor is no less relevant than its other uses on account of its being a metaphor, but is, if anything, more relevant on account of the general palpability of ecological metaphors to non-specialist audiences. Further, in light of my reading of queer ecologies in Chapter 1, I demonstrate that ecology is not merely a metaphor, but a mode of collective organizing that weaves experimental autonomous practices together with the exigencies presented by immediately political situations in order to multiply opportunities for transforming normative subjectivities toward revolutionary ends.

Despite being grounded by a commitment to non-state forms of self-organization and self-management, Smaschieramenti's efforts to maintain Atlantide as an ecology of belonging in which minoritized subjects and practices might take place and transform space have consistently confronted the municipal state's claims to legitimate proprietary authority over both the space and the bodies and objects that occupied it. The complexity of this situation is embodied in the local government's persistent efforts to evict Atlantide and its collectives, which effectively prompted Atlantide and its collectives to articulate spatial praxes that render the city not merely as a site of struggle, but also as a relational object of struggle. The dialectics of this struggle are at the center of Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5, "Atlantide R-Esiste!" (Atlantide Exists/Resists!), I show how Atlantide's own non-proprietary approach to making urban space was challenged during a period in which its collectives were entrapped by the paradoxes of institutionalization inaugurated by the signing of a *convenzione*––essentially a contract––that temporarily legalized their occupation of the space and "legitimized" their situation in the eyes of municipal authorities. Alongside a detailed account of the machinations of institutional/representative politics in Bologna, I consider the perils and promises of institutionalizing transfeministqueer autonomy as revealed by the content of the *convenzione* and by the political crisis that ensued in the wake of its expiration in 2011. Further, I show how Atlantide's entry into a formal juridical relationship with the local government shifted the internal ecology of the space by prompting the formation of the first ever general assembly, which, among other factors, led the lesbian and feminist separatist collective Clitoristrix to leave Atlantide after more than a decade of residing there. Beyond these internal ecological reconfigurations, I also demonstrate how Atlantide's institutional interlude both contributed to the emergence of Smaschieramenti itself and shaped wider public perceptions of the space as an "LGBT Social Center." In light of my discussions about

the divergences between feminist and queer geographies in Chapter 1, I conclude the chapter with an exploration of how Atlantide's encounter with the everyday operations of institutional authority sharpened its approach to transversal politics by way of "unmasking" the state's claims to legitimate territorial authority and opening pathways for alternative conceptualizations of the everyday politics of urbanization.

Where Chapter 5 meditates on the politics of "unmasking" necessitated by collective efforts to make sense of the paradoxes that accompanied the institutionalization of transfeministqueer autonomy, Chapter 6, "The Lost City," takes up the politics of defensiveness by detailing how the remaining collectives of Atlantide mobilized a broad campaign directed at avoiding the perennial threat of eviction, which only intensified after the expiration of the *convenzione*. By way of describing two distinct waves of *la difesa di Atlantide*–– the defense of Atlantide––I translate Nash's critique of the institutionalization of intersectionality to make sense out of the eventual eviction of Atlantide in October 2015. My account of the first wave of *la difesa* shows how the collective subjects who had called Atlantide home developed the praxis of *frivolezza tattica*––frivolous tactics––as an act of both collective self-preservation and as a mode of organizing a broad coalition of autonomous political spaces in ways that both held on to and let go of the founding political commitments of Smaschieramenti and Atlantide. In my description of the second wave of *la difesa*, I explain what led Atlantide's collectives to recast their defensiveness as a form of proliferating ecological resistance to the multiple pressures of legalization, gentrification, and so-called urban renewal. I conclude the chapter by gesturing toward how the two waves of *la difesa* informed the collectives' response to their eventual eviction in the form of two post-eviction campaigns: #AtlantideOvunque, or #AtlantideEverywhere, and #CheGenerediCittà, or #WhatKind/GenderofCity.

The open-endedness and incompleteness of both campaigns with regard to the situation of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis in the wake of Atlantide's eviction leads to the Conclusion: "An Intersectionality of Struggles." Recounting a dialogue that Angela Davis had with students and activists at the University of Bologna in 2016, I contend that her distinctive political and intellectual project, which both embodies the history of transversal politics and witnesses the inherent intersectionality of apparently divergent everyday struggles for justice, suggests one very powerful way forward for both scholars and activists committed to everyday enactments of revolutionary politics.

Toward Ecologies of TransFeministQueer Autonomous Praxis

Chapter Outline

This chapter positions the activist ethnographic and political core of the dissertation as an intervention into two scholarly formations: urban political ecology and queer geographies. My review of scholarship in these fields works toward understanding the epistemological, methodological, and political implications of adopting a transversal approach to ecologies of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis. The chapter proceeds as follows: I begin by describing how anthropological approaches to urban political ecology point to ethnography as the method best suited to inhabiting and researching the webs of ecological relations that coalesce in urban research sites. I explore how key ethnographic works have rendered the relationship between the universal and the particular by way of their attention to practices of translation, boundary-making, and collective political action. I then turn to geographic approaches to urban political ecology, which have arguably been more invested in articulating the "urban" dimension of urban political ecology (UPE). As I describe, owing largely to the influence of early Marxist/Lefebvrian approaches, geographic approaches to UPE have, even by their own account, done far too little to develop an explicit politics that deals with racism, colonialism, and heteropatriarchy.

I then look to feminist political ecology (FPE) and queer ecologies (QE), formations that Marxist/Lefebvrian approaches to urban political ecology are slowly beginning to engage. Both of these scholarly formations reconfigure and (dis)place urban political ecology's preoccupation with "the urban" by way of collaborative and embodied approaches to a variety of research topics, sites, and relations including: the body, the family, language and

representation, and modes of social belonging. Reading across political ecologies, I show how everyday enactments of gendered and sexualized relations condense within the discipline of geography and its scholarly praxes, citational networks, and research sites.

In light of my readings of UPE, FPE, and QE, I then focus on the subfield of geographies of sexuality to show how it has engaged with gendered and sexualized relations within the discipline and its scholarly praxes. After first accounting for the divergence of feminist and queer geographies, I highlight key interventions made by queer geographers in the subfield. I describe how queer geographies have developed through their engagement of white Anglo-American academic queer theory even as they have increasingly, if only partially, looked to Black Feminism and queer of color scholarship to propose intersectionality as a "way forward" for the subfield in light of some of the limitations and issues presented by queer theory's commitment to subjectless critique. In the next section, devoted to non-geographic elaborations of the institutionalization of both intersectionality and queer of color scholarship, I focus on the methodological, epistemological, and political implications of this alternatingly capacious and expansionist will to institutionalization. I argue that the dominant white queer geographic approaches both fail to grasp the consequences of their divergence from feminisms that are not nearly as monolithic as they are often made out to be (to say nothing of queer geographic inattention to transfeminism and gender non-conformity) and insufficiently engage in the historical materialism of queer politics beyond the Anglo-American context. This critique of queer geography leads me to suggest a transversal engagement with transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, which I articulate in the final section through a genealogy of European transfeminism and an explanation of the notion of political translation.

Urban Political Ecology

In this section, I review key literature comprising the heterogeneous field of UPE by way of: (1) tracing the distinctive approaches that anthropologists and geographers have taken to shaping and defining the field and its methodologies; and (2) showing how FPE and QE have critiqued and exceeded Marxist formulations of UPE research through their mutually reinforcing, but differently articulated, emphases on the intersectional ecological politics of gender and sexuality. While I begin by outlining key anthropological approaches to UPE, I pay closer attention to geographic scholarship, where I note the disproportionate influence of critical urban studies on UPE's disciplinary formation and methodological elaboration and also try to push beyond the limitations that this influence has often tracked along with it. My work in this section demonstrates the limitations of Marxist UPE's attachments to "recognizable" forms of urban and ecological politics and addresses how these limitations have shaped scholarly figurations of the (collective) subjects engaged in such politics.

As I detail further both below and in Chapter 2, my understanding of ecology is transversal: I emphasize ecology as both a mode and a method of thinking, drawing, and practicing connections between and among apparently disparate locations, struggles, and collective subjectivities. Additionally, in light of my discussion below about how queer geographers have looked to intersectionality and queer of color scholarship, I note that such an understanding of ecology subtends my call for a transversalization of queer geographies, one that necessarily emphasizes an intersectionality of collective struggles as much, if not more than, an intersectionality that is focused on individualized identities and subjectivities. In relation to UPE, specifically, this call serves to ask those working in the field to think more deeply about how the self-determined articulation of collective subjectivities is itself woven into the everyday work of space and place-making, including the making of urban space and

the taking place of struggles to denaturalize masculinity and to unmask the operations of power that have rendered it so central to both dominant visions of urban transformation and to non-feminist forms of activism, which tend to assert their claims to space in masculinist ways. In short, reading UPE from a transfeministqueer perspective draws attention to the ways in which dominant regimes of gender/sexuality play a significant role in the socionatural organization and transformation of everyday urban ecologies.

Broadly, research in UPE focuses on understanding the increasing centrality of cities and urbanization in the manifold socio-environmental crises prompted by the emergence and endurance of what is variously termed urban, racial, and/or colonial capitalism. Such a concern has only become more urgent as multifarious movements for social and environmental justice continue to resist the brutality of neoliberal regimes of austerity; the financialization and precaritization of everyday life; the militarization of police forces and the expansion of carceral and security states; the ongoing theft of commonly held lands and practices; and the forced displacement of massive numbers of people, whether prompted by war, climate change, or other unnatural disasters. To invoke the slogan that emerged from the alter-/anti-globalization movement of the 1990s: It is painfully obvious that another world is not only possible, but also absolutely necessary. And yet, how best to conceptualize and understand––let alone organize and sustain––struggles for liberation, self-determination, justice, peace, and freedom remain highly contested matters for scholars working in the broad area of UPE, not least on account of sometimes widely divergent cosmo-/onto-/epistemological understandings of "nature."

In the midst of such an abject set of socio-ecological conditions, what has occupied the attention of UPE perhaps more than any other topic is the relationship between "the urban" and "the natural." Questions of both "politics" and "ecology"/"nature" have loomed large in

anthropological approaches to UPE, whereas early geographic scholarship in UPE is largely preoccupied with the status of "the urban," "the city," "urbanization," whether as crucibles of political struggle, sites for research, theoretical "objects," or useful abstractions. The particular limitations of dominant geographic approaches to UPE have recently been recast by the proliferation of new analytics in policy, academic, and popular discourse––the urban age, planetary urbanization, and the Anthropocene––all of which, in some way, seek to redefine the stakes of contemporary politics and knowledge production in/on (urban) nature(s) and planetary futures.[1]

Urban Political Ecology: Anthropological Approaches

As anthropologist Anne Rademacher has described it, UPE is mutually informed by developments in both the biophysical and the social sciences.[2] On the biophysical science side, urban ecosystems ecologists are increasingly developing "models [that] incorporate human beings and social processes rather than labeling them as disturbances."[3] On the social sciences side, Rademacher points out that "scientific forms of inquiry, and their subsequent diagnostics, usually assume a privileged place among multiple ways of knowing and experiencing socionatural change."[4] Nonetheless, she contends that such forms of inquiry and diagnosis "cannot convey how social agents actively refashion these conditions or struggle over the present and future qualities of the urban experience."[5] Methodologically,

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[1] Linda Peake *et alia*, "Placing Planetary Urbanization in Other Fields of Vision," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 3 (2018): 374–86, https://doi:10.1177/0263775818775198.
[2] Anne Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44, no. 1 (2015): 137–52, https://doi:10.1146/annurev-an-44-themes.
[3] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 138.
[4] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 138.
[5] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 139.

Rademacher proposes that ethnography holds significant promise in generating a robust

understanding of how urban political ecologies themselves function as sites of everyday

struggle over the material and symbolic dimensions of urban nature, as incubators for

emergent socionatural imaginaries in and of urban life, and as zones for the collective

contestation of environmental futures.

A raft of work from the late 1980s and early 1990s effectively prompted researchers

across a variety of disciplines to question and to investigate the mutual constitution of nature

and culture.[6] Rademacher points out, however, that "only in the past decade have questions

framed in environmental terms joined more established bodies of work" on the urban.[7]

Indeed, the earliest influences on the eventual emergence of political ecology (*sans* the urban)

in anthropology are to be found in work by Eric Wolf, who challenged the imperial tendencies

of the discipline by historicizing European colonial expansion into the "rest of the world" and

by showing how such expansion wrote many societies and peoples out of history.[8] Along with

other early anthropological work, such as Piers Blaikie's study of soil erosion in the

Himalayas, this line of inquiry eventually complicated narratives of environmental change by

showing their imbrication with wider projects of modernization, development, and

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[6] Donna J. Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nation in the World of Modern Science*, (New York City, NY: Routledge, 1989); Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*; Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium_FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*, (New York City: Routledge, 1997); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and Law John, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[7] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 139; Setha Low, "The Anthropology of Cities: Imagining and Theorizing the City," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25, no. 1 (1996), https://doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.25.1.383: 383–409; Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*, (New York City: Verso, 2003); Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2004); Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paolo*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, *Cities and Citizenship*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

[8] Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); See also Eric Wolf, "Ownership and Political Ecology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (1972): 201–5.

colonial/capitalist expansion/extraction.[9] As Rademacher describes it, such work often focused not so much on pre-existing or given territories *of* urbanity and nature, but on the practices of boundary-making that reconfigure the socialities and meanings associated *with* nature, whether in terms of power, economy, or morality.[10] Exploring the practices of boundary-making is perhaps the most fruitful zone of overlap between studies that locate themselves in rural/marginal zones and those that focus more concertedly on "the urban." Such a framing allows us to see, for example, how a state's efforts to bolster and promote "natural" family forms, such as those that I discuss in Chapter 4, deploy the category of the natural to underwrite policies and projects that materially reshape cities and social relations. There are, of course, different vantage points from which to analyze and understand such efforts; some are more embedded while others take a top-down or god's eye view.

For her part, Rademacher "sketch[es] two nodes of convergence between urban and environmental scholarly praxis that have been particularly generative of new ethnographic understandings of socionatural change."[11] The first node, which includes emergent propositions such as Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid's "planetary urbanization," is influenced by Henri Lefebvre's work on urban revolution, which I discuss further below. The second node is somewhat more amorphously defined as a political ecology *of* the city, as opposed to a political ecology that has been brought *into* the city, where the latter is largely concerned with "appl[ying] the intellectual agenda of more traditional political ecology to

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[9] Piers Blaikie, *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries*, (London: Longman, 1985); Richard Peet and Michael Watts, eds., *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements*, (London: Routledge, 1996); Arturo Escobar, "Whose Knowledge, Whose Nature? Biodiversity, Conservation, and the Political Ecology of Social Movements," *Journal of Political Ecology* 5, no. 1 (1998): 53–82; Tim Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology: the Politics of Environmental Science*, (London: Routledge, 2003).
[10] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 140–141; For example, see Hugh Raffles, *In Amazonia: a Natural History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
[11] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 141.

field sites in cities."[12] Political ecologies *of* the city encompass research sites and processes "located within or across specific cities or city neighborhoods" and, in so doing, dismantle "the fallacy of a clear rural-urban divide" without conflating distinctive experiences of spaces variously marked as urban or rural.[13] Most importantly, this approach to UPE is "deeply historicized" in its use of "ethnographic methodological strategies."[14]

As for the scholarly debates that "generate[d] a rich and dynamic stage for recent ethnographies of urban nature and urban sociality"––work that "easily transcends disciplinary classification"––Rademacher identifies four distinctive threads of influence: works that trouble epistemological dualisms separating nature from culture;[15] studies of economic globalization;[16] critiques of the production of scientific knowledge;[17] and geographic approaches that emphasize issues of scale by way of developing the notion of urban metabolism, which I discuss further in the next section. Among the ethnographies that respond to these debates, those that focus on "advancing scholarly conversations about the lived practices and meanings of a twenty-first-century, interconnected urban world" stand out

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[12] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 144. Anne Rademacher and K. Sivaramakrishnan, *Ecologies of Urbanism in India: Metropolitan Civility and Sustainability*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013); Amita Baviskar, *Waterlines: the Penguin Book of River Writings*, (Delhi: Penguin, 2004); See also Amita Baviskar, ed., *Contested Grounds: Essays on Nature, Culture and Power*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[13] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 141.

[14] Rademacher, "Urban Political Ecology," 141.

[15] William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, (New York City: Hill and Wang, 1983); William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York City: W.W. Norton, 1991); Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Donald Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*; For a more contemporary take on nature/society dualisms in the context of global warming, see Andreas Malm, *The Progress of This Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World*, (London: Verso, 2018). I am grateful to Stefan Kipfer for directing me to the last reference.

[16] Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: Introducing a Concept," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 27–43; Anna Tsing, "The Global Situation," *Cultural Anthropology* 15, no. 3 (2000): 327–60.

[17] Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: the Construction of Scientific Facts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I*, trans. Robert Bononno, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Michel Callon, ed., *The Laws of the Markets*, (Oxford: Blackwell/The Sociological Review, 1998).

for their creative approaches to understanding the politics of translation, boundary-making, and everyday collective action, all of which are central to my work in this dissertation.

As ethnographic work by Anna Tsing and Timothy Choy attests, processes of translation, boundary-making, and everyday collective action *are* relational political ecologies that render the forest, in Tsing's case, and the city, in Choy's case, particularly rich sites for understanding the contestation and construction of environmental knowledge practices.[18] Tsing's *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* takes a particular interest in the fraught notion of the "global" as "a way of thinking about the history of social projects."[19] Her work traces the numerous and often paradoxical ways in which "friction" characterizes global collaboration and connection. Tsing argues that increasing scholarly acknowledgment of the longstanding relational interfaces between "the global" and "the local" make it possible "to accept the idea that powerless minorities have accommodated themselves to global forces," even as she points out the methodological difficulty that obtains when one attempts to do the opposite, namely, to understand how "global forces are themselves congeries of local/global interaction."[20] Inhabiting and exploring this difficulty with the methodological tools afforded by ethnography leads Tsing to question the "deep irony" that "universalism is implicated in *both* imperial schemes to control the world and liberatory mobilizations for justice and empowerment."[21] Rather than glibly calling for the abandonment of universals––and the resulting embrace of justice-oriented mobilizations that such an abandonment might seem to offer––Tsing follows them in order to better understand how they variously enable "unexpected alliances," "collaborations through which knowledge is made and maintained,"

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[18] Timothy Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison: An Ethnography of Endangerment in Hong Kong*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[19] Tsing, *Friction*, ix.
[20] Tsing, *Friction*, 3.
[21] Tsing, *Friction*, 9.

and coalitions marked by "encounters across difference [that] exceed their disciplined boundaries to make new forms of politics possible."[22] Ultimately, Tsing's approach counters both implicit and explicit assumptions about the inevitability of global neoliberal capitalism's triumph over alternative ways of organizing socio-ecological relations. In so doing, *Friction* serves as a powerful example of what happens when researchers focus on "grounding [their] analysis of global connection not in abstract principles of power and knowledge but rather in concrete engagements."[23]

For his part, Timothy Choy focuses on emergent forms of environmentalism in Hong Kong using the heuristic notion of ecologies of comparison, which he defines as "forms of political thinking and action that are both enabling of and enabled by the problems of environmentalism in the post-colony."[24] Drawing together different "senses gathered by the term ecology," Choy traces the "inseparability of political and epistemic practices" and identifies the "methods of comparison [that] call relations of interdependence, connection, and disjunction into being."[25] Echoing Tsing's emphasis on the fricative interface of global/local, Choy elaborates how "knowledge practices constituting environmental politics rely upon and generate scales of comparative analysis––local, global, specific, general, particular, universal, species, ecosystem––in the course of drawing ecological comparisons and relations."[26]

In the provocative conclusion to the book, Choy troubles an "unremarked attachment to solidity" by exploring air as a kind of "substantiation" that both matters too much and not enough in environmental politics. For Choy, air reconfigures how one might imagine and

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[22] Tsing, *Friction*, 12–14.
[23] Tsing, *Friction*, 267.
[24] Choy*, Ecologies of Comparison*, 11.
[25] Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison*, 11–12.
[26] Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison*, 12.

counter capitalism's "constant revolutionizing of society."[27] Rather than lean on the notion of the concrete as an immunization against capitalism's tendency to melt all that is solid, Choy invites a more intuitive, atmospheric, and poetic approach in the hopes that it "might help us to imagine a collective condition that is neither particular nor universal." For Choy, air "orients us to the many means, practices, experiences, weather events, and economic relations that co-implicate us at different points as 'breathers.'"[28] Eschewing any simplistic desire to solve the ostensible paradox of the universal and the particular, Choy notes that framing the relationship between the particular and the universal *as a paradox* relies on a logic of "initial opposition." Insisting on air's "banality," the author points toward an approach that works beyond "conventionalized figures" of the universal and the particular.[29] In so doing, he offers the possibility of a "poetic revival through the activation of examples, where details yield not simply particularity but the potential for mobile metaphors."[30]

Notwithstanding the "frictions" between Tsing's call for concrete engagement and Choy's appeal to air as an exemplary mobile metaphor, both projects demonstrate the potential that situated ethnographic work has to render political ecology a mode of thought that reconfigures conventional forms of dualistic thinking, particularly where such thinking implicates multiple scales. By attending to the everyday relations that comprise processes of translation, boundary-making, and collective action, each of them points to issues of scale and methodology, which have been taken up in somewhat different ways by geographic approaches to UPE. Alongside my engagement with Stengers, I am drawn to thinking ecology with Tsing and Choy not only because their methodology highlights situatedness and the

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[27] Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison*, 143.
[28] Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison*, 145.
[29] Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison*, 167–168.
[30] Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison*, 168.

need to "follow" universals throughout their journeys in particular worlds, but also because of the ways in which both dominant knowledge and counter-hegemonic knowledge about gender/sexuality travel and are translated in distinct contexts. As I show in the final two sections of this chapter on transfeminism and political translation, knowledge which is considered counter-hegemonic in one context, like Anglo-American queer theory, can easily become hegemonic when it is translated into another context. At the same time, this process of translation is not smooth, meaning that the "arrival" of a translated text or practice is always subject to articulation with "local" counterparts to that text or practice. As Chapters 2 and 3 show, transfeministqueer autonomous engagements with a variety of knowledge-practices––state-based, autonomous, academic––have not only fomented frictions with institutional formulations, they have also highlighted the perils of treating emergent forms–– such as "queer," when translated into the Italian context––as wholly "revolutionizing" of extant modes of collective action, relationship building, and place-making.

Such engagements point to the need to move beyond both oppositional imaginaries of universal/particular and ahistorical social theories of urban nature in order to engage in research that generates new categories of analysis, metaphors, and relationships, thereby contributing to repertoires of political action that experimentally disrupt the separation of "the urban" from "the natural," including through queer ecological critiques of heteronormativity and reprocentricity, which I discuss further below. Further, as I detail in Chapter 3, what is perhaps most interesting from the point of view of transfeministqueer autonomy as it is practiced in Bologna is the way in which its emergence has woven together threads of historical and place-based creative, feminist, gay, and trans autonomous movements to reveal a submerged perspective on autonomous Marxism. As my engagement with Mario Mieli and Porpora Marcasciano, in particular, demonstrate, such an approach

entails not only a critique of "the natural"–-in this case, naturalized gender/sexuality and hegemonic masculinity–-but also a rigorous contestation of the ways in which the spaces, places, and relations targeted by hegemonic masculinity can be inhabited, reclaimed, and reconfigured through autonomous praxis.

Urban Political Ecology: Geographical Approaches

The putative binary opposition of "the urban" and "the natural" is precisely what animated the emergence of UPE within the discipline of geography. Like Rademacher, Nik Heynen, one of the foremost proponents of UPE in the discipline, has also been taking stock of its evolution of late. In a recent series of pieces for *Progress in Human Geography*, Heynen highlights three key dimensions of geographic approaches to UPE: an emphasis on the urban, a centering of abolition as a political-intellectual project, and a redefinition of the field by feminist and queer scholarship.[31] Like Rademacher, Heynen begins his discussion of the "first wave" of UPE scholarship by highlighting the influence of Lefebvre, noting, in particular, the influence of Lefebvre's concept of "urban revolution," through which the relationship between the city and the countryside/nature is radically refigured in a dialectical progression toward "complete urbanization."[32] Lefebvre's work remains central for geographers such as Erik Swyngedouw, one of the earliest proponents of UPE in geography.[33] Alongside Marxist geographers David

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[31] Nik Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology I: The Urban Century," *Progress in Human Geography* 38, no. 4 (2014): 598–604, https://doi:10.1177/0309132513500443; Nik Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology II: The Abolitionist Century," *Progress in Human Geography* 40, no. 6 (2016): 839–45, https://doi:10.1177/0309132515617394; Nik Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology III: The Feminist and Queer Century," *Progress in Human Geography* 42, no. 3 (2018): 446–52, https://doi:10.1177/0309132517693336. See also Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, eds., *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, (London: Routledge, 2006).
[32] Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).
[33] Erik Swyngedouw, "The City as a Hybrid: On Nature, Society and Cyborg Urbanization," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 7, no. 2 (1996): 65–80.

Harvey and Neil Smith, Swyngedouw centers the process of "metabolism," suggesting that it offers an "ontological way through the all too stifling dualisms that have historically plagued the discussions of nature *and* society."[34] Heynen goes on to define "urban metabolism as a dynamic process by which new sociospatial formations, intertwining[s] of materials, and collaborative enmeshing of social nature emerge and present themselves and are explicitly created through human labor and non-human processes simultaneously."[35] Indeed, early Marxist geographic approaches to UPE emphasize how tracking large-scale "flows" of apparently "natural" elements––water, dirt, *et cetera*––can disrupt persistent dualisms that epistemologically divide cities from nature, the cultural from the natural, the rural from the urban, and so on.[36] While such an emphasis on flow goes a great distance to understanding the interconnections that shape materialities of cities and the urban at a broad scale, they are, as my reviews of FPE and QE below demonstrate, insufficient for understanding both more intimate scales, like the body, and for approaching the materialities that are worked and reworked through the very definition of the natural as, for example, white, heterosexual, and male. Such a definition is, of course, not universal, but universalizing.

Swyngedouw, who initially proposed UPE in geography, argues that the tendency to treat "the dialectic between nature and society [...] [as] a conflictual relationship between two separate fields" artificially separates what is actually "the dialectical unity of the process of change as embodied in the thing itself."[37] Using a cup of water as an evocative example, Swyngedouw shows both the conceptual power and the conceptual problems presented by

[34] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology I," 599, emphasis in original.
[35] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology I," 599.
[36] Maria Kaika, *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*, (New York City: Routledge, 2005); Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). The commonsense proposition of a metabolic approach is embodied in the negative, by David Harvey's often paraphrased assertion that there is nothing particularly unnatural about the city. David Harvey, "The Nature of Environment: Dialectics of Social and Environmental Change," *Socialist Register* 29, no. 1 (1993): 1–51.
[37] Swyngedouw, "The City as a Hybrid," 69–70; Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

such a dialectical unity. He argues that "it does not take much to identify the profound social, cultural, political and ecological forces, struggles and power relations at work in [the] perpetual metabolizing circulation process of flowing water."[38] For his part, Swyngedouw looks to the work of Lefebvre who, on his reading, "insists on the ontological priority of process and flux which becomes interiorized in each of the moments of the production process, but always in a fleeting, dynamic and transgressive manner."[39] And yet, he suggests that the apparent simplicity of this political ecological relationship is troubled by "post-enlightenment" critiques of representation that insist on the situatedness and, therefore, the partiality of all knowledge-making projects, a suggestion that resonates with the more relational anthropological approaches discussed earlier.[40] Despite the influence that both actor-network and assemblage approaches have had in some formulations of UPE in geography, the trouble caused by such "post-enlightenment" critiques tracks along with geographic articulations of UPE insofar as they theorize urban revolution through a specifically dialectical understanding of transformation, one that is quite specifically focused on a imagination of metabolism over and above other ecological processes, including those that center gendered and sexualized relations as a fundamental part of socionatural transformation.[41]

In light of Swyngedouw's work, early geographic UPE placed two issues on the horizon: how to understand "the political ecology of the city," that is, the city as a process, and

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[38] Swyngedouw, "The City as a Hybrid," 70.
[39] Swyngedouw, "The City as a Hybrid," 73; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (London: Blackwell, 1991).
[40] Donna J. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, (New York City, NY: Routledge, 1991), 183–201.
[41] Further, reading Lefebvre alongside Latour, Swyngedouw suggests that "political ecology is a process-based episteme in which nothing is ever fixed; or, at best, fixity is the transient moment that can never be captured in its entirety as the flows perpetually destroy and create, combine and separate." "The City as a Hybrid," 74.

how to leverage such understanding toward the enactment of a "transformative socialist-ecological urban politics," namely, a modality of politics that mediates this process in an emancipatory way.[42] Given Swyngedouw's influence on first-wave UPE scholarship, it is hardly surprising that the question of "the urban" has loomed so large. Beyond the impact of work by Lefebvre, Harvey, and Swyngedouw, core geographic approaches to UPE have also been overwhelmingly influenced by the work of Neil Smith, who theorized a Marxist perspective on uneven development and the production of nature.[43] Smith's influence on UPE relates specifically to its preoccupations with modes of production, consumption, and exchange organized around material landscapes and forms.[44] It is my contention that transfeministqueer autonomous praxis offers another pathway for thinking and enacting transformative politics by way of its distinctive embodiments of both ecological and urban politics.

Returning to Heynen's review of the field, we encounter a second formation informed more extensively by actor-network theory (ANT) and post-humanist approaches.[45] Approaches that embody these influences do so, at least in part, as a critique of the tendency of metabolically-focused Marxist UPE to undertheorize both the "nature" side of the urban/nature dialectic and the political/subjective dimensions of this dialectic, both of which are more decisively central to FPE and QE, as I will describe in my respective reviews of those

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[42] Swyngedouw, "The City as a Hybrid," 74.
[43] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, 3rd ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008).
[44] Among the numerous iterations of UPE research, those focused on the production of urban nature in the form of parks, green spaces, waterfronts, and so on, clearly bear the mark of this influence. Noah Quastel, "Political Ecologies of Gentrification," *Urban Geography* 30, no. 7 (2009): 694–725, https://doi:10.2747/0272-3638.30.7.694; Susannah Bunce and Gene Desfor, "Introduction to 'Political Ecologies of Urban Waterfront Transformations'," *Cities* 24, no. 4 (2007): 251–58, https://doi:10.1016/j.cities.2007.02.001; Alec Brownlow, "An Archaeology of Fear and Environmental Change in Philadelphia," *Geoforum* 37, no. 2 (2006): 227–45, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2005.02.009..
[45] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology I," 601.

literatures.[46] Here I simply want to note the link between ANT/assemblage approaches in geography and anthropological approaches that Rademacher positioned as elaborations of post-humanist concerns that have subsequently underwritten both more-than-human geographies and a profusion of multi-species ethnographies.[47] Given that the initial waves of UPE in geography correspond to debates about the place of ANT and assemblage geographies in urban studies and urban theory, more broadly, discussions about the methodologies adequate to UPE have also highlighted distinctions between the urban––as a mode of production/reproduction of capitalism replete with corresponding social and spatial relations––and the city as a specific site/form.[48] In this vein, Hilary Angelo and David Wachsmuth have argued against what they call "methodological cityism."[49] Such interventions illustrate how UPE and its research agendas have continuously been consumed by questions of scale, over and above the politics of location, the place of subjectivity, and/or retheorizations of nature, all of which are in some way present in my encounters with

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[46] Kevin Grove, "Rethinking the Nature of Urban Environmental Politics: Security, Subjectivity, and the Non-Human," *Geoforum* 40, no. 2 (2009): 207–16, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.09.005; Ryan Holifield, "Actor-Network Theory as a Critical Approach to Environmental Justice: a Case Against Synthesis with Urban Political Ecology," *Antipode* 41, no. 4 (2009): 637–58, https://doi:10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00692.x; Matthew Gandy, "Queer Ecology: Nature, Sexuality, and Heterotopic Alliances," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30, no. 4 (2012): 727–47, https://doi:10.1068/d10511web.

[47] Bruce Braun, "Environmental Issues: Writing a More-Than-Human Urban Geography," *Progress in Human Geography* 29, no. 5 (August 14, 2006): 635–50; S. Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich, "The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography," *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (2010): 545–76, https://doi:10.1111/j.1548-1360.2010.01069.x.

[48] David Wachsmuth, David J. Madden, and Neil Brenner, "Between Abstraction and Complexity," *City* 15, no. 6 (December 2011): 740–50, https://doi:10.1080/13604813.2011.632903; Neil Brenner, David J. Madden, and David Wachsmuth, "Assemblage Urbanism and the Challenges of Critical Urban Theory," *City* 15, no. 2 (April 2011): 225–40, https://doi:10.1080/13604813.2011.568717.

[49] Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth, "Urbanizing Urban Political Ecology: A Critique of Methodological Cityism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 1 (2014): 16–27, https://doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12105. Angelo and Wachsmuth contend that, despite early emphases on "flow" and "connection," proponents of UPE have tended to focus too exclusively on the "product" of a bounded city as opposed to the "process" of urbanization. In essence, they argue that the abandonment of the city as a privileged "object" of analysis can render more fulsome investigations of "processes of urban transformation that are not limited to the city." "Urbanizing Urban Political Ecology," 24. Their coinage has subsequently been taken up by proponents of planetary urbanization as further evidence of the need to extend urban research to sites and geographies that, they argue, have too often been neglected in urban studies. See Neil Brenner, ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, (Berlin: Jovis, 2014).

transfeministqueer autonomous praxis. Notably, a focus on scale implies a politics very much invested in the necessity practices and concepts that "scale-up," rather than "scaling-down," in order to reclaim the process of urbanization to putatively non/anti-capitalist ends. In light of my emphasis on submerged perspectives, it is important to remember that not all politics aspire to "scale-up" in such ways. Many politicized responses to the extant and emergent socio-political crises of capitalism instead entail an emphasis on rebuilding relations on a more intimate scale and on reclaiming practices that, despite being derived from/engaged in large-scale struggles, have distinct and immediate power to begin the work of reorganizing relations rooted in collective self-determination. In short, such politics entail everyday praxis and a praxis of the everyday wherein power relations often figured as "secondary" in metabolic approaches to UPE––such as gender and sexuality––become a primary point of departure for the organization of collective struggles.

Many scholars working under the banner of UPE in geography do not center the everyday praxis of politics, preferring instead to focus on the abstract persistence of an urban/non-urban binary and to interrogate the ways that binary limits the "object choices" and research sites of UPE and critical urban studies, more broadly. One notable exception to this tendency is Alex Loftus's *Everyday Environmentalism: Creating an Urban Political Ecology*, in which the author "suggests [that geographers of UPE] must reformulate environmental politics on the terrain of the quotidian."[50] Drawing work by Smith and Lefebvre together with Antonio Gramsci and Gyorgi Lukacs, Loftus argues that, if scholars of UPE push "the boundaries of praxis into both the socio-natural realm" and

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[50] Alex Loftus, *Everyday Environmentalism: Creating an Urban Political Ecology*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012): xvii.

> the aesthetic experience, recapturing sensuous experience in the process, then
> [...] we have the possibility for a radical politics from which we might remake
> our cities in sensuously rich, radically democratic, and beautiful ways.[51]

In his assessment of this approach, Heynen contends that Loftus's work "serves as a major stepping stone in the codification of UPE through his mature theorizing and deep empirical grounding in South African hydro-struggles."[52] In light of my adoption of a similar emphasis on Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's everyday struggles and political praxes, I note that an emphasis on remaking the city, which I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6, is directly linked to historical articulation of autonomous movements, like the Take Back the City movement, which I discuss in Chapter 3. For the moment, I highlight that the sensuousness of experience is, from the point of view of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, very much entangled in collective (re)vindications of transfeminist and queer knowledge-practices. Such knowledge-practices both reclaim historical struggles and open up new horizons for creating a city where, for example, one might gather and be gay, cruise, fuck, subvert gender norms, or simply be trans without being subjected to violence or policing. These are, we might say, among the bare minimum conditions for an embodied UPE as viewed from the perspective of transfeministqueer autonomy.

At the end of his review of foundational work on UPE in geography, Heynen calls for more "embodied" forms of scholarship that center "political subjectivity."[53] As he describes in his subsequent reviews, scholars working in three distinctive areas––abolition ecologies, FPE, and QE––have both enabled and heeded this call. On the one hand, the recognition of each of these approaches by one of the foremost interlocutors of UPE in geography reflects the relative openness of the scholarly praxes taking shape among geographic approaches to UPE.

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[51] Loftus, *Everyday Environmentalism*, 126.
[52] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology I," 600.
[53] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology I," 602.

On the other hand, the substantive contributions of scholars who work in the areas of abolition ecologies, FPE, and QE themselves indicate the limitations of Marxist UPE's relatively narrow investment in debates that have characterized critical urban theory.[54] In light of this tension, shifting attention away from the "urbanness" of UPE and toward the explicit politics of urban (and non-urban) natures is a refreshing step not just toward "incorporating feminist, racialized, and queer positionalities within UPE," as Heynen advocates, but also toward interrogating UPE's attachments to specific epistemological and methodological approaches and research praxes.

As far as abolition ecologies are concerned, Heynen indicates their main research focus by asking what race, racialization, and racism have to do with the formation and contestation of uneven (urban) development and political ecologies.[55] Turning to the political upheavals of 1968, he points out how urban riots have brought phenomena like fire, racist violence and white supremacist terror, and policing into the ambit of UPE, insofar as scholarship attending to these phenomena examines the interconnected "causes" of political resistance to the uneven distribution of resources, environmental and social degradation, and state violence. Here, UPE is less immediately concerned with the urbanness of struggles than it is with repertoires of political action that constitute radical counter-mappings of the historical and material relationships between and among spatiality, memory, and insurrection. In short, abolition ecologies refocus attention on the ghetto, the planation, the colony, and the reservation and aim to show how each, in its own distinct way, reveals the

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[54] Neither Rademacher nor Heynen speaks about *other* non-Marxist influences on the longer-term development of political ecology and UPE by noting, for instance, the influence of anarchist thought on the broad formation of political ecology. See Simon Springer, "Total Liberation Ecology: Integral Anarchism, Anthroparchy, and the Violence of Indifference." In *Anarchist Political Ecology: Volume I – Undoing Human Supremacy*, ed. Simon Springer, Jennifer Mateer, Martin Locret-Collet, and Maleea Acker (Oakland: PM Press, forthcoming).
[55] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology II," 839.

deep and enduring influence of colonial and racial capitalism on the contemporary

(re)structuring of urban natures.[56]

Though in some ways nascent as a specific concern for UPE proper, scholarship in

abolition ecologies is grounded in longstanding approaches to Black Marxism and Black

geographic scholarship by W.E.B. DuBois, Cedric Robinson, Clyde Woods, and Katherine

McKittrick, among others.[57] Abolition ecologies blur the boundaries between environmental

justice scholarship and UPE by enabling more rigorous examinations of how the discourses,

theories, and methods of UPE travel (or fail to travel) to the contemporary crucibles of racial

and colonial capitalism. A turn toward abolition ecologies also makes clear that

environmental justice scholarship has been one of the driving forces in bringing explicitly

political questions into the fold of UPE. With echoes of the way that anthropologists have

sought to bring political ecological concerns into contact with critical development studies

and post-colonial scholarship, some geographers have also called for the "provincialization"

of UPE, suggesting that UPE remains all-too-concerned with the well-established research

sites and paradigms of the Global North, as opposed to those in the Global South, let alone

settler colonial relations.[58]

Heynen elaborates UPE's relationship to FPE and QE in his third and final "state of the

field" review, which he begins by invoking Richa Nagar's notion of "radical vulnerability"––a

notion which I explore further in the methodological section of Chapter 4––and by arguing

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[56] Janae Davis et al., "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, … Plantationocene?: A Manifesto for Ecological Justice in an Age of Global Crises," *Geography Compass* 13, no. 5 (2019): 1–15, https://doi:10.1111/gec3.12438..
[57] W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880*, (New York City: Simon & Schuster, 1995); Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: the Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: the Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*, (New York City: Verso, 1998); Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and Cartographies of Struggle*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, eds., *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2007).
[58] Mary Lawhon, Henrik Ernstson, and Jonathan Silver, "Provincializing Urban Political Ecology: Towards a Situated UPE Through African Urbanism," *Antipode* 46, no. 2 (2014): 497–516, https://doi:10.1111/anti.12051..

that UPE "must continue developing in relation to the embodied and heterodox politics central to these metabolic changes."[59] Though metabolism remains central to his framing, UPE's preoccupation with "the urban" is somewhat decentered––or, perhaps, re-/displaced–– by research in FPE and QE, which highlights the relationships between and among discourses of nature and (de)naturalization, sexualized and gendered power relations, and political subjectivity, more broadly. In his brief overview of FPE and QE, Heynen presents FPE and QE as quite distinct, even though they are often linked by common commitments to critiquing heteropatriarchy. In Heynen's description of FPE, work by Dianne Rocheleau looms large, as do recent interventions by Sharlene Mollett and Caroline Faria, Kevin Grove, and Sapana Doshi.[60] As for QE, Heynen notes the influence of Judith Butler on the general formation of queer theory and then invokes specific work in QE by Catriona Sandilands, Matthew Gandy, and Darren Patrick.[61] He also describes a push by queer geographers, particularly Natalie Oswin, for a broader appreciation of efforts to queer disciplinary geography, which require thinking about how sexuality articulates with race/class/gender; I discuss this push further below. Here, I want to point out that longstanding tensions both within academic queer theory specifically, and between queer and feminist theories more generally, have not necessarily resulted in the most fulsome appreciation of the valences of "queerness" in

[59] Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology III," 447. Richa Nagar, *Muddying the Waters: Coauthoring Feminisms Across Scholarship and Activism*, (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014).
[60] Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayter, and Esther Wangari, eds., *Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experiences*, (London: Routledge, 1996); Sharlene Mollett and Caroline Faria, "Messing with Gender in Feminist Political Ecology," *Geoforum* 45 (2013): 116–25, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.10.009; Sapana Doshi, "Embodied Urban Political Ecology: Five Propositions," *Area* 49, no. 1 (2016): 125–28, htts://doi:10.1111/area.12293; Grove, "Rethinking the Nature of Urban Environmental Politics."
[61] Catriona Sandilands, "Queer Ecology," in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, ed. Joni Adamson, William Gleason, and David Pellow, (New York City, 2016), 169–71; Darren J. Patrick, "The Matter of Displacement: A Queer Urban Ecology of New York City's High Line," *Social & Cultural Geography* 15, no. 8 (2014): 920–41, http://dx.doi:10.1080/14649365.2013.851263; Darren J. Patrick, "Queering the Urban Forest: Invasions, Mutualisms, and Eco-Political Creativity with Tree of Heaven," in *Urban Forests, Trees, and Greenspace: a Political Ecology Perspective*, ed. L Anders Sandberg, Adrina Bardekjian, and Sadia Butt, (London: Routledge/Earthscan, 2014), 191–206; Gandy, "Queer Ecology."

geography and by geographers, including those working to develop UPE. While I certainly

appreciate Heynen's call for "Marxist urban theorists engaging the environmental

consequences of uneven development [...] to build more expansive and solidarity-centric

models for thinking through the politics of urban nature and urban geography more broadly,"

the historical indifference of such theorists to precisely the issues highlighted by FPE and QE

bespeaks the need for a careful consideration of the shifts in scholarly political praxis and

institutional knowledge production that such an "expansion" will require.[62] Nonetheless,

Heynen's gesture toward inclusion and his stated willingness to be vulnerable in reaching out

to those who have long been working in FPE and QE signals a hopeful beginning.

Feminist Political Ecology and Queer Ecologies

The literatures and practices associated with FPE and QE extend beyond the disciplines of

geography and anthropology (and the academic world) in ways that mirror my own approach

and, therefore, merit deeper discussion. In a recent review of FPE, Juanita Sundberg has deftly

outlined FPE's major currents and influences: ecofeminism, feminist critiques of

development, and feminist science studies.[63] Scholars working in FPE often do so in close

relation with environmental justice and global feminist movements, yielding a thoughtful

scholarly praxis that centers the politics of knowledge production itself. This emphasis is

perhaps most obvious in the influence that ecofeminism has had on UPE. Clearly connected

to land-based feminist praxis, ecofeminist work by Carolyn Merchant and Val Plumwood has

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[62] Nik Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology III," 450.
[63] Juanita Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," in *The International Encyclopedia of Geography*, ed. Douglas Richardson et al., 2nd ed., vol. 23, (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2017), 1–12, https://doi:10.1002/9781118786352.wbieg0804.

done much to turn over the soil of masculinist epistemologies by emphasizing a critique of the association between women and nature.[64] Then there is FPE's relationship to critiques of development, exemplified by the work of Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, and Chandra Mohanty, which have been elaborated by Farhana Sultana and Shubhra Gururani.[65] Work by these scholars examines land use, resource development and extraction, global capital flows, knowledge/boundary-making practices, and everyday materialities. Considering the dilemmas of UPE surrounding urbanization, it is significant to note that rural, agrarian, and communal life have been thoughtfully elaborated by FPE scholars working in this area. Such elaborations bring to mind the annual queer camping (*campeggia*) that I describe at various points in the subsequent chapters, which offers one, albeit limited, example of how transfeministqueer autonomous collectives have, at times, moved beyond the traditional boundaries of the city in order to experiment with forms of communal life in relatively non-urban settings.

Returning to Sundberg, she notes that scholarship in feminist science studies, especially Donna Haraway's "situated knowledges" and Sandra Harding's notion of "partial objectivities," has exerted wide influence on the formation of FPE on account of their "calls […] for responsibility and accountability in practices of knowledge production."[66] Such scholarship stems from a variety of feminist experiences with science-based practices and

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[64] Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*, (New York City: HarperCollins, 1980); Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, (London: Routledge, 1993).

[65] María Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism*, 2nd ed., (London: Zed Books, 2014); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Lourdes Torres, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Ann Russo, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 51–80; Farhana Sultana, "Suffering for Water, Suffering from Water: Emotional Geographies of Resource Access, Control and Conflict," *Geoforum* 42, no. 2 (2011): 163–72, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.12.002; Shubhra Gururani, "Forests of Pleasure and Pain: Gendered Practices of Labor and Livelihood in the Forests of the Kumaon Himalayas, India," *Gender, Place & Culture* 9, no. 3 (2002): 229–43.

[66] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 2–3; Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*.

encompasses both a critique of the institutionalization of knowledge practices and a marking

of the absence of meaningful considerations of subjectivity in the everyday work of doing and

making science. In the context of my work, the concerns of FPE are reflected in the

engagements of transfeministqueer autonomy with a variety of projects. As I discuss in my

review of Mario Mieli's work in Chapter 3, Laboratorio Smaschieramenti has been heavily

engaged in developing praxes that depart from scientific and psychoanalytic constructions of

gender and sexuality. One concrete example, which I discuss further in Chapter 4, is the

creation of the Consultoria TransFemministaQueer di Bologna, which provides self-organized

healthcare as an alternative to the medicalization of trans bodies and trans lives. The creation

of living alternatives to institutionalized forms of biopolitical management constitutes one

part of autonomy's decentering of dominant traditions rooted in western epistemologies,

which resonates with the decolonial definition of autonomy that I discuss in Chapter 3.

There are, of course, pressing doubts about the extent to which scholarship in this field

has de-centered western epistemologies, notwithstanding recent trends across disciplines and

universities toward "decolonization" and indigenization of the academy.[67] Still, the work of

FPE has not only insisted on the material and socionatural dimensions of feminist struggle,

but it has also highlighted the necessity of feminist politics to *any* political/ecological project

that claims to be focused on liberation. In this vein, Sundberg also alludes to FPE scholarship

that is more directly concerned with anti-essentialist critiques of subjectivity by insisting that

"there is no necessary or pregiven relation between men or women and the environment."[68]

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[67] See Michelle Daigle, "The Spectacle of Reconciliation: On (the) Unsettling Responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples in the Academy," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26, no. 1 (2019): 1–19, https://doi:10.1177/0263775818824342.

[68] Leila M. Harris, "Irrigation, Gender, and Social Geographies of the Changing Waterscapes of Southeastern Anatolia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, no. 2 (2006): 187–213, https://doi:10.1068/d03k; Andrea Nightingale, "The Nature of Gender: Work, Gender, and Environment," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, no. 2 (2006): 165–85, https://doi:10.1068/d01k.

Such insistences have also been at the core of QE scholarship since its inception, albeit with a more pointed focus on sexuality.

Turning to methodological considerations of FPE, scholars working in this field echo UPE in their emphasis on creativity, but, rather than rooting the call in a conceptual/philosophical register, tend to foreground collaboration, which, as I describe in the methodology section of Chapter 4, is at the center of my work with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. As Sundberg has it, "feminist scholars tend to conduct qualitative research from the bottom up by privileging the experiences, spaces, and categories of marginalized people."[69] FPE understands that theory *about* feminist struggle must also contribute *to* feminist struggle, specifically by attending to questions of objectives (and/or objectivity) and by interrupting the insistent association of objectivity with positivist knowledge projects. Given the resonances among FPE, anthropological approaches to UPE, and autonomous feminism, it is somewhat surprising that there has not been more mutual engagement with the work of Silvia Federici, whose movement-based scholarship has yielded powerful critiques of social reproduction and a politics of the commons. Over decades of movement-based scholarship, Federici has made significant contributions to the elaboration of autonomous feminist Marxism. In so doing, she has developed a sophisticated and historically-grounded account of the intimate interconnections between the institutionalization of misogyny, rape, and prostitution and capitalism's ongoing colonial and racist enclosure of the commons.[70] Though Federici herself has not explicitly addressed either political ecologies or the advent of transfeminism or queer theory, her work's enduring impact

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[69] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 6.

[70] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004); Silvia Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2019).

on both scholarly and activist praxis in these fields embodies the significance of autonomous feminism's understandings of communal lands, self-organized spaces, and self-determined social relations.

As I will describe further below, Sundberg concludes by expressing concerns about the impact of "anti-essentialist framings of gender," which lead her to ask: "if women are no longer the organizing purpose of feminism and gender is no longer its central analytical category, then what is the point of FPE?"[71] This interrogative leads Sundberg to describe more recent trends in FPE to explicitly embrace intersectionality "as the primary method of addressing how subjects are constituted in and through diverse and interlocking processes of differentiation such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and livelihood."[72] Turning to work by Sultana, Mollett and Faria, and more recent work by Nightingale, Sundberg also points to Rebecca Elmhirst's embrace of queer theory in order "to question the naturalness of categories such as conjugal relationships and heterosexuality as they are deployed in the practices of knowledge production" that Elmhirst studies in Indonesian forests.[73] In this vein, echoing Elmhirst, Sundberg argues that it is important to track the ways in which non-feminist UPE scholarship has appropriated many of the insights of FPE, leading her to argue that "political ecology owes an *epistemological debt* to feminist theory for the range of fresh perspectives it offers."[74] As so many systematically marginalized scholars know, a debt such as this one too often remains both unacknowledged and unreconciled.

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[71] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 7.
[72] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 7.
[73] Sultana, "Suffering for Water;" Mollett and Faria, "Messing with Gender;" Rebecca Elmhirst, "Migrant Pathways to Resource Access in Lampung's Political Forest: Gender, Citizenship and Creative Conjugality," *Geoforum* 42, no. 2 (2011): 173–83, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.12.004.
[74] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 7, emphasis in original; Rebecca Elmhirst, "Introducing New Feminist Political Ecologies," *Geoforum* 42, no. 2 (2011): 129–32, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.01.006.

Mirroring my own frustrations with queer geographies, Sundberg names three future trajectories for FPE, all of which challenge the need for feminist scholarship to focus exclusively on gender. First, she advocates for work that focuses on the body in order "to account for the intersections of material and affective/emotive practices."[75] Second, Sundberg names "other-than-human" approaches that incorporate both animals and plants to argue that FPE uniquely enables distinctive approaches to the questions of agency.[76] Third, similarly to both Heynen's suggestion of "solidarity-centric expansions" of UPE and Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari's initial propositions for FPE, she calls for approaches that "undertake research from a position of *affinity* as opposed to *identity*."[77] In this last instance, Sundberg points to the resonance between affinity models and geographer Cindi Katz's "concept of *counter-topographies*, which entails tracing lines between places to show how they are constituted in and through the same processes of development or environmental change."[78] Such a "tracing of lines" is precisely the political and methodological approach that is encompassed by a transversal approach to ecologies of autonomous political praxis, which is the core of this project's theoretical and methodological orientation. More specifically, as I detail in Chapter 3, this approach to autonomy exemplifies Katz's notion of "minor geographies."

[75] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 9; Jessica Hayes-Conroy and Allison Hayes-Conroy, "Veggies and Visceralities: a Political Ecology of Food and Feeling," *Emotion, Space and Society* 6 (2013): 81–90, https://doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2011.11.003.
[76] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 9; Juanita Sundberg, "Diabolic Caminos in the Desert and Cat Fights on the Río: A Posthumanist Political Ecology of Boundary Enforcement in the United States–Mexico Borderlands," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 2 (2011): 318–36, https://doi:10.1080/00045608.2010.538323.
[77] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 9, emphases in original; Roberta Hawkins, "Shopping to Save Lives: Gender and Environment Theories Meet Ethical Consumption," *Geoforum* 43, no. 4 (2012): 750–59, https://doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.12.009.
[78] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 10, emphasis in original; Cindi Katz, "On the Grounds of Globalization: A Topography for Feminist Political Engagement," *Signs* 26 (2001): 1213–34.

Keeping in mind the logic of debt that characterized Sundberg's questioning of FPE's

place in broader scholarly formations, I now turn to QE in the mode of a critical celebration of

its "affirmatively perverse and polyvocal imagination" of the place of sexuality in imaginations

of both urban and non-urban nature.[79] Compared to FPE, QE has a distinct focus on

elaborating critiques of heteronormativity and reprocentricity. It is true, as Heynen maintains

in his brief overview of queer ecologies, that some versions of QE, like the one advanced by

feminist science studies scholar Karen Barad, have adapted Judith Butler's theorization of

performativity in a quasi-ontological register that proposes, as Catriona Sandilands has

described it, an ecology that is "always already queer."[80] And yet, as my review of QE

scholarship and practice shows, it comprises a constellation of methodological, political, and

theoretical approaches that "have found different ways of talking about queerness in different

ontological registers."[81] Understanding queerness in this way suggests that QE comprises a

"constellation" more than "subfield," at least insofar as the latter designation attaches to the

other disciplinary formations that I discuss in this chapter. Like queer theory proper, QE

traverses disciplinary boundaries and draws out both the latent and nascent ecological

dimensions of gender and sexuality. In so doing, scholarly work that contributes to QE upends

conventional understandings of both sexuality and dominant ideologies of nature and enables

the formation of a new constellation of scholarly and political praxes.

I locate the "sense" of this constellation in three ways. First, and owing to the reading,

relating, and unlearning that has both enabled and demanded my own ongoing effort to

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[79] Amanda Di Battista et al., "Conversations in Queer Ecologies: An Editorial," *UnderCurrents: Journal of Critical Environmental Studies* 19 (2015): 5..
[80] Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram, Peter Hobbs, and Catriona Sandilands, "Queer Ecologies Roundtable Discussion Part 4: Queer Ecologies at the Limits," *UnderCurrents: Journal of Critical Environmental Studies* 19 (2015): 60; Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity" *Qui Parle* 19, no. 2 (2011): 121–58, https://doi:10.5250/quiparle.19.2.0121; See also Timothy Morton, "Guest Column: Queer Ecology," *PMLA* 125, no. 2 (2010): 273–82.
[81] Brochu-Ingram, Hobbs, and Sandilands, "Queer Ecologies Roundtable Discussion Part 4," 60.

understand my relationship with the stars and sky as a queer, faggy, and non-binary white settler living in Tkarónto––in so-called Canada––on land subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, I invoke Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leeann Betasamosake Simpson's notion of "constellations of coresistance."[82] I look to Simpson without claiming that her articulation of Nishnaabeg thought––and the broader project of Indigenous resurgence of which it is a part––is in any way "for" queer ecologies. Instead, I cite her understanding of constellations in the mode that she, recounting the work of building relationships between Black and Indigenous movements, describes as an "ethical obligation." I do so to provoke an alignment of queer ecological scholarship with the emergent movement toward the "creation of a radical resurgence practice" that "rejects state recognition at its core and is committed to sacrificing and doing the hard and long work of rebuilding Indigenous nationhood one system at a time."[83] Addressing her own communities, Simpson writes:

> We need to collectively figure out how to instigate and sustain mass resurgent mobilizations within nation-based grounded normativities. We need to radically uncouple ourselves from the state political and education system. We need to be willing to develop personal relationships with other communities of coresistors beyond white allies. We need to develop these as place-based constellations of theory and practice because when we put our energy into building constellations of coresistance within grounded normativity that refuse to center whiteness, our real white allies show up in solidarity anyway.[84]

Such a formulation is certainly distinct from autonomous praxis, and yet it aligns with my understanding of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis as an approach that recomposes

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[82] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017): 228–231; See also dusky purples [Darren Patrick], "'Reading Three Ways: Ask Me How!,'" in *Spaces of Spirituality*, ed. Nadia Bartolini, Sara MacKian, and Steve Pile, (London: Routledge, 2018), 278–96.
[83] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 231. See also Anabel Khoo, "Shimmers Below the Surface: Emergent Strategy and Movement Building Through 2-QTPOC Media," *UnderCurrents: Journal of Critical Environmental Studies* 19 (2015): 6–14. In both her writing and her public appearances, Simpson is emphatic that the politics of recognition is and always will be inadequate to this project. There can be no decolonization without the return of lands expropriated, stolen, and otherwise claimed by settler states.
[84] Simpson, *As We Have Always Done,* 231.

apparently divergent queer and feminist praxes by returning to and reclaiming non-state and non-institutional approaches to self-organization rooted in particular places and historical struggles.

Second, I invoke Jin Haritaworn, Ghaida Moussa, Río Rodríguez, and Syrus Marcus Ware's scholarly and activist work in *Queering Urban Justice*, in which the authors archive, witness, and sustain the formative and enduring role that QTBIPOC collectivities have played in making Toronto "arguably one of the world's queer of color capitals––a place that people move to in order to *be* queer of color and *in* queer of color community."[85] Working as the Marvellous Grounds collective, the authors/editors present the work of queering urban justice as an intervention "in power-evasive discussions of the urban and in single-issue approaches to space, politics, and identity" and suggest that such work entails a "revisit[ation of] conversations about queer space and queer archives, anti-blackness, settler colonialism, and border imperialism (see Walia 2013)."[86] Their project not only directly connects with the emplaced histories of the movement-building that Simpson describes, but it also takes shape in––and, in turn, has shaped––one of the immediate institutional contexts in which queer ecologies continues to find form as a scholarly and political project.

Third, I am inspired by Dianne Chisholm's suggestion that "queer constellations sight/cite the city in ruins" in that they "glimpse utopia, dystopia, and heterotopia at once, foreseeing with hindsight the idealization and ruination of what the city could become, as well as the fetishization and fossilization of what it never really was."[87] Chisholm's understanding

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[85] Jin Haritaworn et al., "Introduction: Queering Urban Justice," in *Queering Urban Justice: Queer of Colour Formations in Toronto*, ed. Jin Haritaworn et al., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 3, emphases in original.

[86] Haritaworn et al., "Introduction: Queering Urban Justice," 5; Harsha Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2013).

[87] Dianne Chisholm, *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 32.

of constellations aligns both with my own previous work critiquing the "renewal" of "ruined"

queer places, like the Hudson River Park and the High Line, and with more recent––and

powerfully evocative––investigations of those same spaces by Lucas Crawford.[88] Crawford's

work evokes the potential of queer ecological critique by articulating a specifically

transgender approach to architectonics and a poetic and archival approach to (re)visiting the

submerged queer and trans histories of urban space. In short, and beyond more explicitly

political reference points above, both Crawford's and Chisholm's deliberately retrograde

approaches to reading queer literary constellations point toward the importance of (re)visiting

the ruin(s), to sight/cite the ruination of so-called (queer) urban renewal and regeneration in

turn revealing the socio-environmental devastation underwritten by notions of progress and

progressive politics.[89]

As I detail further in Chapter 2 as well as in Chapters 5 and 6, both the national and

municipal state have justified significant interventions into social and material relations not

only with recourse to a "progressive" politics of recognition, but also by way of presenting

Bologna as a city in which "collaboration" is a key to socio-economic development. Such

notions of development treat autonomous projects like Atlantide as part of a web

"degradation" that must be brought under the ambit of state-led development in order to

contribute value to the city and its economic futures. In light of my discussion of political

translation below, I note that this too is a form of translation in which universalizing global

urban policy frameworks are articulated in particular contexts, often with disastrous

consequences for everyday people. What's more, as my discussion of both Porpora

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[88] Darren Patrick, "'H,i,g,h,L,i,n,e' Architectonics," *Avery Review*, February 2019,
https://www.averyreview.com/issues/37/highline-architectonics; Lucas Crawford, *Transgender Architectonics: The Shape of Change in Modernist Space*, (London: Routledge, 2015;); Lucas Crawford, *The High Line Scavenger Hunt*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2018).
[89] See also Jin Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places*, (London: Pluto Press, 2015).

Marcasciano's work and of Mario Mieli's notion of "educastration" in Chapter 3 attests, state and institutional attempts to govern social relations are predicated on a legitimate claim to territorial authority, one which downplays the knowledge and experience of self-determining autonomous actors who enact their own forms of territorial authority in acts of reclaiming the spaces both left behind and hollowed out by the machinations of successive modes of economic development and the social relations that such modes impose on people, including hegemonic masculinity.

With these three points of orientation duly constellated, I note that, some fifteen years after the scholarly notion of queer ecologies first appeared in the journal *UnderCurrents*, Catriona Sandilands, along with Bruce Erickson, used an analysis of the film *Brokeback Mountain* as a jumping off point to introduce the first published volume focused on queer ecologies. They argue that:

> [I]deas and practices of nature, including both bodies and landscapes, are located in particular productions of sexuality, and sex is, both historically and in the present, located in particular formations of nature. The critical analysis of these locations and co-productions is what we mean by "queer ecology" [...] Specifically, the task of a queer ecologies is to probe the intersections of sex and nature with an eye to developing a sexual politics that more clearly includes considerations of the natural world and its biosocial constitution, and an environmental politics that demonstrates an understanding of the ways in which sexual relations organize and influence both the material world of nature and our perceptions, experiences, and constitutions of that world.[90]

Throughout the introduction, Sandilands and Erickson situate the work of queer ecologies in three ways: (1) by highlighting the mutual discursive production of sex and nature; (2) by analyzing the organization and governance of spaces of nature; and (3) by assembling a provisional archive of projects that imagine and enact, in various ways, queer ecological

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[90] Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, "A Genealogy of Queer Ecologies," in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 4–5; Catriona Sandilands, "Lavender's Green? Some Thoughts on Queer(y)ing Environmental Politics," *UnderCurrents* 6 (1994): 20–24.

disruptions of naturalized heteronormative and reprocentric relations. Contributions to the anthology draw on myriad influences––from literary theory, ecofeminism, critical philosophy, psychoanalysis, and geography to critical studies of the nation-state, racism, and colonialism––to question and critique heteronormativity and reprocentricity and to deconstruct and rework boundaries and relations between and among the book's titular foci: sex, nature, politics, and desire.

Amanda Di Battista, Oded Haas, and Darren Patrick locate contemporary QE in three other ways. First, they situate QE institutionally by noting the influence of a coalitional group of student-led activists in organizing the FES Equity Seminar Series on their work.[91] Second, building on this context-/place-specific scholarly ecology, they draw on Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner's work, as well as that of David Eng, J. Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, to suggest that a shift in emphasis from "queer 'nature'" to "queer 'ecologies'" offers "an opening for something other than a boundary-drawing or canon-making exercise,"[92] In the end, Di Battista, Haas, and Patrick mobilize for a relational (re)framing of queer ecologies that responds both to "shifts in academic queer theory and environmental studies" and to "changing concrete political struggles."[93] I position this work as part of such a reframing insofar as I highlight the way that transfeministqueer autonomy productively blends and blurs boundaries that divide disciplinary forms of knowledge production by articulating them in place and context specific ways. There are several other recent scholarly, political, and creative approaches to QE that, at least in some ways, undertake similar work. For example, as

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[91] Di Battista et al., "Conversations in Queer Ecologies," 3.
[92] Di Battista et al., "Conversations in Queer Ecologies," 4; Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X?," *PMLA* 110, no. 3 (May 1995): 343–49; David Eng, Jack Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?," *Social Text* 23, no. 3 (2005): 1–17.ibid.; Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X?," *PMLA* 110, no. 3 (May 1995): 343–49; David Eng, Jack Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?," *Social Text* 23, no. 3 (2005): 1–17.
[93] Di Battista et al., "Conversations in Queer Ecologies," 4.

part of her genre-busting creative and scholarly work, Alexis Pauline Gumbs has developed a

queer ecological approach to Black Feminist archiving praxes and sonic resistances.[94] With

distinctive echoes of the citational/archival practices of the Marvellous Grounds collective,

Gumbs has subsequently elaborated her archival approach in the Afrofuturist work *M Archive:*

After the End of the World, the second book in a planned three-part series that documents the

ecological scope of Black Feminism's political, creative, spiritual, and intellectual praxes.[95]

Alternatively, the Colorado-based group Queer Nature embodies both a land-based and anti-

colonial praxis by using the notion of an "ecology of belonging."**[96]** Queer Nature provides both

a non-urban analogue to the *Queering Urban Justice* project and a living example of how queer

ecological praxis confounds the dominant heteropatriarchal and reprocentric notions of

nature. Situating the project both with regard to the local histories of settler colonialism and

to the longer histories of Indigenous presence in U.S.-American West, Queer Nature

demonstrates that a radical understanding of queer ecologies can both animate new land and

place-based collective subjectivities, and sustain emergent solidarities and movements of the

kind that Simpson describes in her articulation of "constellations of coresistance."[97]

A third example of contemporary QE is Nicole Seymour's *Strange Natures*, which reads

texts that are frequently unaddressed in more philosophical articulations of queer in a mode

of queer ecocriticism.[98] Drawing on Sandilands and Erickson, Seymour assembles an archive

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[94] Alexis Pauline Gumbs, "Eternal Summer of the Black Feminist Mind: A Queer Ecological Approach to the Archive," in *Make Your Own History Documenting Feminist and Queer Activism in the St Century*, ed. Liz Bly and Kelly Wooten, (Los Angeles: Litwin Books, 2014), 57–68; Alexis Pauline Gumbs, "This Is What It Sounds Like (An Ecological Approach)," *Scholar and Feminist Online* 8, no. 3 (2010), http://sfonline.barnard.edu/polyphonic/gumbs_01.htm.
[95] Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive: After the End of the World*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); See also Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).
[96] "Our Mission: The Ecology of Belonging," Queer Nature, accessed June 8, 2019, https://www.queernature.org/what-we-do.
[97] "This Land: Recognizing the Impacts of Settler Colonialism Is a Core Part of Teaching and Promoting Nature-Based Skills," Queer Nature, accessed June 12, 2019, https://www.queernature.org/this-land.
[98] Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination*, (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Catriona Sandilands, "Queer Life? Ecocriticism After the Fire," in *Oxford*

which "consider[s] that queerness might be progressively articulated through 'the natural' more broadly, or the non-human world more specifically."[99] Seymour articulates a queer approach to nature that rebuffs the tendency of both Lee Edelman's "anti-social thesis" and Halberstam's work on "queer cultural production" to elide specifically environmentalist politics.[100] Beyond these already diverse and distinctive approaches to queer ecological thought, praxis, and scholarship, there have also been several projects that elaborate QE through ecosexual art and performance,[101] ecopsychology,[102] more-than-human plant and animal relationships,[103] landscape architecture,[104] and feminist science studies approaches to chemical and toxic worlds.[105] Taken together, the proliferating uses of the notion of queer ecologies signal an important "way forward" for scholarship that aspires both to track and to subvert the perilous consequences of enforcing strict binary oppositions between nature and

Handbook of Ecocriticism, (New York City, 2014), 305–19. See also Robert Azzarello, *Queer Environmentality: Ecology, Evolution, and Sexuality in American Literature*, (London: Routledge, 2016).

[99] Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures*, 5.

[100] Seymour, *Strange Natures*, 7–8; Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2004); Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, (New York City: New York University Press, 2005).

[101] Michael J. Morris, "Orientations as Materializations: *The Love Art Laboratory*'s Eco-Sexual Blue Wedding to the Sea," in *Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater*, ed. Nadine George-Graves, (New York City: Oxford University Press 2015), 480–503.

[102] Jill E Anderson et al., "Queer Ecology: a Roundtable Discussion," ed. Jamie Heckert, *European Journal of Ecopsychology* 3 (2012): 82–103.

[103] Marianna Szczygielska, "Transbiological Re-Imaginings of the Modern Self and the Nonhuman: Zoo Animals as Transbiological Entities," *Identities Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* 10, no. 1 (2013): 101–10, https://doi:10.1177/0263276406069230; Eliza Steinbock, Marianna Szczygielska, and Anthony Wagner, "Thinking Linking," *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 22, no. 2 (2017): 1–10, https://doi:10.1080/0969725X.2017.1322801; Catriona Sandilands, "Dog Stranglers in the Park?: National and Vegetal Politics in Ontario's Rouge Valley," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 93–122, https://doi:10.1353/jcs.2013.0005; Peter Hobbs, "Canine Cartography: on the Curious and Queer Pleasure of Being a Dog," in *Animal Subjects 2.0*, ed. Jodey Castricano and Lauren Corman, (Waterloo: Wilfred-Laurier Press, 2016), 175–202.

[104] Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram, "Building Queer Infrastructure: Trajectories of Activism and Organizational Development in Vancouver," in *Queer Mobilizations Social Movement Activism and Canadian Public Policy*, ed. Manon Tremblay, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 227–49; Gordon Brent Ingram, "Fragments, Edges, Matricies: Retheorizing the Formation of a So-Called Gay Ghetto Through Queering Landscape Ecology," in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Desire, Politics*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 254–82.

[105] Peter Hobbs, *Tale of the Sarnia Nose*, (Toronto: Art Gallery of York University, 2017); Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

society, oppositions which are maintained, at least in part, through the reproduction of binary approaches to the everyday spatialization of gender and sexuality.

Geographies of Sexuality

The foregoing reviews of UPE, FPE, and QE demonstrated how their scholarly praxes, conceptual elaborations, and sites of research can (and do) link disciplinarily disparate, but politically overlapping, concerns and collectivities. Further, my reviews of FPE and QE revealed that Marxist proponents of UPE have only lately sought to engage longstanding scholarly discourses and practices that position gender and sexuality, not to mention race and colonialism, as core matters of concern for critical geographic scholarship. By contrast, non-UPE research on gender and sexuality has, since the 1990s, achieved a more well-established position as a "subdiscipline" of geography. Specifically, geographers of sexuality have engaged in numerous debates about how best to conceptualize queer's "place" in the everyday spatial production of genders and sexualities.

The formation of the subfield of geographies of sexuality is traceable to Manuel Castells's study of gay and lesbian neighborhoods and business districts in San Francisco.[106] Jon Binnie and Gill Valentine credit Castells with "draw[ing] urban sociologists' and geographers' attention to the fact that there was a spatial basis to gay identity" and for inaugurating conversations that directed that attention to studies of gentrification, a theme that Larry Knopp picked up on in his early work.[107] Binnie and Valentine, whose work was instrumental in generating increased attention to lesbian and gay sexuality on the part of geographers, highlight three themes in this scholarship: urban geography, the urban/rural

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[106] Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[107] Jon Binnie and Gill Valentine, "Geographies of Sexuality – A Review of Progress," *Progress in Human Geography* 23, no. 2 (1999): 176; Larry Knopp, "Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement in an Urban Land Market," *Political Geography Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (October 1990): 337–52; Larry Knopp, "Sexuality and the Spatial Dynamics of Capitalism," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10, no. 6 (1992): 651–69.

"opposition," and sexual citizenship.[108] Among the studies that shaped this first wave of the

geography of sexualities, Linda Peake's early writing the formation of lesbian communities

stands out for its analysis of the connections among of gender, sexuality, and race.

Responding to Liz Bondi's diagnosis of the field's understanding of these connections as

"chaotic," Peake writes that such chaos "lies with geographers' apparent reluctance to address

the heterosexist and 'white' cultural constructions that pervade our discourses on social and

spatial relations."[109]

Whereas feminist urban geographers like Peake introduced analytics that would later

be echoed in calls for intersectional scholarship, research in other areas was more decisively

focused on themes that would eventually be characterized as being too "fixed" or

"essentializing." On the one hand, studies of the urban/rural "opposition" focused on both the

movement of gays and lesbians between urban and rural areas and on how that movement

evoked different spatial imaginaries and ways of inhabiting and negotiating space and place.[110]

On the other hand, early geographies of sexual citizenship focused attention on issues such as

HIV/AIDS activism and the politics of public sex.[111]

By the time Binnie and Valentine undertook their review in the late 1990s, there was

already an emergent strand of research that pointed toward a partial split between

geographies of (gay and lesbian) sexuality and queer geographies, to say nothing of feminist

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[108] Binnie and Valentine, "Geographies of Sexuality"; David Bell and Gill Valentine, eds., *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, (London: Routledge, 1995).
[109] Linda Peake, "'Race' and Sexuality: Challenging the Patriarchal Structuring of Urban Social Space," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11, no. 4 (1993): 418; Liz Bondi, "Gender Divisions and Gentrification: a Critique," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16, no. 2 (1991): 190–98.
[110] David Bell and Gill Valentine, "Queer Country: Rural Lesbian and Gay Lives," *Journal of Rural Studies* 11, no. 2 (1995): 113–22.
[111] Michael Brown, "The Work of City Politics: Citizenship Through Employment in the Local Response to AIDS," *Environment and Planning a: Economy and Space* 26, no. 6 (1994): 873–94; Pat Califa, *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*, (Philadelphia: Cleis Press, 1994); David Bell, "Pleasure and Danger: the Paradoxical Spaces of Sexual Citizenship," *Political Geography* 14, no. 2 (1995): 139–53.

geographies.[112] In their assessment of this split, and its relationship to debates unfolding within/between academic feminist and emergent queer theories in the 1990s, Binnie and Valentine state that they "remain ambivalent about the politics of proclaiming the queer transgression and subversion of identity" suggesting that such ambivalence "demonstrate[s] the limits of thinking through the tensions between discursive bodies and material spaces."[113] This ambivalence leads them to suggest that: "Perhaps then what we need is not so much a queer reading of space, but rather a queer reading of the discipline of geography itself."[114]

Such a queer reading of the discipline of geography would, in Melissa Wright's assessment, tend toward an overstated "idea of division between feminist and queer research [...] itself a form binary thinking as well as a reification of difference that stymies opportunities for exchanges [...]."[115] Wright locates the scholarly impetus for a queer/feminist split in the publication of Bell and Valentine's 1995 edited volume, *Mapping Desire*.[116] Nevertheless, she identifies a thread of scholarship that refused to disaggregate feminist and queer concerns. She notes, for example, Phil Hubbard's call back to Adrienne Rich's landmark 1980 article "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," which identified heterosexuality's relationship to and regulation of gender identity.[117] Wright also invokes Biddy Martin's rejection of queer as a "vanguard position" that somehow "superseded [...] now anachronistic feminism with its emphasis on gender," a rejection that Butler repeated by calling for "a dynamic and empowering interplay" between queer and feminist theory more

[112] David Bell et al., "All Hyped Up and No Place To Go," *Gender, Place & Culture* 1, no. 1 (1994): 31–47.David Bell et al., "All Hyped Up and No Place To Go," *Gender, Place & Culture* 1, no. 1 (1994): 31–47.
[113] Binnie and Valentine, "Geographies of Sexuality," 183.
[114] Binnie and Valentine, "Geographies of Sexuality," 183.
[115] Melissa W. Wright, "Gender and Geography II: Bridging the Gap — Feminist, Queer, and the Geographical Imaginary," *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no. 1 (2010): 56–66, https://doi:10.1177/0309132509105008.
[116] Wright, "Gender and Geography II," 58.
[117] Wright, "Gender and Geography II," 59; Phil Hubbard, "Here, There, Everywhere: the Ubiquitous Geographies of Heteronormativity," *Geography Compass* 2, no. 3 (2008): 645, https://:10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00096.x; Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631–60.

broadly.[118] In short, Wright documents the close relationship between queer and feminist scholarship in geography by situating a variety of geographic and not explicitly geographic research as part of this relationship.[119] Nevertheless, Wright's assessment of scholarship that pushes for reconnecting feminist and queer critique relies largely on an implicit understanding of the politics of such a move and the praxes that such a politics necessitates.[120] As Wright states near the end of her piece, most of the work that speaks to the political potential for refusing the disaggregation of feminist from queer approaches "neither *delve*[s] into the theoretical discussions of their terms nor fully *analyze*[s] their engagement across feminist and queer research," a situation that "reveal[s] implicitly the need for studies that [begin] with the concept of the everyday within their research design."[121] Wright makes two arguments that anticipate the fraught terminological and analytical situation that characterizes research that aims to make this need explicit. First, she presents work that brings the notion of intersectionality into geography in order to theorize both the "relationship between different social categories" and the "variability of experience [...] across space." Second, like many queer geographers, Wright looks to Jasbir Puar's work on assemblage as if it were a critique of intersectionality, a mischaracterization that I will discuss further below.[122] In the end, Wright's push toward research that concerns itself with "the everyday experience of subjectivity" through "a blending of methodologies and compromises within approaches" points toward the need to assess how queer geographers, in particular,

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[118] Wright, "Gender and Geography II," 60; Biddy Martin, "Sexualities Without Genders and Other Queer Utopias," *Diacritics* 24, no. 2 (1994): 104; Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects," *differences: a Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 16, no. 2 (1994): 1.

[119] Kath Browne, Jason Lim, and Gavin Brown, eds. *Geographies of Sexualities*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place*.

[120] Wright, "Gender and Geography II," 60.

[121] Wright, "Gender and Geography II," 64, emphases in original.

[122] Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

have understood and elaborated the key terms that have marked their split with feminist geographies: subjectless critique, or critique without a fixed political/subjective referent.[123]

Queer Geographies

Echoing Wright's call to "bridge the gap" between feminist and queer geographies, I call for a recomposition of trans, feminist, *and* queer approaches with a particular emphasis on provoking a transversal engagement with ecologies of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, where just such a recomposition is a central matter of concern.[124] In light of this aim, it is important to specify briefly why I focus primarily on queer geography rather undertaking separate reviews of "feminist," "queer," "transgender," and/or "transfeminist" geographies. The logic of approaching the literature in this way is banal in that it reflects an unsurprising distribution of disciplinary research in geography. A rather un-scientific foray into Web of

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[123] Wright, "Gender and Geography II," 64–65.

[124] Given my caveats, there are a few notable exceptions to the tendency that I identified in the Introduction for geographers not to engage with autonomous praxis writ large. For example, Jenny Pickerill and Paul Chatterton's frequently cited work calls on geographers to "re-examine the practices of activists, specifically in their everyday lives," but does not address either the implications of translating autonomy into scholarly praxis or transfeminist/queer autonomy. Jenny Pickerill and Paul Chatterton, "Notes Towards Autonomous Geographies: Creation, Resistance and Self-Management as Survival Tactics," *Progress in Human Geography* 30, no. 6 (2006): 742, https://doi:10.1177/0309132506071516. Alternatively, Gavin Brown discusses queer autonomous spaces in the context of queer geographies and activism, but largely does not address the politics of knowledge production. Gavin Brown, "Mutinous Eruptions: Autonomous Spaces of Radical Queer Activism," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 39, no. 11 (2007): 2685–98, https://doi:10.1068/a38385; see also Gavin Brown, "Amateurism and Anarchism in the Creation of Queer Spaces," in *Anarchism & Sexuality: Ethics, Relationships and Power*, ed. Jamie Heckert and Richard Cleminson, (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 143–57. Farhang Rouhani is also inspired by readings of queer and anarchist geography and anarchist theory à la Graeber, which are the basis for an analysis of the rise and demise of the Richmond Queer Space Project. Farhang Rouhani, "Anarchism, Geography, and Queer Space-Making: Building Bridges Over Chasms We Create," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, vol. 11, 2012. Taking a different tack, Kian Goh examines contemporary U.S.-based LGBT activism to develop an analysis of spatial movement building focused on the concept of safe space, which, she argues: "Making queer space spaces through spatial–political organizing [...] offers alternative social–spatial relations and the possibility of continued difference in the city." Kian Goh, "Safe Cities and Queer Spaces: The Urban Politics of Radical LGBT Activism," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108, no. 2 (2018): 474, https://doi:10.1080/24694452.2017.1392286. Lastly, Alexander Vasudevan offers a broad overview of prefigurative autonomous occupation practices to re-evaluate the notion of the right to the city. Alexander Vasudevan, "The Autonomous City: Towards a Critical Geography of Occupation," *Progress in Human Geography* 39, no. 3 (2015): 316–37, https://doi:10.1177/0309132514531470.

Science's "Core Collection" reveals the pecking order of genre geographies modified by terms associated with gendered and sexualized subjectivity: feminist geography (1,407 results); queer geography (308); transgender geography (170); transfeminist geography (0).[125] In perhaps too literal a way, "queer" sits between "transgender" and "feminist" in the geographic literature; explicitly "transfeminist" approaches are non-existent.[126] In keeping with this trend, queer geographers continuously invoke the potential of subjectless critique with specific regard to sexuality (and heteronormativity) over and above gender (and compulsory binarism), that is, they tend to emphasize the political potentials of uncoupling queer critique from "queer subjects" even as they separate "other" subjectivities, like trans and non-binary people, out of consideration.[127] This is but one example of how disciplinary divergences shape scholarly inquiry and praxis; I discuss the implications of this divergence further in my discussion of transfeminism below.

Despite the fact that Michael Warner himself does not use the term "subjectless critique," his intervention in *Fear of a Queer Planet* is most often cited as the entrée to subjectless critique.[128] Warner writes: "The insistence on 'queer' [...] has the effect of pointing

[125] Though I conducted this search in multiple databases, I took Web of Science "Core Collection" as an indicator based on the relative comprehensiveness of the materials gathered in that archive. I used a version of the search string (feminist* OR feminism*) AND (geography* OR geographic* OR geographies*) wherein the I swapped out the modifying/genre terms with those that I list above. Though I used the triad geography/-ies/geographic, the database returned results listed or cross-listed in a variety of fields. Still, geography was always the most well-represented. I am, of course, aware of the severe limitations of this kind of off-the-cuff experiment and, being mindful of this, I use the numbers to establish the dominant tendencies that inhere even in a non-dominant area of the discipline. The point is illustrative more than it is substantive.

[126] Of course, if one searches "beyond" the discipline of geography, one will find that transfeminism has garnered *some* attention in anglophone scholarly literature: A broad search for "transfeminism" and "transfeminist" yields a total of 46 results from the whole of the database, with a disproportionate amount linked to a very small constellation of journals like *Transgender Studies Quarterly* and *GLQ*.

[127] Lynda Johnston, "Gender and Sexuality I: Genderqueer Geographies?," *Progress in Human Geography* 40, no. 5 (2016): 672, https://doi:10.1177/0309132515592109.

[128] There are other important touchstones for the emergence of subjectless critique, namely: Muñoz's work on queer of color performance, disidentification, and utopia and Kandice Chuh's critical reappraisal of Asian American Studies. José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, (New York City: New York University Press, 2009); Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: on Asian*

out a wide field of normalization, rather than simple intolerance, as the site of violence. [...] 'Queer' therefore also suggests the difficulty in defining the population whose interests are at stake in queer politics."[129] Though Warner briefly refers to queer's potential for "cutting across mandatory gender divisions," he does not specifically elaborate this potential further.[130] In short, subjectless critique pushes away from the tendency to anchor sexual politics in specific identities––gay, lesbian, *et cetera*––and toward a more wholesale critique of the social and regimes of normalcy in which the politics of sexuality plays but one part, which I discuss further below. As such, queer theory is articulated not as a specifying or additive evolution of gay and lesbian studies, but as a step toward the generalization of queerness as a mode of critique with the potential to disrupt well-worn pathways of scholarly and political praxis.

Natalie Oswin's work offers a potent example of the implications of translating queer theory into geography by way of an insistence on subjectless critique and an appeal to intersectionality as the ostensible antidote to identity politics.[131] Oswin's most cited intervention is a critique of the "dominant disciplinary" tendency in geography to approach "queer spaces as spaces of gays and lesbians or queers existing in opposition to and as transgressions of heterosexual space."[132] Writing against this tendency, Oswin "highlight[s] the ways in which sexuality is used as a part of broad constellations of power across the heterosexual/homosexual divide," which, following the poststructuralist tendencies of anglophone queer theory, she frames as "deconstructive move" that enables a "queer

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Americanist Critique, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). See also Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?."

[129] Michael Warner, "Introduction," in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvi.

[130] Warner, "Introduction," xxvi.

[131] Natalie Oswin, "Critical Geographies and the Uses of Sexuality: Deconstructing Queer Space," *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 1 (2008): 89–103, https://doi:10.1177/0309132507085213.

[132] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 89.

approach [...] to understand[ing] much more than the lives of 'queers.'"[133] Oswin explains that

she invokes this "divide" in order to critique it and imputes that doing so can also disrupt

other extant modes of binary and dualistic thinking in geography, a disruption that she links

with "a non-identitarian queer approach," itself roughly equivalent to subjectless critique

insofar as it emphasizes an understanding of queerness that is neither wholly dependent on

nor wholly reducible to specific identity categories.[134]

     Oswin contrasts the "non-identitarian queer approach" to one she sees taken by a first

wave of queer geographies associated with scholars such as Bell, Binnie, and Valentine.[135]

Further, she reviews work from scholars like Kath Browne, Catherine Jean Nash, and Alison

Bain and criticizes such work for doing too little to explore the intersections of sexuality and

race, while simultaneously noting that much of this work does, indeed, attend to the mutual

implication of sexuality, gender, and class.[136] She writes: "It is not enough to acknowledge race

as a gap in the literature. [...] The failure to also account for sexualization and racialization as

mutually constituted processes is a shortcoming that cannot but render queer geographical

analyses unduly partial."[137] Oswin argues that Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai's work begins to

address this "partiality" by way of questioning the "presumption of an inherent

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[133] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 90.

[134] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 90.

[135] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 91; David Bell and Jon Binnie, "Authenticating Queer Space: Citizenship, Urbanism and Governance," *Urban Studies* 41, no. 9 (August 2004): 1807–20, https://doi:10.1080/0042098042000243165; Bell and Valentine, eds., *Mapping Desire.*

[136] Kath Browne, "Challenging Queer Geographies," *Antipode* 38, no. 5 (2006): 885–93; Catherine Jean Nash, "Contesting Identity: Politics of Gays and Lesbians in Toronto in the 1970s," *Gender, Place & Culture* 12, no. 1 (2005): 113–35, https://doi:10.1080/09663690500083115; Catherine Jean Nash and Alison Bain, "'Reclaiming Raunch'? Spatializing Queer Identities at Toronto Women's Bathhouse Events," *Social & Cultural Geography* 8, no. 1 (2007): 47–62, https://doi:10.1080/14649360701251809.Kath Browne, "Challenging Queer Geographies," *Antipode* 38, no. 5 (2006): 885–93; Catherine Jean Nash, "Contesting Identity: Politics of Gays and Lesbians in Toronto in the 1970s," *Gender, Place & Culture* 12, no. 1 (2005): 113–35, https://doi:10.1080/09663690500083115; Catherine Jean Nash and Alison Bain, "'Reclaiming Raunch'? Spatializing Queer Identities at Toronto Women's Bathhouse Events," *Social & Cultural Geography* 8, no. 1 (2007): 47–62, https://doi:10.1080/14649360701251809.

[137] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 94.

progressiveness of gay and lesbian or queer reterritorializations of hitherto 'straight' space."[138]

She holds that this queer subjectless critique moves "beyond the heterosexual/homosexual

binary to a usage of queer theory as an approach that critiques the class, race and gender

specific dimensions of heteronormativities."[139] And yet, she notes that, despite a "commitment

to intersectional analysis" expressed by many scholars, "the politics of identity still lingers."[140]

Oswin contends that "the temptation to rely on specific queer saviors is less promising

than a queer approach that has no fixed political referent," an approach whose "task […] is

simply to do the work of understanding how norms and categories are deployed."[141]

Throughout her subsequent review of literatures which, she holds, do just that, Oswin leaves

her initial conceptualization of queer theory as a deconstructive enterprise entirely

unquestioned. While her analysis does much to disrupt dominant geographical approaches to

queer space, and to insist on the dissolution of epistemological binaries, it is limited by the

near total absence of any references to the historical consequences of the translation of

actually existing queer politics into the project of academic queer theory or vice versa. Indeed,

as Oswin makes clear, this is not her goal. She is both making an "argument for a broader use

of queer theory in geography" and "simultaneously arguing against the division of space into

queer and 'straight' space," which leads her to track "the limitations of the notion of

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[138] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 95–96; Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text* 20, no. 3 (2002): 117–48; Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai, "The Remaking of a Model Minority: Perverse Projectiles Under the Specter of (Counter)Terrorism," *Social Text* 22, no. 3 (2004): 75–104.

[139] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 96.

[140] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 96. Here, it is important to note that, some ten years after Oswin was writing, the politics of identity appear to be more entrenched than ever. One need look no further than resurgent white supremacist and white nationalist formations, alongside many forms of right-wing populism, to witness this fact. While no doubt of central concern for transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, which, as I note throughout the dissertation is fundamentally anti-fascist, anti-sexist, and anti-racist. Even though I am not able to focus on explaining the dynamics of right-wing populism here, I am grateful to Shubhra Gururani for pointing out this connection.

[141] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 96.

heterosexual space," again, emphasizing a subjectless queer approach.[142] In so doing, her aim

is to demonstrate that "only when the focus falls on a wide range of sexual normativities and

non-normativities will queer theory's potential as a vital tool for the conduct of critical

geographies be realized."[143] In short, Oswin is attempting to break from a perceived emphasis

of early geographies of sexuality on the binary of hetero/homo both in relation to subjectivity

and in relation to space. Though short on the praxis-based particulars, Oswin's intervention

amounts to asking that queer geographies (and queer theories, more generally) be more

widely appreciated for the ways in which its critiques implicate not just sexuality, but also a

range of other axes of power. And yet, the divergence of queer geographies from feminist

geographies appears to stop short of a fuller consideration of gender.

Some ten years later, geographers Jack Gieseking and Erin Clancey made a similar call

in an introduction to a book review symposium focused on geographies of gender and

sexuality from both within and beyond the discipline. They argue that "appropriations of

queer theory in geography have remained the project of a handful of geographers of

sexualities rather than the field's larger scale adaptation of feminist theory and, more recently

and finally, critical race theory."[144] Gieseking and Clancey note that a handful of "major"

queer theorists––Sedgwick, Muñoz, Halberstam, Foucault, Haraway, and Butler––are

overrepresented in such a way as to "sideline the work of 'minor' theorists."[145] Without

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[142] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 97.
[143] Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 98. As my tracing of the evolution of Smaschieramenti in Chapter 4 shows, not only is the Laboratorio engaged with resisting forms of right-wing populist identitarianism, they are also politically aware of the need to hold on to some subjective referents for the articulation transfeministqueer politics, which I discuss further below in my genealogy of transfeminism.
[144] Jack Gieseking and Erin Clancey, "Book Review Symposium – Queer Geographies," *Antipodefoundation.org*, May 30, 2019, https://antipodefoundation.org/2019/05/30/queer-geographies-symposium/.Jack Gieseking and Erin Clancey, "Book Review Symposium – Queer Geographies," *Antipodefoundation.org*, May 30, 2019, https://antipodefoundation.org/2019/05/30/queer-geographies-symposium/.
[145] Gieseking and Clancey, "Queer Geographies." See also Cindi Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 4 (1996): 487–99.

naming these minor theorists, they call on geographers to put "queer theory and questions of sexuality" to work and they aim to create "a space of theoretical reciprocity and generative dialogues in which there is an expansion of the canon of 'major' queer theory and where there are further entanglements between geography" and a variety of other disciplinary formations.[146] For many contemporary queer geographers, the break with closely related but putatively more identitarian forms of critique, like feminist geographies, has left a gap in terms of conceptualizing how queerness intermingles with gender. In light of both Oswin's work and Gieseking and Clancey's approach to remedying this situation in queer geographies, I now turn to focus on: (1) how intersectionality and queer of color scholarship, have been increasingly hailed by the scholarly praxes of queer geographies; and (2) on the vagaries that have attended these hailings, especially with regard to the histories of the institutionalization of both intersectionality and queer of color scholarship.

Among the books reviewed as part of Gieseking and Clancey's symposium, David Seitz's *A House of Prayer for All People* stands out on account of the author's embrace of both subjectless critique and intersectionality as a means to track the mutations of citizenship in the everyday life-worlds of the Metropolitan Community Church in Toronto (MCCT).[147] Seitz's formulation of queer geography in the book is useful, particularly insofar as he frames it in relation to his earlier writing on the relationship between sexuality and critical urban theory, wherein he elaborates the potential for subjectless critique to recast the stakes of longstanding debates around the right to the city.[148] In that context, Seitz argues that critical urban theorists concerned with the right to the city should "turn to queer theory" to better

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[146] Gieseking and Clancey, "Queer Geographies."
[147] David K Seitz, *A House of Prayer for All People: Contesting Citizenship in a Queer Church*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). See also Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects."
[148] David K Seitz, "The Trouble with Flag Wars: Rethinking Sexuality in Critical Urban Theory," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 2 (2015): 251–64, https://doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12189.

understand sexuality "as a mode of subject-producing power, complicit and co-constituted with race, class and gender."[149] In light of this argument, I note that Seitz's understanding of subjectless critique reads as an intervention against the notion that the proper focus of queer scholarship should be on sexuality as particularistic. In this instance, Seitz is looking to queer theory to show its ability to reveal the inner workings of subjectivation, which are co-constitutive of the tendency of some scholars to focus on particular subjects as opposed to the process of subjectivation itself and, by extension, on the reclamation of that process by self-determining autonomous collectivities who leverage subjectivity as a point of entry into wider fields of political praxis.

In *A House of Prayer for All People*, Seitz holds that "subjectless queer critique––queer theory 'without proper object'––harbors a multitude of political implications that a reformulated, geographically diffuse concept of citizenship can powerfully illuminate."[150] Over the course of the book, Seitz tracks how these implications play out by "situat[ing] the church and the intimacies it fosters as spaces of vexed *attachment* […] *contestation* […and] *solidarity*," all the while noting how subjectless critique enables him "to insist upon an understanding of citizenship and religion as objects of a complex reparative yet unredemptive love," which, following Melanie Klein and Eve Sedgwick, he calls "affective *reparation*."[151] On this basis, Seitz invokes the work of Cathy Cohen who, he argues, "lays out the stakes and prospects for a capacious queer studies and politics even more explicitly" than Butler, whose essay is, nonetheless, at the center of his embrace of subjectless critique.[152] As I discuss more fully later in this chapter, I am somewhat critical of this approach. As a whole, I find that

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[149] Seitz, "The Trouble with Flag Wars," 253.
[150] Seitz, *A House of Prayer for All People*, 3–4; See also Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?."
[151] Seitz, *A House of Prayer for All People*, 4, emphases in original.
[152] Seitz, *A House of Prayer for All People*, 6. Cathy J Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437–65.

many white queer geographers are, in their rush to distinguish from white feminism,

somewhat at a loss to account for their own conceptualizations of the manifold operations of

power, particularly when it comes to gender.

As Natalie Oswin points out in her review of Seitz's book, he (multiply) invokes the

apparent resonance between Butler's argument "against proper objects" and Cohen's call for a

grounded intersectional reformulation of queer politics in order to develop "a more capacious,

robust, dexterous, contestatory and playful orientation toward the political."[153] Noting her

"anxiety" about the subtle drift in Seitz's analysis from "a 'capacious' queer critique to a 'free

floating' one," Oswin argues that it is, nonetheless, "important to hold on to some sort of

referent for 'queer.'"[154] On her reading, that referent is "not just vulnerability, but vulnerability

tied to heteronormativity."[155] For Oswin, Cohen's work "argues specifically for a queer politics

that deals with heteronormativity as a gendered, raced, classed, and sexualized mode of

oppression."[156] Indeed, as Cohen herself argues:

> [T]he radical potential of queer politics, or any liberatory movement, rests on
> its ability to advance strategically oriented political identities arising from a
> more nuanced understanding of power. One of the most difficult tasks in such
> an endeavor (and there are many) is not to forsake the complexities of both how
> power is structured and how we might think about the coalitions we create. Far
> too often movements revert to a position in which membership and joint
> political work are based upon a necessarily similar history of oppression [...]
> Instead, I am suggesting that the process of movement-building be rooted not
> in our shared history or identity, but in our shared marginal relationship to
> dominant power which normalizes, legitimizes, and privileges.[157]

As so many scholars have done, Cohen relies on Kimberlé Crenshaw's formulation of

intersectionality to map and to critique the radical possibilities and aspirations of queer

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[153] Seitz, quoted in Natalie Oswin, "Grounding Subjectless Queer Critique," *Societyandspace.org*, December 18, 2018, http://societyandspace.org/2018/12/18/grounding-subjectless-queer-critique/.
[154] Oswin, "Grounding Subjectless Queer Critique."
[155] Oswin, "Grounding Subjectless Queer Critique."
[156] Oswin, "Grounding Subjectless Queer Critique."
[157] Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 458.

politics.[158] In so doing, she is careful to specify that what she is "calling for is the destabilization, and not the destruction or abandonment of identity categories."[159] While Cohen acknowledges that she largely avoids "specifics when trying to describe how we move concretely toward a transformational coalition politics among marginalized subjects," her call for intersectionality rests on the view that it affords a two-fold opportunity "to privilege the specific lived experience of distinct communities" and "to search for those interconnected sites of resistance from which we can wage broader political struggles."[160] Given both my genealogy of transfeminism below and my discussion in Chapter 4 of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's evolution as an anti-identitarian project born of a moment in which the broader feminist movement was adopting a tactic of strategic essentialism, it is important to note that the *moment* of claiming a specific identity/subjectivity vis-à-vis concrete political struggles and lived experiences is not the same as declaring a theoretical commitment to identity politics (or to subjectless critique, for that matter) or centering identity *as fixed* throughout the course of longer-term organizing, "community"/coalition building, and radical transformation.[161] Claiming an identity––collective or otherwise––as part of a political process is just that, part of a political process. It is not an endpoint or a goal, even if it is sometimes experienced as a *cul de sac* or a detour. It is, instead, a frequently necessary step in the process of opening up new political pathways and repurposing outmoded praxes such that they may

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[158] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99.
[159] Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 459.
[160] Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 462.
[161] Following geographer Lynda Johnston, I note that there has been a profusion of research in the broader landscape of geographies of sexuality that has focused on "LGBTIQ activism" related to marriage, gentrification, pride, and HIV/AIDS, though she also points out that "some feminist and queer geographers have berated others for not radically transforming––or queering––spaces, places, and the discipline of geography enough," naming, in particular, Bell and Binnie's work on sexual citizenship and Oswin's queer geographical interventions. Lynda Johnston, "Gender and Sexuality II: Activism," *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 5 (2017): 649, https://doi:10.1177/0309132516659569; David Bell and Jon Binnie, *The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Natalie Oswin, "Towards Radical Geographies of Complicit Queer Futures," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 3, no. 2 (2004): 89–103; Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space."

become useful for both emergent and long-standing subjectivities engaged in everyday struggles for collective liberation.

As this review has suggested, the imagination of such radical transformations by queer geographers has overwhelmingly called upon queer of color scholarship and intersectionality as a core part of their shifting scholarly praxes. Nevertheless, recalling both Wright's observations about the implicit nature of much research that claims these (and other) terms and Oswin's expression of "anxiety" at the slipperiness of their contemporary use, it is necessary to dwell a bit more on the methodological, political, and epistemological consequences of the twinned advancement of these approaches in academic queer geography. Tellingly, geographer Michael Brown undertakes to do so——albeit focusing only on intersectionality——by way of noting his own anxiety about the "unevenness of the intersections [geographers] have drawn."[162] Perhaps inevitably, since he describes himself as a generally anxious person, Brown explores the affect of anxiety itself as he recounts intersectionality's travels through the citational economies of the discipline.

Brown locates the "origins" of intersectionality in Crenshaw's work, even as he notes its resonances with various moments in the last two decades of feminist and queer geographies of the gender and sexuality.[163] Whereas Brown identifies a "steadfast consensus that for geographies of sexuality to be truly queer they cannot focus on sexuality per se, but must also

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[162] Michael Brown, "Gender and Sexuality I: Intersectional Anxieties," *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 4 (2012): 541–50, https://doi:10.1177/0309132511420973.
[163] Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"; Linda Peake, "Gender, Race, Sexuality," in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Geographies*, eds. Susan J. Smith, Rachel Pain, Sallie Marston, and John Paul Jones III (London: SAGE, 2010): 54–77; Peake, "'Race' and Sexuality"; Valentine, "Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography," *The Professional Geographer* 59, no. 1 (2007): 10–21; Peter Hopkins and Greg Noble, "Masculinities in Place: Situated Identities, Relations and Intersectionality," *Social & Cultural Geography* 10, no. 8 (2009): 811–19, https://doi:10.1080/14649360903305817; Robyn Longhurst and Lynda Johnston, "Bodies, Gender, Place and Culture: 21 Years on," *Gender, Place & Culture* 21, no. 3 (2014): 267–78, https://doi:10.1080/0966369X.2014.897220; Lynda Johnston, "Intersectional Feminist and Queer Geographies: A View From 'Down-Under,'" *Gender, Place & Culture* 25, no. 4 (2018): 554–64, https://doi:10.1080/0966369X.2018.1460329.

consider its connections with other dimensions of identity," Lynda Johnston indicates that

"much of the research on 'queer geographies' has been at the intersection of space, place,

gender and sexualities, not because of the concept of intersectionality, but because scholars

have been motivated by the political potentials of queer theories."[164] While both scholars note

various combinations of approaches to intersectionality in feminist/queer geographies, I am

more concerned with their assessments of the implications of what Wright describes as the

uneven and vague profusion of the term itself both in the disciplinary spaces of geography

and in the geographies of the discipline itself. (I also note that, unlike many other reviewers of

the literatures of feminist/queer geographies, both Brown and Johnston reference specifically

transgender scholarship in geography, by noting, in particular, Petra Doan's work.[165]) In short,

my concern is that many (white) queer geographers are somewhat at a loss to account for the

political genealogies of their own conceptualizations of the everyday material operations of

power. That queer geographers increasingly turn to queer of color scholarship and

intersectionality to "ground" their emphasis on subjectless critique effectively performs an

operation by which the aspects of queer theory derived from queer of color and Black feminist

scholarship are treated as disciplinarily "separate" from (white) queer theory as opposed to

constitutive of it. So, on the one hand, the work of queer of color scholarship and Black

feminism is being acknowledged, which arguably constitutes a recognition of the deeper

continuities and interdependencies between these formations and queer geographies. While,

on the other hand, the acknowledgement does not, in itself, constitute a deeper genealogical

attempt to show the shared roots of *intersecting struggles* so much as it functions as a

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[164] Brown, "Intersectional Anxieties," 541; Lynda Johnston, "Intersectional Feminist and Queer Geographies." See also Peter Hopkins, "Social Geography I: Intersectionality," *Progress in Human Geography*, 2017, 1–11, https://doi:10.1177/0309132517743677.
[165] Petra L Doan, "The Tyranny of Gendered Spaces – Reflections From Beyond the Gender Dichotomy," *Gender, Place & Culture* 17, no. 5 (2010): 635–54, https://doi:10.1080/0966369X.2010.503121.

"corrective" to the everyday divergent operations of disciplinary knowledge production. Central to this distinction is a tendency to conceptualize of intersectionality, in particular, as a critique focused on individualized subjectivities as opposed to collective struggles. While this tendency does have basis in the scholarly literature, which I discuss further below in my review of literatures focused on queer of color scholarship and intersectionality, the profusion of the term in movement contexts reveals its other uses and valences.

For his part, Brown identifies an "overall unevenness within geographies of sexualities" suggesting that this unevenness "produces a worry over just *which* identities we choose to intersect with sexualities" and "a related concern […] over *how many* intersections to consider in our research."[166] Insofar as feminist/queer scholars working in the Anglo-American context tend to frame intersectionality as an antidote to ostensibly essentializing tendencies of identity politics, it is useful to highlight, as Nira Yuval-Davis does, that "the question of whether to interpret the intersectionality of social divisions as an additive or a constitutive process is still central." [167] For Yuval-Davis, the distinction between additive and constitutive approaches highlights that "the heart of the debate is the conflation or separation of the different analytic levels in which intersectionality is located, rather than just a debate on the relationship of the divisions themselves."[168] Yuval-Davis elaborates this distinction methodologically and politically through an analysis of the various, and often confusing, ways that intersectionality has been mobilized in international feminist development and policy contexts, wherein she notes that one of the key issues with an additive approach "is that it

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[166] Brown, "Intersectional Anxieties," 544–545, emphases in original.
[167] Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2016): 195, doi:10.1177/1350506806065752.
[168] Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality," 195.

often remains on one level of analysis, the experiential, and does not differentiate between different levels."[169]

Geography's disciplinary disposition toward parsing just such different levels of analysis by attending to the mutual imbrication of sexuality, gender, and space/place has led to an increased focus on the "mutual constructions of lesbians and gay men from bodies, homes, communities and nations," not to mention from other identities and sites, as my discussion of Oswin's and Seitz's work demonstrated.[170] Positioning such attention as part of an emergent "intersectional approach," Johnston follows Roberto Kulpa and Joseli Maria Silva to argue that this approach "does little to decolonize Anglo-American approaches to sex, gender and place."[171] For their part, Kulpa and Silva contend "that as geographers, feminists, queer scholars, and all out in/out-betweeners, we need not only to look for 'non-Western' examples of world-wide diversity. Rather, and perhaps foremost, we must reconceptualize our own practices of 'doing knowledge.'"[172] They focus particularly on citational politics and explicit/implicit subjective distinctions that render some knowledge producers as "theorists" and others as "informants." Like Kath Browne, they call for turning these conditions of knowledge production "into elements of struggle" for "alternative ways to overcome the cultural, political and economic barriers that prevail in contemporary networks of academic production."[173] As I detail further in the methodological section of Chapter 4, my own work is very much of a piece of these interventions, not least through an emphasis on collaboration

[169] Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," 197.
[170] Johnston, "Intersectional Feminist and Queer Geographies," 556.
[171] Johnston, "Intersectional Feminist and Queer Geographies," 556.
[172] Roberto Kulpa and Joseli Maria Silva, "Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies: Section Introduction," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, ed. Gavin Brown and Kath Browne, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 141.
[173] Kulpa and Silva, "Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies," 141. Kath Browne, "Contesting Anglo-American Privilege in the Production of Knowledge in Geographies of Sexualities and Genders*," *Revista Latino-Americana De Geografia E Género,* 6, no. 2 (2015): 250–70; See also Kath Browne et al., "Towards Transnational Feminist Queer Methodologies," *Gender, Place & Culture* 24, no. 10 (2017): 1376–97, https://doi:10.1080/0966369X.2017.1372374.

and by way of a conceptualization of autonomous praxis as a mode of producing theory through struggle, which I also discuss in Chapter 3.

Calls for intersectionality, whether of individualized identities or of collective struggles, and trends toward various modes of "decolonizing" scholarship are certainly not reducible to each other. Nonetheless, in light of my earlier discussion about the split between feminist and queer geographies, it is worth noting that feminist geographers have focused more on the methodological, epistemological, and political implications of scholarly praxis than queer geographers have done. Take, for example, work by Heather McLean, who embraces the mess of queer and feminist artistic and activist praxis to reconfigure both disciplinary and everyday notions of contemporary urban politics.[174] Or: Work by Richa Nagar, which I return to in Chapter 4, which demonstrates the political power of placing collaborative relationships at the center of research as a way to co-author and translate activist praxis into scholarly praxis.[175] And yet, even as work like McLean's and Nagar's demonstrates that making "room" for more capacious critique can disrupt dominant disciplinary conceptions of both queerness and feminism, such disruptions are too often considered marginal to *the work* of constructing such critiques, especially when that work is undertaken in the rarified spaces of the university and subjected to the mystifying ideologies of its economies of citation. When proposing subjectless critique and/or intersectionality as methodological, epistemological, and/or political imperatives, we might instead productively seek to *re-/displace* critical focus on the enduring consequences of the academy's complicity with racist and colonial social formations, especially when that complicity is elicited and

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[174] Heather McLean, "Hos in the Garden: Staging and Resisting Neoliberal Creativity," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35, no. 1 (2016): 38–56, https://doi:10.1177/0263775816654915; Heather McLean, "Regulating and Resisting Queer Creativity: Community-Engaged Arts Practice in the Neoliberal City," *Urban Studies* 55, no. 16 (2017): 3563–78, https://doi:10.1177/0042098018755066.
[175] Richa Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*.

reinforced through appeals to "diversity" and "inclusion." Such a move is in keeping with Brown's observation that "the fallout from our intersectional choices (however well considered) is the possible – and quite ironic – reinstatement of identity politics," though, as he notes, such a reinstatement does tend toward a constitutive understanding of intersectionality rather than an additive one.[176] Here, I note that the version of intersectionality that interests me most is one that is focused on an intersectionality of collective political struggles, even as it also attends to the moments in such struggles where individualized and subjective lived experience require or invite forms of separatism. Prior to unfolding how this interest took shape during my empirical work in Bologna, it is necessary to track the discursive institutional reproduction of intersectionality and queer of color scholarship and to attend to the actual queer and feminist histories that are mobilized by and occluded in the Anglo-American academic complex. It is my wager that doing so might prompt a more explicitly political approach to translating intersectionality and queer of color scholarship as part of a transversal turn toward transfeminist and queer ecologies of praxis.

Intersectionality and Queer of Color Scholarship

Each in her own way, scholars Robyn Wiegman and Jennifer Nash have attended to the perils and promises that have tracked along with the advancement of what Wiegman calls "identity knowledges," namely, "the many projects of academic study that were institutionalized in the U.S. university in the twentieth century for the study of identity."[177] Both Wiegman and Nash have addressed the toxic tendencies that accompany an ever-increasing administration of

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[176] Brown, "Gender and Sexuality I," 545.
[177] Robyn Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 1.

intersectionality as a tonic capable of soothing the ailments brought on by the institutionalization of ostensibly malignant forms of identity politics. I begin this section by summarizing Wiegman's *Object Lessons* and detailing her approach to mapping "the imperative of intersectional analysis […] not distance, but proximity; not the refusal of identification but intimacy and attachment."[178] I then turn to Nash's recent book, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, because it is perhaps the most compelling explanation of how the concept-practice of intersectionality has been called upon to do "corrective ecological work in the context of women's studies" and, indeed, in a wide array of academic fields and disciplines.[179] In naming such work as *ecological*, Nash is pointing out both the long term consequences of the institutionalization of toxic forms of hegemonic white masculinity and signaling the problematic hope that both institutions and scholars have invested in intersectionality without necessarily attending to its historical and political evolution as a Black feminist political praxis. Finally, I arrive at Roderick Ferguson's queer of color critique wherein I show how Ferguson's analysis moves from a critical rereading of canonical sociology and historical materialism to a Foucauldian critique of the institutionalization of interdisciplines in the wake of post-World War II U.S.-America, and, finally, to the streets and spaces of the city itself, or what I call ecologies of praxis.

Robyn Wiegman's *Object Lessons* defies deft summarization. Rather than attempt to reconstruct the series of specific lessons contained within each of the book's exhaustively footnoted and recursively written chapters, I focus on how Wiegman critically inhabits the paradoxes of various forms of identity knowledge––gender, heteronormativity, whiteness, and so on––as "set against the demand of intersectional analysis, which calls for scholars in

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[178] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 239–240.
[179] Jennifer C. Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

identity studies to offer cogent and full accounts of identity's inherent multiplicity in ways

that can exact specificity about human experience without reproducing exclusion."[180] What I

am trying to tease out here is both the difference between institutionalized notions of

intersectionality and the operations that they inaugurate and the fact that, as I argue in my

review of Mieli's work in Chapter 3, "identity" is always already multiple. For her part,

Wiegman foregrounds her suspicions about how the attachment of scholars who deploy the

methodologies and epistemologies that inhere in identity knowledges reinforces "the

possibility of doing justice to and with objects of study or the analytics developed to name and

explicate them."[181] Like Nash, but unlike Ferguson, Wiegman does not focus on how the

variety of "keywords––transgender, diaspora, transnational, normativity, interdisciplinary"

arrayed by identity knowledges "evoke the possibility of doing justice to and with objects of

study."[182] Instead, she sets out "to study the answer's ardent pursuit."[183] Wiegman does not

historicize the processes of institutionalization per se but instead "proceeds from the

assumption" that the variety of "new practices of governmentality, social protest, and

institutional attachments rewrote the discourse of the university's responsibilities,

constituencies, and function" in which institutionalization is treated as "an established fact."[184]

Wiegman argues that, unlike the other identity knowledges explored in her book,

intersectionality

> takes the key impediment to identity-oriented justice as the problem of *partial attention* and locates such partiality in the universalizing effects that attend the institutionalized monotheism of identity as a solo sojourn, now compartmentalized––if not departmentalized––under the singular rubrics of race, gender, sexuality, or nation.[185]

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[180] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 2.
[181] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 3.
[182] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 3.
[183] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 3.
[184] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 5–6.
[185] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 240, emphasis in original.

She argues that, framed in this way, intersectionality is taken as *the* signal "of political completion in U.S. identity knowledge domains."[186] Like Nash, Wiegman focuses on the performative and discursive reproduction of intersectionality as an analytic that purportedly eschews the pull of the universal by insisting on ever more particular articulations of identity. And yet, she argues that intersectionality "routinely travels unaccompanied by a rich *critical particularity of its own*."[187] To illustrate this point, Wiegman focuses on citational practices. On the one hand, she describes how the institutionalization of other key concepts for identity knowledge has instated "signature" authors––Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Gayatri Spivak, Nancy Hartstock––thereby expanding "the feminist archive" through a dual focus on the "analytic capacities and political utilities" presented both by the work that travels under these authorial signature and by "the texts that found or extend the tradition they represent."[188] Indeed, she argues that this form of discursive reproduction elides the context of academic debates in which the authors themselves were moved to produce work that, by dint of such archival deletions, comes to carry "even more critical capital."[189] On the other hand, her understanding of intersectionality's circulation in academic circles is that it "refuses the lure of the signature in favor of a history of collective critical and political endeavor."[190] As I show below, Nash specifies this tendency in important ways.

For her part, Wiegman hones in on two key issues involving intersectionality's discursive reproduction. First, she argues that its "interdisciplinary travels" have substantially "de-referentialized" the concept such that Crenshaw's engagement with the law and the state is eschewed in favor of the supposition "that intersectionality is *in itself* ameliorative."[191]

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[186] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 240.
[187] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 241, emphasis in original.
[188] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 244–245.
[189] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 245.
[190] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 245.
[191] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 246, emphasis in original.

Wiegman argues that such "de-referentialization" has underwritten the proliferation of

intersectionality's "juridical imaginary" in ways that not only hail its invocation "as a critical

act of political intervention" but that also stabilize its "critical location in U.S. feminist

theory."[192] Second, Wiegman argues that the ascendance of intersectionality reinforces, rather

than resolves, the paradoxes of the universal/particular it is purported to address. She writes:

> [Intersectionality's] power emerges precisely from its origin in law and in
> rhetorics of address to the state that generate the juridical imaginary that
> governs it even as its analytic limit is reached in the equation it repeatedly
> exacts between critical practice and legal justice.[193]

Wiegman's precision in regard to the discursive reproduction of intersectionality in

academic feminism might seem to suggest that she is critical of its political aspirations, but she

specifies that this is not her intention. Wiegman contends that her focus on the disciplinary

(re)production of the "object of study" that intersectionality is taken to center, namely Black

women and their experiences, "is not concerned with measuring the value of the promises

that intersectionality makes but with the lessons at stake in fully inhabiting them."[194]

In the end, Wiegman invokes Nash's work to identify how the problems presented by

intersectionality as a critical method

> add up to the strange lacuna that Nash locates at the center of intersectional
> theory, [namely] its inability to discern an issue that it would otherwise seem
> intent on addressing: "whether *all* identities are intersectional or whether only
> multiply marginalized subjects have an intersectional identity."[195]

Wiegman concludes by "insist[ing] that left theory of any kind does not simply construct an

analysis of power as a way of discerning social relations," which was Oswin's contention in

"Deconstructing Queer Space."[196] Instead, Wiegman argues, left theory must "[live] the

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[192] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 248.
[193] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 248.
[194] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 250.
[195] Jennifer C. Nash, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 9 quoted in Wiegman, "Critical Kinship," 297.
[196] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 299; Oswin, "Deconstructing Queer Space," 96.

complexity of those relations, just as surely as human subjects do." And this, for both Wiegman and Nash, requires a deeper understanding of how "intersectionality as a critical practice is motivated by love."[197] As far as this research is concerned, love certainly plays a significant role in revealing the complexities of intersectional analysis in practice, as the opening sections of the Introduction and each of the subsequent chapters narrativize. Further, given my discussion of Smaschieramenti's critiques of normative relations in Chapter 4, I note that the Laboratorio's approach to transfeministqueer autonomy explicitly problematizes normative forms of romantic love itself by questioning the pull of the proprietary and exploring alternate modes of critical relationality. The main difference, then, between my analysis and Wiegman's is that I am focused on a non-institutional and collective adaptation of intersectionality, even as I am also attendant to the ways in which anglophone institutionalized formulations of "identity knowledges" travel and are translated in distinct contexts, which I take up in the final two sections of this chapter.

For her part, Nash has long been interested in the institutionalization of intersectionality.[198] She argues "that there is a single affect that has come to mark contemporary academic black feminist practice: *defensiveness*."[199] For Nash, (Black Feminist) defensiveness is never wholly separate from (white) anxiety––a term she also uses––but it is perhaps a more precise description of the situation that has resulted from the proliferation of

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[197] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 250.
[198] Nash, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality;" Jennifer C. Nash, "Practicing Love: Black Feminism, Love-Politics, and Post-Intersectionality," *Meridians* 11, no. 2 (2011): 1–24, https://doi:10.2979/meridians.11.2.1; Jennifer C. Nash, "'Home Truths' on Intersectionality," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 23, no. 2 (2011): 445–70, https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/yjlf/vol23/iss2/5; Jennifer C. Nash, "Feminist Originalism: Intersectionality and the Politics of Reading," *Feminist Theory* 17, no. 1 (2016): 3–20, https://doi:10.1177/1464700115620864; Jennifer C. Nash, "Intersectionality and Its Discontents," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2017): 117–29, https://doi:10.1353/aq.2017.0006.
[199] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 3, emphasis in original. In keeping with her critique throughout *Black Feminism Reimagined*, Nash tends to use the uncapitalized "black feminism" in lieu of "Black Feminism." When directly quoting her work, I use the uncapitalized phrase. In my own use of the term––as a matter of respect and as a reflection of my own positionality––I use the capitalized form.

"proprietary attachments to intersectionality" that have accompanied the concept-practice's

institutional ascendance.[200] She argues:

> These attachments conscript black feminism into a largely protective posture, leaving black feminists mired in policing intersectionality's usages, demanding that intersectionality remain located within black feminism, and reasserting intersectionality's "true" origins in black feminist texts. [...] [D]efensiveness is largely articulated by rendering intersectionality black feminist property, as terrain that has been gentrified, colonized, and appropriated, and as territory that must be guarded and protected through the requisite black feminist vigilance, care, and "stewardship."[201]

Nash's reliance on spatial and ecological terminology to characterize Black Feminist

defensiveness in undertaking *the work* of intersectional critique reveals the character of

relations of reproduction and regulation that govern the processes by which concept-practices

born of non-institutional political struggles––think, for example, of intersectionality's

emergence as part of the feminist movement, which I discuss further below––are enclosed

and mobilized according to the contradictory disciplinary logics of the academy in its embrace

of "identity knowledges." As my discussion in Chapter 4 of the differences between

institutionalized knowledge production and non-institutionalized knowledge production in

the context of the Smaschieramenti assembly suggest, one of the key distinctions between

these contexts is how the pull of the proprietary is negotiated. For Nash, it is not only the

concept-practices themselves that are subjected to these logics, it is also the bodies that are

"conscripted" as the "original" bearers of the concept-practices themselves:

> While black feminists have long traced the violence of the university, few have advocated for abandoning the institutional project of black feminism, despite long-standing and widely circulating texts theorizing how the academy quite literally cannibalizes black women, extracts their labor, and renders invisible the work they perform to establish fields. Thus, when I consider the violence the university has inflicted on black women's bodies, I want to underscore that black feminism has remained oriented toward the university, *despite* this violence, and has largely retained faith in the institution's capacity to be

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[200] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 3.
[201] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 3.

remade, reimagined, or reinvented in ways that will do less violence to black feminist theory and black feminists' bodies.[202]

In short, as my summary of Wiegman's engagement with intersectionality suggested, there is no prescriptive path leading from "critical hegemony" to "ameliorative justice."

Even as Nash notes the contradictory specificity that inheres in deploying intersectionality to mediate the relationship between academic feminism, generally, and Black Feminism, specifically, she is quite clear that her conception of Black Feminist approaches is "expansive, welcoming anyone with an investment in black women's humanity, intellectual labor, and political visionary work."[203] Nash relinquishes the institutional tendency toward reductive and additive approaches to intersectionality. Turning away from a proprietary and defensive stance, Nash first reinstates intersectionality as a *political practice* that "shift[s] the content of black feminism from a description of bodies to modes of intellectual production."[204] Nash argues:

> The continued blindness to black feminism *as an autonomous intellectual and political tradition* that has engaged in theorizing myriad questions, developed multiple analytics including intersectionality, and done far more than ask to be 'accounted for' and included in feminist theory is what enables women's studies to continue representing black feminist theory as merely a critique.[205]

Though she does not elaborate on what she means by "autonomous," Nash's use of the term is not incidental. Indeed, she positions defensiveness as "an attempt to exercise agency, as a willful form of territorial exertion in the service of autonomy, but one that is frustrating and frustrated," such that autonomy signals the need to pay close attention to the scholarly affects and praxes *both enabled* and *disabled* by the proliferation of intersectional research not only as

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[202] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 4–5, emphasis in original.
[203] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 5.
[204] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 5.
[205] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 16, emphasis in original.

"an intellectual, political, creative, and erotic tradition but also as a way of feeling."[206] For my purposes, Nash's focus on defensiveness helps to contextualize both how Atlantide's forays into institutional recognition in order to avert an eviction changed both the internal ecology of the space and the character of its collectives, which is the subject of Chapter 5, and how their public campaigns in defense of the space rework the mode of defensiveness through an emphasis on creating new forms of political praxis, which is the subject of Chapter 6. The analysis in both of these chapters builds toward the Conclusion, where I explore the notion of an intersectionality of struggles in the wake of a brutal season of evictions of social spaces in Bologna. In short, I am meditating on how such a reframing of intersectionality with specific regard to transfeministqueer autonomy in the Bolognese context speaks to the need to embrace forms of revolutionary politics that might, at first blush, appear only to concern "niche" subjectivities. My overall understanding of the political reformulation of intersectionality along autonomous lines is that it passes through a moment of identification but does not get stuck there. The "willful form of territorial exertion" of which Nash speaks is resonant with the ways in which the Laboratorio balances both its specific collective subjective position as transfeminist and queer with their participation in a "wider" political territory, where numerous other collective subjects are also active. As such, my emphasis on intersectionality is a reflection of an ongoing effort to overcome the intractability of which Wiegman spoke in a disciplinary context by way of understanding the mutuality of struggles that would appear separate if one were to focus *only* on the terms of identity.

Returning to Nash, she proceeds to a *feeling out* of Black Feminism's current institutional situation, which leads her to point out that "the recent investment in affect is

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[206] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 28.

often intellectually tethered to queer theory."[207] And yet, she argues, the tendency of academic queer theory is to "downplay or entirely neglect the affective work of black feminism" not least through reading practices that elide "how black feminists have theorized what it feels like to do labor that is both desired and devalued inside an academy that was not designed to celebrate or even support black women's intellectual work."[208] Here again, intersectionality is figured less as a specific condition of individualized subjects and their lived/embodied experiences and more as an autonomous intellectual and political tradition whose bearers have been hailed to do the work of building institutions, programs, and analytics that will ostensibly "rescue" the academy from the endless repetition of myriad forms of everyday violence. This mode of *feeling out* is very much of a piece of the work documented in Chapters 2 and 3, namely, the construction of the Eccentric Archive and the relationship of archiving-as-praxis to modes of politicized affect. As I point out in the methodology section of Chapter 2, while the memories and materials that we worked with "belonged" to an individual, they were always already part of a collective memory. By treating the materials as part of a movement-based archive, we not only created new citational pathways, we did so in a manner that was explicit about the affective dimensions of our work. So, in a move that parallels Nash's critique, we actively refigured the institutional exclusion of transfeminist and queer subjects from disciplinary knowledge production in the Italian context as a way to revalorize the work that a demand for inclusion would necessarily entail.

Throughout the book, Nash "linger[s] in the institutional work that intersectionality performs because it is [where] its status as both overdetermined and emptied of any specific meaning becomes most lucid."[209] Indeed, Nash's reimagination of Black Feminism locates the

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[207] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 30.
[208] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 30.
[209] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 18.

political and intellectual work of intersectionality in its numerous (mis)translations, travels, (im)mobilities, and resonances both within and beyond academic feminism. Here, I highlight two key aspects of her analysis in order to reveal both queer geography's own occlusion of autonomous political and intellectual traditions and to interrupt the everyday violences that are underwritten when queer geographers metabolize intersectionality as an "ecological corrective" to the ostensible failures of earlier articulations of both feminist geographies and geographies of sexuality.

First, Nash elaborates the notion of a "politics of reading" that explores "how and why intersectionality has come to be figured as a vulnerable object in need of loyalty and care."[210] She is especially attentive to how framing intersectionality as a vulnerable object leads to "performances of intersectional originalism," particularly with regard to Crenshaw's work.[211] For Nash, "intersectional originalism is a diagnostic reading practice" that "evaluates feminist work" according to its proximity to Crenshaw's two foundational articles.[212] Nash shows how in/fidelity to intersectionality is typically discerned in one of two ways: either through "rescue" operations that "[save] intersectionality from misuse" by "revealing the problematic work of critics or through insisting that intersectionality's true analytic potency has not yet been unleashed," or through "forgetting," which names "originalism's simultaneous *investment* in questions of how power shapes academic life and its *disinvestment* in how the context of the 'corporate university' has shaped intersectionality's relatively easy institutionalization within the American university."[213] As is the case with the mobilization of "queerness" as an antidote to the identitarian misadventures of feminist geography and

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[210] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 59–60.
[211] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 61.
[212] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 63; Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins;" Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140 (1989): 139–67.
[213] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 65–66, emphases in original.

geographies of sexuality, forms of evaluation, rescue, and forgetting are hermeneutic strategies that always "mask their interpretive work in the name of textual fidelity."[214] While Nash appreciates the multiple academic and non-academic commitments that inform a turn toward the "politics of care," she is persistent in her call to rethink the practices of care "in ways that exceed the deep pull of the proprietary."[215]

Second, Nash examines the notion of vulnerability. Recalling both Oswin's insistence on the specificity of queer vulnerability *to heteronormativity* in her reading of Seitz's work and Heynen's invocation of Nagar's notion of "radical vulnerability," Nash situates her turn to "black feminist love-politics as undergirded by a dual commitment to *mutual vulnerability* and *witnessing*."[216] Though she draws on Butler, Berlant, and Christine Straehle, it is Nash's reading of June Jordan's "Poem about My Rights" that best encapsulates "the visionary call of black feminist love-politics – a radical embrace of connectedness."[217] Both Jordan's poem and Nash's reading of it move between the specificity of vulnerability linked to individualized identity, and the necessity of "a vision of collectivity and mutuality" as the basis for imagining "a forceful 'resistance' and 'self-determination.'"[218] Such a move is consistent with non-reductive approaches to addressing the relationship between the universal and the particular. Further, Nash focuses on how mutual vulnerability and witnessing are constituted in experimental forms of writing "like memoir, narrative, autobiography, and 'alchemical' writing" that "challenge or upend the neutral and detached demands of academic writing" by

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[214] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 69.
[215] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 79–80.
[216] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 116, emphases in original.
[217] Nash, *Black Feminism* Reimagined, 118–121; June Jordan, *Directed by Desire: the Collected Poems of June Jordan*, (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2012), 309–312.
[218] Jordan, *Directed by Desire*, 312 quoted in Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 119.

engaging in acts of "strategic self-disclosure."[219] Such an emphasis resonates with my reading

of historically distinctive approaches to autonomous praxis in Chapter 3.

In the end, turning to "love as a political practice" leads Nash back to critical race

theory, to legal scholarship, and to rights-based projects more generally, which is where she

sees the greatest potential to disrupt proprietary logics that have governed intersectionality's

uptake in the citational economies of the corporate university.[220] For Nash, critical

inhabitation of the apparent paradoxes "intersectionality's juridical orientation" is just one of

the "endless ways to undo the treatment of intersectionality as property."[221] The common

element that links non-proprietary articulations of Black Feminism is a willingness to "let go"

of the disciplinary fixations on evaluation, rescue, and forgetting such that Black Feminists

and Black Feminisms might "envision new forms of agency and relationality."[222] What if queer

geographers were to translate such a call in their efforts to queer the discipline? Doing so

would perhaps occasion a deeper engagement with historical forms of agency and

relationality that have often been excluded by the disciplinary logics of the academy.

Such an engagement is an important part of Roderick Ferguson's overarching

intellectual project, which has been among the most central to the formation of queer of color

critique in the U.S.-American academy.[223] I focus here on the evolution of Ferguson's work

because of how his analysis has moved from the spaces of canonical sociology and its

depictions of the deviance of simultaneously racialized, gendered, and sexualized subjects

encountered in its research sites, to the newly institutionalized "interdisciplines" that arose in

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[219] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 119.
[220] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 121.
[221] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 131.
[222] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 131.
[223] Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Roderick Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: the University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Roderick Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019).

the U.S.-American post-World War II academy and, finally, back into city streets. Ferguson arrives at geographically inflected questions of queer space in the most recent of his three books, which I discuss below.

Ferguson's initial formulation of queer of color critique in *Aberrations in Black* opens with an inspection of an archival photograph of a train station near to where he grew up in Georgia. The photo depicts four black men standing around a sign marking a segregated washroom and a white woman standing behind them. Taking the picture's presentation in a Library of Congress exhibition that figures "black men as the central characters in a history of exclusion," Ferguson argues that: "For canonical sociologists, that exclusion would eventually be resolved by the very political economy that initiated it, and African Americans would gradually be assimilated into the American political and economic spheres."[224] Noting both the segregated washroom and the absence of the figures of "the transgendered man" and "the sissies and bulldaggers" that he encountered in the space as a child, Ferguson uses the photograph to lay out the argument of the book: "that epistemology is an economy of information privileged and information excluded, and that subject formations arise out of this economy."[225]

Ferguson's work unfolds in critical conversation with canonical sociology. Narrating the discipline's reliance on figures of racialized, gendered, and sexualized deviance, Ferguson argues "that contrary to canonical claims, intellectual inquiry is always shaped out of heterogeneity, never neatly contained within the presumed homogenous boundaries of a discipline."[226] Like Nash, Ferguson works with, rather than against, the "productive nature of

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[224] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, vii.
[225] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, ix.
[226] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, ix.

that heterogeneity."[227] Ferguson writes: "I do not mean to establish some intellectual or political protocol with this book. I merely wish to offer a work whose insights and failures might incite other ways to be."[228] Insofar as work like Seitz's relies on queer of color scholarship as an antidote to the putatively identitarian preoccupations of geographies of sexuality, among other fields, it is not entirely clear that this offer has been taken up in the spirit in which it was initially intended. As a result, I highlight how Ferguson's *rereading* of historical materialism and canonical sociology informs the elaboration of queer of color analysis as an "epistemological intervention" that "denotes an interest in materiality, but refuses ideologies of transparency and reflection, ideologies that have helped to constitute marxism, revolutionary nationalism, and liberal pluralism" alike.[229] Working against these ideologies, Ferguson constitutes queer of color analysis as a specific kind of intersectional work in that it "presumes that liberal ideology occludes the intersecting saliency of race, gender, sexuality, and class in forming social practices."[230]

With recourse to Muñoz's notion of disidentification, which is "the hermeneutical performance of decoding mass, high, or any other cultural field from the perspective of a minority subject who is disempowered in such a representational hierarchy," Ferguson engages in an Althusserian symptomatic reading of historical materialism.[231] He highlights the pitfalls of historical materialism's, revolutionary nationalism's, and liberal ideology's shared consideration of "heterosexuality as the emblem of order, nature, and universality" and shows how "racialization has helped to articulate heteropatriarchy as universal."[232] Positioning the mutual tendencies of historical materialism, revolutionary nationalism, and

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[227] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, ix.
[228] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, ix.
[229] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 3.
[230] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 4.
[231] Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 25 quoted in Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 4.
[232] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 6.

liberal ideology as wedded to normative visions of heteropatriarchal subjects leads Ferguson to argue that: "Basing the fundamental conditions of history upon heterosexual reproduction and designating capital as the disruption of heterosexual normativity did more than designate the subject of modern society as heteronormative. It made the heteronormative subject the goal of liberal and radical practices."[233] So, where Wiegman focused on the discursive paradox of intersectionality's relationship to the universal and the particular as an impediment to the fulfillment of its political aspirations, Ferguson posits a disidentificatory relationship with historical materialism as ironically "useful for thinking about how capital fundamentally disrupts social hierarchies," which echoes the ways in which Laboratorio Smaschieramenti engages with autonomous Marxism.[234] Unlike his other books, *Aberrations in Black* is squarely concerned with documenting how "Capital is based on a logic of reproduction that fundamentally overrides and often violates hetero-patriarchy's logic."[235] Further, Ferguson's queer of color analysis consistently returns to the specifically urban spatio-temporality of capital's "calls for subjects who must transgress the material and ideological boundaries of community, family, and nation."[236] Coupled with his reading of the dual tendency of "canonical formations [to] suppress the multiplicity of a social context" and to "regulate the diversity that constitutes a discipline," *Aberrations in Black* ultimately reveals "the ways in which canonical sociology has usurped [the] intellectual work [of African American sociologists] and banished them from the taken-for-granted and lived history of American sociology."[237] This claim resonates with both Nash's reading of how women's studies' embrace

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[233] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 10.
[234] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 14.
[235] Ferguson. *Aberrations in Black*, 16.
[236] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 17. John D'Emilio, who is an emeritus colleague of Ferguson's at the University of Illinois Chicago, has undertaken a similar analysis. See John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*, (New York City: Routledge, 1992). I am grateful to Stefan Kipfer for pointing out this connection.
[237] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 22–23.

of intersectionality violently excludes both the actual labor of Black Feminists and their distinctive forms of "love-politics," and with Sundberg's claim that UPE has incorporated the insights of FPE without settling the "epistemological debt" that such a maneuver incurs. Moreover, it teases out the "ruptural possibilities" that inhere in paying closer attention to minoritized cultural forms and inhabiting what I call ecologies of praxis.[238] For Ferguson, it is precisely these "eccentric" forms that "suggest possibilities outside the normative parameters and racialized boundaries of [...] canonical structures."[239] In the end, Ferguson holds that queer of color critique "can be another step in the move beyond identity politics" in favor of "what Angela Davis calls 'unlikely and unprecedented coalitions.'"[240] In light of the work of his subsequent books, it is fitting that Ferguson concludes by referring to Davis's work, not least because of her centrality to the tectonic shifts that marked the birth of the "interdisciplines" in the U.S.-American academy in the 1960s.

Such shifts are at the center of Ferguson's sweeping study of the U.S.-American academy's response to the mass social mobilizations of the 1950s and 60s, *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. In the book, Ferguson asserts that "typical poststructuralist and postmarxist theorizations leave out the student movements that yielded the interdisciplinary fields."[241] Adapting a Foucauldian approach to studying the genealogy of institutionalized power/knowledge, Ferguson bucks this tendency by examining "how state, capital, and academy saw minority insurgence as a site of calculation and strategy" and, further, "how those institutions began to see minority difference and culture as positivities" that could be incorporated and managed by way of "an adaptive hegemony,"

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[238] Sundberg, "Feminist Political Ecology," 7; Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 26.
[239] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 26.
[240] Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 29.
[241] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 5.

which elevated abstract notions of representation above the concrete goals that necessitated the material redistribution of resources.[242] Methodologically, Ferguson distinguishes his approach in *The Reorder of Things* from Foucault's in that he centers "racial formations as the genealogy of power's investment in various forms of minority difference and culture."[243] He also departs from understandings of the academy that render "it as a derivation of capitalist economic formations."[244] Owing to his framing of social movements as "oppositional formations" that are "both critical and solicitous of power," an understanding that echoes Wiegman's analysis, Ferguson locates the academy as "an institution that *socializes state and capital* into emergent articulations of difference."[245] For Ferguson, *re-/displacing* critical focus on the university itself allows for an analysis of how it "became the laboratory for the revalorization of modes of difference."[246] This claim is what leads Ferguson to focus on the birth of the "interdisciplines" in order to show how their institutionalization promised "the affirmation, recognition, and legitimacy of minority life."[247] Reading the "archival capacities" of the academy through Derrida's *Eyes of the University*, Ferguson places "ethnic and women's movements" at "the heart of [the] relationship between institutionality and textuality."[248] Keeping in mind the contradictory nature of oppositional movements' relationship to institutional power, Ferguson embarks upon his genealogical study by invoking Jacques Rancière's warning against an easy rush to consensus about scholarly work that purports to lay bare the monodirectional exercise of power on the part of the state or markets.[249] In so doing, Ferguson avers that it is necessary for scholars to engage in "ongoing experimentation

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[242] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 6.
[243] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 7–8.
[244] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 8.
[245] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 8–9, emphasis in original.
[246] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 13.
[247] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 13.
[248] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 14–16.
[249] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 17.

with the ruptural possibilities of modes of difference" that "[craft] deeds and [work] up visions that are in the institution but not of it."[250]

Following Herbert Marcuse, who was Angela Davis's academic mentor, Ferguson builds on this call to experimentation in his latest book, *One-Dimensional Queer*, which tracks the historical ascendency of the single-issue understanding of queerness that has accompanied its "incorporate[ion] [...] into US state discourse and American capitalism."[251] Ferguson specifically attends to how the narrowing of multidimensional queer politics "became a part of an urban problematic, perhaps even *the* urban problematic, in which cities have steadily worked to banish their customary denizens – the poor, the communities of color, the immigrants, and marginalized queers who remember the days when queerness was not the sign of respectability and consumption."[252] His initial account draws *inter alia* on Chisholm's reading of Samuel Delaney's *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, in order to advance a "multidimensional vision of the city [...] as the possibility to satisfy desires for self-invention and for the invention of new types of community."[253]

Ferguson's itinerary takes the reader through a variety of "queer engagements with the urban," in which he includes work ranging from Horacio N. Roque Ramírez's study of Latinx queer immigrant experiences in San Francisco's Mission District, to Martin Manalansan's study of a Queens bar frequented by diasporic Filipino gay men in *Global Divas,* to Paola Bacchetta's reflections on the multidimensional politics of the Philadelphia-based group DYKETACTICS![254] These queer engagements with the urban show how "minoritized queers

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[250] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 18.
[251] Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*, 5.
[252] Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*, 81.
[253] Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*, 85.
[254] Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, "'That's My Place!': Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco's Gay Latino Alliance 1975–1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 2 (2003): 224–58; Martin Manalansan IV, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Paola Bacchetta, "DYKETACTICS! Notes Towards an Un-Silencing," in *Smash the Church, Smash the State: The Early*

were trying to engage the city as a site for the invention of new kinds of households, communities, families, identities, and politics."[255] Overall, Ferguson's collection of examples of queer spatial praxis demonstrates the power of an approach that emphasizes the intersectionality of struggles in order to frame queerness as both a way of (urban) life and a vital mode of political organizing. Nevertheless, his relatively constrained engagement with both queer and critical urban scholarship––in which he draws, albeit briefly, on the Chicago School of urban sociology, Christina Hanhardt's work on safe space, David Harvey's writing on neoliberalism and the city, and Lefebvre's recently translated *Marxist Thought and the City*––leaves significant room to reconsider the scholarly praxes of queer and critical urban geographies.

The scholarship that I discussed in my review of queer geographies has worked very hard to displace the hegemony of political economy by way of multiple divergences from prior research in feminist geographies, gay and lesbian geographies, and geographies of sexuality. Such divergent moves have, indeed, done much to reveal the failures of previous critical geographic and urban scholarship to "account for" the multiplicities of both queer critique and the concrete political demands that arise from queer urban spatial praxis. And yet, many queer geographers have been inattentive to the implications of hailing specifically U.S.-American articulations of intersectionality and queer of color critique as antidotes to the universalizing tendencies that belie both the discursive reproduction of these approaches within the academy and the repeated failures of masculinist iterations of urban political economy, whether they be marxist, nationalist, or liberal. Despite queer geographers'

Years of Gay Liberation, ed. Tommi Avicolli Mecca, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2009), 218–31; See also Emily K. Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).
[255] Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*, 94–95.

laudable desires to map ever more particular "object lessons" offered by deconstructions and inhabitations of queer space, queer geography has largely overlooked autonomous intellectual and political engagements with historical materialism. Such traditions have, of course, had to deal with plenty of masculinism, both practically and theoretically. It would seem that, in the rush to redress the canonical exclusion of Black Feminist and queer of color scholarship from the citational economies of disciplinary geography, many queer geographers have progressively (re)produced both an Anglocentric and an ahistorical understanding of enduring struggles for queer liberation. Such forms of struggle are not only *already* intersectional insofar as they unfold at and/or beyond the legal limits of the state's claim to legitimate representation and its corresponding recourse to violence, they are simultaneously more nuanced and specific in their practical elaboration of subjectless critique insofar as they transversally engage historical materialism in raucous acts of salvaging that repurpose, play, and experiment with the opacity of capital's dependency on the incessant (re)production of socio-ecological heterogeneity. The prevailing tendency of queer geography is to peremptorily disavow the political potential of forms of *engaged universalism* both those that I discussed in my review of anthropological approaches to UPE and those that I further unfold in Chapter 3 in my discussion of Mario Mieli's thesis that *homosexual desire is universal.*[256]

So, even if unwittingly, many queer geographies rely too heavily on hermeneutic strategies that (re)produce a scholarly praxis in which the *necessary failure* of our own scholarly commitments to *do justice* to our political commitments is mistaken for the anxiety-provoking failure of queer liberation projects themselves. Such an anxiety too easily leads scholars to look "outside" or "beyond" their citational economies––as in the appeal to queer of

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[256] In addition to Tsing's *Friction*, see also Anne Rademacher, *Reigning the River: Urban Ecologies and Political Transformation in Kathmandu*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 28–29.

color scholarship and intersectionality––without necessarily questioning the "smooth" functioning of those economies themselves, let alone attempting to exit or to refuse them. Further, such anxiety is an important moment in the process of (un)learning, which is central to undertaking collective political struggle in an intersectional and historically materialist mode. Left unaddressed in a *collective* and *political* manner, this mistake serves only to secure economies of citation that disavow queer history as the source of queer theory and queer approaches to theorizing spatial praxis. In short, relying solely on the logic of the economy of citations is, at best, untenable and, at worst, risks reproducing the very dynamics of exploitation and oppression that queer geographers seek to subvert through their scholarly work. In contrast to this tendency, I suggest that a (re)turn to the transversal political praxes of transfeministqueer autonomy occasions both a creative reimagination of political ecological approaches to urban spatial praxis and a shift in anglophone queer geographic praxis toward the work of *political translation* required to resource collective autonomy *in light* and *in spite* of the academy's lure of recognition.

...Transfeminism?

Because transfeministqueer autonomous political praxis is both distinct from and related to anglophone conceptualizations of politics and praxis in queer geography, it is useful to briefly describe the genealogy of transfeminism. In "Transfeminism: Something Else, Somewhere Else," scholars/activists Karine Espineira and Marie-Hélène/Sam Bourcier link the emergence of transfeminism in French and Spanish collective politics to the translation of "queer" into the European context and to the grounded refusal of trans-exclusionary feminist politics. Transfeminism emerged nearly simultaneously in France and Spain in the late 1990s/early

2000s and "formally went public" in France when the group Outrans published a statement entitled "Transfeminismes" in 2009.[257] Espineira and Bourcier describe transfeminism as a "coalitional politics of resistance" within which there are "two fights that are specific to trans people: the battle against the medical and psychiatric control of trans lives, and resistance to the totalizing and compulsory system of two exclusive binary genders."[258] Echoing the formulations of Gayle Rubin and Pat Califa, as well as the landmark "Transfeminist Manifesto" by Emi Koyama, Espinera and Bourcier situate French transfeminism as an outgrowth of and contribution to third-wave feminism in light of its "insistence that a specifically transfeminist subject be included in feminism, and its demand for accountability regarding the changes that this insistence brings to feminist thinking and organizing."[259] Further, transfeminism aligns itself with anglophone third-wave feminisms in its "aims to counter the homogeneity of the white, straight, and abstract subject of feminism."[260] Their framing of transfeminism as a third-wave intervention builds on the work of the group Le Zoo, founded in 1996, which "focused on queer theory, subcultural expression, and the 'epistemopolitics' of self-identified faggots, dykes, trans, bi, and queer people."[261] In their Q Seminars (1996-2003), Le Zoo "disengage[d] from the politics of binary sexual difference" by drawing on Monique Wittig's "critique of heterosexuality as a political regime" and Butler's "gender performativity paradigm and her strategy of gender proliferation as resistance to the sex/gender system."[262]

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[257] Karine Espineira and Marie-Hélène/Sam Bourcier, "Transfeminism: Something Else, Somewhere Else," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1-2 (2016): 84, https://doi:10.1215/23289252-3334247.
[258] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 84–85.
[259] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 85; Emi Koyama, "The Transfeminist Manifesto," in *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier, (Lebanon: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 244–62.
[260] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 86.
[261] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 87.
[262] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 86–87.

In its correspondence with historical Black Feminist political formations, the elaboration of transfeminism in the French context aligns with Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's description of the Combahee River Collective's (CRC) sense of the term "identity politics." Writing against the ways "that term has been used, abused, and reconfigured into something foreign to its creators," Taylor explains that:

> The women of the CRC did not define "identity politics" as exclusionary, whereby only those experiencing a particular oppression could fight against it. Nor did they envision identity politics as a tool to claim the mantle of the "most oppressed." They saw it as an analysis that would validate Black women's experiences while simultaneously creating an opportunity for them to become politically active to fight for the issues most important to them.[263]

Understood in this way, identity politics do not signal the monolithic depoliticization of specific subjects, but instead constitute *one pathway* by which those excluded from both citational and political economies sought to organize their longstanding intellectual and material practices such that they might assert collective autonomy and self-determination *in multiple venues*.

In their description of the Spanish transfeminist movement, which has emphasized embodied and material "production and counterproduction," Espinera and Bourcier describe transfeminism as "a reaction against the theoretical excesses of first-wave white Anglo queer theory, whose poststructuralism promoted an abstract concept of political subjectivity."[264] Citing Smaschieramenti's own embrace of transfeminism, the authors point to the politics of translating "*queer* in different cultural and geopolitical contexts that aim to get rid of Anglo

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[263] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, introduction to *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*, ed. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 11.
[264] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 88.

white queer theory and English as an imperialistic language," noting that collectives from Spain to Brazil use terms like *transfeminista* and *pos-pornôs* in lieu of queer.[265]

In their discussion of the Spanish transfeminist movement, the authors contend that its "new focus on the body through trans and crip bodies, along with a new focus on sexuality through the postporn movement, takes transfeminism where queer theory failed to go."[266] In so doing, they argue that "transfeminism is not an abstract critique of [the] theoretical dualism [of sexual difference]," but a politics that "traffics in actually existing nonbinary lives, bodies, identities, and genders on a collective social level." This is precisely why "a performance-oriented politics of representation and enspacement plays a crucial role in transfeminism [...] because it makes visible the lie of sexual dualism."[267] In the case of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, recall the very meaning of the name of the project itself: unmasking/demasculinization. While each of the chapters provides much more detail on how Smaschieramenti works as/in praxis, for the moment, it is important to highlight that its emergence in the context of Atlantide is an embodied response not only to the theoretical preoccupations of ascendant institutionalized anglophone queer theory, but also to the insistent reproduction of hegemonic masculinity in autonomous politics. By creating Smaschieramenti and sustaining Atlantide, the struggles documented in this dissertation witness the proliferation of both identities and experiences that exceed narrowing and stratifying binary configurations of sexuality and gender, wherever they may be found.

For their part, Espineira and Bourcier close their genealogy of European transfeminism by arguing that "trans and queer urban space making practices can counter the

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[265] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 88, emphasis in original. While it is common for Smaschieramenti to use the English term "queer" they also use the untranslated term *frocia*, which is a feminized version of the insult *frocio*, translatable as "faggot."
[266] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 88.
[267] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 89.

neoliberal spatial politics of zoning laws, social segregation, and gentrification."[268] My detailed

analyses of Atlantide's confrontation with the municipal government in Chapters 5 and 6

serve to substantiate this point in the Bolognese context, of which Espineira and Bourcier

(who is quote close to Laboratorio Smaschieramenti) are clearly aware. After all, they position

the spatial, material, and embodied politics of "transfeminism in Europe, whether [...] in Paris

in the 1990s or in Bologna or Barcelona today" as a powerful and necessary critique of "queer

theory and politics––a critique necessitated first by the transnationalization of 'queer' along

the progressivist trajectory of US modernity and, second, by the refusal within Europe to

adopt the anti-identitarian stance required by first-wave US queer theory."[269]

Notwithstanding Smaschieramenti's ongoing insistence the overall anti-identitarianism of

their political praxis, I read Espineira and Bourcier's claim that European transfeminist

movements reject anti-identitarianism as signaling: (1) a primary commitment to resourcing

non-institutional and (re)compositional approaches to knowledge production over and above

performatively powerful, but politically ineffective, rejections of identity politics conceived of

in an individualistic manner; and (2) a secondary commitment to disrupting paradoxically

hegemonic forms of institutionalized theoretical production that discursively (re)produce the

divergence of queer, feminist, and trans politics absent concrete engagements with those

politics and their histories. To be clear: I understand a grounded claim to anti-identitarianism

as, first and foremost, an opposition to fascism as an ur-form of identitarianism and, second,

as a way to make and to hold space for people to enter (autonomous) politics by way of

denaturalizing sedimented political modes and subjectivities, including those of the

autonomous movements themselves, and engaging in collective self-reflection (*auto-inchiesta*)

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[268] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 89.
[269] Espineira and Bourcier, "Transfeminism," 90.

on the ways that those modes and subjectivities have shaped and been shaped by the praxes

that transfeministqueer autonomous praxis seek to reclaim and to revolutionize.

Translation is political...!

The work of this dissertation is intended to provoke a transversal political turn in the queer

geographies and *not* to claim or to create a new canon, an exercise that, to paraphrase Toni

Morrison, can be nothing but imperial in nature. Instead, in my use of the notion of an

economy of citations and the centrality of translation to my work across the dissertation, I

follow Sandro Mezzadra and Naoki Sakai's critique of translation as a political process that is

closely related to the expansion of global capitalism.[270] Translation has at least two aspects

that are relevant to my discussion here. First, there is literal translation, namely, the rendering

sensible of something expressed in one language in another language. As anyone who has

engaged in the work of translation knows very well, this is not a simple exercise. It involves

making the everyday practices that constellate around specific terms, turns of phrase, and

discourses sensible in a context in which those practices may either not exist or may exist with

significantly different intonations. Second, and quite relatedly, is a notion of translation as it is

described by Mezzadra in an earlier engagement with Sakai's work, namely by way of

references to Laclau and Mouffe's adaptation of a Gramscian notion of "articulation" and

Stuart Hall's critique thereof, which Mezzadra nonetheless finds to be "quite consistent"

Laclau and Mouffe's sense of the term.[271] As Mezzadra writes:

> Articulation means therefore *translation*, and [...] translation is one of the
> fundamental modes of operation of global capital. *Capital as translation* is

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[270] Sandro Mezzadra and Naoki Sakai, "Introduction," *Translation: A Transdisciplinary Journal* no. 4 (2014): 9–29.
[271] Sandro Mezzadra, "Living in Transition: Toward a Heterolingual Theory of the Multitude," *Transversal*, June 2007, http://eipcp.net/transversal/1107/mezzadra/en.html.

building up its own global dimension: the *language of value* (exchange value in its pure logical form) is a semantic structure, and above all the *grammar*, of this dimension, reproducing itself through an intensified version of what Naoki Sakai would call "homolingual address" (Sakai 1997, Introduction).[272]

In their collaborative work, Mezzadra and Sakai draw on Sakai's earlier work distinguishing practices of homolingual address, which are always implicated in various forms of modernist and institutional identity, from practices of heterolingual address, which have the ability to upset polarities between "war and benevolent 'integration' within in already constituted and bordered assemblage" by keeping "open both the space of citizenship and the production of subjectivit[ies] that inhabit it."[273] They write:

> While it is rooted [...] within concrete practices of translation [...] "heterolingual" address here also works more broadly, shedding light on practices and dynamics well beyond the translational and even linguistic field. The concept of the institution itself deserves to be reassessed from this angle; it must open up towards the imagination of a continuous labor of translation between its stabilizing function and the multifarious social practices that the institution targets and that at the same time make its existence possible.[274]

Conjugating this understanding into the scholarly praxes of anglophone (queer) geography, I argue that academic knowledge production "about" the spatiality of gender and sexuality has, at best, fallen short on translating autonomous praxes of collective subjectivation, especially when the politics at stake challenge homolingual categories of analysis implicit in the hierarchies reproduced by disciplinary ways of understanding and locating oneself, including understanding and locating oneself as "queer."

As my review of queer geographies suggested, the internal division of disciplinary approaches to gender and sexuality according to sedimented gendered and sexualized

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[272] Mezzadra, "Living in Transition," emphases in original. Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: on "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). See also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed., (London: Verso, 2001); Stuart Hall, "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall," ed. Lawrence Grossberg, *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 45–60, https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000204.
[273] Mezzadra and Sakai, "Introduction," 20.
[274] Mezzadra and Sakai, "Introduction," 21.

subjectivities has the paradoxical tendency to reproduce epistemological violence by way of an ahistorical and Anglocentric hailing of intersectionality and queer of color scholarship. Though the national inscription of gendered and sexualized norms are implicated in transfeministqueer autonomy, such politics and categories can neither be immediately translated to other contexts nor can they be taken as the homolingual standard by which the politics of gender and sexuality in "other" contexts can be evaluated and rendered "legitimate" as a mode of disciplinary address. Again following Mezzadra and Sakai: "This is the reason why a particularly important task today is an exploration of spaces of citizenship below and beyond the nation-state: from cities to regions."[275] As I describe in Chapter 3, this is precisely what a transversal politics emanating from self-declared non-state spaces emphasizes, though, as I will show in Chapter 5 such self-declarations do not mean that these spaces are not caught up in dialectical relationships with the state.

My work is also a specified adaptation of "compositionism," one of the core concepts of autonomous Marxism, which I discuss in Chapter 3. Though my take on compositionism is intentionally perverse with regards to autonomous Marxist's fixation on the progressive elaboration of a singular subject of revolutionary agency and its attendant spatiality (worker/factory, multitude/empire, etc.), I am nonetheless seeking to understand the (re)composition of a transfeministqueer collective subject-position from which to critique the knowledge production practices of urban political ecology and queer geography. I do so, at least in part, in order to assess what these scholarly praxes may be able to offer such collectivities and, further, to question what would need to change in order for that offer to be politically effective beyond the confines of the discipline and the academy. I am mindful that such an effort necessarily fails in the sense that transfeministqueer is rooted in a politics that

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[275] Mezzadra and Sakai, "Introduction," 20.

would *de*compose disciplinary apparatuses and disaggregate the whitened, masculinized, institutional, and Anglocentric epistemologies that continue to inform the smooth functioning and purportedly limitless visionary potential of the dominant geographical imagination. But, as I describe in Chapter 2, such failure is crucial to the construction of alternative archives *of* and *as* political praxis. Finally, the work of political translation evokes "borders" within and between disciplines and their respective homolingual modes/spaces of address––modes that might render this dissertation as an "Italian case study." It should be clear by now that I am opposed to the routinized wholesale "importing" of differential subjectivities and subjectivating praxes into geography or any other discipline.[276] Even as institutional academic environments "admit diversity," such maneuvers remain common and, in their commonality, reflect the reproduction of a dominant and expansion-oriented operation of the economy of citations, which I describe in Chapter 3. In the end, my push for scholars in urban political ecology and queer geographies to undertake transversal engagement with transfeministqueer ecologies of autonomous praxis is a callback to Nira Yuval-Davis's reflections on transversality as she learned it from autonomous feminists in Bologna:

> [T]ransversal politics represents in many ways an important advance on the earlier *modus operandi* of the Left, which fell into traps of 'over' universalism or 'over' relativism. However, for transversal politics to become a major tool of 'real politics' as well as of 'alternative' social movements, requires from us more thinking and doing.[277]

Though we may differ on the aspiration to becoming "major," it is in the experimental space opened by the "however" that this project comes to life.

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[276] See Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).
[277] Nira Yuval-Davis, "What Is 'Transversal Politics'?," *Soundings* 12 (1999): 98.

The Eccentric Archive

The archive has been evicted.
The archive is homeless.

> *The archive is not dead.*
> *It is more alive than ever.*

Spring

It's late April 2015. Spring is arriving in Bologna. The nights are still laced with the damp

coolness that saturates everything in winter. Bologna: Capital of Fog, nebulous city. After an

early dinner at home, I set out on the ill-fitting 90s-era neon blue bike that I've borrowed for

my time in the city.

Tonight, I'm headed to meet Renato Busarello at his apartment so that we can discuss

our plan for organizing his two decades worth of scattered ephemera as an activist archive.

Half-way through the surprisingly long journey around the clock-like *viale* that encircles the

medieval center, I realize that I should pick up a few beers. A good guest brings a drink and,

more than that, a little beer will ease my nerves.

Just after eight o'clock, I arrive to Renato's apartment near Porta Saragozza. I don't

know it yet, but I'll eventually learn that, in 1982, the magnificent structure at Porta Saragozza

itself––originally constructed in the 13th century––became home to the first "conceded" gay

space in Italy: Circolo di cultura omosessuale XXVIII Giungo, known to most people simply as

cassero. Almost every time I hear the name of the space invoked, the speaker is quick to add,

quella prima, the first one, in order to differentiate it from its successive location, now the

Cassero LGBT Center that is the home of Arcigay, the national gay organization that was born

at *cassero*, *quella prima*, in 1985. Cassero, *quella prima*; Cassero the LGBT institution; *cassero*, any

castle-like structure. Names are no easier a matter than places.

<center>———</center>

Renato lives with a couple of other members of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti: Aldara Pérez Paredes and Leo Acquistapace, both of whom hold degrees in anthropology based on research conducted with Smaschieramenti.[1] In the 1990s, Renato studied political and social sciences at the University of Bologna, the same department in which I was a visiting scholar during my time in Bologna. He has also worked for the municipal government of Bologna's Ufficio politiche delle differenze (Office for policymaking on differences) a position that affords him unique insight into the distinctions between institutional and non-institutional "diversity" work, which I discuss further below. Recalling the ballroom scene in New York in the late 80s and 90s, Rena, as he is known among the comrades, is a kind of house mother, not only because he is a bit older than most of the members of the Laboratorio, but also because he has been in the movement and involved with Atlantide since it was founded in the late 1990s. There's a reason the archiving work starts with Rena.

Our meeting tonight is not the first time that we've discussed the possibility for undertaking this work: We met in December 2014––that time over red wine and pizza––to discuss our intentions for organizing the material that he had long ago stashed away in two red acrylic boxes in the basement of his apartment building. Like most of the Laboratorio's projects, the idea to undertake it doesn't attach itself to one person; it emerged by both chance and necessity and, crucially, it was mutual. By the time I arrived at Rena's apartment that night, we'd already tried to imagine ways that the work could benefit everyone involved. While Babs had facilitated our first meeting, it wasn't yet clear how big or small the archiving group should be. Babs had expressed hesitations about being consigned to the role of

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[1] I go into further detail about Acquistapace's research in the section of Chapter 4 focused on *altre intimità*, or "other intimacies," which is one of the core praxes of the Laboratorio.

translator or secretary. I recall their hesitation being something like: "I don't want to play secretary for the glory of two gay men." Rena and I both agreed. Of course, Rena's sharp and strategic Gemini mind had already been thinking about how we could balance the practical need to keep the group small and focused with the opportunity to involve younger comrades so that they could learn, adapt, and engage with the history of the Atlantide, its collectives, and the wider networks of which they are a part. Like both Babs and I, Rena also thinks in terms of conceptual mapping, which is a large part of why the three of us would form the core group. As with almost everything that unfolded in the early weeks of my time in Bologna, I was mostly preoccupied with how to think through the practicalities of the work itself: How would we organize the materials? Thematically or chronologically? How would they be preserved? How would we document our process? Had everyone's needs been considered? Were we dividing tasks fairly? Who would take care of the baby while we worked? In conversation with Leo––a core Smaschieramenti comrade with whom I would later separately discuss the project as a starting point for collective discussions about the relationship between activist and academic work and the transfeminist and queer recomposition of autonomous traditions that I discuss in Chapter 3––I had also begun to think further about the politics of knowledge production.[2] Was our work truly collaborative? How could our work be mutually beneficial to all involved? Could we decenter the academy in our reimagination of the archive and the labor of constructing it? Did the work align with our collective ethics, not just the ethical standards of my distant university? Taken together, we had begun developing

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[2] Alessia Acquistapace et al., "Transfeminist Scholars on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," *Feminismos* 3, no. 1 (2015): 62–70. This collaboratively written article was a product of those discussions, which led to an *auto-inchiesta* on academia and activism at the summer 2015 *campeggia*, an annual meeting of transfeminist and queer collectives and activists organized by the SomMovimento nazioAnale. I discuss this article further below and describe the emergence and significance of the SomMovimento in Chapter 4.

consensus around the project's utility both in-itself and for the Laboratorio and its wider networks.

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The night is casual and warm; I'm still finding my words and my way around the social life of the collective as it unfolds beyond the assemblies. Rena has been one of the people with whom I've had the most conversation. He makes me feel welcome. He is uncannily clever and intelligent. His mind moves quickly, he is funny, and his jokes are shot through with a campy affect that helps me understand them even when I miss the specific reference. (I often miss the reference.) When Rena notices this, he patiently translates the joke so that I might also have a chance at laughter, at being a part of the moment. This makes me feel cared for, included.

Though Rena's English is far better than my Italian, I know that the only way I'm going to learn is to force myself, so we pass the first half of the night speaking only in Italian. He tells me about his university days in 1990s and we spend a bit of time talking about the large student movement that arose at the very end of the 1980s and into 1990: the Pantera, whose name and iconography referenced the Black Panther movement in the United States.[3] As the Berlin wall fell and pro-democracy students met violent repression in Tiananmen Square, Italy's national government proposed a round of neoliberal reforms to the university. The students resisted and a new movement––albeit one that echoed the student movements of Italy's "long-1968" and presaged the dawn of the Global Justice Movement––was born.[4]

[3] Paolo Segatti, "The 1990 Student Protest," *Italian Politics* 6 (1992): 142–57.
[4] Lorenzo Zamponi, "Contentious Memories of the Student Movement: the 'Long 1968' in the Field of Public Memory," in *Social Movements, Media and Memory: Narrative in Action in the Italian and Spanish Student Movements*, ed. Lorenzo Zamponi, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 59–118; Michal Osterweil, "The Italian Anomaly: Place and History in the Global Justice Movement," in *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protests*, ed. Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Lawrence Cox, (London: Routledge, 2013), 33–46.

The institutional context feels far from the disheveled kitchen table in front of us, where Aldara, has just sat down. Both Rena and Aldara are aware of the conversations that I have had with Leo; they know that I'm working between an institution and the movement and this somehow leads us into joking about Malinowski, the intrepid ethnographer, and the constraints and struggles of disciplinary apparatuses. I show them a book I've brought along with me, *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, which is a collective of numerous essays, personal reflections, and political texts from the wide field of Italian feminism.[5] Rena says that we should make something like that for the transfeminist and queer movement. As I light another cigarette, we decide to turn to the materials that we'll be archiving.

Rena disappears for a moment and then calls me into the living room. I'm greeted by two red acrylic Ikea bins brimming with papers. He is perfunctorily pruning some materials that he deems irrelevant as he begins telling fragments of the stories they evoke. I start to lose my focus on what he is saying because of what I am seeing: Fliers, posters, newspaper clippings, floppy disks. We continue like this for almost an hour. Before too long, we're both getting tired and decide to take a break. I had brought along a kind of "map" that Babs and I had drawn illustrating the connections between and among various collectives that are or have been a part of the SomMovimento nazioAnale. I thought it would be a good example of the kind of thing we might end up with once we had systematically organized everything in those boxes.

We don't make it back to the Ikea bins that night. As we open the second of the *weiss* beers I picked up on my way, we start to talk about some of the strategies and intentions for the work of organizing the archive. We talk about the tension between these materials as an already existing personal archive and their status as traces of collective memory and collective

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[5] Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp, eds., *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

struggles. Much of our work will center the desire to reconnect these materials to the moments in which they were produced, a process which, especially given the embodied intensities of activist life and collective struggles, will demand an extraordinary amount of vulnerability on Renato's part. He rather gently alludes to this vulnerability without suggesting that it should stop us from doing the work. Indeed, his willingness to return to these materials bespeaks a need that is not often met in the flux and flow of the movement itself: Pausing and taking stock of the work that has been done, the struggles that have brought one to a particular moment in time, the comrades and the fights that have been lost along the way, the conflicts, the failed strategies. It is telling that most of the materials themselves do not have a date on them. They are so often produced for an immediate need, without a pretense to futurity. *This is what we are doing now.* Though the archive project seems, at first, to involve a turning inward, a willingness to reflect and recall, it is deeply linked to the continuous efforts on the part of the Smaschieramenti to move "outward" beyond the dynamics that characterize the Laboratorio itself.

I start to waffle a bit, feeling like I haven't brought enough to the table, wondering if I am the right person to embark on this work with him. I don't think I'll ever discern if I am "the right person." But, I'm here. The moment passes.

Chapter Outline

Along with Chapter 3, this chapter situates the founding of Atlantide in the late 1990s as understood through the collective transfeministqueer political work of creating the Centro di Ricerca Indipendente ed Archivio Eccentrico TransFemministaQueer Alessandro Zijno di Atlantide, the Alessandro Zijno Independent Research Center and Eccentric

TransFeministQueer Archive of Atlantide.[6] In so doing, the chapter establishes the context in which Laboratorio Smaschieramenti was born, which is the subject of Chapter 4, and anticipates the eviction of Atlantide and of its collectives in 2015, which is the subject of Chapters 5 and 6. Though the Centro di Ricerca Indipendente ed Archivio Eccentrico TransFemministaQueer Alessandro Zijno di Atlantide had been conceived of well before my arrival in Bologna in 2015, the work documented and described in this chapter describes the first concrete steps toward its materialization.

In concept, the overarching project consists of two distinct, but related, parts: The Research Center and the Eccentric Archive.[7] In this chapter, I focus on the work of creating the Eccentric Archive, which was primarily undertaken by a small group of members of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti during my initial fieldwork period in Bologna, between March and September 2015. The labor of imagining, creating, and sustaining the Eccentric Archive entailed, in part, a process of organizing approximately 300 items that comprised the first "bequest" to the archive. These items had been saved over many years by Renato Busarello, one of the founding members of both Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and of its predecessor collective in Atlantide, the gay male separatist collective Antagonismo Gay. In October 2015, just prior to the eviction of Atlantide, I undertook an additional period of work focused on digitizing the material content of the archive and presenting an update on the project to the

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[6] All translations in this chapter, and throughout the subsequent chapters, are my own, unless otherwise noted.
[7] In the time since my initial work both on the archive itself and on this chapter was undertaken, there has been a significant shift in the composition and organization of the larger project of which the Eccentric Archive was initially a part. Over the course of 2018, both longstanding and new members of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti established the Centro di Ricerca ed Archivio Autonomo di Alessandro Zijno (CRAAAZi) separately from Laboratorio Smaschieramenti proper. Despite this divergence, the archiving praxis that I describe and draw on in this chapter remains a point of commonality and overlap between the work being done in CRAAAZi and the ongoing work of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. Further, though I do not delve into Alessandro Zijno's biography here, I note that his personal library was initially imagined to comprise the second half of the project as it was conceived of it in 2015, namely, the Independent Research Center. Zijno, who tragically passed away on September 17, 2011, was among the founding members of Smaschieramenti and was the partner of Beatrice Busi, who had been a longstanding member of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and who is now active in the *auto-formazione* (self-formation) of CRAAAZi.

wider collective and general public. The process of recovering, ordering, translating, and mapping the interconnections among the items that comprised the initial bequest to the Eccentric Archive entailed a material, emotional, and political work that I call archiving-as-praxis. As a whole, this chapter not only positions Atlantide as a living archive––an architectural, social, and relational point of convergence for both Bolognese and translocal autonomous movements, for cultural producers, for punks, lesbians, queers, trans people, for students––it also elaborates the theoretical and methodological significance of archiving-as-praxis to the intellectual politics that comprise transfeministqueer autonomy as I learned it during my time in Italy and, in turn, as I reconstruct it in this dissertation.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, "Methodology: Assembling the Eccentric Archive," I describe the practical work in which I was involved during my fieldwork and method for building and organizing the Eccentric Archive. Then, in "'I Hate Your Archive!' TransFeministQueer Archiving-as-Praxis," I read an unpublished essay written by Busarello in order to show how archiving-as-praxis is rooted in longstanding networks and practices of transfeministqueer knowledge production and translation that implicate both autonomous and self-managed spaces, like Atlantide, and anglophone queer and feminist theory, like the work of the theorists invoked in the essay itself. Recovered during the course of the work described in the previous section, Busarello's essay offers a glimpse into the immediate political and intellectual contexts from which archiving-as-praxis emerged during my fieldwork. Further, "I Hate Your Archive!" establishes the intellectual and political stakes of archiving-as-praxis, especially in relation to the spaces and temporalities of the autonomous transfeministqueer knowledge production in Italy, which are the subject of a brief final section, "(Un)housing the Archive." The final section is inspired by the first political demonstration organized in the name of the Eccentric Archive itself, where I pick up on the

discussion of the universal and the particular that I discussed in the context of anthropological approaches to urban political ecology in Chapter 1.

Together, my readings of key documents from the Eccentric Archive and my articulation of the process that enables these readings demonstrate that archiving-as-praxis both contributes to realizing the promise of Atlantide as it was imagined when the space was first occupied and to understanding that promise in light of the space's eventual eviction at the hands of the municipal government nearly twenty years later. In the context of this dissertation as a whole, archiving-as-praxis speaks as much to Atlantide's origins as it does of the relationship of those origins to an ever evolving politicized present, not least because of the unanticipated ways in which archiving-as-praxis emerged just prior to the long-avoided eviction of the space and how, since that time, it has become an important part of maintaining and transforming the relational networks in which Atlantide was involved over nearly two decades. The ongoing and collective work of elaborating transfeministqueer autonomous archiving-as-praxis serves not only a positive purpose within the spaces of autonomous social movements, it also challenges dominant institutionalized (anglophone) academic approaches to queer theory and queer/feminist geographies. Recalling my review of these literatures in Chapter 1, my primary challenge is rooted in the demand that academics working in these fields transversally engage with autonomous knowledge practices without losing sight of either the place-based politics of transfeminist and queer organizing or the everyday work of political translation. By making this demand, movements place the onus on those serving institutions to learn how to translate autonomous praxes such that they become useful for the aversion, subversion, refusal, and reversal of the depoliticization that often occurs when

dissident and counter-hegemonic knowledge practices are subsumed into institutional

disciplinary formations and, in turn, subjected to normalization.[8]

Methodology: Assembling the Eccentric Archive

"We all have that box, that drawer," was often the refrain among the activists with whom I

spent time in Bologna; that box which lives between the inability to hold on and the difficulty

of letting go. The drawer that promises a return, a reflection, just as soon as the exigencies of

the present can be suspended long enough to look back on everything that brought us to the

here and now. Of course, such moments do not readily present themselves amid the constant

flow of campaigning, demonstrating, writing, reading, responding, provoking, assembling,

processing, supporting, debating, caring, cooking, cleaning, and burning-out that comprise

the everyday political lifeworlds of the transfeministqueer autonomous movement. Such

moments must instead be made through a kind of alchemy in which one transforms the

leaden tendency to forget with the salt of remembering, hoping to yield the golden flash of a

simple moment for integration, for sharing stories, for teaching each other about the history

and endurance of our struggles.

　　And then, the moment arises. And, in that moment, we find ourselves pouring over

newspaper clippings, notes and doodles made during assemblies, fliers, posters, CDs, train

tickets, e-mails, essays published and unpublished; so much evidence of work done,

campaigns past, miles traveled, positions articulated, comrades earned and lost, it seems,

always too often and always too soon (fig. 6). The kind of alchemy that I am talking about is

not devoid of a specific history, a dose of collective self-mythologization, a recursive

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[8] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*; Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*; Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined.*

internalized call-and-response in which one sense speaks to another and says, quietly: There

must be another way to organize things; there must be a way to keep going. We know because

we have done both before; we know because we do both every day. This kind of alchemy

makes for and is already the substrate for an embodied approach to archiving-as-praxis.

Figure 6. Selected fliers from the Eccentric Archive (Source: Eccentric Archive, used with permission

Relational alchemy very much characterized our work on the first bequest to the

Eccentric Archive, which came about more-or-less like this: Aldara found a few red acrylic

Ikea bins in the basement of Rena's apartment building while looking for a place to store her

belongings. She brought them upstairs into the apartment. For a while, the bins sat in a

position of undecidability: can't throw everything away, don't know what to do with it all.

Then, I came along wanting to write about Atlantide, wanting to learn more about the

contexts in which it was founded and to develop a sense of the collective politics and praxes that had shaped the territorial politics in which Atlantide and its collectives had been active for nearly two decades. Renato had also been thinking about revisiting the materials in order to reflect on key passages in the lives of various collectives in Atlantide, most notably those in which he had intimately been involved: Antagonismo Gay and Smaschieramenti. Then there was Leo. Not long after I arrived in Bologna in March 2015, we met over lunch and spoke about how we might weave together the particular work of the archive with the idea to undertake an *auto-inchiesta*––a collective self-inquiry, a praxis that I explore in detail in Chapter 4––into questions of activist knowledge production, academic precarity, and the exploitation of social movements for the creation of commodified knowledge. So too did Bea, another of the founding members of Smaschieramenti, contribute.[9] She had been holding her own set of materials: the extensive personal library of her late partner, Alessandro Zijno, after whom the Archive and Research Center was named. Though she was not present for the initial work of organizing the materials, she had been a part of Smaschieramenti since the beginning; she too stood in that narrow place between memory and forgetting, where one struggles to bear the weight of events that are neither resolved nor resolvable. As the intention to make the archive real began to materialize, Babs brought their two decades of activist experience in Bologna together with Renato's memories and ephemera, providing, in turn, a significant portion of the narrative infrastructure that helped me––that helped us––to make sense out of the materials in the archive itself. At the outset of our work, Babs also raised crucial questions about the organization of the work itself, especially in terms of gendered divisions of labor and social reproduction.[10]

[9] I discuss Busi's political background and role in Smaschieramenti and Atlantide further in Chapter 5.
[10] I name these contributors as a matter of acknowledgement and accountability and to note that the archive came into being as (and still remains) an undeniably collective work.

With all of this in mind, and across several preliminary discussions, we envisioned ways to make the effort mutually beneficial for all involved and considered how we might articulate the archive-making praxis within the broader political projects of Smaschieramenti and Atlantide. Mostly, we learned by doing and, as is so commonly the way in Smaschieramenti, we experimented along the way. We would usually meet on a Sunday, cook lunch together, eat and gossip about the weekend's happenings––a party, a demo, this and that––before pulling pillows off the two futons in Renato's living room, placing them on the floor, and getting to work (figs. 7–8). Because my language and my knowledge of the past

Figure 7. Renato's futon with various fliers from the Eccentric Archive and a flag, which reads: "NO VAT More self-determination, less Vatican," Bologna, Italy, April 2015

twenty years of activism in Bologna were limited, I acted primarily as the clerk. Equipped with packets of multi-colored post-its or small scraps of paper and a mound of paperclips, I would listen attentively as Renato or Babs picked up each item and recounted its significance. Sometimes, with a question, a clarification, or a request for translation, I would try to extrude a few keywords and, crucially, a date, usually just the year, all of which I would write on a post-it that was then affixed to the item.[11] From there, each processed item went into a pile. We would work until exhausted, take a break, and then, sometimes, regroup. Other times, the heat or the stories (or both) would become too thick and we would stop, roll cigarettes, process, and leave the rest for the next session.

Figure 8. Left to right, Renato and Babs working on
the Eccentric Archive, Bologna, April 2015

[11] In a testament to the relentless pace of the movement and the knowledges it produces for immediate release, almost none of the items that we dealt with during this initial round of work was dated.

During the breaks or at the end of a given session, I would sort the processed items into the timeline we were building: A folder for everything that came before 1998, which is the year that most comrades agree Atlantide was first occupied, a folder for 1999 and each subsequent year, a folder for items that had unclear provenance, and a separate pile for large posters and oddly sized items. We used multiples of an issue of the journal *Banlieues*, which had been produced by one of the collectives involved in the initial occupation Atlantide, as folders in which to contain the items. Renato himself had been involved in the *Banlieues* collective; it was how he arrived at Atlantide in the first place. As he recounted to me near the end of the first pass at organizing the materials, *Banlieues* was produced by "a collective of university students, but not from a specific faculty, it was an interfaculty editorial collective that made a small self-produced journal, which, of course, is a fundamental part of the archive because we are using them as file folders!"[12]

In total, we conducted five audio-recorded archiving sessions in Renato's apartment. Together they spanned approximately fifteen hours. For Renato and Babs, who were the core collaborators during this stage of the work, as well as for whomever else might be hanging out after lunch or passing through to say hello, each item sparked memories of past campaigns, initiatives, assemblies, and political crises, in short, of so many threads of organizing, of so many practices devised collectively, of so many subtle and grand forms of experimentation, collaboration, and affective contamination let loose into the ether of the movement and its wider social contexts.

Touching each item, picking it up, literally enabled us to feel its affective traces. Our work heightened and honed our susceptibility to stories. Sometimes, we were carried away to the moment in which an intervention had been scrawled in a notebook during the course of

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[12] Renato Busarello, interview with author, August 28, 2015.

an assembly. Other times, we landed in a meeting in which a flier had been devised, designed, and, later, printed and distributed. We often found ourselves at a party, somewhere we might have found joy––or at least abandon––after an exhausting week or month of organizing and demonstrations. Of course, there were those places that brought heaviness, bodily pain, tears welling up from underneath dreaded memories of nearly unspeakable events. Regardless of where the work took us, we followed; it was rare that an item would be passed over or discarded.[13] The process began to reveal its necessity only as we acknowledged our own needs within the process: to pause, to honor our ancestors in the movement, to reflect on a blunder, to laugh about an errant alliance, to recall the reasons that we all do this work in the first place.

As the initial work of organizing the physical materials of the first bequest inched toward completion, I leveraged access to a high-powered scanner at the University of Bologna, where I was a visiting graduate student, and began digitizing as many of the materials that we had processed as possible. The act of standing alone in front of a copy machine in a seldom traversed hallway of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences––where Rena and numerous other comrades had studied––not only brought me a secondary level of familiarity with the texture and substance of each item and with our fragile organizational system, it also solidified a dimension of queer self-valuation of our work. It was not without irony, that indispensable affect for organizing, that I smuggled these materials into the oldest university

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[13] In the rare instances that items were discarded or the recorder was turned off, the choice to do so was usually obvious to all three of us. Given that we undertook the archiving praxis in simultaneously personal, collective, and political modes, which were intended both to benefit the Laboratorio and the wider movement and to serve as the basis for my academic work, our decisions to exclude materials were equally guided by an ethos of comradely consensus and a shared sensibility that it is not appropriate to cede every detail of the movement and/or the internal politics of the Laboratorio to institutional archives. Throughout the process of organizing Rena's materials, there were no conflicts over these decisions. Further, while the eventual split between Smaschieramenti and CRAAAZi (see note 7, this chapter) would put the locus of the archiving work into question, the work of organizing and interpreting the Eccentric Archive remains the purview of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and has proceeded largely without conflict between the two groups (see note 15, this chapter).

in the so-called western world, which is also where Sandro Mezzadra––a longstanding comrade-scholar, veteran of the Italian autonomous movements, and my mentor as a visiting student at the University of Bologna––is based. As I scanned, I not only had to handle and arrange each object for a second or third time, but I also had to interrogate the very logics of intellectual labor and queer value that belied both the work of making the archive and its preservation in a secondary form.[14]

Practically, the digitization process also revealed shortcomings in our system of organizing. For example, not every item had the requisite "metadata" to lend it a clear position in the temporal matrix of a digital filing system and not every item could withstand the pull of the automatic document feeder. I did not complete the work of digitizing the archive before I left Bologna in August 2015. Instead, I completed the digitization in haste during the week of the eviction of Atlantide in October 2015. As I did so, I recalled that we had initially envisioned that our work on the first bequest might serve as the basis for the creation of a DIY guide to autonomous archiving, something that could be distributed throughout the network of transfeministqueer collectives in Italy such that they might organize archive-making sessions like ours and might benefit from our experience and reflections.[15] As we worked on the

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[14] On the notion of the intellectual worker, see Dario Gentilli and Massimiliano Nicoli, eds., "Intelletuali Di Se Stessi: Lavoro Intelletuale in Epoca Neoliberale." Special issue, *Aut Aut* 356 (2015). On the notion of queer value, see Meg Wesling, "Queer Value," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, no. 1 (2011): 107–25, https://doi:10.1215/10642684-1422161.

[15] Though this DIY guide did not materialize––at least not in the way we had initially imagined it during the work documented in this chapter––the work that we undertook would later serve as the basis for a workshop organized as part of "UNSAFEWORDS. Per/verso il valore queer" ("UNSAFEWORDS. For/toward [a perverse] queer value"), a two-day meeting hosted by CRAAAZi in Bologna on September 22–23, 2018. The archiving component comprised a workshop called "Archivio: Repertori di pratiche | oggetti per fare le storie delle lotte tfq mentre stanno avvenendo" ("Archive: Repertoire of practices | objects for telling stories of tfq [transfeministqueer] struggles while they are happening"). The description for the workshop references the pre-eviction work documented in this chapter and describes the understanding of transfeministqueer archiving-as-praxis that I outline here: "We think of the archive as a repertoire, as a contact zone and space for sharing, a space for dealing with the risks of memorialization, nostalgia, the pretense of originality, the authori(ali)ty of the true story, the coherence of fragments. To evade capture and extraction without destroying ourselves, we are interested in learning and stimulating the processes of self-archiving that are useful for transfeministqueer struggles. In this process, different temporalities intersect: In addition to the past, we are interested in the present, both of the sense of mapping in real time and in the sense of taking the present time, which is constantly

archive, we had discussed the extent to which activists of multiple generations had their own personal archives. In light of the institutional repression and forced amnesia that had followed in the wake of Italy's revolutionary upheavals during the long-1968, we wondered if our praxis of activist archiving might be adapted to bring these archives into deeper conversation with our own. At the very least, we wanted to confirm the existence of these archives and to map, as it were, their locations and contents. But we had not followed-up on these plans in a meaningful way before Atlantide's eviction. As I scanned, I felt anxiety about the extent to which this last-minute effort actually reflected the wider project that we had imagined as we spent all of those hours on the floor of Rena's apartment.

After a couple of days, my work was complete. I assembled a slideshow of some of the materials that Babs, Rena and I then presented to the last assembly of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti held in Atlantide, just two nights before the eviction. This was the first occasion on which we shared our work more broadly; it prompted a number of discussions that would not be taken up again for some time. Following the eviction, we moved the now-organized and scanned boxes to a different basement for safekeeping. We had also collected handfuls of long-forgotten materials from Atlantide itself; these were stored along with the organized materials, suggesting future work that remains to be completed.

As my discussion of Busarello's piece "I Hate Your Archive!" in the next section shows, we had never thought of the Eccentric Archive as a mere collection of materials. Instead, we understood the archive well in excess of what was contained in a few acrylic boxes. Throughout the process of organizing the first bequest, we had often talked about how our work differed or was similar to the construction of academic and institutional archives. We

stolen from us." The full conference program and description of this workshop can be found at http://www.craaazi.org/2018/04/29/call/.

had also imagined various kinds of actions that might enable us to broaden the work of archiving-as-praxis to somehow hold the innumerable stories, encounters, relationships, and affects rooted in Atlantide. But now, Atlantide was gone, it had been evicted and I had to leave Bologna shortly thereafter. Only then did I come to more fully understand the challenges of archiving-as-praxis when it comes to politicized ways of living, to mapping queer ecologies of praxis, to understanding and transmuting the overwhelming knowledge that is revealed by and generated in struggle. I also came to this understanding in conversation with Alexis Pauline Gumbs's writing on queer ecological approaches to activist archiving, where, drawing on her project Eternal Summer of the Black Feminist Mind, she describes an ecological approach to archiving as being

> based on the principles that: we have what we need (each other); everything is useful, everyone is priceless; we are a part of a larger environment that we can relate to symbiotically or destructively; our ecology includes spiritual, physical, practical, social, emotional, technological and intellectual resources.[16]

Still, for all of this to make more sense to me in the context of the Laboratorio, I would have to turn to the contents of the first bequest and to feel an emotion that I don't often allow myself to feel: Rage.

"I Hate Your Archive!" TransFeministQueer Archiving-as-Praxis

In revisiting the political, emotional, and embodied labor involved in assembling the materials that comprised the first bequest to the Eccentric Archive, I am inspired to elaborate that work as transfeministqueer praxis, in part, by a 2011 presentation that Renato Busarello gave at a seminar hosted by Il Giardino dei Ciliegi Centro Ideazione Donna at Villa Fiorelli in

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[16] Alexis Pauline Gumbs, "Eternal Summer of the Black Feminist Mind."

Florence.[17] Along with a program for the three day seminar, "Archives of emotion and public culture," the text of Busarello's intervention––"I Hate Your Archive!"––was recovered during the process of organizing the first bequest of materials to the Eccentric Archive.[18] In the piece, Busarello draws on multiple and overlapping experiences and knowledges informed by his work as an employee of municipal government of Bologna, his own intellectual practice and education, and his *percorso politico* (political pathway) as a founding member of the now defunct gay male separatist collective, Antagonismo Gay and the various national networks and mobilizations of which it was a part.[19] Emphasizing the contrasts that distinguish his institutional work with the municipal government of Bologna from his *percorso* and autonomous activist experience, Busarello both draws on an anglophone citational constellation and relies on knowledge generated in the movement in order to make sense out of the praxis of transfeministqueer archiving and to address what might comprise such archives, not least if they are to be imagined as part of something called "public culture." As my discussion of the invariably collective work of creating both the Eccentric Archive and processing the first bequest has demonstrated, Busarello's framing is certainly not the only

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[17] As Busarello recounted several times during the process of organizing the archive, as well as in other contexts, the seminars hosted at Villa Fiorelli were a fundamental part of the translation and dissemination of anglophone queer and transfeminist theory in the Italian context. The Center itself, whose name translates as The Cherry Grove Center for Women's Ideation, has been in operation in various physical locations since 1988. Among the numerous feminists, both lesbian and not, involved in the project, Liana Borghi was most often invoked on account of her extensive work as a researcher and translator. Having either founded or with numerous networks and research projects, including at the Università di Firenze as a researcher in Anglo-American Literature, Borghi has translated the work of Donna Haraway, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, and Dionne Brand into Italian and written extensively on the themes raised in their work, lives, and politics. Absent stand-alone women's or gender studies departments, of which there are none in the whole of Italy, if and when work on these themes happens in universities, it is nested in other disciplinary locations, such as literature.

[18] Renato Busarello, "Il Tuo Archivio Non Mi Piace!," (Archivi dei sentimenti e culture pubbliche, Florence, 2011). I cite this document as a conference presentation, notwithstanding the fact that it would be equally appropriate to cite it as an unpublished essay. I further note that, while not explicitly acknowledged through the use of quotation marks in the original title, the piece itself reveals its title to be a quotation drawn from an anecdote discussed by Lauren Berlant in *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 12–14.

[19] As Chapter 4 explores in detail, Antagonismo Gay was the predecessor collective to Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, which formed contemporaneously to Busarello's involvement with the municipal institutions.

one that matters, though I make it central to my analysis here insofar as we gathered around his materials and memories in the first instance. In keeping with an ethos of being guided by my encounters and collaborations with the movement and a queer ecological approach to archiving, I am especially interested both in how Busarello himself considers the weight, meaning, and use of the (potential) archive (of feelings) that we would eventually materialize and in the citational constellation that he invokes to frame such work.

Busarello opens "I Hate Your Archive!" by reflecting on being invited to speak at the "Archives of emotion and public culture" conference. He writes:

> When I tried to understand the purpose of my presence at this meeting, I thought it could be productive to share with you my feelings regarding my lived experiences working with the Municipality of Bologna and the Office for policymaking on differences [Ufficio politiche delle differenze], its sad epilogue and the sense of *rage* and *frustration* that it left in me, tying to put together how this institutional experience could be shared in a *common archive of feelings of political discomfort* which I believe could be quite large.[20]

Rage and frustration immediately stand out as the main components of a "common archive of feelings of political discomfort" specifically related to Busarello's experience of both local and national institutional politics. Locally, the office to which he refers was opened in 2008 and suspended when the municipal government was taken over by a so-called technical government (*governo technico*) in 2010, which I discuss further in Chapter 5. Between 2008 and 2010, the mandate of the office was ostensibly (and primarily) to deal with issues related to LGBT communities and, as Matteo Lepore, then the newly appointed attaché for Economics and promotion of the City, Tourism, International relations and Digital Agenda (assessore Economia e promozione della Città, Turismo, Relazioni internazionale, Agenda Digitale), put it in an announcement of the reopening of a replacement office in 2011, "questions of

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[20] Busarello, "Archivio," emphases mine.

gender."[21] Busarello describes the experience of working with that office in scathingly

sarcastic terms, terms which correspond to his characterization of key passages in the broader

LGBT mainstream movement of those years as "falling victim to Stockholm syndrome."[22] He

writes that "for two years, I was a kind of gay hostage [...] to be shown when needed so that the

City of Bologna could perform as if they were paying attention to LGBT themes."[23] Later in the

text, he points out that, especially when compared to other so-called sexual democracies, a

term that I will unpack later in this section, in Italy "lgbtiq politics are extremely rarified at a

national level" a fact that leads him to consider "the politics of local institutions (often guided

by the center left) as much more advanced indications of the more refined discourses of

legitimization of lgbt public policies that these institutions carry out in a neoliberal context."[24]

My experience in Bologna bears this point out. To be sure, national and EU-level politics,

both institutional and otherwise, were very much a part of everyday life as an autonomous

activist, but city politics were almost always followed with a closeness and attention that stood

out to me, not least in comparison to my organizing experiences in other places. It is also the

case that, as the symbolic center of Italy's so-called "red belt," which is comprised of

historically communist regions in the central part of Italy——Emilia-Romagna, Toscana,

Umbria, and Marche——Bologna has long been a focal point and laboratory for both the

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[21] Matteo Lepore, "Un Ufficio Parì Opportunità, Differenze, E Diritti Umani: Per Una Bologna Migliore," *Matteolepore.it*, November 3, 2011, https://matteolepore.it/2011/11/03/ufficio-pari-opportunita-differenze-e-diritti-umani-per-una-bologna-migliore/. The replacement office had a mandate framed in much broader terms which, quite apparently, deemphasized gender and sexual politics. https://matteolepore.it/2011/11/03/ufficio-pari-opportunita-differenze-e-diritti-umani-per-una-bologna-migliore/.
[22] Busarello, "Archivio."
[23] Busarello, "Archivio."
[24] Busarello, "Archivio." Throughout the piece, Busarello uses "lgbtiq," "lgbt," and "LGBT," somewhat interchangeably in reference to various levels and kinds of sexual and gender politics. On my reading, his tendency is to use "LGBT" to refer to national-level mainstream politics, and "lgbtiq," "lgbt," and or other similar variants to refer to the local context, both mainstream and not. I preserve his original (non-)capitalization and, where appropriate, try to be as explicit as possible about the distinctions he makes in the text, especially when they seem to bear directly on the analysis he provides.

movements and the parties.[25] Given the extent to which subsequent chapters engage in

analysis of the local/municipal context, I will focus on other levels of analysis here.

Echoing Nash's description of being called upon to bear the legacies of the

institutionalization of intersectionality in the U.S.-American academy, Busarello's discomfort,

rage, frustration, and impatience are palpable when we consider both the substance of the

extremely limited institutional recognition of so-called LGBT and gender-related issues at a

national level in Italy and the untenable demands and political positions that such recognition

entailed during this time period. Busarello contributes to the "archive of things that made us

angry in these years" the few instances of national political/policy focused on LGBT and

gender-related issues. One such instance, involved key "exponents" of the mainstream LGBT

movement, specifically Paola Concia, the first openly lesbian member of the Italian Chamber

of Deputies, participating in a dialogue around "human rights" hosted by CasaPound, a neo-

fascist social movement that began in Rome in 2003.[26] Another saw then minister of Equal

Opportunity (ministro per le Pari Opportunità), Mara Carfagna, and minister of Public

Education (ministro dell'Istruzione), Mariastella Gelmini, mobilized to organize a so-called

"Week against violence" (Settimana contro la violenza), an instrumental response to a string

of instances of homophobic violence in Rome. The national "Week against violence" focused

on "raising awareness against intolerance and prejudice" in schools, even as the budget for

schools was being cut.[27] Not to be outdone, the Vatican had also made "timid overtures"

toward endorsing the use of prophylactics during this period.[28] Not only were such "pseudo-

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[25] For more on the institutional political shifts in this region and Bologna's place therein, see Francesco Ramella, *Cuore Rosso? Viaggio Politico nell'Italia Di Mezzo*, (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2005).Francesco Ramella, *Cuore Rosso? Viaggio Politico nell'Italia Di Mezzo*, (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2005).
[26] Busarello, "Archivio."
[27] "Associazioni in 100 Scuole Per Settimana Contro La Violenza," editorial, *Gay.it*, October 13, 2010, https://www.gay.it/attualita/news/associazioni-in-100-scuole-per-settimana-contro-la-violenza.
[28] Busarello, "Archivio."

openings" immediately disavowed as they became known to wider publics, they were also deeply inadequate on their own terms, not least considering the Vatican's "monopoly on charity" in Africa and "blackmail of institutional politics" in Italy.[29] "I Hate Your Archive!" responds to these various realities through a diagnostic and symptomatic (re)reading of the tendency of national institutional politics in Italy (as elsewhere) to demand victimization as a precondition to already inadequate policies of inclusion, to eschew a politics of self-determination, to involve organizations like CasaPound––whose politics are manifestly violent, homophobic, transphobic, and misogynist––in policy responses to violence and everyday discrimination, and to instrumentalize instances of violence in order to underwrite racist and xenophobic legislation.

Such policies and politics also had significant bearing on Italy's position within the European Union, especially with regard to (neo)liberal notions of LGBT rights and equality-focused policies on gender and sexuality, more broadly. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Italy was easily among the most regressive countries in the bloc when it came to even the most mainstream liberal measures of gender equity. Take, for example, wage equality: At the time Busarello was writing, the country was ranked 74th in the Global Gender Pay Gap Index, a fact that he notes.[30] Alternatively, one could look at gay marriage, easily the most mainstream measure of "progress" in sexual recognition politics. Whereas the EU-wide policy on gay marriage had involved both formal and informal agreements to implement recognition of legal status for same sex couples throughout Europe in the late 1990s, it was not until a

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[29] Busarello, "Archivio."
[30] Ricardo Hausmann et al., "The Global Gender Gap Index 2011," (World Economic Forum, 2011), http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-2011/#section=the-global-gender-gap-index-2011.

European Court of Human Rights decision in 2015 that a "positive obligation" for recognition, though certainly not marriage, of same sex couples was even affirmed in Italy.[31]

Discussing such disparities, Busarello contextualizes his political reading of both national and EU-level sexuality and gender policy and politics by drawing on his experiences with two large-scale mobilizations. The first, Facciamo Breccia, a broad-based anti-Vatican network "claiming self-determination, laicity, anti-fascism, liberation, and citizenship," was, at the time that "I Hate Your Archive!" was written, organizing a two-day encounter in Rome called "Fuori & Dentro le Democrazie Sessuali" ("Inside and Outside Sexual Democracies").[32] The second, Orgogliosamente, self-describes as "an open space for debate and political analysis, a 'laboratory' [*laboratorio*] where diverse and multiple realities can meet, grow together and, with respect to the LGBTIQ subject [*tematica*], put initiatives and informationcampaignsawarenessraisingresistanceexistence [sic] on the political agenda."[33] Orgogliosamente sought to shift the politics of the Europride celebration to be held in Rome in 2011. In so doing, they had developed a platform that included among its political commitments and analyses: anti-victimization, anti-sexism, anti-racism and anti-fascism, which specifically critiqued immigration detention and security policies, anti-austerity, depathologization of identities and bodies, and opposition to clerical influence in politics. Based on his experiences working with these two networks––in which Antagonismo Gay had played an active role––Busarello makes clear that, owing to its variegated composition, "the antagonist part of the movement does not at all disregard [institutional] openings and juridical recognition," especially considering that, in other parts of the EU, such openings and

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[31] *Oliari et al. v. Italy*, Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights (2015).
[32] Facciamo Breccia, "NO VAT Self-Determination, Laicity, Anti-Fascism, Liberation [Platform and Call for Demonstration]," January 12, 2009, http://darkpand.net/facciamobreccia/documenti/Piattaforma_NOVAT_2009_EN.pdf.
[33] Orgogliosamente LGBTIQ, "Euro Pride 2011," *Orgogliosamente.Noblogs.org*, February 18, 2011, https://orgogliosamente.noblogs.org/post/2011/02/18/verso-il-roma-euro-pride-2011/Orgogliosamente LGBTIQ.

recognitions had "translated into sexual politics that have made the lives of many women, lesbians, gays, and transsexuals better."[34] Even so, marginal improvement in the lives of these various groups could not be separated from the reality that institutions at various levels, both within and beyond the EU, used such policies and claims of progressive recognition "to justify war and hegemony."[35] Drawing on the work of Lauren Berlant, in particular––though with distinctive and deliberate echoes of Jasbir Puar's critiques of homonationalism–– Busarello explores how such policies and politics constitute sexual democracies, a term that has also been mobilized by geographers such as David Bell and Jon Binnie in order to describe the reconfigurations of politics––not least through the struggles of new social movements––both in and around spaces and social relations that had not traditionally concerned scholars working on these questions.[36] For his part, Busarello critiques how the Italian national state makes claims of progressive recognition in order to construct "regime[s] of justification" for atrocities as varied as the refusal of entry to migrants at sea, the detention of migrants who manage to reach the EU, the imposition (and, sometimes, the suspension) of the Schengen area, and Israel's "ferocious occupation of Palestinian territory while it pretends to be the cradle of democracy and the gay mecca of the middle east."[37]

Taking a different tack than geographers and preceding Puar's more global analysis, Berlant examines "the coupling of suffering and citizenship" in the U.S. national project, which she finds "so startling and so moving because it reveals about national power both its impersonality and its intimacy."[38] Berlant's work tracks the emergence of an intimate public

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[34] Busarello, "Archivio."
[35] Busarello, "Archivio."
[36] Bell and Binnie, *The Sexual Citizen*; David Bell, "In Bed with the State: Political Geography and Sexual Politics," *Geoforum* 25, no. 4 (1994): 445–52; Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
[37] Busarello, "Archivio." See also Berlant, *The Queen of America*.
[38] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 1.

sphere predicated on "narratives of traumatized identity [that] have dramatically reshaped the dominant account of U.S. citizenship."[39] In so doing, she begins with the premise that "there is no public sphere in the contemporary United States, no context of communication and debate that makes ordinary citizens feel that they have a common public culture, or influence on a state that holds itself accountable to their opinions, critical or otherwise."[40] That premise is conditioned, on the one hand, by the reverberating consequences of the "antiwar, antiracist, and feminist agitations of the sixties" and, on the other, by the reactionary formation of "a conservative coalition [...] whose aim was the privatization of U.S. citizenship." With the ascendancy of the so-called Reagan revolution, Berlant argues, "the public rhetoric of citizen trauma has become so pervasive and competitive [...] that it obscures basic differences among modes of identity, hierarchy, and violence."[41] While there are some resonances with the Italian institutional political situation that I described above, not least the tendency to predicate citizenship claims on state-managed narratives of victimization, there are also some important distinctions between Berlant's U.S.-based analysis and focus "on the ways conservative ideology has convinced a citizenry that the core context of politics should be the sphere of private life" and the anomalous context that Busarello describes in "I Hate Your Archive!."[42]

Berlant's analysis assembles and deploys an archive comprised mostly of so-called cultural or everyday/normal texts ranging from books, like Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of my Name*, to films, like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, to magazines, like *Time*. Using this archive, Berlant simultaneously reveals the intimate workings of national power while

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[39] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 2.
[40] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 3.
[41] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 2.
[42] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 3.

rebuffing a tendency to reduce such archival materials to what Judith Butler describes in her

eponymous essay as "merely cultural," that is, as insufficiently attendant to the ostensibly real

(and, I might add, conventionally Marxist) materialities of revolutionary political praxis. In

decrying the ascendance of a "leftist orthodoxy" whose "calls for a 'unity' that would,

paradoxically, redivide the Left," Butler asks "how the very division between the material and

the cultural becomes tactically invoked for the purposes of marginalizing certain forms of

political activism."[43] Though such forms of political activism are not at the heart of Berlant's

project, even if they are always lingering nearby, Butler's question takes on a particular

salience in light of Berlant's description of the methodology that guided her to construct her

archive. Berlant recounts an anecdote wherein a colleague responded to a presentation of a

portion of her work from *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, by telling her, "I really

admired your thinking, but––I hate your archive."[44] Her response to this off-handed

observation in the book offers a number of important insights for my elaboration of archiving-

as-praxis and for the archive/s and intellectual praxes on which I draw not only in this

chapter, but also throughout the dissertation. Berlant notes that the comment seemed to have

been animated by an anxiety about the ways in which she had not explicitly reconstructed

and spelled out the most canonical of her references to critical theorists like Walter Benjamin,

Michel Foucault, and Antonio Gramsci.[45] Responding to the complaint, Berlant notes the bevy

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[43] Judith Butler, "Merely Cultural," *Social Text* 15, no. 3 (1997): 268. In an Italian context, it would be easy to say that calls for "unity" emanating from the leftist orthodoxy have a somewhat different trajectory than they might have in the contexts that Butler is writing about. Consider that, during the cold war, Italy was home to the Italian Communist Party (PCI), the largest communist party outside of the USSR. Further, as Chapter 1 outlines, autonomous organizing, theorizing, and contestation during this period called into question the strategies of the party in seeking evermore electoral power. Among many examples, the Historic Compromise, in which the PCI and the conservative Christian Democratic (DC) party formed an alliance, looms largest. Prompted by the 1973 Chilean coup, the formation of the alliance is something of a common point of departure for a wide variety of extra-parliamentary formations, including the Red Brigades.

[44] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 12.

[45] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 12.

of scholars whose work she invokes that the commenter seemed to have overlooked, including Judith Butler, Michael Warmer, Eve Sedgwick, and Hortense Spillers.[46] Perhaps more revealingly, she notes the ways in which late-90s critical academics expressed anxiety about the apparent ascendancy of cultural studies, an anxiety not unlike that expressed by geographers in their engagements with intersectionality. Of course, queer theory was a significant part of the turn to cultural studies, insofar as it was (and perhaps remains) too focused on what she calls "a counterpolitics of the silly object," which comprises an important part of the work that we undertook both in assembling the Eccentric Archive and elaborating transfeministqueer archiving-as-praxis.[47] In response to this concern, Berlant writes:

> The very improvisatory ephemerality of the archive makes it worth *reading*. Its very popularity, its effects on law and everyday life, makes it important. Its very ordinariness requires an intensified critical engagement with what had been merely undramatically explicit.[48]

Pivoting from the immediacy of this relatively routine academic encounter filled with coded dismissals of queer, feminist, and "popular" referents, Berlant also addresses readers who might complain that her archive is "stacked in order to be politically correct" or that it is "far too sympathetic to the kinds of utopian wishes for unconflicted normality expressed by both liberals and conservatives" and to those readers who might argue that that it is too "resolutely national" to be relevant in a moment in which "radical scholars [had] been demanding the end of an American Studies that places the United States and the nation form in general at the center of the history of the present tense."[49] Indeed, Berlant is sensitive to all of these concerns and responds duly to them even as she defends her interest in "looking at the moments of oppressive optimism in normal national culture" in order to read "mainstream documents

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[46] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 12.
[47] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 12.
[48] Berlant, *The Queer of America*, 12, emphasis in original.
[49] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 13.

and discourses not as white noise but as powerful language, not as 'mere' fiction or fantasy but as violence and desire that have material effects."[50] Much of Busarello's own reading of "mainstream documents and discourses" ascribes to a similar ethos, not least in order to track the very operations of normalization that work to (re)define the national project of Italy in conversation with both local realities and transnational politics and policies at the level of the European Union.

One other encounter that Berlant recounts is relevant to my analysis here: A colleague asked her why she was not more invested in "theorizing and promoting the world-building activities evident in the pamphlets, zines, polemics, and literature of radical or subaltern publics."[51] A substantial portion of the work that I describe in this chapter and the next was invested in documenting and assembling just such material traces of world-building activities, though our work was not limited to acts of documentation and assembly, even if it was inseparable from them. In keeping with the methodological description in the previous section, I note that Busarello's reading of Berlant places "affectivity and emotionality [...] at the center of politics and [shows] that they can induce inaction, adhesion to normative models, or, instead, refusal and movements of social transformation," though, he is quick to note that, "to arrive at the threshold of refusal, it [would] be necessary to express a bit of rage and to let our intolerance grow!"[52] As I outlined above, Busarello figures such refusal and movement toward social transformation as a key motivation for the construction of alternative archives and autonomous political cultures. In other words, reading Berlant into the Italian context not only invites a differential analysis of the discourses and practices of national state-making and its relationship to varying constructions of citizenship––a theme that Seitz, whose

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[50] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 13.
[51] Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 13.
[52] Busarello, "Archivio."

work I highlighted in Chapter 1, also grapples with––it also highlights the role that archiving-as-praxis plays in showing how localized autonomous praxis militates for just such social transformations while keeping a close eye on wider contexts.

Busarello does this by placing Berlant in conversation with the local, national, and international contexts laid out above in my summary of "I Hate Your Archive!." He translates Berlant's nationally-focused analysis into the Italian and Bolognese milieus by way of referencing independent researcher Titti Castiello's concept of Italy itself as a *phantasmic* sexual democracy "simultaneously located inside and outside the map of European sexual democracies."[53] In so doing, Busarello exceeds a diagnostic and symptomatic analysis of institutional approaches and invokes a collective politics of self-determination at the root of the praxis of "so-called antagonists of the lgbtiq movement."[54] Echoing Puar, but pointing in a different direction, Busarello "calls into question [the use] of gender and sexuality to activate nationalist, racist, and identitarian rhetoric functioning to define thresholds of inclusion and exclusion," while simultaneously making the case for

> including in our archives of feeling queer forms of life, the activism of the movement, [and] political work from below, operations that are very difficult because many of these dimensions are not classically documentable and leave few traces in terms of theoretical sedimentation.[55]

By shifting understandings of archiving, Busarello directs attention to the distinctive embodiments, temporalities, and spatialities of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, especially as compared to mainstream and institutional forms LGBT politics in Italy. At the same time, reformulating archiving-as-praxis prompts a deeper consideration of how queer

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[53] Busarello, "Archivio." To my knowledge, Castiello does not have any published work on this formulation, suggesting that the idea was operative in the broader conversations of the movement during this period, a fact that itself highlights the need to reconceptualize the archive as praxis.
[54] Busarello, "Archivio."
[55] Busarello, "Archivio."

studies' anti-disciplinary and anti-institutional tendencies translate (or fail to translate) to/from the Italian context and its wide-ranging local realities, where such tendencies have not produced institutional archives of the same kind that now exist in the Anglo-American context. The anglophone citational constellation on which Busarello draws in "I Hate Your Archive!" connects Lauren Berlant's critique of sexual democracy with more recent work by Ann Cvetkovich––who is credited with the term "archives of feeling" that Busarello invoked in the quote above––and Jack Halberstam by focusing, in particular, on the question of queer archives, politics, and public culture.[56] Especially in light of the politicized affects of rage, frustration, and impatience that thread throughout "I Hate Your Archive!," I will briefly describe the work of Ann Cvetkovich and Jack Halberstam, both of whom influenced Busarello's analysis and our eventual work on the Eccentric Archive.

As Busarello has it, Ann Cvetkovich's *An Archive of Feeling* highlights the "productivity of working on archives of feeling drawn from everyday queer trauma, in fact enlarging this category of trauma from sexual and physical abuse to every form of quotidian discrimination experienced in queer subjectivity."[57] He points out that "Cvetkovich proposes the depathologization of the notion of trauma and its productive, rather than its reparative, dimension."[58] Cvetkovich herself describes the project of the book in terms that resonate with Berlant's project while departing from the latter's emphasis on reading materials that comprise a distinctively national archive focused on so-called normal culture. She writes:

> My hope of making the book's marginal, idiosyncratic, and sometimes
> unexpected sites relevant to more general understandings of sexual and
> national trauma is grounded in the conviction that trauma challenges common
> understandings of what constitutes an archive.
> [...]

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[56] Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
[57] Busarello, "Archivio."
[58] Busarello, "Archivio."

In its unorthodox archives, trauma resembles gay and lesbian cultures, which have had to struggle to preserve their histories. In the face of institutional neglect, along with erased and invisible histories, gay and lesbian archives have been formed through grassroots efforts, just as cultural and political movements have demanded attention to other suppressed and traumatic histories, ranging from the Holocaust, to labor and civil rights activism, to slavery and genocide.[59]

Cvetkovich's conceptualization of the archive (of feelings) coheres with much of the work documented in this chapter and the archive that it assembles and on which it is based. Such coherence is only redoubled in light of the readings of Ferguson and Nash in Chapter 1. Nevertheless, Cvetkovich's description of how "publics are formed in and through cultural archives" are, as my reading of the first fliers of Atlantide and reconstruction of the long-1968 in Chapter 3 will show, not immediately adaptable to the Italian context in either autonomous or institutional political terms, not least because of the divergent histories of how counterhegemonic transfeministqueer "cultural and political movements" have created what Busarello, in the conclusion of "I Hate Your Archive!," calls an "lgbti-queer and feminist archipelago" of autonomous spaces, movements, and collective subjectivities.[60] I will return to the notion of the archipelago in my description of Atlantide as a queer urban ecology in the next chapter. Here, I am more focused on how the languages and practices of collective autonomy––which, in the context of readings of Anglo-American queer theory, can be understood as modes of heterolingual address––do have analogues in the United States, but their divergent histories with regard to both state-recognition and academic institutionalization render any extended analysis based solely on analogy quite limited. In keeping with the mode of political translation, I am stringently trying to avoid an easy transposition of political practices and lexicons between cultural contexts while aiming to

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[59] Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 7–8.
[60] Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 9; Busarello, "Archivio."

track the evolution of such spaces, movements, and networks in the Italian autonomous context. To this end, I appreciate Cvetkovich's intention "In using the term *public culture*, [to] keep as open as possible the definition of what constitutes a public in order to remain alert to forms of affective life that have not solidified into institutions, organizations, or identities."[61] I further appreciate the argument that she makes regarding the enmeshment of affect, in this case traumatic affect, and public culture, which "entails a reconsideration of conventional distinctions between political and emotional life as well as between political and therapeutic cultures."[62] Transfeministqueer autonomous praxis not only enables the emergence and sustenance of multiple forms of collective affect and affective life, it also challenges the desirability of solidifying such praxis in the recognizable forms of institutions, organizations, and identities by virtue of is very insistence on autonomy.

To speak to this distinction, I turn to the work of Jack Halberstam, whose 2011 book *The Queer Art of Failure* is both the anglophone academic text most contemporary to Busarello's analysis in "I Hate Your Archive!" and the anglophone academic text that is most immediately useful in connecting the various dimensions of archiving-as-praxis that I have thus far explored in this section to an explicit critique of hegemonic forms of knowledge-production. In the opening of "I Hate Your Archive!," Busarello explains that the "version of queer studies which interests" him and, he postulates, the other participants in the seminar at which the paper was presented, "contests disciplines in order to contest the disciplining of knowledges, bodies, and regimes of production of the truth of subjects."[63] Whereas Berlant's project focuses on the reorganization of national politics rendered visible through "normal" representations, and Cvetkovich's project challenges and reorganizes notions of trauma and

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[61] Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 9.
[62] Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 10.
[63] Busarello, "Archivio."

to question what counts as an archive, Halberstam's project encompasses elements of both (along with a significant dose of cultural theory in the mold of Stuart Hall) and embodies them in the proposition of "low theory."[64] In Halberstam's words, "Low theory tries to locate all the in-between spaces that save us from being snared by the hooks of hegemony and speared by the seductions of the gift shop."[65] Halberstam articulates low theory in such a way as to make it relevant both for the specific project of archiving-as-praxis and the broader project of elaborating a queer urban ecology of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis.

Low theory centers undisciplined knowledge practices, practices that flout "the desire to be taken seriously," a desire that too often "compels people to follow the tried and true paths of knowledge production."[66] Merely following well-worn paths of knowledge production "signal[s] a form of training and learning that confirms what is already known according to approved methods of knowing."[67] Variously referencing Foucault's notion of subjugated knowledges, Rancière's figure of the ignorant school master, and Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's speculative territorial concept of the undercommons, Halberstam points toward numerous pathways that can potentially lead knowledge producers away from confirming what is already known. But, it is Halberstam's reading of James Scott's *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* that I find most relevant and compelling here, not least because of the extent to which its analysis is predicated on the juxtaposition of high modernist forms of planning and order with "messy forms of organic profusion and improvised creativity" that "favor instead, drawing from European anarchist thought, more practical forms of knowledge that he calls *metis* and that emphasize mutuality,

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64 Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 2.
65 Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 2. The reference to the gift shop is drawn from a scene in SpongeBob SquarePants, with which Halberstam opens the book in an act of shedding "the idealism of hope in order to gain wisdom and a new, spongy relation to life, knowledge, and pleasure."
66 Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 6.
67 Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 6.

collectivity, plasticity, diversity, and adaptability."[68] With Scott, Halberstam argues that

"Illegibility may in fact be one way of escaping the political manipulation to which all

university fields and disciplines are subject."[69] And, with Halberstam, Busarello situates his

conceptualization of the archive as deeply dependent on "the counterposition of normalized

and hegemonic global theory and theory from below [*dal basso*]; localized, autonomous, and

illegible to power."[70] Taken together, the general outline of low theory's relevance to

transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, in which archiving-as-praxis is but one part, comes

into view. As Halberstam puts it:

> Today in the university we spend far less time thinking about
> counterhegemony than hegemony. What Gramsci seemed to mean by counter
> hegemony was the production and circulation of another, competing set of
> ideas which could join in an active struggle to change society. [...] Hall, like
> Gramsci, is very interested in the idea of education as a popular practice aimed
> at the cultivation of counterhegemonic ideas and systems.[71]

Busarello used a shorter version of this quote in "I Hate Your Archive!" to focus attention on

"the production of queer archives in relation to queer lives, gender, and sexuality," which he

predicates on the construction of "non-state public spaces [*spazi pubblici non statuali*]."[72] As my

reading of two fliers announcing the opening of Atlantide in the late 1990s in the next chapter

shows, non-state public spaces offer something distinct to the spatial, temporal, and political

imagination of counterhegemonic knowledge practices and to archiving-as-praxis.

  To conclude: My reading of "I Hate Your Archive!," its local, national, and

international contexts, and the anglophone citational constellations that it invokes and on

which it builds, reveals numerous layers of archiving-as-praxis both for the immediate context

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[68] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 10, emphasis in original; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). I am, I should note, wary of the use of '*metis*' as a concept abstracted from the lived realities of Métis polities and lived experiences.
[69] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 10.
[70] Busarello, "Archivio."
[71] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 17.
[72] Busarello, "Archivio."

of transfeministqueer autonomy and for the queer/feminist scholarly praxes that I critiqued in Chapter 1. Busarello's approach to politicized affect, practices of collective space- and place-making, and the everyday, embodied life of queer knowledge contributes to two important interrelated conceptualizations for my own articulation of queer urban ecologies of autonomous praxis: the economy of citation/s and ecologies of praxis. On the one hand, the economy of citation/s refers to the generalized process of extraction, (re)production, and circulation of institutional academic knowledge, just the kind of knowledge that Halberstam suggests seeks to be taken seriously. In this case, I am focused on transfeministqueer knowledge, which, in the process of ostensible refinement for inclusion in traditional archives and institutional structures, is often radically disconnected from those by whom and for whom it was produced in the first place. On the other hand, I use ecologies of praxis to refer to alternative approaches to working with knowledges generated not only in specific times and places, but also deeply implicated in and inseparable from the production of spaces, movements, materialities, and collective subjectivities that take root beyond well-worn citational pathways. In this case, the ecology of praxis is predicated on––though far exceeding––a transfeministqueer critique of value and of forms of (neo)liberal governance and traditional academic disciplining alike. Or, as Halberstam writes:

> We may in fact want to think about how to see *unlike* a state; we may want new rationales for knowledge production, different aesthetic standards for ordering and disordering space, other modes of political engagement than those conjured by the liberal imagination. We may, ultimately, want more undisciplined knowledge, more questions and fewer answers.[73]

I propose ecologies of praxis as a convenient shorthand for the entire ensemble of ideas, practices, and politics that generate more questions and fewer answers. On the one hand, this ensemble enables archiving-as-praxis, and, on the other, it subtends what Busarello refers to

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[73] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 10.

as "diffuse and polycentric non-state public spaces" that comprise the archipelago of transfeministqueer autonomy.[74] I do not argue that the economy of citation/s is separate or separable from ecologies of praxis or that they exist in some kind of base-superstructure configuration. If anything, I would contend that the former is invariably predicated on the latter. When ecologies of praxis generate knowledges that circulate beyond the times and places of their creation, albeit sometimes under very different terms, they simultaneously pose serious questions about the politics of knowledge production both within and beyond the contemporary university. In addition to those that I have already discussed, such as the relationship between culture and politics, I would include among these questions longstanding debates around the proper "objects" of queer studies, debates that not only inform the divergence of queer geographies from feminist geographies, but which have recently entailed suggestions like that of Wiegman, who, in conversation with her work in *Object Lessons*, has argued for the need to consider the possibility of queer theory "without anti-normativity."[75]

Whereas Wiegman focuses on critiquing U.S.-centric academic institutionalization of identity knowledges, my approach to juxtaposing economies of citation with ecologies of praxis is guided by the need for a concise inventory of the practical, political, and principled dimensions of autonomous archiving-as-praxis, which, at a minimum, entails: consideration of the conditions of the enactment and production of collective subjects, explicit acknowledgment of what else those conditions enable/disable/require, a careful tracking of the extent to which those conditions are oriented toward collective self-determination,

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[74] Busarello, "Archivio."
[75] Berlant and Warner, "What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X?"; Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson, "Introduction: Antinormativity's Queer Conventions," d*ifferences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 1–25, https://doi:10.1215/10407391-2880582.

continuous efforts to map the interdependencies of those conditions with structures of power/domination/discipline, both in relation to state institutions and academic institutions, and forthrightness about the immediate and long-term demands and possibilities immanent to making collective autonomy and self-determination the *sine qua non* of a new political imagination for transfeminist and queer theory. Archiving-as-praxis would not be possible without the spatial praxes that subtend these modes of production. In light of this claim, it is necessary to dwell further on the relationship between autonomy and ecology such that the stakes of grounding transfeministqueer autonomy in the notion of ecologies of praxis and presenting Atlantide as a queer urban ecology in the next chapter may become more palpable.

Following Isabelle Stengers, I position transfeministqueer autonomy as an ecological politics in that it intentionally *diverges from* so-called major approaches by "trying to think 'with' the devastation" encountered every day.[76] There are no big enemies here, just a proliferation of monsters, cyborgs, hybrids, and so on, fashioned from the detritus of the world. What's more, Stengers approach resonates both with anthropological strains of urban political ecology by way of its emphasis on the translation of the universalizing tendencies of scientific knowledge production vis-à-vis the politics of boundary-making and with engaged universalism and with critiques of anglophone approaches to anti-identitarian politics like those I highlighted in my genealogy of European transfeminism at the end of Chapter 1. In her focused engagement with autonomous politics, Stengers follows the work of Félix Guattari, who was inspired by the Movement of 1977 and attended one of its major moments in Bologna, an episode that I discuss further in the next chapter.[77] In so doing, Stengers does not "produce a new master story promoting 'reconciliation' between misguided opponents" but instead

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[76] Isabelle Stengers, "Autonomy and the Intrusion of Gaia," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2017): 383, https://doi:10.1215/00382876-3829467.
[77] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, (London: Continuum, 2008).

speaks to a "'transversalization' of struggles," precisely the kind of transversalization that takes shape as a "collective and widely shared learning process" that constitutes a "web of interdependent reasons to resist."[78]

Learning with the French autonomous space ZAD, Stengers describes how reclaiming space "requires ongoing exchanges, generating mutual sensitivities, and learning how to cooperate and care for one another's reasons to resist."[79] Using the language of the "palaver," Stengers credits the (re)emergence of autonomy in any given place/time to a disposition against "overcoming" divergences among those gathered and, instead, a treatment of those divergences as "the very condition for the generation of an 'autonomous'––not imposed by any arbiter, including the rule of the majority––'consensus,' 'a sensing together' what the place of the issue that gathers them demands."[80] On this reading, autonomy necessarily begins with emotions, feelings, and intuitions: "humiliation, shame, and temptation of cynicism"–– and, I might add, rage and frustration––all of which point toward the destruction of, and therefore the need to rearticulate, autonomy.[81] As my discussion of the origins of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and its recomposition of autonomous traditions in Chapter 4 details, there are numerous ecological and scientific modalities––contamination, experimentation, the very notion of the laboratory itself––that inform the spatio-political articulation of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis.

In keeping with her wider project of tracing the history and philosophy of scientific disciplines and their practices, Stengers observes that "knowledge economy" demands of scientists "that they face their dependent condition with sober senses and forfeit any ambition

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[78] Stengers, "Autonomy and the Intrusion of Gaia," 390; Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*.
[79] Stengers, "Autonomy," 391. Stengers, "Autonomy and the Intrusion of Gaia."
[80] Stengers, "Autonomy," 391.
[81] Stengers, "Autonomy," 392.

to discover 'good' questions opening to a partial but relevant understanding of what they address."[82] This condition recalls my intervention into queer geographies in Chapter 1, but with the caveat that, as Stengers also points out, knowledge workers in the humanities––and, I would add, the social sciences––"are not used to thinking of ourselves as part of a community, that is, as owing to a collective our capacity to think and question."[83] Being a part of such a community is precisely what I have found so transformative about working with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and what I feel is entirely necessary to (re)claim as I translate that work into the academic archive. Notwithstanding the common practice of acknowledging the inevitable collectivity of any individualized project before presenting a single-author work and, more immediately to my own lived experience as a settler academic in Canada, the increasingly common practice of performing territorial acknowledgements before institutional events, it is far less common to actually learn the praxis of collective knowledge production in the academy *as a response* to shared problems and to the ongoing domination of major theory produced by major players.[84] Indeed, it seems that many disciplinary spaces traffic in the trauma of minoritized subjects, creating an impossible condition which both demands individual identification and prompts collective disidentification. Here, I stay with Stengers: "The common feature of reclaiming operations is that they always need to betray the view that devastation is to be embraced as the condition for the manifestation of a truth that comforts critique."[85]

Such an operation of reclaiming resonates with the reality that transfeministqueer praxis as a relational praxis; it literally functions as a relay. Stengers elaborates the notion of a

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[82] Stengers, "Autonomy," 392.
[83] Stengers, "Autonomy," 392.
[84] Michelle Daigle, "The Spectacle of Reconciliation." I discuss the relationship between autonomy and decoloniality in Chapter 3.
[85] Stengers, "Autonomy," 395.

relay in a way that makes the consequences of introducing this relational practice in an academic context quite clear. Acting as a relay is not only about critical reflection, but about adding to a situation:

> It demands consenting to an ongoing process, accepting that what is added can make a difference to the process, and becoming accountable for the manner of that difference, the manner in which the thinker casts [their] lot for some ways of going on and not others.
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> [...]
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> It should be obvious that casting one's lot means partiality but does not exclude formulating matters of critical concern. It only means that the concern must be such that it is liable to be shared with those who arouse it, liable to add new dimensions to the issue of their struggle, for instance, to activate entangled transversality against the always-present danger of "black hole" sectarian closure. In other words, the concern has to be immanent, exhibiting what has been learned from the situation—–not imposing abstract imperatives derived from a theory but "staying with the trouble."
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> [...]
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> Relayers cast their lot not with a paradigm but with an ongoing question.[86]

This is precisely why I approach queer urban ecologies as a constelling theoretical practice, rather than as a preexisting disposition toward "theory," which, all too often, becomes an excuse to foist new "critical" interpretations onto people who already understand their situation. An emphasis on reclaiming and relaying the insights, knowledges, and practices created in queer urban ecologies highlights the ways in which they may (or very well may not) insistently return to the sites of their collective creation with relevant and open-ended questions, questions which I carry with me throughout the work of this dissertation as an ongoing challenge to academic knowledge production.

At the same time, I want to be clear that I do not hold that all knowledge produced in relation to the norms and everyday operations of institutionalized academia should be

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[86] Stengers, "Autonomy," 396–7.

dismissed. I am instead suggesting that we read an insistence on collective autonomy as a

powerful refusal of what Roderick Ferguson calls the drama of affirmation.[87] If, as Ferguson

contends, "antiracist and feminist movements and the changes they inspired in the American

academy constitute a history that compels us to once again think the limits of economic

narratives in theorizations of power," including power that "*socializes state and capital* into

emergent articulations of difference," then, I would argue, transfeministqueer autonomous

movements constitute an ecology of praxis in which to learn how to do just that by asking new

questions, adapting experimental tactics and historical praxes, and devising forms of

knowledge less susceptible to being exhausted by the all of the (often unpaid) labor entailed in

socializing both state and capital.[88]

Having elaborated my use of the term ecology and my sense of its political valences, I

now turn to one final example to highlight the distinction––this time in the Italian context––

between transfeministqueer knowledge produced in diffuse and polycentric non-state public

spaces and queer, feminist, and trans theory that in some ways aspires to traffic in the rather

formalized space of university-sanctioned knowledge production, even, and perhaps

especially, when that knowledge expresses broader political aspirations.

(Un)housing the Archive

On Saturday, October 8, 2016, just one day shy of the one year anniversary of Atlantide's

eviction, the Centro di Ricerca Indipendente ed Archivio Eccentrico TransFemministaQueer

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[87] Roderick Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*.
[88] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 9, emphasis in original.

Alessandro Zijno di Atlantide hosted its first ever public demonstration.[89] The event had been

billed as a performative presentation of the recently released book *Il Genere tra*

neofondamentalismo e neoliberismo (Gender between neofundamentalism and neoliberalism),

edited by Federico Zappino.[90] The evening prior to the demonstration, the edited volume––to

which many members of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and the broader transfeministqueer

networks of which it is a part had contributed––had been launched at the Biblioteca Italiana

delle Donne, The Italian Women's Library, located in Bologna, a space that had become one

of the temporary homes in which Atlantide and Smaschieramenti continued their activities

following the eviction.[91] In the opening paragraph of his introduction to the volume, Zappino

writes:

> The essays collected in this volume constitute a restitution of research
> articulated in a little more than one year of meetings, discourses, writings,
> moments of reflection, and struggles around *gender*. A nomadic research and
> critique developed in a series of opportunities to meet, which took place
> within feminist bookstores, *case delle donne*, LGBTQ *circoli*, queer students'
> collectives, university classrooms, in transfeminist and queer *consultorie*, in
> self-financed queer festivals, in occupied and self-managed spaces, as well as
> outside, in the streets and squares, and *everywhere* [*ovunque*], when these
> occupied and self-managed spaces had been evicted.[92]

Already in this short paragraph, the ecologies in which transfeministqueer knowledges are

produced, debated, enacted, and struggled over meet a number of dilemmas of political

translation: There are no easy English-language or Anglo-American spatio-political

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[89] I began writing this chapter nearly a year to the day that Atlantide was evicted on the order of Virgino Merola, Bologna's so-called center-left mayor. Merola was acting under pressure from the public prosecutor's office (*procura*). This episode is the focus of the Chapter 5.

[90] Federico Zappino, ed., *Il Genere: Tra Neoliberismo E Neofondamentalismo*, (Verona: Ombre Corte, 2016). Apart from being a queer intellectual and ally of the movement in his own right, Zappino is perhaps best known as Judith Butler's Italian translator.

[91] Despite being formally registered with the municipality as an Association, the library has itself confronted the specter of eviction in recent years and has, quite recently (as of this writing in Spring 2019), been targeted by fascists.

[92] Federico Zappino, "Introduzione," in *Il Genere: Tra Neoliberismo E Neofondamentalismo*, ed. Federico Zappino, (Verona: Ombre Corte, 2016), 11, emphases in original.

equivalents for spaces such as *case delle donne, circoli, consultorie*. Such spaces are the outcome

of successive waves of struggle that contribute to the articulation of new subjectivities and

develop new place-based (approaches to existing) political praxes. Such spaces comprise both

more and less institutionalized nodes in the ecology of praxis in and through which the

central "object" of the book––gender––is figured, contested, and reworked. The contributors

to the book engage in debates, theorizations, and practices that are likely to be both familiar

and, at times, less familiar to anglophone audiences: universal access to both reproductive and

non-reproductive healthcare and safe and legal abortion, corporate diversity management

and pinkwashing, gay marriage and civil unions, resistance to gender binaries,

depathologization of transgender identity and subjectivity through collectively self-managed

alternatives healthcare, and anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic resistance to fascist

and religious groups, including the Vatican.[93] Each author's contribution to tracing political

modes and practices that have placed gender in relation to the book's other titular formations

of power––neofundamentalism and neoliberalism––is no doubt interesting in itself. And yet,

while each of these topics has urgent implications on both practical and theoretical levels, for

the purposes of this chapter, I am more squarely concerned with one central node in this map:

Atlantide.

Zappino's book is just one of many emergent expressions of an ongoing and far

reaching discussion of where and how to house the knowledges produced and documented in

and through transfeministqueer struggle, knowledges that include, but also exceed, themes

and analytics that have come to dominate the enterprise of queer theory and queer

geographies in anglophone academia. At first glance, such concerns might seem particular to

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[93] There are numerous places in the dissertation where these commitments are spelled out, but they are most clearly connected to the politics of knowledge production in Chapter 4.

the Italian context. Unlike in anglophone academia, in Italian universities, one cannot earn a

degree in gender studies or women's studies; there are no programs of study in either area.

One cannot take courses in queer theory. And, while individualized research on transfeminist

or queer themes might be negotiated with sympathetic supervisors, both approaches are

maligned with the Italian university system.[94] Take, for example, Lorenzo Bernini's reflection

on comments he received as part of an evaluation of his publications, including a recently

translated book on the political implications of the so-called anti-social queer theory put

forward by Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman:

> Careful! The book you are holding in your hands "incorrectly attributes the
> significance of political theory, or better yet, of real and true philosophical
> reflection to homosexual liberation movements, and thus gives rise to quite a
> few suspicions of manneristic intellectualism." Or, at least, one of the members
> of the Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale [National Scientific Qualification] held
> in Italy in 2014 has claimed this to be the case [...] The reasons for this are
> indeed evident: The Ministry of Education, Universities and Research does not
> consider feminist studies, gender studies, and queer theories to be discrete
> disciplinary sectors, and the scientific communities within existing disciplines
> find it difficult to recognize the dignity of academic research in these areas [...]
> In Italy, those who work within gender studies or queer theory, whether they
> want to be or not, are militant intellectuals who challenge academic
> conventions and disrupt the heterosexist common beliefs active in the
> university and the country. Thus, these scholars occupy a liminal position: their
> referential community is that of activists more so than academics, and their
> readers and interlocutors belong more to LGBTQIA movements than to the
> universities. So, since movements and activists offer neither salaries nor
> scholarships, the destiny of these scholars is marked by a choice between a
> hardened but noble amateurism at home and legitimized research that receives
> more peaceful professional affirmation abroad.[95]

Bernini's autobiographical account might appear to situate Zappino and the authors who

collectively created the other book clearly on the side of "a hardened but noble amateurism at

home." It is with some irony that Bernini points out the economic precarity that many activists

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[94] To point out this fact is not to suggest that mere inclusion is enough, as both my discussion above and my
analysis in Chapter 1 make perfectly clear.
[95] Lorenzo Bernini, *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of an Antisocial Theory*, trans. Julia Heim, (Cham: Palgrave
Macmillan, 2017): ix–x.

necessarily confront if and when they commit themselves to the study and "disruption" of

"common beliefs active in the university and the country."[96] Indeed, as Zappino's "map"

suggests, autonomous collectives have played a crucial role in both the practico-theoretical

translation of anglophone queer and feminist theory into the Italian context and in the

revindication of Italian queer thinkers like Mario Mieli––whose work I discuss in the next

chapter––within the spaces and debates of the transfeministqueer movements in Italy.[97]

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[96] Bernini is among a number of Italian academics involved in CIRQUE – Centro interuniversitario di ricerca queer (CIRQUE – Interuniversity queer research center), which is, to my knowledge, the first such entity in Italy. In 2017, two years after their first public presentation, CIRQUE held a conference in L'Aquila at which a number of members of the SomMovimento nazioAnale were present. Based on their experiences of both the conference's organization and its content, members of the SomMovmento published, in both English and Italian, "STRIKE! A Statement from the transfeminist strikers of the Cirque [sic] Conference (L'Aquila March 31st–April 2nd, 2017)." Among the numerous critiques in the statement––including of the racism, appropriation, and transphobia experienced by many attendees of the conference––one stands out for its particular relevance to my discussion in this chapter: "In Italy in particular [...] there is an attempt to carry on an epistemic imperialism: italian [sic] academia is trying to erase the experiences of gender dissidence and eccentric sexuality [...] and to demonstrate that it can catch up with anglophone standards, thus producing a norm of what queer is or should be and reproducing its own hierarchies in this space." For their part, the organizers of CIRQUE and the conference issued a response to the SomMovimento statement, in English and Italian, titled "X-communiqué from the CIRQUE (Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca Queer) Board and from the organizers of the first CIRQUE conference." Responding specifically to this critique, they write "That which has been described as CIRQUE's de-political turn and epistemological violence is, in fact, an approach to queerness that extends beyond LGBT issues [...] no one has the right to exert their normative control over the proper usage and correct meaning of the term queer." SomMovimento nazioAnale, "STRIKE! A Statement From the Transfeminist Strikers of the Cirque [sic] Conference (L'Aquila March 31st–April 2nd, 2017)," *SomMovimentonazioAnale.Noblogs.com*, May 26, 2017, https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2017/05/26/strike-a-statement-from-the-transfeminist-strikers-of-the-cirque-conference-laquila-march-31st-april-2nd-2017/; CIRQUE, "X-Communiqué From the CIRQUE (Centro Interuniversitario Di Ricerca Queer) Board and From the Organizers of the First CIRQUE Conference," *CIRQUE Centro Interuniversitario Di Ricerca Queer*, June 12, 2017, https://cirque.unipi.it/en/s-comunicato/.

[97] Mario Mieli, *Elementi di critica omosessuale*, 2nd Edition, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2002); Mario Mieli, *Homosexuality and Liberation: Elements of a Gay Critique*, trans. David Fernbach, (London: Gay Men's Press, 1980); Mario Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, trans. David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams, (London: Pluto Press, 2018); Christian Lo Iacono and Elisa A.G. Arfini, eds., *Canone inverso: antologia di teoria queer*, (Pisa: Edizione ETS, 2012). Mieli's visionary text, *Elementi di critica omosessuale*, was partially translated and published in English in 1980 as *Homosexuality and Liberation: Towards a Gay Communism* and more recently released as a full translation under the title *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*. Like the similarly inflected work of Guy Hocquenghem in France, Mieli's writing has received little sustained critical attention in anglophone academia. The life of Mieli's text is as controversial, revealing, and storied as the life of its author, who committed suicide in 1983. *Gli Elementi*, as it is known, fell out of print very quickly after its initial publication by Einaudi in 1977 and remained difficult to locate until its republication in 2002 by Feltrinelli. This republication came about, in part, through the efforts of Antagonismo Gay, which had posted a pirate edition to its website prior to the republication. The book *Canone inverso* is a translated anthology of some of the landmark texts of anglophone queer theory edited by Christian Lo Iacono, who had collaborated closely with Renato Busarello and Antagonismo Gay and A.G. Arfini, who was a member of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti at the time that I conducted my fieldwork in Bologna in 2015 and who is also among the founding members of CRAAAZi.

Further, they have done so as a result of constant struggle and, as the eviction of Atlantide and the criminalization of several of the comrades who defended the space bespeaks, have often paid a high price for their commitments.

For the moment, I hone in on the tension between amateurism and professionalism that Bernini posits in his presentation of the situation faced by Italy's contemporary queers and feminists. Read alongside Bernini's breathless recounting of the attack on "gender theory" coming from various quarters in Italy––an unlikely array that includes some historical feminists, the Vatican, and neo-fascist groups––his appraisal of the situation is not substantively inaccurate. At the same time, Bernini does not address the way forward for either contemporary elaborations of transfeministqueer praxis in Italy or the ongoing evolution, production, and circulation of queer theories in a broader context. Such concerns were, in part, the basis for a collective self-inquiry (*auto-inchiesta*) into the relationship between academic and activist knowledge production by a group from the SomMovimento nazioAnale.[98] That paper, which I referred to at the opening of this chapter, identifies both symbolic and material potentials to resist the entrepreneurial model of intellectual labor by organizing alternative networks of both knowledge production and circulation. Materially, the strategies involve not only advocacy for a universal basic income, but also interim measures to leverage mutual support on a self-organized basis.[99] The symbolic aims articulated in the paper are more immediately relevant to my analysis here: "the point is to strengthen a culture of non-subalternity in the face of the lure of recognition that the academy seems to offer; recognition of our knowledge and recognition of our lives as queer people."[100] The creation of the Eccentric Archive is no doubt an important dimension of this symbolic aim, though the

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[98] Alessia Acquistapace et al., "Nervous Breakdown."
[99] Acquistapace et al., "Nervous Breakdown," 67.
[100] Acquistapace et al., "Nervous Breakdown," 67–68.

authors are quick to add they "are cultivating the idea that cooperating with universities is neither a goal in itself, nor evil in itself."[101]

The implications of this open-ended process of collective self-inquiry come into sharper relief when expressed through the terms in which Atlantide couched their performative presentation of Zappino's book. In a communiqué announcing the demonstration, the Laboratorio writes:

> Atlantide is not dead, but is more alive than ever and is everywhere. **The Independent Research Center and eccentric queer archive that we wanted to name after our unforgettable comrade Alessandro Zijno** works to conserve and disseminate knowledges that are born from *frocia* and feminist struggle [...] **Knowledges that are born and circulate in the streets, in *piazzas*, in self-managed spaces, and which return to the *piazzas*** to underline that there is no subsumption of knowledge that can neutralize subjectivity in struggle [*soggettività in lotta*] and that the need for self-managed, transfeministqueer spaces is always urgent, and also to sabotage academia and the neoliberal culture industry.[102]

The statement moves toward a critical materialization and revindication of the ecologies of praxis that subtend transfeministqueer subjectivities, methodologies, and histories both within the movement and in the broader social fabric of Italy and, indeed, of global political struggle and knowledge production. More than that, the statement clarifies the stakes of resisting the lure of the drama of affirmation to which I referred earlier. Taken in tandem with the passages from Bernini's and Zappino's introductions, Smaschieramenti's position on the importance of creating an eccentric queer archive *in* and *for* autonomous struggle clarifies the central importance of the very spaces in which transfeministqueer knowledges are produced,

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[101] Acquistapace et al., "Nervous Breakdown," 68.

[102] Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, "Il Genere Secondo Atlantide," October 8, 2016, https://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/post/2016/10/08/il-genere-secondo-atlantide/, emphases in original. Recall that the term "frocia," is a feminization of the word "frocio," translatable as "faggot." Feminizing and the utilizing terms in an affirmative/constructive manner is not only a hallmark of the transfeministqueer movement, but an echo of the political sensibility that lead to the reappropriation of "queer" in the anglophone context.

which brings us to Atlantide's founding moment and to its embodiment of the dream of

another ecology of praxis, one born during Italy's long-1968.

Navigating toward Atlantide

Francesco è vivo e lotta insieme con noi!

Francesco is alive and struggles with us!

Red Bologna

Today marks the 38th anniversary of the day that police in Bologna murdered autonomous

activist Francesco Lorusso (fig. 9). I don't know if there has been a demonstration every year

since, but I would imagine yes. *Credo di sì.* Bologna remembers its dead. Atheist though it may

be, with its spectacularly unfinished cathedral––which stands half-naked, fully exposed, in

Piazza Maggiore––the city shares something of the Vatican's attachment to ghosts. The

movement lives in the shadow of its dead, in the absence of its most famous exiles, the ones

Figure 9. Mural on Via Zamboni commemorating Francesco Lorusso, which reads:
"Francesco lives in the struggles," Bologna, Italy, March 11, 2015

who carried news of Italy's revolution to the dreamers in France, in the Americas, and beyond. Tonight, the movement lives––or, better, is undead––in the repetition of this untimely message by those who never left, those who survived, those who came after, those who meet here, in these same streets.

I arrived early in Piazza Verdi, an historical gathering space for the autonomous movement; Babs joins me after a little while. We sit around waiting for the last contingent––mostly migrant occupants of Ex-Telekom––to arrive. To pass the time, Babs tells me stories about the "old guard" autonomous activists. Pointing to a cartoonish looking man, a paid organizer with a long history dating back to the 70s, Babs tells me how he once tried to kick them out of a demonstration. I look into his big, blank, blue eyes, wondering what they've seen. Babs notices and chuckles, "He doesn't have the smartest face." The Ex-Telekom contingent arrives. I see a Palestinian flag among many red flags for Social Log, the organization coordinating the occupation. I think that the demo might end up being more interesting than I had imagined. We set off about an hour after the appointed start time of the demonstration: Bologna time.

As we wind through the medieval streets whose stories I am learning faster than either their names or this language, it occurs to me that this is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a transfeministqueer demonstration. In the course of the evening I am introduced to many activist "types": The *duri e puri*, youth, a single old-style "red" skinhead punk, housing activists, migrant activists, members of student collectives. Almost everyone is wearing the comrade uniform: all black, a mad dash of red. Though this is most certainly a so-called illegal demonstration, there are no police anywhere, at least not in uniform. The Ex-Telekom contingent is led by women wearing hijab, many of them pushing strollers and flanked by children who seem either indifferent or anxious when the red flares pop off. Many of the

activists in the demo project a kind of machismo strength; the women pushing strollers look both strong and tired.

Throughout the course of the evening, only one woman addresses the demonstration on the megaphone, near the end of our winding route. She is a white-appearing Italian, probably a university student. She is ensconced by several men, student activists, who probably belong to autonomous social centers like Crash and Teatro Polivalente Occupato (TPO). They have that look. She gets on the megaphone just as some very prototypically revolutionary looking masked men start spray-painting a new mural next to the falafel shop which now stands adjacent to where Francesco was murdered. He was shot in the back by the *carabinieri*. The shopkeepers look out from under blue florescent lights into the magnesium orange streets; they are relaxed, their faces are curious. She offers the crowd some kind of poetry. Owing to my limited Italian, I'm still not capable of grasping it fully, but it makes an impression. Her voice is hesitant, but forceful. We are packed in tightly on Via Mascarella, forming a protective cordon around the graffiti boys. I inhale paint fumes as another flare goes off. We stop to chant again: *Le nostre idee non moriranno mai*. Our ideas will never die. A small child, maybe six, in a happy yellow jacket joins in the chant. Just then, another kid, cute enough to be the little one's older sibling, comes over and half-gently grabs the little one's face with both hands, stopping the chant. As the older child clasps the other's head, both of them turn to me and smile. My head tilts into a smile; I laugh back to them.

From Via Mascarella, we march onto Via Irnerio and pass a row of large university buildings standing guard behind tall iron fences with big palm trees spread out over top of them. But for the chill in the air, it seems we could be further south, in Rome, maybe Beirut. We turn onto the Viale, a ring road that encircles the medieval center of Bologna. We block

traffic for a while. Nobody seems that miffed. *Motorini* weasel past the march; a few demonstrators help direct more frazzled drivers. Still no police.

The demonstration feels like a distant echo of Bologna 1977, of that year in which the simmering broth of Italy's long-1968 finally began to boil. The endurance of March 11, 1977 into March 11, 2015 speaks of the breadth of that full-scale revolutionary movement and the multiple, linked, yet distinctive, subjectivities that created it and that it, in turn, proliferated. Tonight, the endurance of 1977 is a feeling more than a fact, though feelings are also facts. Tonight makes it difficult to deny that Bologna is one place where the red flame still flickers.

Babs and I are getting tired. This has been our date night. Monica is at home with the baby, who is probably sleeping soundly by now. We decide to go to dinner. As we turn away from the demo––which, after more than two hours, ambles along down the Viale––Babs calls out to an old friend who is the only other queer comrade-friend that we have spotted in the demo. Though they are also leaving, they chat for a minute as I linger nearby. Babs returns to me, laughing a bit, feeling relieved or justified, I can't tell. At least we hadn't been the only ones. Our duty done, we go to eat at a newly opened restaurant specializing in Southern Italian food. It's about nine o'clock; we are the earliest to dinner and, by the time others start arriving, also the youngest. The food is excellent, if pricey. When we get home, Babs crashes immediately. I lay awake. My thoughts drift to my friends in Toronto who are on strike following the collapse of contract negotiations with the university. Even though I'm finally starting to settle into the fieldwork, I can't shake the feeling that I should be there with them, holding the picket lines. As I drift into sleep, my anxieties melt together with images from the demo: Red eyes, red rage, red flag, red light, red flare, red blood (fig. 10).

Figure 10. Photo taken during a demonstration commemorating the anniversary of the murder of autonomist activist Francesco Lorusso, Bologna, March 11, 2015

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, I described archiving-as-praxis in order to demonstrate the distinctiveness of transfeministqueer autonomy both in relation to mainstream and institutional LGBT politics in Italy and nascent academic formations of queer theory in the Italian context as well as in relation to other modalities of knowledge production, specifically those of anglophone queer theory. In so doing, I distinguished between knowledges produced in ecologies of praxis from those produced according to the logics of economies of citation. Having established the context for archiving-as-praxis, I now turn to the founding of Atlantide itself as read through two fliers announcing its opening in the late 1990s. My readings of these fliers emphasize through-lines and continuities that connect both with archiving-as-praxis as delineated in the previous chapter and with wider historical and contemporary ecologies of autonomous praxis in which Atlantide became a central node. Based on the spatio-political project outlined in the first fliers of Atlantide––both of which bear the name "Navigando verso Atlantide," ("Navigating toward Atlantide"), which I have used as the title of this chapter––this chapter discusses key dimensions of Bologna's place in Italy's long-1968, a decade-long period of social and political upheaval that witnessed the emergence of *autonomia*.

Over the course of the chapter, I situate Atlantide both spatially and temporally in the vast terrain of historical autonomous praxis and point to the resonances of historical autonomy with decolonial, ecological, and minor geographic thought and praxis. Using the first fliers announcing the opening of the space as points of departure and return, I conclude this chapter by describing Atlantide's founding in the late 1990s. *En route* to my full description of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's emergence within Atlantide, I establish key points of reference for the political project drawn from the longer trajectory of autonomous spatial praxis in Italy––and, indeed, beyond––since the long-1968, a moniker that I use to refer

to Italy's part in the global revolutionary upheavals that marked the beginning of so-called new social movements/new left.[1] Italy's long-1968 culminated in the Movement of 1977, in which Bologna was a key site of mobilization.[2] The Movement of 1977 was met with a massive wave of political repression and spiked with armed conflict, both of which brought it to a devastating conclusion by the end of the decade. In navigating toward––and finally anchoring at Atlantide––my reading of the first fliers not only moves back and forth in time, it also further establishes the context in which the subsequent chapters unfold.

A full reconstruction of the history of Italy's long-1968 is beyond the scope of this chapter, not least because of the extent to which that history remains largely unwritten in anglophone texts and contained in private archives beyond my reach during the initial fieldwork.[3] Instead, in revisiting the long-1968, I will focus on key points of reference with a specific interest in the how the spatial imaginaries, dynamics, praxes that emerged from the *operaismo* (workerist) wing of movement were transformed as creative feminist, gay, and trans expressions of autonomy became stronger and articulated themselves spatially, especially in Bologna. Showing the influence of feminism, gay and trans liberation, and so-called creative

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[1] On the periodization and issues of writing Italy's long-1968, see John Foot, "Looking Back on Italy's "Long '68'." Public, Private and Divided Memories," in *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*, ed. Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), 103–29. For a global reading of the uprisings of 1968, see Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left*.

[2] See especially Red Notes Collective, *Italy 1977–8*.

[3] Italian language books that deal in some way with the general history of the long-1968 tend to fall into two categories. The first are edited volumes assembled from testimonies, reviews published during the years of upheaval, and the like (i.e. "memories"). The second are monographs that sometimes reflect on similar themes as the edited collections but tend to do so with a more synthetic approach (i.e. "premonitions"). In the first category, I would include: Sergio Bianchi and Lanfranco Caminiti, eds., *Gli Autonomi: Le Sotrie, Le Lotte, Le Teorie*, Vol. I, (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2007); Sergio Bianchi and Lanfranco Caminiti, eds., *Gli Autonomi: Le Storie, Le Lotte, Le Teorie*, Vol. II, (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2007); Alessandro Bertante, *Re Nudo: Underground E Rivoluzione Nelle Pagine Di Una Rivista*, (Rimini: NdA Press, 2005); Molti Compagni, *Bologna Marzo 1977 ...Fatti Nostri...*, eds Enrico Palandri et al., (Rimini: NdA Press, 2007). In the second category, I would include: William Gambetta, *I Muri Del Lungo '68: Manifesti E Communicazione Political in Italia*, (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2014); Sergio Bianchi and Lanfranco Caminiti, eds., *Settantasette: La Rivoluzione Che Viene*, 2nd Ed., (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2004); Salvatore Ricciardi, *Maelstrom: Scene Di Rivolta E Autorganiazzazione Di Classe in Italian (1960–1980)*, (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2012); Angelo Ventrone, *"Volgiamo Tutto": Perché Due Generazione Hanno Creduto Nella Rivoluzione 1960–1988*, (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 2012); Marcello Tarì, *Il Ghiaccio Era Sottile: Per Una Storia dell'Autonomia*, (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2012).

autonomy––and, indeed, highlighting their inextricable relationship to each other––will, in turn, help to place Bologna in the archipelago of autonomous praxis and politics.[4] Beyond archival documents and the texts that I cite, I also refer to my interviews with the comrades of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and to three life historical interviews, which I conducted during the course of my fieldwork in Bologna in 2015, with key exponents of the autonomous movements of the long-1968: Bologna-based feminist Sandra Schiassi, who, among many political affiliations, was a member of both the workerist group Potere Operaio and numerous feminist groups, Porpora Marcasciano, one of the founders of Movimento Identità Transessuale (MIT), Italy's oldest and largest trans organization, and a longtime autonomous activist, and Sandro Mezzadra, Professor of Political and Social Science at the University of Bologna and long-time comrade of autonomous movements.

My navigation through the historical autonomous movements is oriented toward establishing the context in which Atlantide would come to embody not only a distinctive kind of political space with respect to the moment in which it was established, but also to showing how its distinctiveness in that moment both depends on and enables a new reading––a recomposition––of the historical and contemporary movements to which the first fliers refer. Reading the fliers in this way establishes Atlantide not only a living archive of autonomous politics and praxis, but also as an embodiment of the notion of a queer urban ecology of autonomous praxis.

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[4] For an archival collection and collective reflection on the particular significance of Bologna to the articulation of autonomous politics, see Paolo Brunetti et al., *L'eresia Bolognese: Documenti Di Una Generazione Ribelle (1967-1990)*, (Roma: Edizioni Andromeda, 2015). I refer to the so-called gay liberation movement because, while this moniker is common to refer to the wing of autonomous movements concerned with sexuality and sexual subjectivity, such a formation not only involved a range of subjectivities, but also was deeply enmeshed with feminist autonomy.

The First Fliers and the Long-1968

It wasn't until our fourth archive meeting, in the heat of mid-July 2015, that we found the first

flier announcing the opening of Atlantide. Rena had assured me that it was among the piles of

paper, but it was still something of a surprise when it finally turned up, not least because we

found not one but two documents with the title, "Navigando verso Atlantide," or "Navigating

toward Atlantide" (Appendix A & Appendix B).[5] The documents themselves are very similar,

though not identical. The first lines of the first flier, likely written in or around 1998, reads:

> *Atlantide*, submerged city, rich and mysterious […] as rich as that city was and as
> rich as the multitude which should meet there [*attraversarlo*]; submerged
> because the subjectivities that it could constitute do not find citizenship within
> the societal model to which we are constrained, which we feel the need to
> change; mysterious because it could be the first experiment of its kind in Italy.

By way of contrast, the second flier reads, "*Atlantide*, continent submerged like the dream of

another place [*luogo*] constructed collectively […] [Atlantide] is not a place […] that could exist

here and now, in the context of these social relations, but is its memory and its premonition."

The social relations to which this passage refers are later described as a "metaphysics of the

Grand Misconception, Capital, and its children, the Market, Competitiveness, Social Peace."

By founding Atlantide as a "memory and premonition," the initial occupants of Porta Santo

Stefano 6a prefigured it as a new kind of political space in which distinct territories of

autonomous social movements, both historical and contemporary, might be understood as

interconnected and continuous.[6] Already in this description, Atlantide is imagined as a kind of

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[5] Unlike Busarello's "I Hate Your Archive!"––which, like the fliers, is a part of the contents of the Eccentric
Archive––I do not use conventional citations to refer to the two fliers bearing the title "Navigando verso
Atlantide." Instead, I have included the complete original texts as appendices refer to them throughout my
reading as the first flier (Appendix A) and the second flier (Appendix B). All emphases in quotations are from the
originals, unless otherwise noted.

[6] Only the second flier is "signed," i.e. contains a list of the collectives involved in physically reclaiming the
building that became Atlantide. They are: Associazione "In Marcia," Circolo Universitario, Collettivo Banlieues,
Collettivo di Giurisprudenza, Collettivo di Ingegneria, Collettivo Il Maggio, Collettivo di Scienze della
Formazione, Giovani Comunisiti, and Tute Bianche di Bologna.

metonym for a (lost) vision of the city and for the kind of social relations that might be organized there.

The fliers present the metastasis of global capital in the wake of the fall of state socialism at the end of the 1980s as a kind of family drama. While capital remains both a paternalistic inheritance and crowning concept for the broadest conceptions of the movement, the conditions that followed the historic demise of the Movement of 1977–– "Market, Competitiveness, and Social Peace"––clearly define the immediate terrain of struggle for the revival of the autonomous movements in the 1990s. The triumphalism of the market superseded socialized alternatives at the institutional level; competitiveness eclipsed collectivity and cooperation as increasingly deregulated labor markets drove entrepreneurialism across sectors; social peace became the byword for the reduction of antagonistic movements of the past to the miasma of armed conflict.

Only the first flier, which seems to have been intended for a broader audience of potential denizens of the space, both individual and collective, discusses anything specific about the mode in which Atlantide was to be organized and self-managed. A section titled "Comitato di gestione," or "Organizational committee," specifies a "light structure" oriented toward "the maximum valorization of the autonomy of individual and collective participants [*aderenti*]" in the space. The document also emphasizes "the maximum openness to subjectivities who will *eventually* want to congregate at Atlantide," suggesting that, from its beginnings, Atlantide was to be a political space without a singular political identity or "correct" approach to movement building, that is, apart from the antifascist, antiracist, antisexist orientation declared, though clearly not always embodied, by all left-wing social spaces in the broader movement.[7] And yet, Atlantide's eventual transformation into a space

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[7] Emphasis mine.

that housed punk, lesbian and feminist, gay, and, eventually, transfeministqueer collectives was by no means guaranteed. After all, the initial occupation was undertaken by a coalition of collectives that included the Tute Bianche, a group with strong ties to the derivation of autonomy associated with so-called *post-operaismo*, which I discuss further below.

For now, I want to highlight the implications of the first fliers' prefigurative *imagination* of a different kind of political space. As Aldara Pérez Paredes, a comrade of Smaschieramenti, put it to when I asked her to clarify some basic operative distinctions between the spaces of the so-called "mixed" autonomous movement, a formulation used to refer to the wider area of contemporary non-institutional/non-parliamentary politics, and transfeministqueer autonomous spaces, "Obviously, as a social center [*centro sociale*] you have to be antifascist, antiracist, and antisexist. These are the three passwords. [Q: The holy trinity, so to speak?] Exactly: the holy spirit, Jesus, and Mary of the social centers."[8] At the same time, Paredes and others with whom I spoke routinely pointed out that the very need for a transfeministqueer articulation of autonomy responded to the reality that such ideological declarations by spaces and collectives of the mixed movement far too often failed to correspond to meaningful and material practices, especially with regard to antisexist politics, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, gender-based violence, and the everyday work of social reproduction, all of which I discuss further in my account of the emergence of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti in the next chapter. In short, contemporary self-organized spaces tended to reflect the unresolved remainders and contemporary recompositions of the long-1968 as much as they also embodied new contradictions immanent to the particularities of ascendant neoliberal capitalism. The distinctiveness of Atlantide becomes clearer when it is contextualized with regard to the spatial praxes emerging from the autonomous movements in Italy as they took

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[8] Aldara Pérez Paredes, interview with author, June 12, 2015.

shape during the long-1968. Revisiting the "memory" of the long-1968 contextualizes the

"premonition" of what might be called the long-1990s.

There are three broad formations that, for the purposes of my review here, comprise

autonomous movements (*autonomia*) arising out of the long-1968: workerism/compositionism

(*operaismo*), feminism, and gay liberation. While distinct, these variants of autonomy are also

deeply intertwined with each other insofar as they all organized around principles and praxes

of a collective self-determination capable of redefining not only terrain of political struggle,

but also the very processes of subjectivation active in that terrain. As it took shape in post-

WWII Italy, *autonomia* was, as Marcello Tarì has written, "neither a group nor a grouping of

groups" but "an *area,* that is, a space with uncertain boundaries that more or less adhered to

those of the Movement."[9] Tarì's spatial/territorial definition highlights not only the relatively

amorphous qualities of the movement as a whole, but also the circulation of ideas, practices,

theories, and materials that helped to constitute it across the decade in which it flourished. He

continues:

> In fact, if *Autonomia* is a common plane of consistency […] it must be referred to
> as the *autonomies*: autonomy of the workers, autonomy of the students,
> autonomy of women, autonomy of homosexuals, autonomy of babies,
> autonomy of prisoners.[10]

The consequences of understanding *autonomia* in such a way become even clearer when we

look at how Steve Wright describes a "map" of autonomy created by Primo Moroni in the late

1980s:

> The 'map' […] seeks to show the connections between the major expressions of
> revolutionary media in Italy for the thirty years that followed the workers'
> uprising in Hungary. In doing so, it aims to tell a story across time about space:
> not so much geographical space––although that too is hinted at, in part––but

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[9] Tarì, *Il Ghiaccio Era Sottile*, 36, emphasis in original.
[10] Tarì, *Il Ghiaccio Era Sottile*, 36, emphases in original.

rather that kind of 'space' that spawned talk of an 'area' of autonomy during the seventies.[11]

Because workerist variants of autonomy focused on the recomposition of class politics through an emphasis on the autonomous organization of factory labor, they necessarily existed in something of an antagonistic relationship to the organs of the state and official labor, including unions and political parties. Further, *operaismo* required a wholesale rethinking of the territories in which these entities sought to exert organizational hegemony.[12] As Robert Lumley notes in his historical study of "cultures of revolt" in Italy's long-1968, the "expressions of revolutionary media" that Moroni mapped were embodied in the theoretical debates that appeared on the pages of the many journals and reviews created during the peak of *operaismo* movement, including, most famously: *Classe Operaia, Quaderni Rossi, Quaderni Piacentini*. Such revolutionary media became "a privileged format for theoretical/political intervention [which] sprang up within the milieu of the city intelligentsia [whose marginality held] the promise of a future that others might not be able to see."[13] For Lumley, *operaismo* not only displaced the "individualistic ethos" prized "in the dominant culture's conception of the artist and thinker," but also decisively posed "the question of alternative organization and concrete political intervention."[14] The reviews and the editorial collectives associated with them tended, however, to be very narrowly focused on the factory as the privileged site of subjectivation, which "produced myopia in relation to other social tensions," including those

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[11] Wright, "Mapping Pathways," 117. The rigidities of official communism presented specific problems, especially after the Soviet crushing of the uprising in Hungary in 1956. Such strong moves against collective struggles presented significant problems for parties whose official line was derived from the USSR. In this sense, the space opened by autonomous Marxism was one that sought to derive not a more accurate scientific understanding of the machinations of capital itself––and the possibility to manage such machinations using the state-form––but the space for an expression of a tendency toward struggle both against the harsh exploitations of evolving capitalism and beyond the repressive regimes which increasingly characterized official communism.
[12] See Wright, *Storming Heaven*.
[13] Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency,* 34.
[14] Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 35–36.

being animated by student, youth, feminist, and gay liberation movements.[15] Nonetheless, the

reviews were instrumental in helping to provide alternative readings of hallmark radical

thinkers and texts like Marx's *Grundrisse*, Gramsci's prison notebooks, and Lenin's corpus of

writing. The reviews were instrumental in introducing and interpreting the insights in these

texts to a new wave of interlocutors whose interests were not dominated by party lines or by

hierarchical union agendas. At the same time, the importance of the review can neither be

abstracted from, nor completely credited for, broader societal shifts that placed such texts in

active relationship with concrete political objectives and everyday organizing. So, while

reviews helped the movement to counter both party and union lines on the "official" political

strategy, they did not enable a sufficiently comprehensive reimagination of either

revolutionary strategy in itself or of the spatio-political and subjective correlates that would

necessarily have to accompany such a comprehensive reimagination.

The reviews did, however, highlight the fact that the spatiality of the nation and the

local state were necessary, yet insufficient, points of reference for the elaboration of *autonomia*

as the praxis from which a viable alternative vision and organization of society might be

elaborated, not least on account of their role in both spatial planning and economic policy.

The state's role is, in one sense, what makes it possible and necessary to distinguish, as Georgy

Katsiaficas does, between German and Italian autonomous movements.[16] While both

countries had significant autonomous movements during roughly the same period, their

articulations necessarily differed in relation to the conditions *from which* these movements

insisted on their collective autonomy. And yet, the flow of ideas, texts, and people across such

boundaries also render a strictly state-focused analysis untenable. This is one reason why the

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[15] Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 38.
[16] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*.

work of Italian autonomists must always be considered as existing in a relationship of mutual influence with a wide range of struggles, including, notably, the organizing of American workers, perhaps especially Black auto workers, and the events of (May) 1968 in France and Germany.[17] As I noted in the Introduction, historical formations of the area of *autonomia* were always already international and intersubjective in character even as they were also distinguished by their engagements with pre-defined subjectivities immanent to national and local politics.

In light of this complex intermeshing of scales, subjectivities, and modes of knowledge production, it is quite difficult to divine a narrative structure within which each of these three broad geographic demarcations––international, national, and local––is sensitively considered; dividing them would be arbitrary and artificial while insisting on their commensurability would be facile. Still, the translation of the prodigious textual production arising from *operaismo* tends to reify an economy of citations in which the actually existing ecologies of autonomous praxis continue to be segmented according to conventional spatial categories. Such a dilemma animates Alberto Toscano's insistence that:

> [I]t is imperative to begin formulating a truly political topology, one that binds together the subjective forms of political action and the shifting configurations of space. What is required is a thinking of the antagonistic, or, at the very least, agonistic production of space, not just an account of the heterotopias of resistance or the creative destruction of space that accompanies capitalist accumulation.[18]

To that end, I argue that, as a whole, historical autonomous movements challenged what might be counted as politics by questioning traditional authorities, by re-locating political inquiry and struggle in spaces traditionally neglected by official organs of politics, and by

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[17] See, for example, Georgakas, "Italy: New Tactics & Organization." The whole issue of *Radical America* is illuminating in this regard.
[18] Alberto Toscano, "Factory, Territory, Metropolis, Empire," *Angelaki* 9, no. 2 (August 2004): 198, https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725042000272834.

inventing and elaborating new spaces and praxes that reworked orthodox Marxist understandings of revolution such that they could become relevant to the everyday lives of those who were, in a way or another, involved in the movement and the sites that the movement sought to (re)politicize.

With this in mind, and to the extent that there could be anything like a commonsense definition of *autonomia* itself in English, it would, at a minimum refer to the struggle for subjective self-determination and for self-management of an ever-proliferating constellation of political sites and spaces. As Katsiaficas explains it, "autonomy refers mainly to collective relationships, not individual ones," such that a social movement based definition of autonomy insists not only on "the independence of social movements from political parties and trade unions," but also on distinguishing these movements from nationalist/regional movements for autonomy.[19] This definition distinguishes between individual autonomy––the ostensible rights of an already constituted citizen-subject––and collective autonomy, which itself involves the active struggle for the creation of new forms/revindication of old forms of subjectivity and politicized spaces that exceed liberal categories, institutionally controlled processes, and narrow definitions of revolutionary politics, alike. The contours of such a definition help to explain why, for example, Katsiaficas points to the resonances between historical European autonomous movements and contemporary movements––such as the Zapatistas and its Italian counterpart, the Ya Basta Association, which influenced the tactical organization of the Tute Bianche and the *disobbedienti* and inspired the social center movement––noting that "they all call for 'Power to the People' and decentralization of decision-making concentrated in nation-states."[20] Crucially, contemporary understandings of

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[19] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 6–7.
[20] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 7. For more on the connections among these formations, see Claudio Albertani, "Paint It Black: Black Blocs, Tute Bianche and Zapatistas in the Anti-Globalization Movement," trans.

autonomy derived from the long-1968 would be incomprehensible today without a feminist analysis "because of feminists' innovative internal procedures as well as their capacity to act separately from men in accordance with their own autonomously defined needs and aspirations."[21]

In this sense, historical autonomous movements rebuffed the immediate post-War tendency of the Italian Communist Party (PCI)––whose long-standing electoral dominance in Bologna is part of why the city is often referred to as "Red Bologna"––to focus on crafting policy that "gave priority to the immediate problem of promoting productive recovery, rather than to the more basic questions of planning and worker participation."[22] By the early 1960s, the PCI was revising its economic policy to respond to the growing power of organized labor––most notably the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), which was the union closest to the PCI––vis-à-vis the party. In so doing, the PCI worked toward consensus and "recognized the value of labor autonomy in the wage struggle" while also confronting "the implications of this new labor autonomy for [their] traditional hegemony in the trade union movement."[23] Nevertheless, the PCI's minority status in national government presented significant issues for the implementation of reforms aimed at so-called *pianificazione democratica*––democratic economic planning––which were constantly threatened by the governing hegemony and veto power of the coalition led by Democrazia Cristiana (DC), a

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Rosanna M. Giammanco Frongia, *New Political Science* 24, no. 4 (2002): 579–95, https://doi:10.1080/073931402200002540. For another anarchist perspective on the connections among the movements and their implications for prefigurative politics, see David Graeber, "The New Anarchists," *New Left Review* 13 (January/February 2002): 61–73. For a specific account of the Zapatista approach to autonomy as a practice of decolonization, see Alvaro Reyes and Mara Kaufman, "Sovereignty, Indigeneity, Territory: Zapatista Autonomy & the New Practices of Decolonization," in *The Anomie of the Earth: Philosophy, Politics, and Autonomy in Europe and the Americas*, ed. Federico Luisetti, John Pickles, and Wilson Kaiser, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 44–68.

[21] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 7.

[22] Alberto Martinelli, "The Economic Policy of the Italian Communist Party," *Challenge* 19, no. 4 (1976): 36; See also Jäggi, Müller, and Schmid, *Red Bologna*.

[23] Martinelli, "The Economic Policy of the Italian Communist Party," 38.

dynamic that I discuss further below when I address the historic compromise that forged a

pact between the PCI and the DC.

The PCI's evolution was hampered by "the weakness of the Socialist Party as a

representative of the working-class, and because of elements of rigidity still present in the

PCI's policy."[24] By the late 1960s, the widening "gap between the high degree of militancy and

consciousness of workers and students and the government's immobility" resulted in

significant upheavals by organized labor and autonomous social movements alike, which are

emblematized by the beginning of the long-1968 during the so-called Hot Autumn of 1969–70,

which entailed significant student-worker-led mobilizations––including strikes, perhaps most

notably at Fiat in 1969, occupations of university buildings, and public demonstrations––

demanding social reforms, wage increases, and collective control of production.[25] While the

motivations for the widespread actions of the Hot Autumn varied across time and place, it is

significant to note that the massive waves of migration from the largely agrarian and poor

south (*mezzogiorno*) played an undeniably central role in setting the tone for the long-1968. As

Rachel Kushner describes in her introduction to a recently translated edition of *Vogliamo Tutto*

(*We Want Everything*)––Nanni Balestrini's astounding quasi-fictional account of the Hot

Autumn––this era witnessed the emergence of extra-parliamentary autonomous groups like

Potere Operaio, of which Balestrini had been a founding member. Kushner explains that the

> focus [of Potere Operaio] was on factories and factory workers, on listening to
> workers and producing a movement of their voices and direct experience. [...]
> This method of workers' inquiry––called *inchiesta* by its practitioners in Italy––
> has foundations in Marxism [...] Worker subjectivity, it became apparent, was
> shifting from building a labor movement to a resistance against the disciplines
> of work. The concept of collective the stories of workers themselves, the idea
> that their accounts of work and of their live would be essential to any
> revolutionary process, goes all the way back to Marx's 1880 worker's
> questionnaire, which was meant to be disseminated among French factory

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[24] Martinelli, "The Economic Policy of the Italian Communist Party," 39.
[25] Martinelli, "The Economic Policy of the Italian Communist Party," 39.

workers. [...] Simply put, there is no theory without struggle. Struggle is the conditions [sic] of possibility for theory. And struggle is produced by the workers themselves.[26]

As I will describe further in Chapter 4, where I detail Laboratorio Smaschiermaneti's mutational recomposition of the autonomous praxis of *inchiesta operaia* as *auto-inchiesta* and describe its use of questionnaires, autonomous political praxis exceeds and challenges that of both representative political organizations, like parties, and collective institutions, like unions. Beyond the emergence of *inchiesta operaia* in the Hot Autumn, such praxes also influenced nascent demands for self-determination, direct control of institutions, and self-organization by students, women, gays and lesbians, and so on, all of which proved indispensable to the cultivation of an ever-widening area of autonomous political praxis through to the end of the 1970s.

In keeping with the historical emergence of extra-parliamentary autonomous politics and praxis in the late 1960s, there are several possibilities for how to situate Atlantide with respect to the spatial imaginaries, dynamics, and praxes of the long-1968. Because I am trying to articulate a contextual account of Atlantide's distinctiveness as the basis for a queer urban ecology of autonomous spatial praxis, my limited reconstruction of the long-1968 takes a cue from Toscano, who, addressing the implications of the "spatial turn" in social sciences for conceptualizations of autonomy, describes as "a deficit of praxis, of that exquisitely materialist concern with the effects of collective political action, subjectivity and organization on the composition of the social and the functions of its command."[27] For his part, Toscano approaches this deficit by

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[26] Rachel Kushner, introduction to *We Want Everything*, by Nanni Balestrini, trans. Matt Holden (London: Verso, 2016), xvii.

[27] Toscano, "Factory, Territory, Metropolis, Empire," 197. The consequences of such a deficit for urban theory, specifically, are spelled out in detail in Sue Ruddick et al., "Planetary Urbanization: An Urban Theory for Our Time?," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 3 (2018): 374–386, doi:10.1177/0263775817721489.

briefly interrogat[ing], both theoretically and historically, a very definite political sequence [...] emerging in conjunction with the factory struggles of the 1960s [...] reaching its point of organizational crisis in the late 1970s, and spreading its theoretical influence to the present day in a number of antagonistic movements (*Tute Bianche, Disobbedienti*) and, most prominently, in the theoretical production of one of its originators, the philosopher Antonio Negri.[28]

In keeping with his focus on Negri, Toscano avoids any explicit engagement with either historical or contemporary feminism or gay/transfeminist/queer liberation, which I address later in this chapter. Here I simply want to note that, while it is untenable to assume that the work of a single theorist can stand in for the unprecedented variation of political praxes and subjectivities emanating from the long-1968, such an assumption is not an inaccurate representation of the reverberations of the long-1968 in successive waves of autonomous organizing and political translation of autonomy in anglophone contexts, both those of the movement and those of institutionalized knowledge.

A concrete example from my fieldwork illustrates my point in the contemporary context: As a member of a Bolognese transfeministqueer collective, when I participated in a meeting of other transfeministqueer collectives from around Italy, the contributions of comrades from Padova, the city where Negri had the greatest influence, tended to reflect his distinctive way of formulating the contemporary dilemmas faced by autonomous praxis, notwithstanding the fact that Negri's work has little to say about gender and sexuality and is not based on a relationship with movements where such perspectives are central. Interpretations of Negri's (post)*operaismo* nonetheless highlight important issues for understanding both the significance of how Atlantide took shape as a social space and for situating the specific contributions of transfeministqueer autonomy eventually enabled by

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[28] Toscano, "Factory, Territory, Metropolis, Empire," 198.

that space in the wider terrain of autonomous praxis, including the very *need* and *desire* to

develop a transfeministqueer approach to autonomous praxis itself.

On the one hand, Toscano highlights the extent to which theorists who contributed to

the articulation of *operaismo* "tried to anticipate material transformations and spur political

strategies."[29] As I will describe further when I return to the founding fliers of Atlantide, I read

a similar tendency into the framing of Atlantide as a new kind of political space with respect to

contemporary autonomous praxis, one which anticipated and reflected, to a certain extent,

the recomposition of political subjectivity with regard to gender and sexuality, among other

dimensions of subjectivity, at the level of both the local and national state, which I

demonstrated in my reading of "I Hate Your Archive!" in Chapter 2. On the other hand,

Toscano poses a key question regarding the nature of the spatiality of contemporary

autonomous praxis: "[H]ow might the localization of political action, the kind of places in

which it is anchored or dimensions it traverses, affect its claims and consequences?"[30]

Toscano's fidelity to a Negrian genealogy of (post-)*operaismo* leads him to address this

question by reconstructing the eponymous spatio-political sequence of factory–territory–

metropolis–empire and its corresponding conceptualization of the (re)composition of labor

around the subjective categories of the mass worker, social worker, immaterial laborer, and

the multitude. The body of work associated with this sequence is what I have been short

handing as (post-)*operaismo*. There are numerous critiques of the Negrian derivation of

autonomy. For example, as Silvia Federici, among other feminists, has long ago (and long

since) argued, the Negrian line untenably neglects gender and social reproduction in its

account of both the emergence of and the mutations of contemporary capitalism.[31] I will not

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[29] Toscano, "Factory, Territory, Metropolis, Empire," 198.
[30] Toscano, "Factory, Territory, Metropolis, Empire," 198.
[31] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*.

reconstruct these debates here, but I point them out to move toward a more subtle political topology in which both the distinctiveness of transfeministqueer autonomy and Bolognese autonomous politics, both of which are reflected in the spatiality of Atlantide, become sensible.

While work like Federici's is deeply resonant with the elaboration of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis at the heart of this dissertation, I will arrive at this sensibility somewhat differently here, namely, by way of an approach to historicizing *autonomia* recently developed by Neil Gray.[32] Drawing on an archive of translated work emanating from the long-1968, Gray contrasts contemporary mobilizations of Henri Lefebvre's concept of the Right to the City with the Take over the City movement launched by the autonomous organization Lotta Continua in the 1970s.[33] In so doing, Gray's analysis expands upon Toscano's limited critiques of the spatial turn, which Toscano himself apprehends only through metonymic reference to David Harvey, whose work is, nevertheless, undoubtedly central in the economy of citations associated with this turn. Gray goes some distance to addressing both a specific lack of engagement on the part of geographers with Italian genealogies and practices of autonomy and a general lack of sustained engagement on the part of contemporary geographers with the political translation of autonomy as both a spatial praxis and a critique of disciplinary knowledge production, which is reflected both in the Introduction and in my reading of queer geographies in Chapter 1.[34] Further, Gray does so

[32] Neil Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City: Territorial Autogestion and the Take Over the City Movement in 1970s Italy," *Antipode* 50, no. 2 (2018): 319–39, https://doi:10.1111/anti.12360; Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, ed. Patricia White, (Oakland: PM Press, 2012); Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World*.

[33] For more on Gray's research practice and engagement with autonomy, see Neil Gray and Hamish Kallin, ""Much More Than You Think: the Spatialities of Italian Autonomy" – Interview with Neil Gray, Author of "Beyond the Right to the City: Territorial Autogestion and the Take Over the City Movement in 1970s Italy","" *Antipodefoundation.org*, July 27, 2018, https://antipodefoundation.org/2018/07/27/author-interview-neil-gray/.

[34] See Chapter 1, note 132.

without overlooking feminist contributions to the historical development of autonomy insofar as he situates the shift from *operaismo* to more variegated expressions of autonomy as having been prompted, in no small part, by the work of autonomous feminists. Overall, Gray opens a novel line of inquiry into the enduring consequences of the long-1968 that proves useful for my own effort both to situate Atlantide within the historical evolution of autonomous praxis and to elaborate a queer urban ecology of the same. At the same time, I note that Gray's analysis has little to say about gay liberation, an issue that I will address later in this chapter.

In his review of *autonomia*, Gray develops a notion of spatial composition, which he describes as "a study of the relation between the technical and political composition of capital, focusing on the tendential shift from industrialization to urbanization that Lefebvre" postulated in his 1969 text *The Urban Revolution*.[35] According to Gray, the concept of spatial composition

> allows us to perceive how central autonomous categories and practices from the 1960s (the inversion of class perspectives, the refusal of work, the social factory, class composition) were re-theorized in the 1970s to generate new grounds and new subjects of struggle.[36]

In the wake of massive industrialization in the North of Italy and accompanying migration of Southern peasants to work in Northern factories following WWII, a period that is often referred to as the "economic miracle," Gray describes a reconfiguration of state strategies arising between 1973–1974 on account of "industrial decomposition and economic crisis," both of which I alluded to above.[37] This period witnessed a shift from economies driven primarily by manufacturing and industry to those centered on land and property speculation, a change that is in keeping with similar economic transformations in other industrialized countries in

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[35] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 325; Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*.
[36] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 325.
[37] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 326."

the mid-1970s. Politically, Italy's experience differed substantially from other industrial nations in that this period also witnessed an alliance between the right-wing DC and the PCI, the latter of which was the largest Communist party in the so-called West at the time. This perverse alliance involved a massive austerity agenda aimed at downloading the costs of the economic crisis onto working-class people and communities. So, as Gray observes, invoking the work of autonomous thinker Sergio Bologna, both the economic and political recomposition led to an attendant spatial recomposition, which, in turn, "led groups to organize around 'a reconquest of the city centers,' reacting to unplanned and uncontrolled city planning as an immanent, dialectical terrain of struggle and generating new waves of 'territorial community activism.'"[38] The shift away from the factory as a primary locus of struggle was accompanied by a surge in organizing underwritten by longstanding feminist emphasis on social reproduction, unwaged, and household labor. As Gray goes on to observe, "by stressing the paradigm of social reproduction as an immanent material concern for everyone (though clearly in distinctively gendered forms), political praxis in this area in 1970s Italy offers vast potential for re-examination today."[39] Gray goes on to revisit some of the key dimensions of the spatio-political praxis of "Take over the City," including:

> rent strikes, squatting, occupations, and 'autoreduction' (or self-reduction), which had developed in the factories as a means to collectively reduce the hours of work and the rate of productivity, and were later applied to reduce, through direct action struggle, prices in housing, transport, public services, utilities and cultural consumption.[40]

By way of conclusion, Gray suggests "that the largely unheralded [Take over the City] movements in 1970s Italy hold potentially vital lessons for contemporary urban politics."[41]

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[38] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 327; Bologna, "The Tribe of Moles," 43.
[39] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 328.
[40] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 330.
[41] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 336.

Among these lessons are not only the need to broaden the subjective relevance of struggles over relations and spaces of social reproduction, but also to move "beyond the dichotomies of a phenomenology of resistance and the deficit of praxis associated with 'capital-centric' studies."[42] This is, by Gray's own account, a direct answer to Toscano's diagnosis regarding the issues associated with the spatial turn and a fulfillment of the more deeply radical call that he reads as inherent in Lefebvre's formulation of so-called "territorial autogestion," or territorial self-management. Gray's proposal of the notion of spatial recomposition takes an important step toward recognizing the key contributions to spatial praxis of an area of the broad and heterogenous autonomous movement that is all too often "off the map" of both anglophone and Italian historicizations and memorializations of the long-1968 and of its culmination in the Movement of 1977.

Autonomous Feminism in/from Bologna

While Gray's scholarship constitutes an important opening for understanding the spatial dynamics of autonomous social movements during the long-1968, not least by way of indicating some of the limitations and failures of *operaismo*, it nonetheless does little to address the internal differences that characterized the territorial strategies of the movement in different cities and regions––including those that differentiated so-called "organized" autonomy from "creative" autonomy, a distinction I discuss further below––and has nothing to say about gay liberation. In flagging these issues, I am, of course, most interested in locating emplaced articulations of autonomy in Bologna, which should not be understood as suggesting that Bologna was not itself internally differentiated. Here, I pick up on Busarello's

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[42] Gray, "Beyond the Right to the City," 336.

use of the metaphor of the "archipelago" to refer to the profusion of autonomous spaces, tendencies, and collective subjectivities that characterize both historical and contemporary autonomy. Given my historical emphasis in this chapter, I note that the spatial metaphor of the archipelago also highlights the enduringly relational dimensions of autonomous praxis, the contemporary expression of which is more central to my discussion of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's emergence in the next chapter.[43] Lastly, in light of the overview of autonomous Marxism that I presented in the Introduction by way of emphasizing its fundamentally international character and purview, my analysis here is oriented toward highlighting the "submerged perspectives" that arise from a specific focus on Bologna.[44]

As the life historical interviews to which I referred to at the beginning of this chapter confirm, there was indeed a distinctiveness to Bolognese derivations and expressions of autonomy that remains palpable through to the present day. Historical feminist Sandra Schiassi (fig. 11), the first person whom I interviewed for this project, described this difference when asked about her experiences of meetings in which Bolognese feminist groups encountered those from other cities:

> Yes, every now and then there were big meetings [*convegni*]. I enjoyed them immensely [*E a me piaceva un casino*]. Because, you know, the groups changed name a bunch. [It was] chaos. One group that I was in was called––and it was a name I had given the group––obviously, it was called: Long Live the Pussy. [Q:

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[43] My understanding of relationality is informed by reading Édouard Glissant alongside the notion of political translation that I discussed in Chapter 1. Glissant writes: "Going beyond the impositions of economic forces and cultural pressures, Relation rightfully opposes the totalitarianism of any monolingual intent." In contrast to exile, Glissant offers the notion of errantry, of which he writes: "The thought of errantry is not apolitical nor is it inconsistent with the will to identity, which is, after all, nothing other than the search for freedom within particular surroundings. If it is at variance with territorial intolerance, or the predatory effects of the unique root (which makes processes of identification so difficult today), this is because, in the poetics of Relation, one who is errant (who is no longer traveler, discoverer, or conqueror) strives to know the totality of the world yet already knows he will never accomplish this––and knows that is precisely where the threatened beauty of the world resides." Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 19–20. For reflections on the relevance of the notions of "exodus" and "exile" for autonomous Marxism, see Nate Holdren and Paolo Virno, "General Intellect, Exodus, Multitude: Interview with Paolo Virno for *Archipélago* Number 54," trans. Nate Holdren, *Generation Online*, (Rome, June 2002), http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpvirno2.htm.

[44] Gómez-Barris, *Extractive Zones*. See also Zamponi, "Contentious Memories of the Student Movement."

This was a consciousness raising group (*auto-coscienza*)?] No, it was a 'little bit of everything' group. It was a group [concerned with] abortion, with consciousness raising [...] In any case, I enjoyed it immensely because, in Milan, the women were a little...they were a little...Calvinist. And when I said, "I'm Sandra Schiassi of Long Live the Pussy from Bologna!" Oh, it made me laugh to see their faces.[45]

Though some scholars might be tempted to dismiss Schiassi's reflection as a "mere anecdote," her memory suggests a very significant distinction between and among the *autonomies*, to use

Figure 11. Sandra Schiassi at home, Bologna, Italy, April 28, 2015 (Photo by Daniele Pezzi, used with permission)

Tari's term, that was not just about subjectivity, but also about geography. It is perhaps not coincidental that much of the academic literature on autonomous movements *as movements* tends to focus on Milan or Rome, the largest cities in Italy and the economic and national capitals, respectively.[46]

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[45] Sandra Schiassi, interview with author and Babs Mazzotti, April 28, 2015. The term "historical feminist" (*femminista storica*) has a deeper sense than its literal translation would suggest. In general, I heard the term used to refer to people who had been active in the movement since the long-1968 and, indeed, sometimes earlier than that. That these feminists are considered "historical" among younger generations of the movement is not a signal of their backwardness or irrelevance, but, quite the opposite. I always encountered the term in a much more complex register, one that was capable of holding both the dimensions of their experience that had been superseded in subsequent waves of feminist organizing and those that had been inherited by subsequent waves as ongoing and recurring dilemmas, which is to say, as real problems.

[46] Regarding the tendency to equate "Italian feminism" with "sexual difference feminism" see, as an example, Graziella Parati and Rebecca West, eds., *Italian Feminist Theory and Practice: Equality and Sexual Difference*, (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2002). At the same time, there is other work which at least attempts,

A similar tendency applies to the so-called sexual difference feminism coming from Milan, which, like Negri's version of (post-)*operaismo*, has become something of a hegemonic metonym for "Italian feminism" in anglophone academic translations.[47] This was even something that Sandro Mezzadra, who is by no means a feminist thinker or activist, mentioned in our interview when I asked him about his encounters with feminism as a young activist in the 1970s and 80s: "the so-called *pensiero della differenza* [sexual difference feminism] became, quite quickly, a kind of orthodoxy."[48] Addressing this issue, Schiassi explained that, in her estimation, the dominance of psychoanalytically inflected sexual difference feminism in the textual and political productions of the movement during and after the long-1968 was because noted Milanese feminist Luisa Muraro "did a great job marketing it."[49] Schiassi went on to recount that she rarely recalls seeing Muraro present in the moments and spaces when the movement was most active:

> One could say, 'You don't remember anything because you were a bit stoned [*rincoglionita*].' And that is true. But, I remember Lea Melandri very well and we are still friends, while, in my opinion, Muraro was in hiding. But, this is my hypothesis: She was studying. I don't remember her.[50]

Beyond their numerous books and publications, both Muraro and Melandri were also among the founders of the Libreria delle donne di Milano, the Milan Women's Bookstore. As Andrea Hajek has deftly described, the "mixed" Milanese scene of the 1960s was indeed central to the formation both of new kinds of social spaces, such as the Circoli del Proletariato Giovanile,

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albeit with a somewhat liberal political imagination, to differentiate feminism as it was practiced in cities often overlooked by anglophone authors, for example: Judith Hellman, *Journeys Among Women: Feminism in Five Italian Cities*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987). Lastly, my references to sociological studies that focus narrowly on Milan is largely a reference to Lumley's *States of Emergency*.

[47] There is, of course, an entirely different pathway, largely represented by the work of Federici and others, which is rooted in the international Wages for Housework and Wages against Housework campaigns.

[48] Sandro Mezzadra, interview with author, August 28, 2015.

[49] Schiassi, interview, April 28, 2015. See, for example, Luisa Muraro, *The Symbolic Order of the Mother*, ed. Timothy S Murphy, trans. Francesca Novello, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018).

[50] Schiassi, interview, April 28, 2015.

the Young Proletarian Associations, which "gave rise to the first *centri sociali* [social centers] in Italy," and of feminist spaces, including those like the Milan Women's Bookstore, which, alongside the numerous publishing houses based in Milan, helped make the city a central node in emergent translational networks.[51] Among the texts that Hajek notes as having been translated "within one or two years of the original publication" were Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, and the Boston Women's Health Book Collective's *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Such textual production and circulation certainly contributes to the present status of Milan in a global economy of citations that often renders "Italian feminism" coincident with the literatures focused on sexual difference. At the same time, as Hajek notes, exchanges were not limited to the translation of texts; Milan also became a key meeting point for international feminists, including the influential French group Psych et Po:

> The importance of a women-only space in which to share experiences was anticipated by the practice of *auto-coscienza* but revolutionized after the encounters with Psyche et Po. While these encounters led to the first attempts to represent the potential for discovering one's body and self through the development of relations among women beyond the context of small and intimate *auto-coscienza* groups, which had proved incapable of dealing with internal conflicts and contradictions; psychoanalysis and the theorization of sexual difference proved more appropriate instruments to "deal with the knot of female sexuality [*sessualità femminile*]."[52]

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[51] Andrea Hajek, "A Room of One's Own. Feminist Intersections Between Space, Women's Writing and Radical Bookselling in Milan (1968–1986)," *Italian Studies* 73, no. 1 (2018): 84, https://doi:10.1080/00751634.2018.1414376.
[52] Hajek, "A Room of One's Own," 88. Quoted material from Fiamma Lussana, *Il movimento femminista in Italia. Esperienze, storie, memorie* (Rome: Carocci, 2012): 75. As I discuss further in the Chapter 3, the practice of *auto-coscienza* and its guiding principle of *partire da sè* (beginning with the [collective] self) is an important precedent for Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's intellectual praxis, albeit in a "less intimate/inward" way and with an "analysis [that] tends to be less focused on the psychological aspects of each individual and/or of the relationships within the group." At the same time, the historical memory of internal conflicts and ostensibly "inward" focus of *autocoscienza* led the collective to align itself more with the praxis of *auto-inchiesta,* which has a genealogy more firmly rooted in *operaismo* and the tradition of *co-ricerca* or co-research. See Acquistapace et al., "Nervous Breakdown," 64.

Hajek concludes that the influence of the Psych et Po encounters in Milan coincided with a shift in the spatiality of the feminist movement in Milan from meeting in private homes to meeting in "rented space," a shift that was able to "accommodate the various groups within the growing feminist movement and which offered more autonomy and liberty."[53] For Hajek, as for her interlocutors, such a shift enabled a move away from the ostensible focus of *autocoscenza* groups on mutual recognition toward the construction of more publicly oriented relational spaces driven by the activities of writing and publishing.[54]

These activities proliferated not only in the everyday work done in spaces like the Milan Women's Bookstore, but also in the establishment of the so-called 150 hours program, a victory won by trade unionists to allow for 150 hours of paid employment time to be dedicated to educational activities self-organized by workers. Feminists eventually created a separatist version of the 150 hours course that, among other things, played a significant part in dissolving the limited domestic roles to which many women had been confined. Hajek concludes that

> the 150[hour] monographic courses led by Melandri [...] best reflect the search for a room of one's own that Virginia Woolf had envisaged; a relational and autonomous space outside of the private and domestic setting of the participants' daily lives where, through the act of writing and sharing their writing, women could discover an authentic sense of self.[55]

In this rendering, the "room" becomes a metonym for new forms of space and spatial praxis wherein the "city," by extension, should be understood as a kind of "home" for autonomous praxis of whatever kind. While, in Milan, sexual difference feminism quickly became a dominant focus, Schiassi recalls a different tenor to her experiences in Rome, which, alongside Bologna, was a significant site for the emergence of the Movement of 1977.[56] Schiassi

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[53] Hajek, "A Room of One's Own," 89.
[54] Hajek, "A Room of One's Own," 89.
[55] Hajek, "A Room of One's Own," 95.
[56] Red Notes Collective, *Italy 1977–8*.

described her exchanges with women in the Roman movement, focusing in particular on a

conference on "self-help," a term she used in English, in the "winter or late-spring of 1975":

> There we did something beautiful: We finally looked at our pussies [*figa*]
> ourselves! The gynecologist has always seen you; your partner has always seen
> you; but, you had never seen it well yourself; and then, with the mirror, the
> speculum, the flashlight, et cetera. So, in short, I remember that I returned to
> Bologna and I was enthusiastic. I went to Piazza Maggiore [the main public
> square], obviously, and said: "We're going to do this at somebody's house; buy a
> speculum and come!" There was a line out the door. Little by little we entered
> and we did it and then it became a very common practice here. I think it was
> even more separatist than *auto-coscienza*, because, in the end, with *auto-
> coscienza*, men were actually there, but they were there virtually because we
> would talk about fathers, brothers, and so on. Instead, in this story here, with
> this self-help, we seemed like a group of witches. Men had absolutely nothing
> to do with it.

Schiassi's reflection speaks to the material and embodied effects of an autonomous praxis that

well exceeds textual production. Such feminist separatist practices were not undertaken

instead of *auto-coscienza*, but in addition to it and alongside many other practices; I discuss the

operative contemporary distinctions and overlaps between *auto-coscienza* and other praxes,

specifically *auto-inchiesta*, in the next chapter. Among the practices at play historically,

Schiassi also described her engagement with Bolognese groups concentrated on wages for

housework (which tends to travel under Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Selma James, and Federici's

names) and with a wide variety of texts that also circulated in other cities.[57] Further, Schiassi

highlighted the role of public space in her description of this otherwise apparently intimate

experience. When I asked about the role that Piazza Maggiore––the main public square of

Bologna––played in the movement of those years, she described it this way:

> There was a situation, a basic situation [*una situazione di base*] that was very rich,
> very particular, very fluid. Our social network was Piazza Maggiore. And so,
> when you wanted to say something, you didn't put it on the internet, you went
> to the main square, you told two people and then, zoom, everybody knew. We

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[57] Dalla Costa and James, *The Power of* Women; Silvia Federici, *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women*, (Oakland: PM
Press, 2018); Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero*. See also Christina Rousseau, "The Dividing Power of the Wage:
Housework as Social Subversion," *Atlantis* 37, no. 2 (2016): 238–52.

went to the main square, we danced, we sang songs. Many played the guitar, the drums. We danced, we danced in circles without knowing that dancing in circles was a very feminine dance with a long and rich history.[58]

Schiassi went on to describe transnational exchanges, including a trip to Marseille to learn with the French group Mouvement Libération Avortement e Contraception (MLAC). Less than six months after this encounter, there was a group of women in Bologna performing medically safe abortions:

I am very proud of this. We did them so well that there was even a gynecologist who sent his wife to us to have an abortion because, he said, we were the safest of all. We were very proud. We never made a mess.[59]

Schiassi's recounting of such exchanges not only emphasizes the embodied, material, and DIY attitude that characterized Bolognese autonomous feminism during the long-1968, it also shows the archipelagic interconnectedness of multiple levels of the movement, including in other cities and transnationally, embodying what I am describing when I invoke the terms ecologies of praxis and queer urban ecologies.[60]

I have shared just a few of the many details that Schiassi offered over the course of our interview to illustrate the impossibility of reducing autonomous feminism either to singular line of praxis or inquiry (i.e. of "departmentalizing" it) or to a mere specification of (masculinist) autonomous Marxism. At the same time, and in combination with other memories that Schiassi shared over the course of the interview––such as the fact that her

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[58] Schiassi, interview, April 28, 2015.
[59] Schiassi, interview, April 28, 2015.
[60] Prior to the start of our interview, Schiassi playfully demanded that I ask her why she was wearing the sweatshirt that she was wearing, which was emblazoned with artwork from the autonomous feminist resistance in Rojava (Kurdistan). Once the recorder was switched on, I did just that. She responded: "This shirt is a shirt that we [Schiassi's feminist collective] wear in solidarity; we made then, we sold them, we wear them. [...] In Rojava [...] a true [*vera e propria*] revolution is taking place. The women have an army all their own, which has a role of the police in moments of peace, which we hope will come. Further, they have a really wonderful thing in my opinion, and that is that every time a crime is committed against women, from femicide to stalking, they come. [...] I am now very much in love with these women. [...] I am now getting to know them [...] because they [...] are in charge of world feminism. [...] We try to do as they do: liberate Italy and liberate the world in order to govern it differently. [...] In fact, the most comical slogan has been: *Liberté, Egalité, Kurdité*!" Schiassi, interview, April 28, 2015.

dining room table was where the initial idea for Bologna's famous pirate radio station, Radio Alice, was hatched––it is accurate to say that, while distinctively part of a larger archipelago of autonomy, Bologna's place in the long-1968 is indelibly marked by a certain raucous spirit of irreverent creativity and alternative modes of production.[61] As Schiassi put it, "We [in Bologna] were much less [...] how can you say? Less prudish, less conservative from the point of view of sexuality."[62] Such a lack of prudishness also extended well beyond sexuality. By the time that the long-1968 culminated in the Movement of 1977, Bologna had become a central site of both "creative" autonomy and of repression on the part of official parties, including the PCI, from whose perspective the situation was quickly getting out of hand.[63] Beyond its particularities with regard to autonomous feminism, Bologna's status as less conservative that other places cannot be fully appreciated without further specifying the meaning and origins of "creative" autonomy.

Creative Autonomy and its Decolonial and Ecological Resonances

Schiassi's characterization of Bologna resonates with Katsiaficas's historicization of the *autonomia*'s surpassing of narrow formulations of class-as-proletariat. He writes:

> There has been a failure to note the significant contributions of students, women, and artists––constituencies not traditionally perceived of as "proletarian." When compared to the women's liberation movement and the Metropolitan Indians (MI–a countercultural youth group), even the most far-

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[61] Collective A/Traverso, "Radio Alice––Free Radio," in *Italy: Autonomia Post-Political Politics*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, trans. Richard Gardner and Sybil Walker, (New York City: Semiotext[e], 1980), 130–35; *Lavorare Con Lentezza*, directed by Guida Chiesa, written by Wu Ming and Guido Chiesa (Milan: Medusa, 2005), DVD.

[62] Schiassi, interview, April 25, 2015.

[63] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 55–65.

seeing of factory-based parties appears today as mired in outmoded ideologies and actions.[64]

Katsiaficas goes on to highlight the extent to which the Metropolitan Indians (MI), a group prominent in Bologna and Rome––the two cities where Schiassi had the most transformative political experiences––were instrumental in defining the character of "a new generation of activists" who, by 1977, "synthesized culture and politics in a liberatory movement that was a product of both working-class origins and youth culture."[65] The MI were well known for dressing like the racist and colonial stereotyped images of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas that they had consumed as part of a massive campaign of U.S. cultural imperialism in the Post-WWII period organized, in part, as a counterweight to Soviet cultural influence in Italy. Coincident with the period of the so-called economic miracle of rapid industrialization and the mass migration of marginalized and quasi-racialized people from the *mezzogiorno* in search of work in Northern factories, the deluge of Americanized culture unleashed on Italy during this period involved a wide diffusion of so-called spaghetti westerns. In a very naïve way, countercultural youth hailing from the *mezzogiorno* and the provincial areas of the country and living in the margins of large cities identified with the resistant image of the "Indian" presented in these films.[66]

Despite bearing an untenable name, the MI are an important point of reference for understanding and situating autonomous praxis in Bologna in that they not only fomented arguably necessary discord between the more hierarchical approaches to "organized" autonomy and more "creative" approaches, they also––albeit extremely naïvely––presaged

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[64] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 44.
[65] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 52–53.
[66] For more on the cultural tug-of-war between U.S. and the USSR during this period, see Stephen Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow: the Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943–1991*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

important connections between autonomies in Europe and autonomies rooted in distinct geographic and historical contexts, including settler colonial and colonial contexts. As Mezzadra described these connections when I asked about them during the course of our life historical interview:

> I know that there are attempts to retrospectively read these references [to Indigeneity] from a postcolonial or decolonial point of view. I'm thinking Federico Luisetti, for instance. I think that such attempts can be intellectually interesting and challenging but, at the same time [...] it was quite different. [...] And, as you were saying, the important reference was American counter-culture and this is what distinguishes the autonomous movement, writ large, from other currents, hegemonic currents of the Italian––and not only Italian–– revolutionary left [...] [T]he Italian autonomous movement was characterized by a kind of uncanny [inaudible] Americanism, in a way. Meaning that the history of class struggle in the U.S., American counter-culture, the history of First Nations in North America [was] a crucial point of reference.
>
> And, so, *Indiani Metropolitani* were some kind of western movie [...] It was a kind of myth. And it was not very much reflected upon. *Autonomia Indigina* [a derivative group of the MI], in the case of Savona [where Mezzadra became involved in *autonomia* as a teenager], was an attempt that can, again, be read in interesting ways retrospectively to vindicate, [to] claim, and to turn around our provincial location. *Indigina* was a reference to the province, you know, we are not the metropolis. [...] At the time, there was no awareness of the several questions that are raised today by postcolonial [and] decolonial [scholarship]. For sure, this kind of sensitivity helped us to question, to radically challenge, established images of the revolutionary subject [on] the left.[67]

With this in mind, and in light of the influence of the MI in Bologna, I note the relationship between autonomous praxis and decolonial approaches that broadly characterize autonomous movements in the Americas. Recalling my discussion of the profusion of Black Feminist and decolonial methodologies, epistemologies, and politics in my reviews of feminist political ecologies and queer ecologies in Chapter 1, I follow Walter Mignolo by arguing that transfeministqueer autonomy works to undo persistent forms of Eurocentric, dualistic, and institutionalized thinking and action. Working from an etymology of the word "autonomy"––

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[67] Mezzadra, interview, August 28, 2015.

decomposed to the prefix "auto," which, in this context refers to a *collective* subject, and the

noun "nomos," which refers to "the law; the principles governing human conduct, especially

as defined by culture or custom"––and a critical reading of Carl Schmitt, Mignolo argues that

"at the moment of what Europeans call 'the discovery of America" and more recently Latin

American philosophers of history rebaptized 'the invention of America,' everyone on planet

Earth was living under what Schmitt described as the first nomos."[68] But, "the 'discovery' that

inaugurated the second nomos inaugurated at the same time the legal and symbolic European

appropriation of the planet," thereby creating the second nomos.[69] Such an understanding

informs what Mignolo describes as the "de-noming" of the earth:

> De-noming is the general project of Indigenous political organizations. [...]
> Indigenous projects go to the root of the second nomos of the earth:
> territoriality is a living space where life is regenerated (and not of course,
> reproduced, which is the concept that defines the economy of accumulation). In
> order to regenerate, the basic philosophical principle of any of the many first
> nomoi of the earth (that is, the nomos before the second established regulations
> for appropriation, expropriation, and exploitation) was based on life
> regeneration.
>   De-noming names the processes of erasing the regulation of the second
> nomos. The task is long and difficult; difficult because the second nomos can
> neither be avoided nor erased. It has to be overcome. And overcoming needs
> knowledge and arguments. But not knowledge that unfolds from the very
> institutions that were created by actors and institutions that established and
> maintained the second nomos. Although such knowledge and arguments are
> important and help in understanding the deadly consequences of the second
> nomos, the deadly consequences cannot be overcome by means of the same
> principles that established them, even if such projects are defended by well-
> meant actors.[70]

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[68] Walter Mignolo, "Anomie, Resurgences, and De-Noming," in *The Anomie of the Earth: Philosophy, Politics, and Autonomy in Europe and the Americas*, ed. Federico Luisetti, John Pickles, and Wilson Kaiser, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), vii-xiii.; OED Online, "Nomos, n.," *Oxford University Press*, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/127770. See also: Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--an Argument," *CR: the New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337, https://doi:10.1353/ncr.2004.0015 and Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations," in *Sylvia Wynter: on Being Human as Praxis*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 9–90;

[69] Mignolo, "Anomie, Resurgences, and De-Noming," ix.

[70] Mignolo, "Anomie, Resurgences, and De-Noming," xiii.

In Mignolo's de-noming project of upending Schmitt's placement of the first nomos as *prior* to

the second, he rightfully centers Indigenous political resurgences in the Americas, which are

clearly not the focus of this dissertation. To draw out this connection is definitively not to

present European autonomous movements as metaphorically equivalent to Indigenous

resurgences.[71] Instead, I follow Mignolo's sense of de-noming in order to situate Atlantide

among contemporary social movements that, as Georgy Katsiaficas's describes, constitute

autonomy's broad politics of the decolonization of everyday life.[72] Like any politics that insists

on self-determination and self-organization, *autonomia* refuses the legitimacy of the state, the

market, and dominant institutions as the proper arbiters of the social and material conditions

of everyday life. Framing European autonomous movements as one part of a planetary project

of decoloniality situates the historical emergence of autonomous social movements as "a

noncentralized archipelago" of political organizations, tendencies, collectives, and groups

which, beginning with the long-1968, broadened "the description of labor [...] to include

categories of immaterial labor and social reproduction, abandoning the centrality of industrial

workers [...] and embracing practices of mass illegality and sabotage, in order to intensify

political antagonism and prepare an insurrectionary situation."[73] Such work set the stage for

precisely the forms of non-institutional knowledge production that Mignolo describes in his

definition of de-noming.[74]

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[71] Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization Indigeneity, Education Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.

[72] Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of*, 377.

[73] Though the citational economies of autonomous Marxism often center various "trans-European experiences," it is important to note, as Federico Luisetti, John Pickles, and Wilson Kaiser do, that such experiences "were not coordinated around a single philosophical paradigm or political project but developed independently according to historically situated conditions." Federico Luisetti, John Pickles, and Wilson Kaiser, "Autonomy: Political Theory/Political Anthropology," in *The Anomie of the Earth: Philosophy, Politics, and Autonomy in Europe and the Americas*, ed. Federico Luisetti, John Pickles, and Wilson Kaiser, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 7.

[74] Luisetti, Pickles, and Kaiser, "Autonomy," 8. In the case of Atlantide, this independent development and historical situation definitively related to the emergence of the alter-/anti-globalization movement and its networks of collaboration with decolonial projects in the Americas, as I show both in the Introduction and in this chapter.

To bring this discussion back to feminism, the discipline of geography, and Bologna, I invoke Cindi Katz's notion of "minor theory."[75] Drawn largely from a reading of Deleuze and Guattari, Katz speaks of the fraught relationship between Marxism and feminism in disciplinary geography while refusing to position "Marxism as major theory to feminism's minor."[76] Alternatively, she calls for infusing geographic scholarship with the politics of the minor in an act of "interpolation," wherein major theory is understood as "dominant in a particular historical geography, and not the reverse" and minor theory "is defined as minor in relation to a dominant major theory, but as the context change, so too can the designations of major and minor or the boundaries between then."[77] The latter specification, in particular, evokes my critiques in Chapter 1 of the divergence of queer from feminist geographies, the homolingual address of anglophone queer geography, and geographer's turn to queer of color scholarship and intersectionality. As Katz writes while describing her motivation to call for minor theory:

> Exclusion, of course, is all about power and we have heard and said a lot about who has been and continues to be excluded from the productions of knowledge and theory in the Western academy. [...] [T]alk of exclusion can lead to an unsavory hierarchy of marginalization––a kind of competitive victimology–– and even to the cul-de-sac of an essentialist identity politics. Notions of exclusion are all about, one might even say tautologically about, position, and if we are not careful they can lead to relativist accounts that offer little of practical value. And they can be disingenuous––proclamations of exclusion by scholars who are quite included.[78]

Written more than two decades ago––coincidentally in the same year that Erik Swyngedouw first formulated urban political ecology––Katz's proposal has received what she terms a "*surgence* of interest" in the last several years, not least because of the reorganization of the

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[75] Katz, "Towards Minor Theory"; Katz, "Revisiting Minor Theory."
[76] Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," 497.
[77] Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," 490.
[78] Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," 487–488.

very politics of knowledge production that were at stake in geography in the mid-1990s.[79] On

my reading, neither transfeministqueer autonomy nor urban political ecology, for that matter,

conspicuously aspire to achieving a "major" status; they are meant to be useful and to be used.

Staging a conversation between them conjures the image of a group of comrades plotting.

In light of this reading, it is significant that in both the 1996 piece and her 2017

reflection on it, Katz invokes the enduringly problematic question of "being at home" in the

academic and theoretical registers that mark the interstices of major/minor. Given my

emphasis on ecology––whose root meaning is located in the *oikos*, the home––and queer––

which I understand, in part, as a reflexive politics *and* a method of making strange, of

disrupting, confounding, and productively displacing both the "objects" and processes of

knowledge production––Katz's (re)invocation of minor theory bears repeating here:

> The draw for me in thinking about––and doing––minor theory was its intent to use major forms in an altered and decomposing way, to undo those forms, practices, and theories from within [...] To do minor theory is to make conscious use of a displacement––of not being at home or being in between homes––so that new subjectivities, spatialities, and temporalities might be marked and produced in spaces of betweenness that reveal the limits of the major as it is transformed along with the minor. Working within a minor theoretical mode is to recognize that those subjectivities, spatialities, and temporalities are embodied, situated, and fluid; their productions of knowledge inseparable from––if not completely absorbed in––the mess of everyday life.[80]

The incessant demand for "new" approaches in academia carries with it the risk of

reproducing dominant genealogies––whether expressed in geographic terms or in terms of

well-worn citational pathways––and, relatedly, the risk that "interventions" coming from a

minoritized positions will merely be seen as "additive" or "corrective" to a wider project aimed

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[79] Katz, "Revisiting Minor Theory," 597, emphasis in original.
[80] Katz, "Revisiting Minor Theory," 597. I cannot avoid noting that the term "*oikos*" is deployed by fascist identitarians, including, most recently as of this writing, the white supremacist terrorist who massacred fifty-one people at a Mosque in Christchurch on March 15, 2019, whose manifesto made use of the to underwrite violence. This, I think, also illustrates why not simply *abandoning* identity, but understanding it as something to be dealt with and overcome *en route* to a political stance of "anti-identitarianism," remains important.

at generating an ever more precise (and abstract) Marxist critique of contemporary (urban)

capitalism's reinvention.[81] That is neither my desire nor my demand. Crucially, the work of

this dissertation is reducible neither to a call for inclusion nor to a claim of simple exclusion.

Instead, it is, in the first instance, an embodiment of Katz's provocation toward "altering one's

own academic or other practices" and, in the second instance, a provocation to scholars

working in both queer/feminist geographies and urban political ecologies to turn toward

transversal engagements with autonomous praxis.[82]

In the first instance––and as both the next section and the next chapter further detail

by way of engaging with Atlantide's place in the history of gay liberation and Laboratorio

Smaschieramenti's mutational use of *auto-inchiesta*––doing the work of knowledge production

in the academy differently requires: first, a personal, embodied––and, yes, spiritual––

distinction between the work we think we are supposed to be doing and the work we are

actually called to do;[83] second, a rigorous collective inquiry into the (uneven) nature of that

work and the physical, psychic, emotional, and relational demands it places upon us; and,

third, a sustained, engaged, collective, and mutualistic refusal of the dimensions of that work

which are dehumanizing, degrading, violent, alienating, and so on, such that we may reclaim

whatever is left for our survival, thriving, and transformation.[84]

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[81] In light of Katz's reference to planetary urbanization in her re-visitation of minor theory, see: Peake et al., "Placing Planetary Urbanization."

[82] Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," 588.

[83] I was first confronted with this provocative distinction when attending a keynote lecture by M. Jacqui Alexander. M Jacqui Alexander, "Medicines for Survival: Indigenous Knowledge and the Sacred," keynote Lecture at The Contemporary Urgencies of Audre Lorde's Legacy, Toronto, March 7, 2013. The personal and political transformations that Alexander's provocation subsequently prompted in me can be found in the following publications: Darren J. Patrick, "Between the Fool and the World: Toward a (Re)Contextualization of Assemblage Theory in the Contemporary University," in *Rethinking Life at the Margins: Assemblage, Subjects and Spaces*, ed. Michele Lancione, (London: Routledge, 2016), 215–28; and, dusky purples [Darren J. Patrick], "Reading Three Ways: Ask Me How!," in *Spaces of Spirituality*, ed. Nadia Bartolini, Sara MacKian, and Steve Pile, (London: Routledge, 2018), 278–96.

[84] Beyond the influence of my comrades in Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, I would like to acknowledge the deep and abiding impact of the comradely love showered upon me by an autonomous group of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903 variously known as the Big Gay Garden (BGG) and Allied Calendulas Against

For her part, Katz draws on Spivak to provoke an alternative praxis of knowledge production, which she describes using the Deleuzo-Guattarian notion of a "'line of escape'" and further characterizes as "a rupture––a tension out of which something else might happen."[85] Both Katz's critical adaptation of Deleuze and Guattari and her critique of feminist engagements with the notion of becoming are deeply resonant with my sense of minor theory's relevance to the Bolognese autonomous context, my own scholarly and political experience leads me to a somewhat different lexicon when it comes to staging my own scholarly intervention. This is why, in the second instance. I emphasize transfeministqueer autonomy as a mode of active experimentation in re-/displacing the traditional locus for organizing collective revolutionary subjects: the factory, knowledge-based or otherwise. From the position of Atlantide and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, that displacement entails a transversal politics that leads in the direction of numerous other urban ecologies: occupied and self-managed social centers (CSOAs), clinics, nightclubs, libraries, comrade-owned bookstores and bars, pharmacies, daycare centers, other cities, digital spaces, listservs, apartment blocks, and so on.

As I described above, transfeministqueer autonomy turns the historical praxes of the movement in on themselves, using traditionally factory-centric praxes such as *auto-inchiesta* to map the blind spots and exclusions that have prevented the so-called "mixed movement"–– the equivalent of which would be masculinist formations of critical academic geography–– from incorporating and taking seriously the constitutive roles played not just by gender/sexuality, but by their affirmative and active reorganization by autonomous collective subjects. Recalling my discussion of Stengers in Chapter 2 and anticipating my return to

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Bulldozers (ACAB), whose brilliance and creativity has helped me to develop this triadic formulation in the years since my fieldwork in Bologna.

[85] Katz, "Towards Minor Theory," 489.

reading of the first fliers at the end of this chapter, this politics plays with the purity of the notion of the "laboratory" by ceaselessly seeking to contaminate politically mixed, masculine, mainstream, and institutional spaces, processes, and social relations. Contamination––whose meaning includes toxic realities, such as patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, even as it moves toward the sense of "the blending of two or more stories, plots or the like into one"–– conjures ecological conditions of disturbance and political modes of provocation, irony, and subversion, all of which lend themselves not only to doing theory in "minor registers," but also to committing to collective praxis and to radically altering the ways that we conceptualize, experience, and transform the everyday ecologies and social relations in which we are all immersed. So, while transfeministqueer autonomy cannot conspicuously be understood as an "ecological politics" in any conventional sense, it nonetheless has everything to do with both the places we "minors" would seek call home––our bodies, our relationships, our collectives, our social spaces, our movements, our worlds, this earth––and the collective practices that shape and make those places every day. For this understanding of autonomy's place in a queer ecological approach to spatial praxis, it is necessary to address how historical autonomous movements set the stage for the contemporary emergence of transfeministqueer autonomy.

Gay and Trans Liberation in/from Bologna

Precious little is written that treats gay liberation as anything more than a footnote in the long-1968. Addressing this gap in memory, I turn to Mario Mieli's iconoclastic proposition of gay communism and to the prodigious lifework and narrative of his friend, comrade, and contemporary Porpora Marcasciano who, in addition to being interviewed for this project, has written, among other texts, two landmark books describing her political *percorso* as a queer

and trans public intellectual and activist whose trip began in the long-1968 and was among the founders and is currently the President of Italy's first and oldest trans organization: Movimento Identità Transessuale (MIT).[86] In lieu of undertaking a full exegesis of Mieli's recently re-translated *Elementi di una Critica Omosessuale*––a text whose submergence and reemergence in both the Italian and anglophone contexts is perhaps as significant as its contents––I will outline its key proposition and detail the concepts most immediately relevant to Atlantide and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. Then, in an echo of the narrative of "the trip," with which I began the Introduction, I will turn to Marcasciano's work.

In his introduction to the complete translation of Mieli's *Elementi di una Critica Omosessuale*––translated as *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, but which I will call the *Elementi*––scholar Massimo Prearo writes that Mieli's "theoretical and political reflections do not just review or rephrase in homosexual terms the communist project for revolution, but call for a mutation in homosexuals themselves, or, as Mieli puts it, for 'a critical process.'"[87] Indeed, Mieli––who committed suicide on March 12, 1983––embodied this call not only by frequently "appear[ing] *en travesti*"––in drag––"as a way to strategically perform his homosexual femininity," but also by producing a theory of gay communism that was "paradoxically late and yet remarkably ahead of its time."[88] A memory and a premonition. Originally published in 1977, the *Elementi* is a scathing, funny, expansive, and ironic hybrid of genres: "essay," "political manifesto," and "experimental roadmap of sexual politics that alternates theoretical arguments and intuitions with virtually ethnographic observations about homosexual activism in the 1970s, along with experimental narratives at the crossroads

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[86] Porpora Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia: Vivere Sognando E Non Sognara Di Vivere: I Miei Anni Settanta*, 2nd Ed, (Rome: Alegre, 2014); Porpora Marcasciano, *L'aurora Delle Trans Cattive. Storie, Sguardi E Vissuti Della Mia Generazione Transgender*, (Rome: Alegre, 2018).
[87] Massimo Prearo, Introduction to *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, by Mario Mieli, trans. David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams (London: Pluto Press, 2018), xvii.
[88] Prearo, Introduction, xxviii.

of autobiography and auto-fiction."[89] In the *Elementi*, Mieli––who was a member of Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano (FUORI!), the Unitarian Revolutionary Homosexual Front, whose Italian acronym translates as "Come out!"––draws his lived experience as an autonomous activist together with readings of Marcuse, Marx, Freud, Reich, and Deleuze and Guattari––among numerous Italian thinkers and historians and French counterparts, like Guy Hocqugenhem (and his collective)––to unfold his personal, political, and theoretical thesis: *Homosexual desire is universal*.

Unlike most Anglo-American queer theorists of the 1990s, whose work is heavily influenced by Foucault's challenge to the repressive hypothesis in the *History of Sexuality*, Mieli focuses on the repression of homosexuality in his analysis. Even so, Mieli's work is not a direct challenge to Foucault––whom he does not cite––but instead provides an alternate pathway for the articulation of anti-normativity, critiques of naturalization and reprocentricity, and depathologization, all of which are central concerns of Anglo-American queer, queer ecological, and trans scholarship. With an eye toward tracking both the influence of Mieli's work on Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's praxis and my own reading of that praxis in the next chapter––and keeping in mind the relationship between the universal and the particular that I discussed in Chapter 1––I will briefly summarize three interrelated facets of this thesis: (1) Mieli's proposition of "transsexuality"; (2) his description of the process of "educastration"; and, (3) his exposition of the connections between gay liberation and other threads of revolutionary struggle.

Mieli develops the concept of "transsexuality" at the outset of the *Elementi*. Crucially, as Tim Dean notes in his Foreword to the (re-)translation, Mieli's use of the term not only differs substantially from its largely pejorative and pathologizing use in English, it also resonates

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[89] Prearo, Introduction, xxviii.

both with the ways that "queer" has been reclaimed in English and with trajectories of contemporary trans politics. Dean points out that Mieli's use of transsexuality both "entailed breaking down the barriers that separate us from each other" through an anti-hierarchical, de-pathologizing, and anti-psychiatric emphasis on "erotic desire"–– Eros––and that the term's prefix "trans-" connotes the "multiplication of pleasures, a radical expansion of access to what we all really want."[90] Mieli himself develops the concept at the outset of the *Elementi* by way of emphasizing its connection to the psychoanalytic notion of "original bisexuality." Mieli is critical of psychoanalysts' emphasis on the "inverted" nature of original bisexuality; indeed, he refers to such psychoanalysts as "psychonazis."[91] He tracks the ways in which the "*'perverse' polymorphism*" of original bisexuality is repressed in a process that he refers to as "*educastration,*" which, for Mieli, entails the "transformation of the infant, in tendency polymorphous and 'perverse,' into a heterosexual adult, erotically mutilated but conforming to the norm."[92] Mieli's exposition of the process of educastration emphasizes its reproduction of "a monosexual Norm," which, across a wide variety of social relations and institutions, contributes to the "subjection and oppression of women, the estrangement of the human

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[90] Tim Dean, Foreword in *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, by Mario Mieli, trans. David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams, (London: Pluto Press, 2018), xii–xiii. Mieli's emphasis on Eros reflects the significant influence that Herbert Marcuse's work––especially *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*––had in Italian counter-cultural and autonomous movements. Originally published in 1955, *Eros and Civilization* was first translated into Italian in 1964; and, originally published in 1964, *One-Dimensional Man* was first translated into Italian in 1967, at the dawn of the long-1968. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974); Herbert Marcuse, *Eros e Civiltà*, trans. Lorenzo Bassi, (Torino: Einaudi, 1964); Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Herbert Marcuse, *L'Uomo a una Dimensione: L'Ideologia della Società Industriale Avanzata*, trans. Luciano Gallino and Tilde Giani Gallino, (Torino: Einaudi, 1964). For a compelling Marcusean reading of 1968 as a world historical event, see Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left*, 3–27.
[91] Mario Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 6. Mieli argues that Freud's emphasis on perversion renders homosexuality "precisely *not* a pathological syndrome" (22, emphasis in original). At the same time, he understands that many psychoanalysts did not agree. So, Mieli flips the script: "We consider heterosexuality to be a pathological, biological, psychosexual adaptation, resulting from pervasive fears surrounding the expression of homosexual impulses" (26). Interestingly, he even takes a queer ecological tack to denaturalize the notion of heterosexuality as normal: "Homosexuality is extremely common among primates, and very many sub-primate mammals are also homosexual, to mention only lions, dolphins, dogs (who hasn't seen two male dogs fucking, or two females, for that matter?), cats, horses, sheep, cows, pigs, rabbits, guinea-pigs, rats, etc" (27).
[92] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 4, emphases in original.

being from itself, and the negation of human community."[93] There are two aspects of this process that clearly inform the genesis of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and the SomMovimento nazioAnale: First, drawing on Jung, Mieli refers to masculinity as a "kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other to conceal the true nature of the individual."[94] This sense of masculinity as a mask undergirds the invention of the portmanteau *smaschieramenti*, which combines and pluralizes the words *smascheramento*––to unmask––and *maschile*––male/masculine/virile––to arrive at *smasch(i)eramenti*, unmasking/demasculinization. Second, moving toward a more explicitly anti-capitalist analysis, Mieli vanquishes genitality by arguing that: "The anal desire displayed by every child reveals a potential for pleasure that is latent in every adult, and reflects [...] an atavistic erotic expression of the species, which has been progressively more negated over the millennia, and particularly in the last few centuries of capitalism."[95] This "demand for the restoration of anal pleasure" as "one of the basic elements in the critique made by the gay movement of the hypostatizing of the heterosexual-genital status quo by the dominant ideology" is clearly echoed in the name of the SomMovimento nazioAnale, which decomposes and reconfigures the word *nazionale*––national––to envision a new spatio-political form: the natioAnal, the Anal nation. Wordplay such as this is not only evocative of the subversive irony that characterizes the historical evolution of creative autonomy in Bologna, it also resonates in contemporary transfeministqueer autonomous movements, which routinely use slogans such as *viva la lotta anale contro il capitale*, or, long live the anal struggle against capital! To sum up: Educastration acts not only to repress original bisexuality, it also reproduces

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[93] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 12.
[94] Carl G. Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, eds. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler (London: Routledge, 1953), 190 quoted in Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 13.
[95] Mieli, Gay Communism, 147.

phallo(go)centrism, subtends the incessant reproduction of rigidly binary gender and, relatedly, seeks to ensure the domination of what Mieli calls the "absolute male" over everybody else, including women.[96]

For Mieli, the dialectical negation of "the polarity between the sexes" and "the abolition of heterosexual primacy" are conditioned by the "gay necessity" of liberating transsexuality in every person, including in gays and lesbians, such that "the discovery and progressive liberation of the transsexuality of the subject will lead [...] to the utopian (in the revolutionary sense of *utopia–eutopia*) achievement of the new man-woman or, far more likely, woman-man."[97] In light of both Katz's engagements with feminist critiques of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "becoming-woman" and queer geographic engagements with intersectionality and its divergence from feminist geographies, it is significant to note that Mieli is definitive about the centrality of the concrete political project of women's liberation to his articulation of gay communism:

> In order that the liberation of homosexuality, transsexuality and human emancipation be accomplished, *the assertion of the revolutionary movement of women is necessary*, as being concrete historical subjects of the universal antithesis to the masculine power presently in force, they will overturn this power, transforming their antithetical position through revolution, bringing about the collapse of the system of repression of Eros that is absolutely functional to it, starting with the heterosexual Norm and the rejection of Homosexuality.[98]

Mieli's concept of revolution emphasizes that "[l]ike transsexuality itself, the revolutionary movement is *one and multiple*." Such multiplicity evokes contemporary engagements with intersectionality, albeit in a more politically explicit manner. Throughout the text, Mieli

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[96] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 149. Further dissolving the binary between the "active" absolute male and his antipathy for the "passive" role, Mieli writes: "As a general rule, the more fear a man has of being fucked, the more he himself fucks badly, with scant consideration for the other person."

[97] Mieli, *Gay Communism,* 253–254, emphasis in original.

[98] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 255, emphasis in original; Katz, "Towards a Minor Theory," 492–494.

repeatedly invokes the influence of numerous other strands of revolutionary struggle, likening and linking, but never reducing, the struggle against the repression of homosexuality to "workers' and students' struggles of 1968 and 1969 in Europe, and in the USA" and highlighting "the deep revolt stamped on American society, and particularly on the minds of young Americans, by the insurrections of black ghettoes and the temporary revolutionary assertion of the black movement."[99] In so doing, Mieli is not simply noting resonances, he is tracing material and practical topologies of the intersectionality of struggles and diagnosing "the counter-revolutionary stabilization of capitalist power and the stagnation of social and existential discontent," which, he concludes, "have all notably contributed to a fragmentation of the gay movement."[100] In the end, Mieli argues:

> True human subjectivity is not to be found in that personification of the thing par excellence, i.e. capital and the phallus, but rather in the subject position of women, homosexuals, children, blacks, "schizophrenics," old people, etc. to the power that exploits and oppresses them, this revolutionary or potentially revolutionary subjectivity arises from subjection.[101]

Considering that Mieli's centering on a conceptual, political, and practical struggle for the liberation of Eros by way of the development of the notion of transsexuality, I now turn to the work of Porpora Marcasciano (fig. 12), who was a comrade and friend of Mieli's.

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[99] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 99.

[100] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 100. Provoking anti-psychiatric theorists to move beyond their emphasis on reorganizing "the classical psychoanalytic categories (substituting for Oedipus, for example an Anti-Oedipus)" Mieli further argues that "only by the revolution of women against male supremacy and the homosexual revolution against the heterosexual norm" will a liberation of transsexuality be brought out of the realm of the unconscious (251). In so doing, he centers "the standpoint of women and gays, above all of gay women," as key to "drawing the thread that unites class oppression, sexual oppression and the suppression of homosexuality" (251).

[101] Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 251. Mieli's centering of the human is not straightforward. In the context of a critique of totalizing and dyadic relations, he writes: "The revolutionary homosexual struggle demands the erotic and emotional recognition of every human being in the community and the world. Each of us is a prism, a sphere, is mobile, and beneath and beyond the contradictions that presently oppose and negate us, each of us fits potentially together with anyone else, in a 'geometry,' both real and imaginary, of free intersubjectivity––like a wonderful kaleidoscope to which new and precious stones are steadily added: children and new arrivals of every kind, corpses, animals, plants, things, flowers, turds…" (122). Though not thoroughly developed, such a framing of relationality clearly moves in a queer ecological direction.

As translation studies scholar Serena Bassi writes in a note accompanying a recent (and rare) publication of translated excerpts of Marcasciano's latest book, *The Dawn of Bad Trans Women*, along with Mieli, Marcasciano is among the "key figures of the Gay Liberation movement, a theoretically sophisticated and lively chapter of the Italian radical Students and Workers movement that has been virtually ignored by historians of LGBT movements and twentieth-century Italy alike."[102] Like Mieli, Marcasciano's approach integrates autobiography with social movement history and praxis, effectively upending distinctions between the two that would tend to dismiss accounts such as hers. As Bassi puts it, her approach both "give[s] anglophone readers a sense of the integral role that trans women have played in the queer movement in Italy from the very start," and "can help tell *another* story of transgender liberation and bypass the anglo-normativity of LGBTQ publishing, which typically leaves little room for queer texts in translation."[103] To that I would add that it wasn't just the queer movement that transwomen contributed to, but the autonomous movement as whole. In light of my focus on the spatialities of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, I also point out that the very modality in which Marcasciano constructs her narration, account, and interpretation––bringing the past very much into the present, making trans and queer struggles for self-determination central to autonomous struggle across geographic and place-based contexts, and incorporating poetic, subversive, and creative language into a rigorous

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[102] Porpora Marcasciano, "Excerpts From the Dawn of the Bad Trans Women: Stories, Fragments, and Lives of My Transgender Generation," trans. Serena Bassi, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (2019): 124, https://doi:10.1215/23289252-7253566.
[103] Marcasciano and Bassi, "Dawn of the Bad Trans Women," 125.

political account of contemporary local, national, and global politics––informs the very core of my analysis in this chapter and dissertation.

Rather than reconstructing the entirety of Marcasciano's accounts across two books and the extensive life historical interview I conducted with her, I want to focus on a few key spatial and praxis-based insights that regard the line of discussion that has threaded through my narration of *operaismo*, autonomous feminism, creative autonomy, and gay communism. In *AntoloGaia*, Marcasciano uses the English word "trip" to describe her migration from "a small town in the South of Italy […] to Naples, then to Rome and, later, to Bologna":

Figure 12. Porpora Marcasciano (foreground) and the author (background) at the headquarters of Movimento Identità Transessuale, Bologna, Italy, December 15, 2016 (Photo by Daniele Pezzi, used with permission)

other dimensions, other worlds or…worlds, otherwise [*di altri mondi o…di mondi altri*]! After all, *trip* meant, above all, journeys with LSD or with all the other hallucinogenics used to enlarge consciousness […] hallucinogenics were not simply drugs for getting wasted, but a powerful means of knowledge. […] By

trip, I mean the journey that comprises my entire life, which I had started in September 1973, when a new world opened up before me, when I began to understand many things, to become aware, when I stopped feeling ashamed and realized that everything that I had been told up until that moment was false. The Indians were not bad, the communists were not cannibals, the anarchists were not assassins, homosexuals were not monsters, the assholes [*stronzi*] who wanted to make us believe these things were, instead, authentic: assholes, truly assholes.[104]

With this interpretation of the term trip, Marcasciano not only shatters "respectable" ideas and approaches about theorizing space and subjectivity, she quickly upends an entire range of internalized and socially mediated attitudes that had shaped her view on life––and the views of countless others––during and prior to the long-1968. She also locates herself spatio-temporally in 1973, a key year both for the Take back the City movement, which I discussed earlier, and for a diffuse awareness of the limitations of party-driven Communism on account of the coup in Chile and the beginnings of the historic compromise. Marcasciano expresses an embodied experience of self-awareness and self-awakening that, in its irreducibly collective dimension, is very difficult to capture in traditional scholarly accounts of a movement or a moment. She shares both a memory or a premonition, to use the language of the first fliers of Atlantide insofar as she contextualizes her awakening against the backdrop of profound political upheaval within the educational system, which altered her sense both of how knowledge itself had been produced and circulated and how it should be. She describes the school system as being "in great ferment," a ferment that "put everything on the table,

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[104] Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia*, 42. Marcasciano's use of the term trip aligns with Mieli's use of the term in its material, experiential, and metaphorical dimensions. For example, Mieli argues: "'Heterosexuals' aware of their transsexuality, however, are at present far less numerous than gays who have undertaken the transsexual trip. This is because heterosexuals, as a general rule, have adapted to their mutilated role of man or woman as something 'normal,' obvious and taken for granted, whereas we gays almost invariably experience it as a burden that we have to be exclusively men or women, and suffer from the resistance with which we, and our desire, are opposed by heterosexuals of the same sex as ourselves" (209). In relation to drugs, Mieli writes: "Marijuana, hash, LSD, etc., and in fact all 'mind-expanding' drugs frequently bring straight people face to face with their homoerotic desire and/or the problem of its repression, especially if they find themselves in the company of homosexuals. They can either abandon themselves to the formerly repressed impulse, to experience, or else resist this and end up in 'paranoia'" (114). For more on the role of drugs and the liberation of Eros in *autonomia*, see Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*, 39–40; 228–229.

especially knowledge [*sapere*], that which we had always been restricted to understand

passively, a constructed knowledge set up and assembled for the use and conception of

bourgeois power."[105] She goes on to explain that the contestation of this model of knowledge

addressed both its "contents and the methods of transmission" and, notwithstanding a certain

youthful naïveté, was rooted in feeling

> the need, common to many other people, to reappropriate that knowledge
> [*sapere*], to develop grassroots, horizontal knowledge [*conoscenza dal basso*] to
> become active subjects, producers and not only spectators, to be subjects of
> history.[106]

Such an awakening not only evokes the exclusions wrought by notions of "citizenship" well

before the dawn of so-called sexual citizenship, to recall Busarello's discussions in "I Hate

Your Archive!," but was also of a piece with the wide diffusion of countercultural texts, art,

and images being produced transversally across the movement in this period. Still, for gay,

lesbian, queer and trans subjects, this awakening also required a double contestation of the

mainstream movement's own willful exclusions, violences, and erasures over and above those

of the dominant institutions and the state. Though there are numerous particular experiences

across the duration of Marcasciano's life that speak to the richness and difficulty of this

explosive moment of awakening, I focus on what it is that she sees as particular about

Bologna.

When I asked Marcasciano about the significance of Bologna during the course of our

interview, I indexed the question against my own growing impression of the city's

distinctiveness when it came to political praxis––Bologna as a school of activism––and

transfeministqueer praxis, in particular. She responded:

> Certainly, in Italy, Bologna has its own particular history. It's as if we cut with a
> hatchet to talk about [the differences] between Italy, Germany, America. In

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[105] Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia*, 43.
[106] Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia*, 43.

Italy, there are different realities. Bologna has always been and still is a *laboratory*; I continue to consider it as such. A laboratory of politics, cultures, and movements. Because, in Bologna, there was a culture, a very specific political tradition. We all have to reclaim this. It is because of this specific tradition that, first, a specific style of thought, of reflection grew here and, then, physical, tangible experiences.[107]

The particularity of Bologna, its antagonist and autonomous traditions, its place in the archipelago of autonomies, is evidenced by the fact that Bologna would eventually become home to nearly all of Italy's most significant transfeministqueer organizations and political spaces: from Marcasciano's organization, MIT, a space "entrusted to a trans group" to the first national gay organization, Cassero, "entrusted to a gay group," to Atlantide, and "occupied and self-managed" space.[108] Indeed, in her reflection on the Movement of 1977 in *AntoloGaia*, Marcasciano situates Bologna as the center for the creative wing of the movement: "Situationists, Dadaists, Transversalists and still others. It must be said that the entire University was abandoned to political collectives, every faculty had different ones."[109] During the course of the Movement of 1977, autonomous activists did not simply assert their right to the city as it had been, they took back the city and refashioned it as a school of activism.

As with other cities that I have placed on the diffuse map of autonomia, so too we can locate Bologna as perhaps the only place where Atlantide might have been created. As Renato Busarello describes it in a brief history of gay space in Bologna that he wrote––in which, it merits pointing out in light of my discussion of the divergence between queer and feminist geographies––he is, like Mieli, explicit about saying that both the gay liberation movement and gay space would not exist without feminism, in general, and lesbian feminism, in particular:

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[107] Marcasciano, interview, December 15, 2016, emphasis mine.
[108] Marcasciano, interview, December 15, 2016.
[109] Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia*, 76.

Gay space [*lo spazio omosessuale*] is, first of all, a place [*luogo*] of personal-political subjectivation, of speaking up [*presa di parola*], of the circulation of bodies and desires. As such, it is not at all reducible to a singular fixed place, neither to a singular subject; instead, it crosses [*attraversara*] all places in the city, all bodies and the entire discursive and social order. In this sense, one certainly cannot say that there has always historically been a gay space, even if there has always been homosexuality. Because, indeed, in order to create the conditions for a circulation of homosexuality/diversity/perversion were created in Bologna, and in Italy, many events had to concatenate over the course of the 1970s.[110]

Busarello names two such conditions. First, he cites the "vast and diffuse experience of *Autonomia*," which he defines in terms similar to those Marcasciano uses, namely as putting into question the entire capitalist power structure in terms of both its socialities and its methods of knowledge production.[111] Second, he names the internal "dislocation" of the "antiauthoritarian experience" undertaken in the by way of "the feminist revolt against masculinist and patriarchal structures," which, he contends not only "multiplied the struggles" but also multiplied subjectivities themselves, a process, he concludes, "that, around [1977] found one of its most intense urban epicenters in Bologna."[112]

Both Marcasciano and Busarello identify an historic three-day meeting held in Bologna in September 1977 as a crucial moment for the solidification of the city as a center of transfeministqueer autonomous praxis, to say nothing of its significance in the broader area of *autonomia*. The city had been chosen as the site for the meeting on account of the unprecedented repression of the movement by the state and the police, who had murdered Francesco Lorusso, an autonomous activist, earlier that year. Among the "thousands of comrades from all of Italy" and the presence of "Deleuze, Foucault, Guattari, who had signed the manifesto against the repression" of the movement, an intervention made by Mieli (the

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[110] Renato Busarello, "Appunti Per Una Storia Dello Spazio Omosessuale a Bologna," in *Atlante dei movimenti culturali dell'Emilia-Romagna, 1968–2007*, eds. Piero Pieri and Chiara Cretella, Vol. 3, *Arti, Comunicazione, Controculture* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2007): 34.
[111] Busarello, "Spazio Omosessuale a Bologna," 34.
[112] Busarello, "Spazio Omosessuale a Bologna," 34.

Elementi was published the same year) stood out for having "incarnated the explosion of a new

subjectivity," one queerer than is even, perhaps, imaginable today.[113] As Busarello recounts it:

> [Mieli], disguised as a Dutchwoman, [took] the microphone in a square full of
> comrades entertained by [legendary theater actor] Dario Fo, far from Piazza
> Maggiore where a mass was held with the bishop of Bologna to celebrate the
> Eucharistic Congress; [Mieli] urged them to go to Piazza Maggiore to challenge
> the bishop. To the whistles, to the shouts of mockery, he responded with "You
> are sheep––beeh, beeh––and you will always continue to bleat!" And, with that,
> he went away happy, showing his ass, because "homosexuals represent the ass
> [*il culo*] of the revolutionary movement, one and multiple."[114]

Mieli's *Elementi* would later be revindicated by Antagonismo Gay, one of the collectives that

came to inhabit Atlantide, long after it went out of print and became something of a fetish

object for the movements. For the moment, I draw out the symbolism of Mieli's display of his

ass to the whole of the movement in Piazza VIII Agosto because it both resonates with a

celebration of anality and contributes to one final element to the spatial imagination of the

movement.

Atlantide: The Lost Continent Reemerges

Long after the Movement of 1977 was shattered by the police and the state, likely with the help

of the U.S. Government, which feared the rise of a left as radical as the one growing in Italy,

long after Mieli committed suicide in 1983 in a spectacular and tragic final performative act,

long after the dawn of HIV swept through the movement in Italy, as it had elsewhere, long

after these so called years of reflux, where a harsher punk aesthetic, similar to the one

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[113] Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia*, 108; Busarello, "Spazio Omosessuale a Bologna," 37. The final quote comes from Mieli's *Elementi*, though I could not find an exact correspondence for it in the most recent translation, I am presuming the entire sentence on which Busarello draws is the one that reads: "The revolutionary proletariat and the movement of revolutionary women are two faces of the communist/human-community party, and the movement of revolutionary homosexuals is its ass. Like transsexuality itself, the revolutionary movement is *one and multiple*." Mieli, *Gay Communism*, 255, emphasis in original.
[114] Busarello, "Spazio Omosessuale a Bologna," 37. The latter quote, though unattributed, is from Mieli's *Elementi*.

cultivated by Nulla Osta, another of the collectives that would come to inhabit Atlantide, long after all of this, a lost continent was rediscovered. Just a few years after the explosion of the Pantera movement and barely preceding the peak of the so-called alter-globalization movement––or, as Michal Osterweil, borrowing from Italian social movements, calls it the *movimento dei movimenti*, the movement of movements––the memory and the premonition of this complex era and area of *autonomia* was reincarnated within the walls of Atlantide.[115]

Despite the immensity of its context, neither of the founding fliers of Atlantide overdetermines either the political precedents or potential futures of the space. Instead, the documents function paradigmatically by situating Atlantide within the autonomous political ecology of Italy in the late 1990s while also suggesting that Atlantide might be the "first experiment of its kind in Italy." What the initial occupants of Atlantide clearly understood was that both the historical imagination of a social otherwise and the contemporary conditions under which the struggle for that otherwise were again taking shape demanded something other than a space with a singular identity. The complexities of the unresolved contradictions of the long-1968 and of Bologna's place in a broader map of autonomous praxis foreclosed any possibility for claiming the reconstitution of a singular "revolutionary subject."[116] By taking the position that the space itself was distinctive, if not precisely unique, the collectives that first occupied Atlantide simultaneously connected the space to the resurgent network of autonomous and self-managed spaces, or *Centri Sociali Occupato e Autogestiti* (Occupied and Self-Managed Social Centers/CSOAs), that had begun to re-emerge from the late 1980s throughout the 1990s, while distinguishing it from such spaces by emphasizing its non-

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[115] Michal Osterweil, "In Search of Movement."
[116] Regarding the concept of the "social otherwise," see Elizabeth Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

singular political identity. Vincenzo Ruggiero offers a general overview of the resurgent movement of the *centri sociali* it in his sociological analysis new social movements in Milan:

> The movement of the *centri sociali* in Italy has its roots in the particularly turbulent events which characterized the 1970s in that country. It was in the 1970s that groups of young people started a process of 'claiming the city' through widespread squatting of public spaces and the occupation of empty buildings, a move that brought them into the center of cities from the poor hinterlands. In the particular configuration of Italian cities, the occupation of historical centers, with their fine medieval, Renaissance and neo-classical architecture, symbolically exemplified some of the core political values expressed by this movement.[117]

With echoes of the Take back the City movement and the spatialization of the feminist movement as filtered through the specificities of Bolognese autonomy, the initial imagination of Atlantide certainly cohered with this symbolism insofar as the building itself is one of two neo-classical structures that comprise the Porta Santo Stefano, one of the historical entrances to the medieval city center of Bologna. What the initial occupants could not have known was that, at the time of its eventual eviction by the municipal government in 2015, Atlantide would be the last of the self-managed and occupied spaces founded in the 1990s to hold such a symbolically significant position. As far as its distinctiveness, Atlantide's non-singularity is most concisely expressed when the first flier describes it as a place for the convergence of "*A multitude of different subjects*: immigrants…students…the precarious…the unemployed…women…gay and lesbian subjects." Echoing both Mieli's framing of the intersectionality of struggles and a Negri's concept of "the multitude," each of these positions is nonetheless linked to a distinctive reorganization of the social and political fabric on levels ranging from the local to the global. As the first flier makes clear: The space, unlike many CSOAs that sprouted up across Italy throughout the 1990s, was not created with the intention

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[117] Vincenzo Ruggiero, "New Social Movements and the 'Centri Sociali' in Milan," *The Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (2000): 170, https://doi:10.1111/1467-954X.00210.

of housing a singular collective which tied itself to a specific position, location, or set of practices within the wider area of autonomy.

Each subjectivity among that multitude suggests specific links to both the situation of Italy as it was being reconfigured in the 1990s and to the long-1968. For example, immigrants are described as "bodies uprooted and put to work in forms of exploitation old (the last arms of living labor) and new (care and service work)." Here, the document witnesses not only increasing political "crises" associated with immigration to Italy from North Africa, but also the reality that the historical movement was deeply rooted in large waves of internal migration of dispossessed Southern peasants to the factories of the industrialized North.[118] In this sense, the fliers speak to an imagined public, asking it to consider the contemporary transformation of immigration as related to the reproduction of citizenship and participation in representative forms of government at every level. Alternately, students are invoked as "directly productive and exploited," in that they continued to pay fees to a university system which many in the social movements had sought to abolish. Precarious workers are understood as bellwethers of ongoing destabilization of the labor market as they are forced to "experiment with new forms of flexibility of labor time and the dismantling of old welfare guarantees" won in previous rounds of struggle. The condition of the unemployed bespeaks "the paradox of an idea of citizenship founded on work" harkening to *operaismo*'s political insistence on the outright refusal of work. In each of these positions, the first fliers of Atlantide expose issues associated with numerous internal debates that had marked the historical autonomous movement, including the composition of a revolutionary subjectivity and its

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[118] See Ingrid Hoofd, "The Migrant Metaphor Within Radical Italian Thought," *Cultural Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2005): 129–46.

relationship to the state, to citizenship, and to social belonging along the multiple fracture lines that still marked the terrain of the movement, even two generations later.

In both the first and second fliers, Atlantide takes imaginative shape as both a place and a time and, indeed, as the intimate intertwining of the two. Subtle differences between the documents open some space for reflecting on the significance of the name of the space itself and on the importance of the *kind* of space being envisioned. In the first document, Atlantide is figured as a "submerged city" (*città sommersa*) which itself speaks to those who are "willing to dream" (*disposti a sognare*). Here, I would invoke the subtitle of Marcasciano's book, "Vivere sognando e non sognare di vivere," live dreaming, don't dream of living. Of this saying, she writes, "In the 70s, [this saying] was often written on the walls of the city [...] these are the words that express a desire which overtook me to transform my life and the entire world."[119] In the second flier, Atlantide is rendered as a "continent" (*continente*) itself "submerged like the dream of another place constructed collectively" (*sommerso come il sogno di un altro luogo costruite collettivamente*). Here, again, the prefigurative imagination of the space refers both to the immensity of its precedents and to the invariably collective, and somewhat hallucinatory, experience of making such a place livable, of making it available to new collectivities, including those not yet imagined at the time of its founding. Indeed, it is important to note that none of the three collectives that would come to inhabit Atlantide was a part of the initial occupation. Of the possibility for the space to become a meeting place of many people, multiple collectives, the first flier makes clear that Atlantide is to be

> **a public space, not a state space, not occupied, but offered and free to be traversed [***attraversato***] by a multitude in dire need of political cooperation.** [Atlantide] **is not the point of arrival for an antagonist pathway, but a political laboratory, a network of multiple subjectivities––biopolitically fused at the level of bodies, pleasures, knowledges [***saperi***], even moreso**

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[119] Marcasciano, *AntoloGaia*, 26.

> **power––willing to be activated by the impulses of conflict distributed, lattice-like, in the capitalist metropolis.**

Here we hear echoes of contemporary French and Italian philosophical discourses of biopolitics and debates about the distribution of sensible experience in and through spatialities wrought by mutations of capitalism, which movements and intellectuals alike were attempting to theorize and decode beginning the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. As Busarello writes of the influence of Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, who had come to Bologna in 1977 to witness and to support the unfolding of a true "molecular revolution," in his contextualization of the formation and evolution of queer space in Bologna:

> They warn us against identitarian rigidification, they remind us that the subject is a form in becoming [*divenire*], not a substance, and becoming is always open; they allude not to desexualization or indifference as the horizon of transformation, but to a larval [*neotenica*], indefinite dimension that characterizes human species. And, drawing on this species-specific larval power, we can contest roles, sexes, socially assigned genders asserted as if they were nature, destiny, a condemnation.
> [...]
> Even this dense practical theoretical intertwining between gay-lesbian-trans-queer issues and the movement in general is an unwritten history often evaded by pacified [...] reconstructions of the events of the Italian gay movement.[120]

Here, Busarello uses contemporary iterations of historically relevant thinkers and texts without abstracting them from––or holding them over––the movement contexts in which such forms of contestation are devised, organized, experienced, reflected upon. Writing some ten years after the founding of Atlantide, he cites the influence of comrades who he came to know in the process of organizing there and echoes, consciously or not, the imagination of Atlantide as an "offering," as a place of mutual encounter, as a vantage point, as a node in what Katz might call a "renegade cartography," and as a place from which to apprehend the

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[120] Busarello, "Spazio Omosessuale a Bologna," 35–36.

distribution of power in the "capitalist metropolis."[121] Busarello situates such an ambitious,

and somewhat vague, proposal for a political project through recourse to the actual praxes

that emerged from the very willingness to confront one another. Reflecting on his

participation in the initial occupation and its relationship to the Tute Bianche movement,

Busarello explained that, in the late 1990s

> There were a series of struggles. And so, there was a reading of these new
> figures––in the wake of the centrality of the worker, of the *operaismo*
> movement––these new productive figures that could have been hybrids. So, we
> worked on the figure of the precarious, on precarity, that could have been a
> student, a precarious worker, et cetera. [...] And so, from there, we occupied the
> space as a place to make these networks visible.[122]

The first fliers are not definitive and unambiguous representations of what Atlantide was in

the 1990s. Instead, they function as barometers of the evolution of struggles, languages, and

approaches to spatial praxis. At the same time, they are temporally specific representations––

snapshots––of the movement at a particular moment in time. For example, temporally, the

second document plays with the founding of Atlantide as both memory and premonition, as I

have already noted. On the one hand, it suggests the *impossibility* of Atlantide insofar as the

progettualità outlined in the fliers harkens back to the long-1968 while also attempting to

envision a practical adaptation in light of shifting configurations of capital and state power. Of

course, the founding of the space as a *laboratorio* should be understood as reflecting an

historical tension that characterized relationships between radical/militant (read: male,

marxist) intellectuals working from within (quasi-)institutions (read: universities, labor

unions, legalized social spaces) and a range of other subjectivities (read: women, lesbians,

queers, transgender people) whose concerns were not exhausted, if they were even addressed,

by either the bodies of theoretical work that such intellectuals produced through the

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[121] Katz, "Towards a Minor Theory," 494–496.
[122] Busarello, interview.

circulation of radical journals and reviews or by the forms of recognition entailed in institutional affiliation.

In other words, the founding documents are significant in that they constitute something like an invitation to contaminate purified notions of the appropriate points of reference for the evolution of the struggles. For example, reflecting the failures of the long-1968, the first fliers clearly make room for feminists and gay & lesbian subjectivities without overlooking the historic victories of the feminist movement in legalizing abortion and divorce in the 1970s. In many ways, the fliers both echo Mieli and prefigure the emergence of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti within Atlantide, even though it would occur nearly ten years later: "Women, who are still today forced to suffer the brutality of a masculine culture which commodifies their bodies and does violence to their specificity." Though, as I articulate in Chapter 4, Smaschieramenti would engage transfeminist *and* queer theories and politics, its emergence is inseparable from ongoing commitments to maintaining space and lines of struggle for issues made central in the feminist movement of the long-1968: violence against women, access to self-managed health care, the formulation of critical alternatives to heteropatriarchal relationships and family structures, and self-organized alternatives to take the place of the vanishing welfare state.

Considering both of the fliers together, there can be little doubt that the founding of Atlantide signaled a desire on the part of the various collectivities that initially occupied it to re-open lines of praxis and inquiry rooted in the unfinished work of both imagining and instituting modes of politics which, while responsive to the global reorganization of capital, emphasized the localized work of coalescing and organizing new subjectivities and positions from which to transform and (re)politicize everyday life. Despite the first document's indication of a variety of subject positions, it ultimately states that these positions are "**united**

by the various forms of the exploitation, of their disavowal, of their exclusion from

citizenship." But, as the last chapter argued, the concerns of Atlantide's collectives would not

only concern themselves with the ostensible exclusions of citizenship. Instead, as the first

fliers put it, Atlantide was to be "a *political laboratory* for the elaboration and organization of

political projects and the production of autonomous subjectivities." The notion of the political

laboratory resonates as both a memory and future for Atlantide.[123]

As we now enter the space, I note, in the mode of premonition, the eventual choice to

organize Smaschieramenti as a *laboratorio*, a form that both harkens back to the long-1968 and

that is anticipatorily echoed in the first fliers. For example, when I asked Smaschieramenti

comrade and longtime participant in social spaces of the autonomous movement writ large,

Francesca Bidasio, whose own political formation was rooted in a post-*operaismo* genealogy, to

explain what was significant about this choice compared to the more typical self-designation

of "the collective," she explained:

> When someone says the word "collective," you usually think of a situation
> which is more structured, where there is a strong shared sense with respect to
> political analysis [...] a great homogeneity of political analysis.[124]

The demarcation of a political "line" maintained by a particular collective becomes legible

according to longstanding analytical, tactical, and historical disagreements and divisions over

key political problematics, positions, and subjectivities. Bidasio continued, explaining that, in

contrast to the relatively fixed positions and analytics maintained by many collectives, not

least in their singular identification with a space operated according to those positions:

> A *laboratorio* instead suggests something in becoming. Something which is
> always moving and that is not homogenous [...] The positions in
> Smaschieramenti are not superimposed, they are not all identical.[125]

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[123] Michael Hardt, "Introduction: Laboratory Italy," in *Radical Thought in Italy*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
[124] Francesca Bidasio, interview with author, July 20, 2015.
[125] Bidasio, interview.

The form of the *laboratorio* evokes and embraces a distinctively Bolognese approach to

experimentation that does predetermine a mode of political analysis, even when there is a

commonly held emphasis on the politics of gender and sexuality as a point of departure. As

Smaschieramenti comrade and scholar A.G. Arfini suggested, the point of making a

distinction between *laboratorio* and *collettivo* was "probably to remind ourselves not to fall into

the kind of automatic routines of political practice."[126] Notwithstanding a non-identical

positioning of individual members, Arfini explained that

> not calling yourself a collective [doesn't] necessarily deprive you of the ability
> of identifying with that space, with that project, with that politics [...] it is just
> more, probably more, contingent and has to be, again, negotiated from time to
> time.[127]

The subsequent chapters focus on just such (re)negotiations, both internally to the ecology of

Atlantide and within the municipal political situation of Bologna.

   In conclusion, anticipating the birth of Smaschieramenti, I note that underlying––and

borne of––the ethos and everyday practices of the political *laboratorio* are a set of rigorous

praxes which, despite having emerged in distinct passages in the life of the Laboratorio

proper, took time to coalesce as a non-systematic approach to transfeministqueer politics and

to consolidate a basis for a sustained engagement with the dilemmas posed by dominant

forms of gender and sexuality, forms like those that Busarello, among others, reflect upon in

the construction of queer archives. Atlantide created as a safe harbor for such coalescence. Its

(in)formal (non)organization enabled the autonomous production of transfeministqueer

knowledges, relationships, networks, and political *percorsi* that were not overdetermined by a

need to furnish better understandings of a violent system. Instead, in its anti-identitarian

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[126] A.G. Arfini, two-part interview with author, May 25, 2015/Jul 15, 2015.
[127] Arfini, interview.

organization, the space enabled both responses to and reworkings of systemic violences and specific forms of exploitation wrought by the dominating insistences of that system, in all of its many guises. Smaschieramenti emerges not only out of the distinctiveness of Atlantide, but also out of an adaptation of praxes foraged from the historical area of autonomy embodied and embedded in Atlantide. Smaschieramenti shifted and expanded with each successive move in the contemporary political landscape. Each of its praxes responded to the vicissitudes of events as they happened in a particular context, even as a more and more distinctive line of critique emerges in practice. From the submerged continent of Atlantide, we now arrive at the birth of Smaschieramenti.

4

The Birth of Smaschieramenti

Cicadas

Though it is not recorded in the almanac, I distinctly recall a powerful summer storm passing

through Bologna on July 11, 2015. Perhaps weather and climate have been confused in my

memory. Babs and the baby were away at the seaside, the only sensible place to be to retreat

from the relentless heat and humidity of the Italian high summer. I found myself in the

sunbaked city, scrambling to complete interviews and to advance the archive work. I was

struggling, my grip was slipping. As it turned out, trying to research in another language, to

co-parent, to do activism, to build comradeships based on trust and mutualism, and to

maintain a support system half a world away isn't easy (fig. 13). Maybe it wasn't even possible.

Figure 13. At home in San Donato, Bologna, Italy, July 2015

In the thick stillness of that day, I wrote a letter that I never sent. This I know for sure because I find it, all these years later, in a folder labeled "Emotional" on my old laptop. It is a subfolder of "Fieldwork." I titled the letter "The Flood after The Storm." I read the letter again; I don't feel anything in particular. Maybe it is neutral now; maybe all of the tension, the uncertainty, and the feelings of being inundated are just a part of the data now. I think about sharing the letter here. I copy and paste it, edit it, and move on with the writing. After a night of dreamless sleep, I wake up decide that it is too much. The letter doesn't belong here. Like those brutally hot days, it is too long and the night has brought little relief. Maybe it didn't rain that day.

It seems likely that my memories of the daily patter of uncertainty have been eclipsed by what proved to be an unsustainable pattern for the future. Things fell apart. I continue to sift through my own archive of feelings. Ten days after "The Flood after The Storm," I wrote a piece called "Simple Things." It is comprised of four statements, two of which begin with "I cannot rebuild a relationship…" and two of which begin with "I can rebuild a relationship…" I cannot include this either. I keep scrolling. The next two files in "Emotional" are sound recordings. I know for sure that, on August 10, 2015, there was a massive thunderstorm in Selvapiana, a tiny village on the Tuscan side of Tuscan-Emilian section of Apennine Mountains, the same mountains where the resistance fighters hid during the Second World War. I listen to four-year-old rainfall. I smell it on the gravel driveway. *Petrichor*. I remember this storm.

By August, the heat had become truly unbearable and the city was practically deserted. I still had so much work to finish. Babs and I had just come from the SomMovimento's summer *campeggia*, which had been an exhausting mix of non-stop assemblies, workshops, performances, and parties that, mostly, we could not attend, because we had brought Simone

with us (fig. 14). On the last morning, she ended up breaking a tooth as Babs and I cleaned up after the previous night's revelry; we were both frustrated about being consigned to this socially reproductive work just because we were the first people to be awake. This was the baby's first big injury. It was traumatic. We needed a break, so we went to Selvapiana to stay with the artist and filmmaker Daniele Pezzi, one of Babs's lifelong friends. He is practically family.

Figure 14. Aftermath of the assembly, SomMovimento nazioAnale Campeggia Queer, Ozzano dell'Emilia, Italy, August 1, 2015

Years earlier, before any of this came to pass, Daniele had stayed in my apartment in Toronto. He was visiting Canada to make a film called *Road's End*. I thought he had been joking when he said he'd like me to be in the film. But then, in the early spring of 2012, we spent ten days driving through northern Ontario, hiking, filming, camping, telling stories. I had only been living in Canada for a year. Our trip was the first time I saw anything beyond

the city limits of Toronto. The first time I watched the final cut of the film was at Daniele's

place in Selvapiana in 2014. The morning after we watched it, there was an earthquake. The

rest of our time there was marked by the uncanny sound of aftershocks deep within the

mountains; you hear them, but you don't feel them.

Compared to the *campeggia*, Selvapiana was a refuge. A couple of Babs's comrades

from Klit, the transfeminist collective that they started in Budapest the year after I left, joined

us from Berlin. The three of them were working on a performance piece about lesbian

cruising. While they plotted, played, and caught up and Daniele worked on his latest project, I

walked the countryside gathering wildflowers, rocks, and stones. I made an altar with them,

my way to heal (fig. 15). In the afternoons, we swam in the cold mountain streams. In the

evenings, we shared meals.

Figure 15. The altar, Selvapiana, Italy, August 2015

One night, the Babs and the Berlin comrades did a run-through of the lesbian cruising piece. They were inspired to create it for the second edition of a punk art festival that Klit had hosted the year before. The theme of the first edition of the festival was "Rituals of Collective Transformation." Babs and I had staged a piece called "Io sono a(p)parenti/I am a(p)parent." Babs was there in Budapest with the baby and her grandma in tow; I skyped in from Toronto. My image was projected onto Babs's naked body. I was in a bath like the one in which the baby had been born. I had painted a giant red square on my belly. I performed a silent ritual in the bathtub and then pulled the stopper with my foot. I remained motionless as the water drained and my weight slowly returned to me. I was unaware of the moment in which the call, and therefore the performance, ended. When I finally pulled myself out of the empty tub, I was alone in my apartment.

I scroll to the next file in "Emotional," another sound recording called "Last 90 Seconds." The file is dated August 29, 2015, just a couple of weeks after we returned from Selvapiana and only few days before my fieldwork ended and I returned to Toronto. It is the final recording that we made as part of the archiving work. The recording begins with the sound of Babs's laughter, then my voice: "So, for our last one minute and thirty-nine seconds, I would just like to note that we have now packed up the archive boxes. I have taken the pre-1999…"

Babs interjects, "I think I have menstruations…uh oh, yeah. And now?"

I laugh and ask, "What did you do the last time you had menstruations?"

They reply, "No, I mean, I don't have a *pad*," exaggerating the "a" in pad to sound more American. We banter back and forth for a moment, laughing. Babs says it makes perfect sense that menstruation would start in the moment that we finished our long work on the archive. The mood is light; we're joking. The recording ends.

I scroll to the next and last file in "Emotional," another sound recording: forty-four seconds of cicadas, *le cicale*, recorded just days before I returned to Toronto. From mid-July through to the end of summer, cicadas are ubiquitous in Bologna. I think of the campy song "Cicale" by Heather Parisi. I watch a live performance of the song from 1982, the year Babs was born. Every time "Cicale" would come on at an Atlantide party, I would sing along, barely aware of what the words meant. I look them up. Even now, it's difficult to translate their airy summertime sensibility. Is *ci cale* a play on words? WordReference.com tells me that the verb *calere,* to care for––the only verb that could reasonably conjugate as *ci cale––*is almost always used in the third person and preceded by a negation: *we don't care*. In the reflexive affirmative, it could be: *it's close to my heart*. At the end of the track, Parisi sings, "Automobile, telefoni, tivù / nella scatola del mondo, io tu / per cui la quale / ci cale ci cale ci cale." Cars, telephones, televisions; you and me in the box of the world; that's why; cicadas/I care, cicadas/I care, cicadas/I care. That little box of our world, I carry it with me; it's close to my heart.

Chapter Outline

The previous two chapters reconstructed a transfeministqueer archive-making praxis and situated the founding of Atlantide in the late 1990s in the broader context of *autonomia* emanating from the long-1968. This chapter focuses on the emergence of the transfeministqueer Laboratorio Smaschieramenti within the space of Atlantide itself and outlines the main lines of political praxis that have arisen through the Laboratorio's *r-esistenza––*its resistance/existence––over the last decade. Taken together with archiving-as-praxis, the praxes that I discuss in this chapter comprise a distinctive approach to autonomous politics both within the historical and contemporary landscape of Italian autonomous

movements and vis-a-vis more geographically diffuse institutionalized versions of queer theory. In the case of the former, that distinctiveness is marked by Smaschieramenti's recomposition of the *operaista*, feminist, creative, and gay/trans variants of autonomous political praxis from an anti-identitarian transfeministqueer perspective. In the case of the latter, the distinctiveness is marked by the Laboratorio's insistent anti-institutional approach to knowledge production. Such production is not only predicated on weaving together of a corpus of theoretical work with both the place-specific political dynamics and histories of Bologna and Italy, but also in persistently attending to the everyday dynamics of space/place-making that I discuss in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

In this chapter, I reconstruct the conditions under which the Laboratorio emerged in 2008 and describe the evolution of the Laboratorio's approach to *autonomia* as it has been expressed in the proliferation and multiplication of its political engagements––or, in the transversal spirit, political lines––in the subsequent decade. I focus on three key areas of praxis to show how the Laboratorio's approach to transfeministqueer life, theory, and politics constitutes a specifically anti-identitarian, non-institutional, and world-making approach rooted in the adaptation, mutation, and contamination of core elements of feminist and *operiasta* autonomous praxes as they are re-appropriated and re-elaborated within the contemporary (geo)political conjuncture. As I understand them, the praxes that I discuss in this chapter are all derived from the adaptation of *auto-inchiesta*, or collective self-inquiry. Prior to detailing the praxes themselves, I will discuss the extent to which comrades of Smaschieramenti distinguish them from the perhaps more typically feminist approach rooted in *auto-coscienza*, or consciousness raising. Smaschieramenti's core areas of praxis are: *Auto-inchiesta sul desiderio (del) maschile*, the collective self-inquiry on desire of/for masculinity; *auto-inchiesta sulle relazioni*, the collective self-inquiry on relations which would come to be known

as *altre intimità* (other intimacies); *auto-inchiesta sul lavoro/non-lavoro*, the collective self-inquiry on work/non-work, which connects to *neomutualismo*, or new mutualism, which is built on a concept of welfare *del basso* or grassroots/bottom-up welfare. In addition to these three key areas of praxis, I will also highlight some key conclusions derived from the experience of the Consultoria TransFemminsitaQueer Bologna, a self-managed transfeministqueer clinic closely connected to Laboratorio Smaschiermenti. The *consultoria* is distinguished from the other areas of praxis in that it has a different historical precedent, namely feminist *consultori*, themselves a key achievement of the feminist movements of the 1970s. Each in their own distinct, yet interrelated, ways these praxes characterize the political strategy and organization of Smaschieramenti as a whole and establish the Laboratorio as an exemplary manifestation of transfeministqueer autonomy in both theory and practice.

Methodology: Learning the Language of Autonomy

My description of the evolution of the Laboratorio is drawn from the ways in which comrades of Smaschieramenti shared their own modes of arrival, engagement, and understanding of the Laboratorio with me during the course of interviews. It is also drawn from my observations of the negotiation of these areas of praxis as they manifested during my time in Bologna, largely through the everyday political work of staging demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, organizing interventions, writing political and critical texts, engaging with local media, hosting events in Atlantide, and coordinating the summer 2015 *campeggia* (queer camping) of the SomMovimento nazioAnale, which I discuss further in the section of this chapter focused on *altre intimità*. My overall methodological approach to engaging with Smaschieramenti balanced participant observation in this everyday political work with more focused efforts to understand the emergence and evolution of the Laboratorio through my interviews with

Smaschieramenti's comrades. This balance reflects my own conception of the work I undertook during this period of research as a praxis in-itself, one that necessarily involves the transformation of my own subjectivity in the process of doing the work of research, organizing, and everyday theorizing. My reconstruction of the evolution of Smaschieramenti in and through these areas of praxis highlights formal and contextual specificities that both render its approach to politics distinctive and exemplify of the knowledge production and critical praxis of transfeministqueer autonomy.

In light of both my emphasis on political translation in Chapter 1 and my detailed discussion of *auto-inchiesta* in the next section, it is important to situate my overall methodological approach to working with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti with regard to existing literatures on participatory and embedded activist research methods, feminist fieldwork, and feminist critiques of knowledge production. The work of two scholars––Aziz Choudry and Richa Nagar––has proven particularly useful on account of the former's emphasis on "[i]ncremental, below-the-radar learning and knowledge production in the course of organizing and action" and the latter's emphasis on "the necessity of muddying theories and genres so that we can continue to embrace risks of solidarities that might fail and of translations that might refuse to speak adequately."[1] Though I weave Choudry's and Nagar's wisdom and insight together with my own experiences throughout this section, I will first briefly summarize their work.

Choudry's Marxist approach to the politics of knowledge production is rooted both in his own activism and in his experience of being hired by an academic institution on the basis of that activism.[2] In framing his work, Choudry prominently features a wide range of thinkers,

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[1] Aziz Choudry, *Learning Activism: the Intellectual Life of Contemporary Social Movements*, (North York: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 9; Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 2.
[2] Choudry, *Learning Activism*, xi–xvi.

including: Alan Sears, Robin D.G. Kelley, Gary Kinsman, Angela Davis, Ellen Wood, Antonio Gramsci, Franz Fanon. Beyond these engagements, Choudry positions his engagements in conversation with the work of scholars and activists whose research and writing are sometimes gathered under the umbrella of social movement studies, namely: Chris Dixon, Harsha Walia, Scott Neigh, Eric Shragge, Anandi Ramamurthy, and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. Weaving these threads together with his own activism, Choudry presents a number of key themes that resonate with my experiences and inform my approach: learning by doing; building activist archives; taking a non-romanticizing view of the praxes of social movements by not overlooking the tensions and contradictions that suffuse activist spaces and networks; focusing on the collective work of movement building/knowledge production more than elevating certain individuals as "leaders" and/or fetishizing the "single author"; examining the stated values of a social movement/network/organization/collective in light of everyday practices; attending to the geographic unevenness of scholarly accounts of movements in light of the long-standing global influences of anti-colonial resistance and Indigenous resurgence; emphasizing the relational/dialectical character of theory-making as it unfolds in practice; engaging with social movements' critical mappings of power; understanding the enduringly historical dimensions of movements through archiving and engaging with creative and artistic forms of knowledge; focusing on the micropolitics of strategic learning in movement spaces; and not artificially dividing intellectual/mental labor from the manual/embodied work of organizing. In the end, Choudry "intervene[s] directly into these politics of knowledge production by arguing that theoretical and experiential forms of knowledge can enrich each other and that that academy does not have a monopoly on research and knowledge production of social movements and social change."[3]

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[3] Choudry, *Learning Activism*, 39.

Nagar takes a different tack that Choudry, not least on account of her prominent emphasis on feminist critiques of epistemology and knowledge production. Situating her work with regard to the tendency of "academic logics [to] become locked into pure theoretical positions and loyalties," Nagar argues:

> [T]he journeys in and through which the complexities of solidarity and responsibility are felt, known (however, partially), and struggled with, either get relegated to methodological appendices of critical ethnographies or articles on "action" research, or they are dismissed a priori as invalid or unworthy of academic discussion. Such segregated conversations also serve to reinforce the problematic division between "abstract thinking" and "concrete doing."[4]

In addition to an emphasis on "journeys"––one which I echo in my centering of the notion of "the trip" and my inclusion of personal/political narratives throughout the dissertation–– Nagar is unequivocal in her critique of "the lenses that academics deploy to address questions of epistemic hierarchies."[5] Beyond "betray[ing] the logic and investments emanating from our own locations," Nagar argues that the violent reproduction of epistemic hierarchies privileges "metropolitan knowledges [...] as 'sophisticated' [...] where nonmetropolitan knowledges are perceived as 'raw data' or stories that need to be framed and put into perspective by the formally certified intellectual."[6] Working to unsettle such hierarchies, Nagar bends traditional scholarly genres and forms and blends them with a wide array of materials––letters, poems, translations, images––to produce what she terms an "academic memoir," namely, "a self-conscious attempt [...] to become radically vulnerable" while simultaneously centering and emphasizing the political and intellectual challenges of co-authorship, translation, border and boundary crossing, dialogues across multiple locations, and modes of theorizing that are rooted in storytelling and the affective dimensions of collaborative knowledge production.[7]

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[4] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 2.
[5] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 3.
[6] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 3.
[7] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 6.

Drawing on a number of key thinkers––including Gayatri Spivak, Linda Martín Alcoff, Chandra Mohanty, M. Jacqui Alexander, Patricia Connolly-Shaffer, and Naomi Scheman–– Nagar (along with Susan Geiger) proposes a notion of "situated solidarities" as a way to "attend to the radical contingencies of time and place while also resisting simplistic assumptions about shared political sensitivities or agendas."[8] In lieu of donning either the mantle of activist scholarship or proposing "a methodological engagement with questions such as 'how to' undertake transnational feminist studies or alliance work across the borders of academia and activism," Nagar's anti-hierarchical work instead grapples with the ethical and political conundrums brought on by scholarly complicity with epistemic violence. I took a mutualistic and collaborative approach to working with the Laboratorio, one which both acknowledges and politicizes the intimacies and institutional structures through which I came to be present in the Bologna. In light of Nagar's critique of epistemic violence, I note that my approach also highlights the role played by complicity. As much as I am constantly reminded of the risks that come with situated solidarities, I also understand the potential to frame complicity as an embodiment of a transfeministqueer politics of relationship rooted in the self-aware and reflexive practice of being an accomplice.[9] Of course, I also inhabit both a specific positionality as a non-binary and queer person, but, owing to my role as an institutionally connected researcher, it is necessary to specify that my approach to the work of narrative the life of the collective is characterized much more as a process of "working with" than a practice of "working on" the Laboratorio. Of course, this characterization is in no way

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[8] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 4. Nagar notes the resonance of "situated solidarities" with "Chela Sandoval's notion of 'differential consciousness,' Carole Boyce Davies's 'critical relationality,' Sara Ahmed's 'ethical encounters," and Jodi Dean's 'reflective solidarity'" (5).
[9] In addition to being shaped by my conversations with Babs Mazzotti, this understanding of complicity is informed by: *Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex (An Indigenous Perspective)*, 2nd ed., (Indigenous Action Media, 2014).

devoid of the vulnerabilities, risks of betrayal, and complex responsibilities that Nagar's work

highlights.

To this end, Nagar proposes a "politics without guarantees [...] rooted in a praxis of

radical vulnerability that is committed to opening up spaces for negotiation by always

returning us to the ethics of how and why one comes to a story and to its variable tellings and

retellings."[10] Nagar's emphasis on variable tellings and retellings leads me to reflect on several

aspects of how I narrate my encounters with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and its members,

especially by way of emphasizing: building comradely friendship and trust while

simultaneously confronting "the ever-present possibility of distrust and epistemic violence";

undertaking to support and sustain Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's utopian world-building

while "continuously recogniz[ing] hopelessness and fears"; and undertaking a research

journey that traverses both national and interpersonal borders and boundaries "even as each

person on the journey learns of borders they cannot cross."[11] Several key methodological

choices emerge on account of (and with accountability to/for) the tensions that both Nagar

and Choudry bring forward: (1) I do not present my account of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti's

emergence and evolution as either definitive or authoritative; (2) I emphasize the concepts,

narratives, histories, and ideas that Smaschieramenti comrades have developed and shared

with me as theory-in-translation and theory-in-practice rather than as "raw data" in need of

scholarly approbation; (3) while being mindful of contradictions and the gaps between

practice and principle, I do not undertake to expose every internal conflict of which I became

aware during my research or to scrutinize individual members for their mistakes or failures;

and (4) even as I present this research as a piece of original scholarship, which is inevitably

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[10] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 14.
[11] Nagar, *Muddying the Waters*, 5.

conditioned by the individualizing nature of academic research and shaped by the extractive logics of institutional knowledge production, I emphasize my intentions and commitment to present this work in such a way that it may be of use to the Laboratorio and to the networks of which it is a part and that it may serve as the basis for an ongoing conversation about the contradictions of collaborative work across multiple types of borders and boundaries.[12]

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My participation in the everyday social and political life of the Laboratorio during my time in Bologna provides the basis for my understanding and interpretation of a heterogeneous body of work collected both within the Eccentric Archive, which grounded Chapters 2 and 3, and on the various web-based platforms maintained by the Laboratorio, which, alongside the interviews, are the primary focus of this chapter. Given my emphasis on *auto-inchiesta*, I note that, during my time in Bologna, the Laboratorio was not actively pursuing a particular *percorso di auto-inchiesta*, apart from the work we were doing on the Eccentric Archive, which, as I noted in Chapter 2, included a limited *auto-inchiesta* into the relations between academia and activism. Instead, 2015 was a largely transitional moment during which Atlantide was involved in negotiations with the municipal government of Bologna to relocate to a new space. The collapse of these negotiations culminated in the eviction of the space from its historical home at Porta Santo Stefano 6a, which is the focus of Chapters 5 and 6. My ability to engage with these processes, praxes, and materials and to translate their political and contextual significance for an anglophone audience is part and parcel of the shared experiences of assemblies, demonstrations, parties, informal gatherings,

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[12] For more on these conversations and on the positionality of some of the core members of the collective, see Alessia Acquistapace et al., "Nervous Breakdown."

in short, everything that constitutes the life of the Laboratorio and of the space in which it was housed prior to the eviction.

My active participation as a member of the Laboratorio and researcher began in March 2015 and culminated in the eviction of Atlantide at the hands of the police in October 2015. Prior to the eviction, I conducted nearly forty hours of interviews with sixteen comrades of Smaschieramenti and with one member of Nulla Osta, the punk collective that also called Atlantide home.[13] Though Atlantide had also been home to a separatist collective of women and lesbians––Clitoristrix/Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno––I only conducted one interview with a former member of that collective who had subsequently joined Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. These interviews took an open and dialogical format based on my preliminary knowledge of the Laboratorio and questions arising from my early participation in weekly assemblies. As both my language skills and my knowledge of the basic functioning of the Laboratorio, the space of Atlantide, and the social/political context improved, I revised the interview schedule (Appendix C) and settled on semi-structured format organized around three general areas of inquiry. The first set of questions focused on each comrade's path of arrival to the Laboratorio and their knowledge of the space's history; the second highlighted the origins of the Laboratorio and the praxes with which the collective unfolded a series of transversal *percorsi politici* (political pathways), campaigns, and networks and which characterize the distinctiveness of a transfeministqueer autonomous politics vis-a-vis both contemporary and historical modes of politics and institutionalized approaches to queer knowledge production; the third focused on the ongoing threat of eviction and its consequences for the collectives of

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[13] With two exceptions––namely, my interviews with A.G. Arfini and Roger Fiorilli––all interviews were conducted in Italian.

Atlantide. Since the completion of the fieldwork, the interviews have been transcribed and I have reviewed and coded them into nearly 100 distinctive topics/areas of concern.

During the course of my fieldwork, I regularly attended the weekly assemblies of Smaschieramenti, followed and engaged with multiple listservs associated with the collective and its wider networks, participated in/co-organized numerous public demonstrations, attended several parties in the space, and, in July 2015, traveled to the semi-annual *campeggia* organized by SomMovimento nazioAnale, which is a space where transfeministqueer collectives and individual activists from around Italy and Europe converge both to develop new areas of political practice and inquiry and also to share strategies, experiences, and insights from the diverse experiences of ongoing campaigns. As I discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, these various dimensions of the political lifeworld of the Laboratorio constitute an ecology of praxis, which is itself rooted in Atlantide, as I described in Chapter 3. The notions of an ecology of praxis and queer urban ecology enable me to understand the interdependence and experimental nature of the approach to politics described in this chapter. While they are in many ways distinctive, the whole ensemble of the Laboratorio's transfeministqueer articulation of autonomy is itself inseparable from the historical and geographic contexts and situations from which it emerged, even as it constitutes a decisive and necessary move beyond them. In keeping with Stengers's understanding of the ecology of practices in relation to contemporary science, the ensemble that I refer to as transfeministqueer autonomy is not a singular frame of reference meant to eclipse either the previous articulations of autonomy or of queer theory.[14] Instead, the everyday praxis of transfeministqueer autonomy establishes conditions for the transversal operation of specific modes of experimentation and contamination across a range of political, social, and

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[14] Stengers, "Ecology of Practices."

intellectual fields. In this sense, the self-designation of the Laboratorio *as* a laboratory is both a nod to the political ethos that imbues the wider area autonomous praxis and an embrace of an experimental approach to politics that seeks to surface new questions related to sexuality, gender, the social reproduction of movements for self-determination, and the rapport between activist and academic modes of knowledge production and everyday struggle.

The ecology comprised of the various praxes operative in the Laboratorio is in no small part held together through the weekly assemblies. Of all of these aspects of my participation in the Laboratorio, the assemblies were the foundation of my understanding of the everyday life of the Laboratorio. Held every Wednesday night at Atlantide, the assemblies were the primary venue in which I witnessed the sustained and complex process of developing analytics and approaches through the political process described throughout this chapter. The assemblies were also the occasions on which I spent the most time in the physical space of Atlantide.

As is customary in Bologna, assemblies generally began a minimum of thirty minutes after the appointed hour––typically 7:00 pm––and often lasted until midnight or later. While generally remaining focused on the issues/organizational discussed over the closed collective listserv during the time between assemblies––planning a party to sustain the Laboratorio financially, writing a document/call for a demonstration, interpreting an institutional political development, planning a demonstration, revisiting a demonstration, organizing a reading group, and so on––the assemblies themselves rarely followed a strict agenda. The assemblies were, instead, meetings where points of focus for the Laboratorio––whether organizational, theoretical, practical––were turned over again and again until a workable decision or way forward was reached. A profound amount of political experience and creativity circulated in the room on a weekly basis. The ability of the group to make space for the distinctive

contributions of those present was remarkable in comparison to other organizing spaces in which I have participated, even though there were occasions where one person's perspective was accorded dominance, often on account of the length of their time in the Laboratorio. While it is distinctly possible that my initial assessment of the assemblies is somewhat romanticized on account of my initially limited knowledge of both the language and the style of politics that I was witnessing, my lasting impressions from the assemblies are that they are spaces that function according to deeply internalized understandings of both counter-hegemonic political traditions and an ongoing willingness to engage in meaningful processes of dissent, reflexivity, and holding each other accountable. Of course, these praiseworthy modalities are not the only forces that shape the assembly, so much as they are consistent refrains, points to which the assembly consistently returns, even when conflicts, failures, and mistakes threatened to overwhelm the group. In short, the arc of any regular meeting and, to some extent, the assembly overall, is organic in that it involves the commingling of various skills, personal/political histories, and intellectual and experiential investments of those present in distinctive ways, depending on the central focus. The assembly is a space for exploring every angle of an issue, which can be an overwhelming experience. Yet, somehow, the most compelling approach emerges and suggests the next step, the next moment, the action, the movement to come.

If Bologna itself is a school of activism, then the assemblies were like transfeministqueer night classes: a point of orbital return, a space-time for necessarily face-to-face, embodied and affective encounters; they are sustenance, a source renewal for the commitment to Atlantide and to the wider constellation of spaces of which it was a part. Recalling Choudry's framing of activist knowledge production, I experienced the assemblies as a core dimension of a distinctive kind of political education, one which enabled me to

release the need to understand everything that was unfolding in front of me and to learn by doing. As with any new member of the Laboratorio, my learning curve was steep. Throughout my time in Bologna, I rarely spoke in assemblies. Most of my direct contributions to the Laboratorio––such as the work toward organizing the archive and using it as the basis for an *auto-inchiesta* focused on intellectual labor at the summer 2015 *campeggia*––were made outside the assemblies proper, in one-on-one meetings and conversations and/or in smaller groups, which I described in Chapter 2. I largely worked around the edges. My goals were to learn and to share skills and to engage in experiments and knowledge exchanges in which I could draw on my own experiences of organizing and scholarly work in the North American context. The assemblies themselves not only helped me to build my practical skills (language, especially) but also to deepen my trust in myself and in the comrades. Alongside the other areas of the activist life-world that I inhabited in Bologna, the assemblies helped me to chart a course for the work of the dissertation, namely by showing me how collective subjects elaborate, adapt, mutate, and contaminate the praxes of historical autonomy in order to meet the demands of their own political contexts, cope with life circumstances, and respond to the conjunctural specificities of the contemporary political landscape.

As the core of the everyday life of the Laboratorio, assemblies build the capacity of the group to produce or enact something greater than what might be realized by any one person present. The particular modality of the collective-in-assembly was one of the most revealing dimensions of my experience. Given my interest in understanding how the Laboratorio functioned as a site of knowledge production, it is remarkable how both the form and the feeling of the assemblies contrasted my experiences of institutionalized learning environments. The process by which ideas emerged, circulated, and were refined and alchemized into action––a delicate, yet robust, consensus-driven process––was not free from

power dynamics or positional tensions, of course. Such dynamics often reflected to the distinctive political formations and commitments of each member. For example, during the early part of my fieldwork, there was an ongoing reflection on the Laboratorio's participation in a European-wide mobilization for a social strike. While some members sought to prioritize a transfeministqueer effort to contaminate this overwhelmingly masculine network, others felt that it would be preferable to disengage and focus on building coalitions with other feminist groups in Bologna. While the Laboratorio eventually decided to follow the latter course, this shift was not immediate and required reiteration and rearticulation of the core commitments of the collective. Alternately, when comrades or friends in extended activist networks were confronting difficulties or crises in their everyday lives, there would often be divergent opinions related to what forms of material and emotional support the Laboratorio, as a whole, was both willing and able to offer, which is something I discuss further below in relation to the praxis of *neomutualismo*. Almost invariably, if the assembly could not reach a consensus, individual members would endeavor to support the comrades in whatever way they could. Lastly, when specific instances of aggression or violence arose––which, while infrequent, threw the Laboratorio's core commitment to addressing gender-based violence into significant question––there were often divergent and polarized opinions about how to proceed. As occurs in organizing spaces, including queer and feminist spaces, in a wide variety of contexts, positions ranged from silence to banning perpetrators to facilitating mediation to focusing on the structural dimensions of the particular incident in question.[15] Throughout each of these conflicts that I witnessed or became aware of during my time in Bologna, I was

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[15] My understanding of these dynamics has subsequently been deeply impacted by A.J. Withers, *Transformative Justice and/as Harm*, (Toronto: Rebuild Printing, 2014). See also: CrimethInc, "Breaking the Impasse Around Assault and Abuse in Anarchist Scenes," *CrimethInc*, April 17, 2013, https://crimethinc.com/2013/04/17/accounting-for-ourselves-breaking-the-impasse-around-assault-and-abuse-in-anarchist-scenes.

nonetheless struck by the widely shared commitment to showing up for difficult

conversations.[16] Overall, the assembly clearly embodied a shared commitment to horizontality

and to an ethos which placed collective wisdom before individualized or competitive claims to

knowledge and knowing. Still, peace was not always achieved before decisions were made and

the Laboratorio was not unburdened by the weight of its previous missteps and failures. Even

so, such missteps and failures did not grind the assembly to a halt. In fact, the opposite was

often the case, the tendency toward burnout was stronger than any impulse to a

deliberateness that risked inertia.

    Stepping into an assembly that had been active for nearly a decade, I had to suspend

my preconceived notions of politics in order to attune to the distinctiveness of what I was

witnessing. This is not to say that the environment was utterly unfamiliar. I was, for the most

part, surrounded by university-educated people. The majority of the approximately fifteen

active members of the Laboratorio at the time were white, born in Italy, and in their 20s and

30s.[17] Members' positions are varied, with some members having been raised in relatively

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[16] One such example, which pertains less to the internal dynamics of the Laboratorio than its engagements with other collectivities, unfolded in the wake of a performative presentation by the Spanish group Battonz on Valerie Solanas's SCUM Manifesto. For reasons I will not detail here, numerous of the members of the collective found aspects of the performance problematic. So, in the assembly following the performance, the Laboratorio set aside its other business and focused on crafting an alternative reading of the text. Beyond sharing this response publicly, several members of the collective also engaged directly with members of the Battonz to convey aspects of the Laboratorio's critique which were not made public. Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, "Leggere SCUM Oggi – Per Una Lettura Transfemminista Di Valerie Solanas," *smaschieramenti.noblogs.org*, August 29, 2015, https://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/post/2015/08/29/leggere-scum-oggi-per-una-lettura-transfemminista-di-valerie-solanas/; Valerie Solanas, *SCUM Manifesto*, (London: Verso, 2015).

[17] The construction of race in Italy is not the same as the construction of race elsewhere, which, as someone steeped in the white supremacist logics that undergird racism in North America, took me a while to grasp. So, while I describe members of the collective as "white," I do so with a clear understanding that those who migrated from the south of Italy to the north, who were children of such migrants, or whose families still live in the south, had invariably been impacted by the powerful stereotypes and racializing logics that mark historical patterns of "internal" migration in Italy. The whitening of Italian emigrants to North America, which is a part of my own family's history, informs my caveats here. Beyond the distinct lived experiences of the Laboratorio's members, the Smaschieramenti's anti-racist politics is deeply informed by collective critiques of the construction of Italian national identity and belonging. Those critiques are mobilized, in part, by the Laboratorio's ongoing engagement and solidarity with other collectives, like the Bologna-based migrant organizing group Coordinamento Migranti and XM24's self-organized Italian-language classes for migrants. As far as Italy's colonial legacies are concerned, these were not central to the analyses that I encountered during my time in Bologna, though such critiques do

wealthy families and others having poor and working-class upbringings. Even so, nearly every member of the collective––including those with university degrees––was either precariously employed or unemployed, with only a precious few of the older members having access to secure jobs. In terms of educational background, many members had attended the University of Bologna, had read many of the same texts, and had participated in other forms of political organizing before coming to the Laboratorio. At the same time, there was very little intellectual snobbery and few perceptible traces of elitism. Most importantly, everybody shared a commitment to feminist and queer ways of thinking and doing both life and politics. Even so, a common viewpoint on conceptual matters and political strategies was neither a given nor a prerequisite for participation in the Laboratorio. For example, some members of the collective recounted to me their initial disinterest in particular kinds of intellectual engagement because of the way it was taught in institutionalized environments; others explained that, given the intellectual character of their paid work, the Laboratorio offered them a space to listen and to engage in activities like cleaning, maintenance, and other forms of social reproduction; still others engaged in all aspects of the assembly with a sense of self-possession that reflected experience in politics rooted as far back as primary school. To be part of a collective with such a depth of experience did, at times, engender feelings of doubt and uncertainty, not least on account of the relatively more rigorous––if quite traditional––philosophical training that those members of the collective who did have university degrees had received during the course of their studies.

circulate as part of extended research networks in which numerous members of the Laboratorio participate and through which non-members have maintained close relationships with the Laboratorio. For more on the mutual construction of race and gender in Italy, especially with regard to Italy's imperial legacies, see: Gaia Giuliani, *Race, Nation and Gender in Modern Italy: Intersectional Representations in Visual Culture*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Roberto Dainotto, *Europe (in Theory)*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Lucia Re, "Italians and the Invention of Race: The Poetics and Politics of Difference in the Struggle Over Libya, 1890–1913," *California Italian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 1–59.

Quite practically, language was a major initial stumbling block, though it was initially (and paradoxically) much easier to speak about complex intellectual matters than everyday life. While I had a very basic working knowledge of the Italian language when I arrived in Bologna, both the interviews and the assemblies functioned as "crash courses" not just in the language itself, but in the particular lexicon of the Laboratorio. In a very real sense, I learned the language through the process of interviewing people and through deep listening during the course of assemblies.[18] I often had help during both assemblies and interviews in translating key words or references which might have otherwise been beyond the grasp of *any* non-specialized speaker, regardless of their first language (e.g., references to particular passages in the life of the collective, slang, names of local activists or political figures).[19] The language gap certainly heightened my awareness that I could not take my sense of common understanding too far. Commonality became a way to enter the conversation. Beyond commonality, the mode of translation, both literally and politically, became a way to stay in the conversation. One of the primary ways that I reallocated personal resources to the collective even at a distance is through this work of translation. In that sense, while the ideas gathered in this chapter are irreducibly a "product" of the collective work of the Laboratorio, my effort to arrange them into this narrative and to situate them within particular academic discussions represents my contribution to the collective itself.

The interviews themselves were a helpful barometer of my integration into the life of the Laboratorio. I conducted my first interview after nearly two months in Bologna, in Italian. I conducted my second interview shortly thereafter with a comrade fluent in English. Nearly

[18] I also, and in no small part, learned by spending time with Simone and reading children's books and watching dubbed cartoons. Further, I attended free Italian language classes at the Centro Amilcar Cabral and undertook a significant amount of auto-didactic learning.

[19] I also would like to acknowledge the support of Marilia Faraone, who pointed me to numerous language acquisition resources during my time in Bologna.

256

all subsequent interviews were conducted in Italian of which approximately half involved the presence of a bilingual translator, who was most often Babs Mazzotti. None of the interviews was translated simultaneously. In many ways, the very basic challenge of understanding has, in the long run, proven to be a benefit. It has slowed my naturalized assumptions about the meaning of particular terms and heightened my attention to the reality that all fieldwork involves bridging a certain gap of understanding, if not literal translation. The long and arduous process of reading, coding, and analyzing the transcribed interviews has, in many ways, illuminated the value of this first phase of just being with the words, stepping into the flow of conversation without the expectation of understanding everything at once. The misunderstandings have, in this sense, been liberating.

Throughout the entire scope of the interview process, which eventually involved nearly every active member of the Laboratorio present in Bologna during my fieldwork, my constant refrain and desire was to strive for the cultivation of connections and conversations which would form mutually beneficial, or at least non-extractive, exchanges. As with the work of archive-making, I came to understand this refrain not just as a more or less virtuous desire, but as an ethical responsibility quite closely knitted into the very mode in which the research itself unfolded as a mutualistic collaboration. Understanding each instance of the fieldwork as a form of collaboration––albeit one without guarantees, to invoke Nagar's formulation–– demanded that I quite quickly stabilize the format of the interviews themselves, even if my aspiration was not a "data set" that would be subject to quantitative analysis, but a rich narrative web that might help me make sense out of a largely unfamiliar approach to politics in a context that was new to me. Though I would not have initially imagined it, the interviews themselves were also a kind of contribution to the collective.[20] Activism does not often leave

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[20] I am grateful to the Smaschieramenti comrades who pointed this out to me.

much time for self-reflection, even when it is rooted in recursive efforts at reflexivity. Many comrades informally told me that their experiences of the interviews were helpful insofar as they provided an opportunity to construct a narrative of individual *percorsi politici* that had led them to the Laboratorio in the first place. While there can be no doubt that the interviews were taxing in some ways––they often lasted nearly three hours and many required two sessions to complete––they were conducted in a spirit of mutual benefit and accountability that exceeded the formal ethical requirements established by the university.

The more stable semi-structured schedule of interview questions (Appendix C) took shape after five initial interviews and remained in place for the subsequent eleven interviews, which I completed at the end of August 2015, shortly before I returned to Canada.[21] The shift in format and focus throughout the interview process was, in part, a response to the organic evolution of my needs and positionality as a researcher, my ongoing effort to learn the language, and my role as a member of the Laboratorio. I had arrived to "the field," of course, with specific sets of questions both for comrades and for myself as a researcher. As perhaps with all fieldwork, my ability to forecast the most relevant pathways to follow or points to track could only have been solidified once I was actually embedded in the situation itself.[22]

In short, my effort to bring together my intellectual, personal, and political commitments in this research has been a very messy process, not least because my

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[21] The earliest interviews had a more exploratory and dialogical character. They functioned not only as a check on my understanding of events as they were unfolding in any given moment––for example, why a particular group was staging a demonstration in Bologna at which we would be counter-demonstrating––but also to help become more immediately familiar with how those moments should (or could) inform a more stable format for subsequent interviews. The process was iterative: The more I saw action rooted in praxis, the better equipped I became to understand abstract or theoretical articulations of the contours of that praxis in itself. The early interviews also served the very practical, and very human, need to connect with members of the Laboratorio beyond the everyday spaces of assemblies and demonstrations, parties, and informal gatherings.
[22] Many of the initial research questions that I formulated in the earliest phases of the fieldwork were outcomes of conversations with Mazzotti, whose experience, both in the Laboratorio and in the wider social movement context of Bologna and Italy, invariably shaped the scope and focus of this project.

attachments both to the personal and political relationships have shifted significantly since this research began. With both Choudry's and Nagar's framings of activist and feminist research in mind, these shifts only begin to make sense to me in light of the parts of the research which were *just life*, the parts of the research that implicated me beyond any pretense of scholarly detachment, the aspects of my presence in Bologna that were deeply contingent upon the (in)stability of relations that exceeded the scope of the research. Long before I imagined that my institutional research would bring me to the politically occupied spaces of the transfeministqueer autonomous movement in Bologna––and far beyond either voluntarism or mere academic interest––my primary attachment to that place was intimately relational.

It was, of course, extraordinarily difficult to try to balance the multiple, and highly asymmetrical, roles that I found myself trying to inhabit before, during, and after my time in Bologna: partner, researcher, comrade, co-parent, unicorn auntie, translator, temporary resident, witness, family member. Looking back, it feels dangerous to invoke those moments because they mark the distance between all that I imagined would be possible and the failures and contingencies that characterize my experiences as they actually unfolded. Mapping this distance, tracing this spiral of time, is, however, necessary. This is surely the kind of existential dilemma that has also confronted many of the comrades in light of their own relational reconfigurations to both the Laboratorio and the space itself prompted by the eviction, which I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6.[23]

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[23] Indeed, years later, several comrades have either shifted their way of participating or have left the Laboratorio altogether. While this is not the place to tell those stories of departure, not least because they are not my stories to tell, I want to note that the interval between the end of the fieldwork and the conclusion of this dissertation has not only presented individualized challenges for me, but collective reconfigurations for the Laboratorio as a whole.

At this juncture, turning back to the period that preceded the eviction seems to be a necessary step toward understanding the consequential nature of the labor, insights, challenges, failures, and (dis)identifications that inform this chapter as an historical re-membering of the Laboratorio in the months just prior to the eviction. So, while this chapter is an account of Smaschieramenti's birth and of its recomposition of historical modes of politics and collective subjectivation, it is also traversed by death, loss, confusion, depression, and anxiety. I write to honor both that which I long to revisit and to invoke that which I would, on most days, rather not think about. The very act of returning to this material years after the fact constitutes part of my own politicized understanding of the meaning of Smaschieramenti: Un-masking and de-masculinization. I have continued this journey in conversation with the *laboratorio* that lives within me and in an echo of the Laboratorio that lived within Atlantide.

Auto-inchiesta and Auto-coscienza

Before exploring the particular conjuncture in which Smaschieramenti was born and the evolution of its politics over the last decade, I want to contextualize the transfeministqueer adaption of the praxis of *auto-inchiesta* with respect to the historical evolution of *auto-inchiesta* as a core method of *autonomia* and to discuss its relationship to the feminist praxis of *auto-coscienza*. Historically, as Smaschieramenti comrade Flavia Politi explained it to me, the praxis of *auto-inchiesta* is drawn from the *operaismo* methodology of *inchiesta operaia* (workers' inquiry), which was used by intellectuals "to enter into contact with laborers, with workers in the factories...and to specify [*individuare*] the forms of exploitation that emerged specifically

within the factories."[24] This process is very much one of subject-making at the intersection of radical sociological research and political organizing. Alongside the development of the praxis of *inchiesta operaia*––which, following Jamie Woodcock, might be read as an approach "from above"––early *operaismo* also involved the tactic of *co-ricerca*, or co-research, which might be understood as an approach "from below."[25] Where *inchiesta operaia* involves the use of classical tools of social science, like the survey, albeit without the metanarrative and statistical aspirations of mainstream institutionalized social science, *co-ricerca* emphasizes collaboration with the "subjects" of the research.[26] In some sense, both *auto-inchiesta* and *co-ricerca* are meant to provoke reflection, to gather information, and to pose questions, in short, to take a productive role in enabling the process of collective subjectivation and, in turn, the self-determination of those subjects.

In the context of industrial capitalism and the particular historical situation of Italy as a rapidly industrializing country following the defeat of fascism in WWII, *operaismo* emphasized the use of such strategies both to imagine and to constitute, especially outside the traditional structures of political parties and labor unions, a subject with an historical agency exceeding any determinate role, especially if such a role was imagined to be governed solely by the abstract laws of capital. In this sense, and building on the work of early *operaismo*, autonomous Marxism more squarely emphasized the process of subjectivation itself without abandoning inquiries into the very ways in which workers understood, engaged in, and

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[24] Flavia Politi, two-part interview with the author, June 25, 2015/August 19, 2015. See also: Asad Haider and Salar Mohandesi, "Workers' Inquiry: A Genealogy," *Viewpoint Magazine*, September 27, 2013, https://www.viewpointmag.com/2013/09/27/workers-inquiry-a-genealogy/; Steve Wright, "Italian Workerism and Its Enduring Legacy: Steve Wright Interview," *Notes from Below*, January 29, 2018, https://notesfrombelow.org/article/italian-workerism-and-its-enduring-legacy-steve-wr.
[25] Jamie Woodcock, "The Workers' Inquiry From Trotskyism to *Operaismo*: A Political Methodology for Investigating the Workplace," *Ephemera Theory and Politics in Organization* 14, no. 3 (2014): 505.
[26] Gigi Roggero, "Notes on Framing and Re-Inventing Co-Research," *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 14, no. 3 (2014): 515–23.

resisted particular modes of production and forms of capitalist alienation and exploitation. In this matrix, the contradictions of capitalism and the problems posed by its persistent incorporation of efforts to overcome these contradictions posed problems both for organizing a supposedly historically determined subject (i.e., the working-class) and for understanding how the (re)formation of that subject might be undertaken through an emphasis on antagonism, self-determination, and self-organization. As Bologna-based autonomous thinker Franco "Bifo" Berardi has it, *operaismo*—a term he dislikes because "it reduces the complexity of the social reality to the mere datum of the centrality of industrial workers in the social dynamics of late modernity"––is best understood as entailing a replacement of the "focus on identity" with an emphasis on "the process of becoming" in relation to class struggle.[27] This emphasis on the constitution of new classes (and on new constitutions of class) is why Berardi and others more often refer to *operaismo* as compositionism and why I have used the term recomposition to describe Smaschieramenti's mutational adaptation of autonomous Marxist praxis. Berardi's distinction between identity and subjectivation is relevant not only for an autonomous Marxism, but also has resonances for transfeministqueer autonomy as it is practiced and conceptualized by Smaschieramenti.

The Laboratorio's engagement of *auto-inchiesta* as a primary pathway for developing transfeministqueer autonomous politics is itself evocative of this distinction, especially considering the importance of both historical and contemporary feminist movements for the emergence of the collective, movements that cultivated the praxis of *auto-coscienza* (consciousness raising) much more so than *auto-inchiesta*, not least because of the lack of consciousness among autonomous Marxists of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s for the "becoming" of

[27] Franco Berardi, "What Is the Meaning of Autonomy Today? Subjectivation, Social Composition, Refusal of Work," *Republic Art*, September 2003, http://republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/berardi01_en.htm.

women, queers, and other people minoritized along the lines of gender/sexuality. The shared

prefix *auto-* is particularly important because it emphasizes the extent to which the

subjectivity/subjectivities of the group conducting the inquiry must be a reflexive part of the

inquiry itself. Whereas early *operaista* thinkers perhaps took their role in investigating the

situation of "the workers" more for granted, such an assumption is untenable for

Smaschieramenti, an anti-identitarian group of transfeministqueer subjects working

outside/beyond of the context of factory labor. In this sense, the transfeministqueer use of

auto-inchiesta owes much more to the autonomous Marxist feminism, known to some as social

reproduction feminisms. The work of Silvia Federici, Mariarosa Dalla Costa and others from

1960s and 1970s onward has demonstrated that it is not only possible, but also necessary, to

develop a Marxism that maintains its historical and materialist methodologies while also

attending to the subject formation of women.[28]

When I asked members of Smaschieramenti why the Laboratorio chose to engage in

auto-inchiesta, rather than *auto-coscienza*, which might have superficially seemed like a more

obvious genealogy, I received a variety of responses. Common to all of them was a distinction

between the purportedly "internal" focus of *auto-coscienza* on establishing an enunciative

position for subjects sharing/seeking a common identification *as women*. While many

comrades indicated that the process of *auto-inchiesta* also necessitates starting from

oneself/ourselves (*partiamo da sè*), most viewed *auto-inchiesta* in terms of a definitive trajectory

toward ostensibly "external" political action and toward the generation of questions aimed at

understanding the historical situation of the production of subjectivities from an anti-

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[28] A number of postcolonial feminists have also contributed to this debate, see, for example: Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"; Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anticapitalist Struggles," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 2 (2003): 499–535, https://doi:10.1086/342914; M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, (New York City: Routledge, 1997).

identitarian perspective. Rather than seeing the intention of the praxis as the development of a political or subjective consciousness *as* a particular subject, *auto-inchiesta* translates a variety of subjective views on a common problematic into an agenda for transversal political action. Transversal politics is not contingent upon a singular collective identification within a mutually agreed upon and pre-constituted field of political action.[29]

It is difficult to say precisely how significant the distinction between *auto-inchiesta* and *auto-coscienza* is for the particular approach of Smaschieramenti over time, not least because the majority of the members of the collective at the time I was conducting interviews did not have direct experience of *auto-coscienza*. Nonetheless, some had engaged in *auto-coscienza* in other areas of the movement and all had an informed awareness of its general tendencies and its significance in the broader feminist movement. Nobody indicted *auto-coscienza* as such and nobody denied the historical efficacy of the praxis for either the development of the feminist movement since the 1970s or for the institutional and non-institutional victories it achieved. Nonetheless, many viewed *auto-coscienza* alone as insufficient for the contemporary conjuncture in which the politics of gender and sexuality had significantly evolved alongside the very conditions under which a variety of subjectivities have been "put to work" in the service of neoliberal capital.

Given that *auto-coscienza* was consolidated as a political praxis in a context of social and economic transformations in the post-War/post-Fordist period, its contemporary signification was strongly determined by the realities of the social role of women in general during that period. In its historical from, *auto-coscienza* responded to a situation in which women were still largely excluded both materially from the labor force and ideologically in

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[29] A very small number of feminist academics have written about transversal politics *as such* for anglophone audiences. For one example that specifically names transversality as a Bolognese approach, see Yuval-Davis, "What Is 'Transversal Politics'?."

the development of *operaismo*. The latter exclusion, in particular, in no way suggests that *auto-inchiesta* was *more* readily amenable to transfeministqueer inquiries, quite the opposite. Still, given the historical predominance of *auto-coscienza* for some strands of autonomous feminism, its influence could, perhaps, be taken more for granted in any collective project taking shape amid the significant structural and intimate reconfigurations that were unfolding during the lifespan of Atlantide and its collectives. Overall, *auto-coscienza*'s influence had much less to do with demanding inclusion than with interrogating patriarchy as a violent force utilized by autonomists and right-wing actors to delimit "proper" political, economic, and intellectual subjects.

For the purposes of my genealogy of Smaschieramenti's praxes, I do not want to draw a bright-line distinction between *auto-inchiesta* and *auto-coscienza*. As Renato Busarello explained it to me, the approach of the Laboratorio is perhaps best understood as oscillating between the two, even if the emphasis is on *auto-inchiesta*. In light of the significance of *inchiesta operaia* for the *operaismo* movement, he explained that:

> [*Auto-inchiesta*] has always been the instrument with which post-*operaismo* has tried to understand the new composition of labor, the productive figure, and so on. However, thinking also of the fact that, in the moment in which we say that the work of *inchiesta* concerns subjectivity in its entirety, it therefore comes to concern life itself. [...] It's a kind of torsion. It becomes very difficult to distinguish *auto-coscienza* from *auto-inchiesta*. Let's say that "classic" *auto-coscienza*, the one which comes from the feminist movement, obviously had its own provenance, another genealogy. And so [our work] is a reflection on this, on how these are different, with limits on one side and on the other. So, ours is an attempt to undertake an *auto-inchiesta* which stands on the bridge [that connects it to] *auto-coscienza* without becoming it.[30]

But what are these two sides? On the one hand, they relate to the notion of separate spheres approach to feminist analysis and its emphasis on public/private, with a tendency to connect *auto-coscienza* to the becoming-public of that which had been relegated to being-private. In the

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[30] Busarello, interview.

context of the contemporary reorganization of labor and of the recursive incorporation of

feminist insights into the nature of social reproduction, the distinction might have more to do

with a strategic negotiation between co-related tendencies in autonomous organizing toward

collective subjectivation in-itself and collective subjectivation for-itself. In other words, both

auto-inchiesta and *auto-coscienza* have to do with the formation of a collective political

subjectivity from distinctive locations within the social fabric. The adaptation for

transfeministqueer *auto-inchiesta* then takes on a distinct significance in the context of the

Laboratorio's adaption of it for a specifically transfeministqueer politics. Busarello continues:

> Neither can we claim [that *auto-inchiesta* is] an instrument of subjectivation
> which is quite so direct, as with the case with *auto-inchiesta operaia*. The moment
> in which you do, in the workplace, obviously the aim is to organize strikes,
> struggles, insubordination. It has an immediate political consequence. On the
> one hand, at this stage, *auto-inchiesta* perhaps no longer finds this immediate
> political consequence. On the other, *auto-coscienza* alone is perhaps not
> sufficient to grasp the putting-to-work [*la messa al lavoro*] of that which is life,
> "the private," which is what *auto-coscienza* tries to propose and collectively
> investigate.[31]

So, amid these divergences and continuities, the two approaches find commonality in the

necessity of understanding one's own layered implication in contemporary arrangements of

capitalism and of reaching that understanding through a process of collective self-inquiry and

questioning. The implications of this commonality become more evident when we turn to the

circumstances that prompted Antagonismo Gay, the gay male collective which had been

operating in Atlantide since its beginnings in the late 1990s, to launch its first *auto-inchiesta*,

which constituted the birth of Smaschieramenti.

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[31] Busarello, interview.

Auto-inchiesta I: Laboratorio sul Desiderio (del) Maschile

Laboratorio Smaschieramenti was not originally created as a standalone entity within

Atlantide. Initially, it was an initiative of Antagonismo Gay launched as a response to the

organization of the Manifestazione Contro la Violenza Maschile sulle Donne––the

Demonstration Opposing Male Violence Against Women a.k.a. "Not In My Name!"––in

November 2007. The November demonstration, as I will call it, not only marked the first time

that the UN-designated International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

was recognized at a national level in Italy, but also witnessed one of the largest feminist

demonstrations in a generation, with some estimates counting upwards of 200,000

participants.

The call within the feminist movement to organize at a national level had been

prompted by the Italian state's instrumentalization of the rape and murder of Giovanna

Reggiani, a bourgeois woman and the wife of a military officer, in October 2007. The

perpetrator was a Roma man of Romanian origin. As Caterina Peroni, a member of the

SomMovimento nazioAnale, recounts, "the problem of security and its link to immigration

became the main topic in the public and political debate [...] The political reaction was

extremely repressive and highly alarmist."[32] The initial passage of a law including provisions

for the expulsion of *both* EU and non-EU citizens from Italy "fostered the process of the

criminalization of immigrants, implying that there was a relationship between foreigners and

the sexual abuse of Italian women."[33] Two subsequent rounds of legislation, in May 2008 and

February 2009, further drove the state's effort to link gender-based violence to racist

immigration policies. Peroni provides a piercing analysis of the "political lexicon and practices

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[32] Caterina Peroni, "Gender-Based Violence and 'Feminicide' in Queer Italian Movements: Questioning Gender, Sexuality, and the (Hetero)Normative Order," *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 5, no. 6 (2015): 1565.
[33] Peroni, "Gender-Based Violence," 1566.

developed in the context of the new wave of feminism in Italy" prompted by the demonstration, with a particular interest in the legal and socio-legal dimensions of terms such as gender-based violence and femicide (*femminicidio*).[34] While her analysis is quite useful for an understanding of the context, my own interest lies more squarely with the particular response prompted by the specification of the demonstration as a non-institutional and separatist demonstration of women and lesbians.

As Goffredo Polizzi, who had been a member of Antagonismo Gay, recounted, organizers of the November demonstration had gone beyond the formal designation of 25 November as a day focused on gender-based violence to specify "*male* violence," a move which he described as prompting reflection within Antagonismo Gay about how not to work *against* the strategic choice of separatism.[35] Instead, they responded to the choice of strategic separatism on the part of the November demonstration by "interrogating the way in which gay males may be involved in the construction of a hegemonic masculinity."[36] This interrogation focused on Antagonismo Gay's own de facto separatist positioning in the political landscape of Italian social movements by addressing the limits of *all* identitarian political positions to confronting issues which implicate *all* social positions. In other words, the distinction between strategic and de facto separatism and/or essentialism came under close scrutiny.[37] The use of *auto-inchiesta* to inquire about the nature of work happening

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[34] Peroni, "Gender-Based Violence," 1560.
[35] Goffredo Polizzi, two-part interview with author, July 9, 2015/July 16, 2015.
[36] Leo Acquistapace, two-part interview with author, June 22, 2015/August 24, 2015.
[37] The concept/practice of strategic separatism is closely related to Spivak's articulation of the concept/practice of "strategic essentialism." Spivak has written that she "thoroughly repudiate[d] the idea of 'strategic essentialism.'" Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias*, (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 260. She made this claim with recourse to an interview in which she engages with anglophone appropriations/interpretations of the term: "So, as a phrase, I have given up on [strategic essentialism]. As to whether I have given up on it as a project, that is a really different idea. I am much more interested now in considering the differences between the sexed subject––female agency, feminist theory––and a variety of individualisms, and their inter-relationships. I'm becoming more interested in that. It seems to me that Marxism is a critique of essentialism, so that when one says old-fashioned Marxism is essentialist, one is talking about 'the site of betrayal.'" Sara Danius, Stefan Jonsson, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak," *Boundary 2* 20, no. 2 (1993): 35.

within movements themselves, was honed using the actual experiences of the collective, filtered through the adaptation of historically rooted activist-intellectual praxis, and directed toward the creation of anti-identitarian approaches to the politics of gender and sexuality.

Even before the November demonstration, Antagonismo Gay's political identity had already been evolving through a series of reading groups and political engagements that had opened participation to subjectivities beyond gay men. Antagonismo Gay had for some time been organizing parties and social events that existed as an alternative to the mainstream gay events one might have found at Cassero, for example, which is the space maintained by ArciGay, the central national gay organization. Nonetheless, from its beginning in the late 1990s, Antagonismo Gay had operated as a gay male collective, meaning that its participants shared a self-identification as gay men.[38] In keeping with a transversal approach, this self-identification definitively did *not* signal disengagement from a wide variety of political issues that exceed an identitarian approach: the war in Iraq, the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the depoliticization of the mainstream gay movement, including Pride "celebrations" both locally and globally, and the racist anti-immigrant politics of the Italian state were all matters of concern taken up within the collective. Neither did the self-identification of the collective in any way signal a disengagement from feminist politics. Instead, in the highly differentiated political landscape of both Bologna and Italy, Antagonismo Gay's position served as a complement to and evolution of historically rooted gay liberation movements, which I discussed at some length in Chapter 3.

As Leo Acquistapace, who had participated in these early reading groups, explained it to me, Antagonismo Gay's openness to other subjectivities "confronted feminism and

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[38] At the time of their formation, the term "queer" was not in use in Italy.

practically [went] beyond––or started to go beyond––the idea of an identitarian collective."[39]

The reading groups had focused on texts by Luigi Parinetto, the French collective Tiqqun,

and, perhaps most notably, Mario Mieli, whose *Elements of a Homosexual Critique* work had

been a touchstone throughout the life of Antagonismo Gay.[40] With the exception of Tiqqun,

each of those authors had already been the subject of study and reflection in preceding years.

The difference, perhaps, in 2007, was not only the sense of a recommencement of feminist

politics at the national level, but also the increasing engagement with a range of queer texts

being translated from English and the arrival of the anglophone term "queer" in both a variety

of mixed social movement spaces and in the mainstream LGBT movement. Given the broadly

non-institutionalized nature of queer and feminist knowledge production in Italy, which I

discussed at the end of Chapter 2, the arrival of these texts was due, in large part, to people

directly or very closely connected to social networks from which Smaschieramenti's eventual

membership would be drawn and sustained.[41]

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[39] Leo Acquistapace, interview with author, June 22, 2015.

[40] Mario Mieli, *Elementi Di Critica Omosessuale*.

[41] I am referring to two things here. First, I am referring to the build-up to the publication of Altera's "Collana di intercultural di genere," a series of books edited by Liana Borghi and Marco Pustianaz which would eventually include both new publications by Italian authors and translations of anglophone queer theory. The series is one manifestation of the workshops that Borghi had been conducting at Il Giardino dei Ciliegi, which I discussed in Chapter 2. Among the books in the series that members of Smaschieramenti and its extended networks either produced or contributed to are: Arfini and Lo Iacono, *Canone Inverso* and Marco Pustianaz, ed., *Queer in Italia. Differenze in Movimento*, (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2011). Second, and relatedly, I am drawing out a point that came up in an interview that I conducted with Federico Zappino, who, in addition to being Judith Butler's Italian translator, is closely connected to Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and has been a central force in establishing a movement-centric academic engagement with queer/gender theory in Italy. In the course of our discussion about queer knowledge production and translation in the Italian context, Zappino placed the initial date of "the intelligibility of 'queer' in Italy" around 1997, which corresponds to the first publication of an Italian translation of Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter*. Elaborating on the impact of this translation, Zappino noted not only the importance of Feltrinelli's prestige as a publisher, but also pointed out the fact that the text had been introduced by a preface from Adriana Cavarero, who holds a professorship in political philosophy at the University of Verna and has been a visiting scholar at University of California Berkeley, New York University, and Harvard University. He further contextualized the 1996 publication of *Corpi che Contano* by noting: "Butler [was published] in 1996, which was followed by a series of publications by Liana Borghi, but not as prestigious as those published by Feltrinelli; they were conference proceedings published by more mercurial small publishing houses. They were publications that you may find in libraries, but certainly not in commercial bookstores. The people who engaged these publications were certainly academics, but they are between academia and activism. For example, Liana Borghi never became a university professor, she always remained a researcher with a relationship to the university; we can say that she was not interested in pursuing academic power. And also [Marco] Pustianaz."

The initial formation of Smaschieramenti must be understood in light of Antagonismo Gay's continual engagement with strands of trans, feminist, and queer organizing *and* thought both in the Italian context and elsewhere and in the more immediately political situation that Peroni describes as demanding that both institutional and autonomous groups "critique the exploitation of Reggiani's murder," especially as it related to "the security framework traditionally applied to gender violence."[42] The state had framed the position of women in terms of both victimization and national belonging, a political choice that highlighted the exploitation of a particular instance of gender-based violence committed by a "non-Italian" notwithstanding the widespread culture of intimate partner violence that certainly predated and endured after Reggiani's rape and murder. Such a framing prompted not only a direct critique of state-based "solutions" to gender-based violence, much less femicide, but also a more sustained effort to push back against a presumed "spatial neutrality of the heterosexual male."[43]

Recalling some of the early planning conversations for the initial meetings of the Laboratorio, Polizzi situated the demonstration as a catalyst to address an existing stagnation that had, to some extent, already taken hold in the everyday life of Antagonismo Gay. Nearly ten years into its collective life, Antagonismo Gay had to confront the emergence of a more recognizable mainstream gay movement increasingly concerned with rights and recognition-based politics, a story that would be familiar to most queer and trans activists with any experience of liberal democracies and market-driven co-optations. The very strategy of antagonism––the capacity and desire to provoke meaningful and broad political

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Federico Zappino, interview with author, August 20, 2015. Judith Butler, *Corpi Che Contano: Il Limiti Discorsivi del Sesso*, trans. Simona Capelli, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1996).

[42] Peroni, "Gender-Based Violence," 1568.

[43] Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, "Cos'è Il Laboratorio Smaschieramenti," *Smaschieramenti.noblogs.org*, September 12, 2009, https://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/post/2009/09/12/cos-il-laboratorio-smaschieramenti/.

dissent/discussion from a particular subject-position––was thrown into question as a more

narrowly mainstream gay movement itself gained some traction and visibility. The

advancement of a mainstream agenda meant that formerly antagonistic positions could easily

be marginalized within/absorbed by a wider political field. In contrast to this tendency, Polizzi

suggested that Smaschieramenti "was a good strategy to…create a disturbance…that could not

be attached to a clear subject."[44] Indeed for activists poised at a crossroads between

celebration of progressive inclusion into a violent state/market game of recognition and

insistent refusal of any politics that traded the critique of racism, sexism, and fascism, whether

state or market driven, the choice would seem obvious. But the basis for that choice was far

from obvious, which is what makes the choice itself political. The internal collective tendency

toward a queer reformulation of anti-identitarian politics had already been ripening in

precisely the moment that calls for the November demonstration circulated. The productive

resonance of minor and major events is a good illustration of what scholar Roderick Ferguson

describes in a U.S.-focused context as an instance "in which multidimensional queer

formations [try] to prevent queerness from becoming the tool of the ruling classes" by

leveraging both the historical memory of social movements and the ability to repurpose that

memory for material circumstances in which its significance is, all of a sudden, back on the

map of official power.[45]

 The confluence of these internal issues and the circumstantial motivation of the

November demonstration posed, in essence, a challenge that was taken up through the

experimental portmanteau of Smaschieramenti. The term itself deserves attention as its

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[44] Polizzi, interview.
[45] Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*.

meaning is not obvious, even in Italian. When I asked Polizzi, whom I interviewed in English, how to approach understanding the name in itself, he responded evocatively:

> I think it's a good name...because you have that [sense] of denaturalizing masculinity, but also take your masculinity *off* of you...so that you can see that it's a mask you are wearing and you yourself can do the work of disidentifying. So, it's really about disidentifying with masculinity or re-identifying with it in a sense that is not "natural." [...] With this disidentifying move, we wanted to say that [male]-assigned people need to be accountable. So, it wasn't just to say, "We, gay men, are not *them*." It was to say, "We, gay men, after all, are men and we can have a crucial role in disidentifying with that normative, oppressive masculinity." And, together with all the other "weird" people who have and investment in masculinity, [we have to] help denaturalize it...Being accountable was one of the main things [...] It's not enough to say, "Well, I'm gay, I'm not participating in that kind of oppressive reproduction of gender." No. A lot of gay people are. So, we wanted to have *"maschile"* in [the name] as a way to be accountable, as a way to say, "Yes, we are, and let's try to do something about it."[46]

The move of denaturalizing, as much as the move of disidentifying, becomes central here. Building on my discussion of Mieli's work in Chapter 3 and my review of the relationship of Ferguson's work to Muñoz's notion of disidentification in Chapter 1, it is important to note that the forms of masculinity put into question in Antagonismo Gay were: (1) those of the mainstream/mixed autonomous movement of the 1990s and early-to-mid-2000s, which existed in close relation to the emergence of post-*operaismo*; (2) those that traversed mainstream gay social spaces; and (3) those that are hegemonic in the overall context of capitalist and colonial hetero-patriarchy, both in Italy and globally. Rather than stabilizing a distinction between two clearly identifiable gendered positions, the initial formation of Smaschieramenti and, indeed, the name of the Laboratorio itself, enabled new political questions, questions that were necessarily posed from a range of subjective positions. As the first flier announcing the activities of the Laboratorio explained:

> Today, the open **rebellion** of lesbian and feminist subjects **calls up** [*interpella*] **other subjectivities:** gay, bisexual, trans, queer, heterosexuals not conforming

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[46] Polizzi, interview.

to heterosexual models. All of these are in some way **implicated in masculinity and in its social and cultural construction**, all are possibly accomplices to an oppression which is perpetuated by traditional or hidden modalities: complicities comprised of looks, words, gestures, codes of silence [*omertà*], silences [*silenzi*].[47]

The most immediate outcome of the initial meetings of the Laboratorio was the development of a survey (*questionario*) which was later distributed in self-organized spaces of the so-called "mixed" social movements in Bologna.

The survey itself consisted of thirty multiple-choice, short answer, and free form questions. The overall tone of the survey tends toward irony, notwithstanding the seriousness of many of the questions. The final page of the survey included two short paragraphs indicating the intended trajectory of the Laboratorio:

> The *laboratorio* wants to draw together [*intrecciare*] various views on masculinity, on the historical and social conditions of its constitution and transformation, to enable the emergence of multiple gender positions, free and self-aware of their partiality, [positions] which do not only look at the themes of violence and dissymmetries of power between men and women or between majorities and minorities.[48]

The *questionario* is perhaps the clearest example of the formative role that the praxis of *auto-inchiesta* played in the formation of the Laboratorio. On the one hand, the creation of the survey was a practical move: The very authorship of the survey is an outcome or "first step" toward opening Antagonismo Gay to other subjectivities. On the other hand, as Viviana Indino explained in an interview, the use of the survey in a broader political context proved to be a provocative political and theoretical effort to "truly experience how the personal becomes political, how the personal is political."[49] Indino's own experience is quite telling of both the personal and the political implications of the praxis of *auto-inchiesta* as applied to the "desire

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[47] Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, "Cos'è Il Laboratorio Smaschieramenti," emphases in original.
[48] Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, "Questionario Sul Desiderio (Del) Maschile," *Smaschieramenti.Noblogs.org*, January 26, 2010, https://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/post/2010/01/26/questionario-sul-desiderio-del-maschile/.
[49] Viviana Indino, interview with author, July 14, 2015.

of/for masculinity," especially in relation to the formation of political subjectivities in different areas of the social movements.

Prior to joining Smaschieramenti, Indino had been a member of Laboratorio Crash, a occupied and self-managed social center (CSOA) on the periphery of Bologna. After a sustained effort to find both political and social refuge in Crash, she encountered myriad issues related to "the horizontality of the assemblies, the way in which roles were assigned within the assemblies, and because of the practices that were being chosen."[50] Taking these things into account, she explained that she was "no longer interested in standing behind the bar, cleaning, or being the barista," all forms of feminized and socially reproductive labor.[51] She entered Smaschieramenti shortly after the first *auto-inchiesta* was launched. She described her experience of joining the collective in a way that made the impact of the praxis quite clear:

> The experience of doing the *questionario* myself allowed me to bring my [previous political] experiences along with the other comrades of Smaschieramenti; the most interesting thing is that there was nothing right or wrong in my experiences or opinions, there was no judgment of what I was saying, [but instead] an effort to talk, to discuss, an effort to understand. The thing that fascinated me most was to discover was that there exists a given masculinity which is not a biological, but that I also have my own masculinity, even in negative, a chauvinism [*maschilismo*] of my own that is active and operative in relationships with people and in my parameters of judgement.[52]

The *questionario* put a variety of people with a variety of political formations into conversation around common, but frequently underexplored, experiences of masculinity, thereby revealing their role in shaping subjectivity beyond any predetermined or presumably stable social category of men/male. Despite a trajectory that obviously and necessarily rejected the most abject consequences of male dominance/hegemonic masculinity––violence against women, especially––the *auto-inchiesta* nonetheless constituted a political process that did not take for

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[50] Indino, interview.
[51] Indino, interview.
[52] Indino, interview.

granted the range of meanings and lived experiences of that dominance. The presence of politicized subjectivities with various formative experiences and social locations invariably afforded a much broader range of affective responses and strategic interpretations of those responses than would have otherwise been possible in a functionally identitarian and more or less homogenous group.

The life of the survey did not begin and end within the walls of Atlantide or with the engaged responses of those who regularly attended its initial meetings, where the creation of the *questionario* through the praxis of *auto-inchiesta* nourished both the formation of the Laboratorio itself and contributed to an expansion of the imagination of the dominant subject of masculinity. Instead, Smaschieramenti used the *questionario* to provoke––or, in the preferred parlance of the Laboratorio, to contaminate––the gay mainstream and the "mixed" social movements alike. For example, the *questionario* was distributed both during events organized around Bologna Pride 2008, in part as a response to the depoliticization of Pride itself and the ongoing political and social repression of the LGBT movement by the Vatican, and again during the "Three Days Against Repression, Normalization, and New Forms of The Discipline of Bodies," organized in October 2008. On the one hand, Smaschieramenti used the outward-facing phase of the *auto-inchiesta* to push the mainstream LGBT movement toward a greater consideration of its connection both to the historical feminist movement and its resurgence in the November demonstration, and to a broader range of issues than was typically taken up in the official agendas of more identitarian/mainstream organizations like ArciGay or its sibling organization, ArciLesbica. On the other hand, the *questionario* became a strategic intervention within the terrain of left political spaces in Bologna, including CSOAs like Crash, asking them to interrogate their complicities with both the structural and everyday aspects of *male* violence that were highlighted by the November demonstration. Recalling

Mieli's intervention in Bologna in 1977, provoking the mixed movement became a way to expose the distance between ideology and the everyday practices of the political commitments ironically embodied in the "holy trinity" of positions claimed by nearly all CSOAs and mixed movement spaces: anti-fascism, anti-racism, and anti-sexism. Members of Smaschieramenti presented the survey and a preliminary analysis of its results at a three-day festival of anti-fascist organizing, to bring attention to the fact that, across the political spectrum, there had been a very limited effort to understand the underlying dynamics that actually perpetuate sexism vis-a-vis the gendered operations of both politicized spaces and everyday relationships. It was, as Polizzi pointed out, a call to accountability both of the group itself and, ultimately, of wider cross-sections of the social movements.

The creation, distribution, compilation, analysis of responses, and mobilization of critiques derived from responses to the *questionario* was crucial to the endurance of the Laboratorio beyond the initially planned three-month period. In a sense, the first foray into *auto-inchiesta* became a method not only for mapping the existing political terrain but also for carving out space within that terrain for a contemporary revindication and elaboration of the historical forms of gay/trans autonomy. Combined with the growing political translation of anglophone queer theory such a revindication subtended the emergence and endurance of transfeministqueer autonomous politics. In the context of the Laboratorio itself, such endurance initially took the form of a second round of *auto-inchiesta* focused on relationality/relationships which that eventually garner its own name: *altre intimità*, or, other intimacies.

Auto-Inchiesta II: Altre Intimità

Following the initial *percorso di auto-inchiesta sul desiderio (del) maschile*, the work of the Laboratorio turned to a focus on relationships. In recounting the focus and significance of this passage, the work of Smaschieramenti Leo Acquistapace is fundamental. Acquistapace is a member of Smaschieramenti and an academic researcher and anthropologist. They had first entered Atlantide around 2003––during their second year of studies at the University of Bologna––to attend parties hosted by Antagonismo Gay, which they had found out about from a friend who had been a member of both Antagonismo Gay and the now-defunct gay collective Frangette Estreme (Extreme Fringe/Bangs), which was based out of XM24. Subsequently, Acquistapace attended the open reading groups that I described in the previous section. They then began working the door at Atlantide parties and, shortly thereafter, co-organized a series of *aperitivi* called M'Assaggi (Taste Me/Massage Me).[53] Having become more deeply involved at Atlantide throughout the early-to-mid-2000s, Acquistapace is among the core members of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and has made significant contributions to the elaboration of its political praxes.

As Acquistapace recounts in the Master's thesis (*tesi di laurea specialisticia*), *Relazioni senza Nome*, (*Relations without a Name*) the Laboratorio's decision to turn toward a focus on relationships emerged out of the initial *auto-inchiesta* focused on questions of gender-based violence and the desire of/for masculinity.[54] Acquistapace identifies three distinctive reference

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[53] As Acquistapace further recounted: "[W]e did this *aperitivo* in which there was vegetarian cuisine, wine from Critical Wine...because, at the time, we were just at the beginning of this discourse about food sovereignty, *genuine clandestine*, all of that; the 'glass breakers,' I called them [laughs]. There were [folks] who did massages–– literally, there was a massage room––there was also, at that time, La Tuilette and MP5, who were artists that had done the two murals at Atlantide. Indeed, the mural in front of [the bar] was done in this period. [...] So, nothing. In short, we organized these *aperitivi*; there were three cycles." Acquistapace, interview.
[54] Alessia Acquistapace, "Relazioni Senza Nome: Reti Di Affetti, Solidarietà, Intimità E Cura Oltre La 'Coppia Eterosessuale Obbligatoria'," (master's thesis, Università degli Studi di Bologna–Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 2011), https://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/post/2013/07/15/relazioni-senza-nome/.

points within the initial *auto-inchiesta* that pointed in the direction of a second engagement

with *auto-inchiesta* around the theme of relationships:

> (1) [...] the importance of making "sexual microviolences"––violences which not only happen *in* relations, but *through* relations––recognizable.
> (2) Analyzing campaigns and discourses against gender-based violence, we agreed that to say that male violence "is not a problem of public order" but "happens above all within the domestic sphere [*fra le mura domestica*]" is important for disassembling the idea that gender-based violence is something "from outside" (outside of the house, outside of the family, outside of our culture––the ghost of the foreign rapist in the street). And yet, this affirmation risked remaining, within "alternative" and "social movement" environments, yet another way of thinking about sexist violence as something that does not concern us [...][55]

The third reference point focuses on discussions unfolding during the previously mentioned

event, "Three Days Against the Normalization, Repression and Discipline of Bodies," held in

Bologna in October 2008. Acquistapace explains how discussions at the event focused on the

political risks posed by the emphasis of mainstream gay and lesbian movements on a "family-

centric" politics, a politics that centers demands for civil rights and that affirms normative

dyadic gay and lesbian couple relationships modeled on compulsory heterosexual relations,

further naturalizing the political centrality of heterosexual couple. Acquistapace situates

Smaschieramenti's approach with recourse to an intervention made by Elena Biagini during

the "Three Days" event. Acquistapace recounts that, in the intervention, Biagini emphasized

"the necessity of not falling into a kind of negativity to the bitter end," but, instead, of

"constructing and giving visibility to forms of affect, sexuality and solidarity that are not the

mimesis of heterosexual family forms."[56] The crucial distinction between these two tendencies

troubles an easy separation between a "negative" politics, one which unmasks the discursive

and material consequences of mainstream progressive/liberal emphasis on gay marriage, and

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[55] Acquistapace, "Relazioni Senza Nome," 33.
[56] Acquistapace, "Relazioni Senza Nome," 34. There are numerous examples of so-called negative critique in queer studies; cf. Edelman, *No Future.*

"affirmative" politics, one which elevates "alternative" modes of relation as ends-in-themselves. In contrast, *altre intimità* gives life and meaning to the work associated with creating, mapping, living, and sustaining a panoply of relations––sexual and not, romantic and not; roommate relationships, friendships, and so on––without assuming them to be free of precisely the kinds of dynamics that often accompany dominant forms of relationships. Bringing *auto-inchiesta* to bear on such a broad range of relationships/relational modes points to the potential to multiply sites of politicized intervention and, in turn, expanding the purview of transfeministqueer autonomy.

Taken together, these reference points for the emergence of a praxis of *altre intimità* demonstrate a careful attention to maintaining a strong critique of dominant discourses and practices and to subverting their ideological and material consequences as part of an ongoing effort to (re)frame enduring problems, such as gender-based violence, and as we will see in the next section, precarity. Acquistapace's reconstruction of *altre intimità* shows how social movements themselves can and do reconsider their own theoretical and practical efforts to address such problems, which resonates with my reading of Choudry above. In this sense, and as the broader scope of Acquistapace's research reveals, the point of an *auto-inchiesta* focused on relationships is to construct (and constantly reconstruct) relational modes that subvert the reproduction of both material violences and their sedimentation as gendered and sexualized norms. At the same time, the trajectory of *altre intimità* does not, and perhaps cannot, exhaust its focus with the very form of relationships themselves, but also must take into account the contexts in which such relations find form, including issues such as housing, un/employment, and so on.

Acquistapace explains how this initial foray unfolded within the space of the Laboratorio. Between September 2009 and November 2010, the weekly assemblies of

Smaschieramenti turned toward focusing solely on the theme of relationships "starting from the experiences and desires of each [comrade/member of Smaschieramenti]."[57] Following a similar trajectory of the initial *auto-inchiesta sul desiderio (del) maschile*, the first phase of the new inquiry focused on elaborating the experiences of the variety of subjectivities present within the Laboratorio itself. This process gradually yielded a core set of questions and analytics that would eventually become pointed enough to be mobilized beyond the interiority of the assembly and, therefore, capable of shaping broader political analyses, sustaining personal and collective practices, and creating a new political terrain.

Among the many general reflections on *altre intimità* that emerged from my interviews, one comrade's reflection stands out for the clarity with which it rendered the interrelatedness of these various levels of the praxis. In the section of our interview that focused on distinguishing and discussing each of Smaschieramenti's praxes, they characterized the experience of *altre intimità* as a "'discovery.'"[58] They went on to elaborate how *altre intimità* impacted their approach to intimacy as someone who had been "in a heterosexual relationship, living together for five years with a hetero guy."[59] For them, *altre intimità* was an entirely "different world."[60] As with the points drawn from Acquistapace's elaboration above, they identified the relative simplicity of grasping a theoretical discourse which, first and foremost, questions the monogamous heterosexual couple "and how it guarantees the reproduction of a certain system of oppression and exploitation."[61] They explained that:

> It is more difficult to actually *live* these *altre intimità* when we are profoundly influenced by a certain type of emotional [*affettiva*] and sexual education precisely because [living these intimacies] is not the [kind of] deconstructive work that you do alone, on yourself, but the work of continuous deconstruction

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[57] Acquistapace, "Relazioni Senza Nome," 35.
[58] Smaschieramenti comrade, interview with author. At the interviewees request, further details of this interview are not included in relation to this portion of our discussion so as to preserve their anonymity.
[59] Smaschieramenti comrade, interview.
[60] Smaschieramenti comrade, interview.
[61] Smaschieramenti comrade, interview.

and reconstruction. It is work in all respects. And I say that positively. It is the only form of work that is worth doing. The only work that should not be refused, all others can be rejected. And it is worthwhile because, if the goal is to imagine other forms, if the horizon of the political sense that we give ourselves is to imagine the forms of life, organization, living community, relationships, different sociality [then] other intimacies is a fundamental step.

The very work of denaturalizing compulsory heterosexuality and shifting emphasis away from the hermetically sealed/proprietary couple form brings transfeministqueer autonomy into sharper relief. As the quote above indicates, *altre intimità* situates *operaismo*'s emphasis on the refusal of work in the context of the unwaged and unrecognized labor of creating and sustaining alternative forms of relationship and relational networks. Accordingly, the praxis of *altre intimità* invites––perhaps even demands––a through-going critique of the correspondence between dominant relational forms and the devaluation and depotentiation of alternative social relations and social worlds like those envisioned and enacted in Atlantide. Such worlds disaggregate sexuality/gender as an individual characteristic by acknowledging and politicizing the collective and relational substrates of any and all "individual identities." So, even as the Laboratorio unfolded *altre intimità* in the context of broader political projects directed at unmasking/de-masculinizing hegemonic and violent relations, *altre intimità* wormed its way into the everyday lives of the Laboratorio's members. On the one hand, *altre intimità* enabled the development of distinctive perspectives on issues of central concern for the feminist movement, such as gender-based violence. But, on the other hand, Smaschieramenti was not content to rest there. By pushing *altre intimità* toward inquiry into modes of relating, the collective used the insights generated during the inquiry to transform their own modes of relating and of "valuing" relations beyond the narrow confines of normativity.

One of the most significant ways in which the praxis of *altre intimità* has evolved since the initial *auto-inchiesta sulle relazioni* has been through the work of the SomMovimento

nazioAnale. The network itself formed in 2012 and is central to the coordination variously situated collective and individual transfeministqueer activists throughout Italy. Though I discussed the formation of SomMovimento in most of my interviews with Smaschieramenti's comrades, my interview with Roger Fiorilli, a comrade affiliated with the Roman collective Cagne Sciolte, offered one of the most evocative reflections on SomMovimento's origins, its emergence, and the significance of its role in amplifying the transfeministqueer movement beyond Bologna, itself a form of cultivating *altre intimità* between and among various collectivities and individual activists/activists without collectives.[62] In our interview, Fiorilli recounted a rich personal history of activism and intellectual work across a variety of queer and feminist political contexts. Fiorilli's affective and political connections to Bologna––that is, to Atlantide and Smaschieramenti––took shape over several years. Affectively, Fiorilli emphasized the role of a friendship with one of Smaschieramenti's comrades, Beatrice Busi, who, along with Fiorilli, had participated in a queer/feminist collective in Rome, A/Matrix, some years prior. Their shared experience of A/Matrix––in particular of a very challenging period in 2008 in which Ornella Serpa, a transwoman, sex worker, and activist, died–– solidified a connection not only between the two, but also highlighted the limitations of the social movements, especially in terms of creating and sustaining social and emotional infrastructures capable of nurturing not only alternative political relations but also alternative forms of material support.

As many Smaschieramenti comrades confirmed during interviews, the work of Smaschieramenti helped to make Bologna a central reference point and refuge for the elaboration of responses to traumatic events, like the death of Ornella Serpa, and, in keeping

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[62] Roger Fiorilli, Skype interview with author, March 19, 2016. Fiorilli has also made significant contributions to the wider elaboration of queer/gender studies in Italy. See, for example: Michela Baldo, Rachele Borghi, and Olivia Fiorilli, eds., *Il Re Nudo: Per Un Archivio Drag King in Italia*, (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2014).

with the approach to emotional/affective archiving that I outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, to render these responses as practical political processes. For Fiorilli, the fallout following Serpa's death revealed multiple layers of disconnection not only between existing feminist movements and the lived realities of trans and gender non-conforming people in terms of recognition and survivability, but also underlying issues related to the very material limitations of intimate and affective networks for addressing the immediate needs of individuals who, like Serpa, often face a double exclusion from normative spaces *and* social movement spaces. The death of activists not only exposes the material risks posed by precarity and violence, it also points to significant limitations regarding the efficacy of labor-focused organizing when it comes to sex work. In this sense, the formation of SomMovimento reveals an underlying connection between *altre intimità* and *neomutualismo*, a third area of praxis that I discuss in the next section.

Politically, Fiorilli explained that, beyond its relationship to *altre intimità*, the "official" genealogy of the SomMovimento is, in part, rooted in efforts to articulate a queer and feminist analysis of the global financial crisis of the late 00s and early 10s and the subsequent accelerations of the neoliberal dismantling of the welfare state in Italy. Drawing on discourses that took shape in a series of events throughout 2011 in Bologna, Rome, Milan, and Torino, the initial foundation of the SomMovimento effectively represented efforts to draw stronger connections between and among a variety of both individual and collective efforts to trace the implications of neoliberal austerity politics for and from queer and feminist perspectives. Beyond this, and echoing the initial formation of Smaschieramenti itself, the final "push" toward the formation of the nascent network came in 2012 with news of the suicide of a gay 15-year-old in Rome who had been relentlessly bullied, prompting calls for greater coordination among various radical queer and transfeministqueer activists and collectives. The Bari-based

collective Cime de Queer responded to the suicide with a statement that was of central importance for the consolidation of efforts to form the network. Not only did Cime de Queer identify the obvious issues of homophobia, they situated these issues as part of a broader critique "of heterosexism, of racism, of the fascism of bodies and desires" and argued that the church/state/market nexus that profits from such repressions does so through the "criminalization of every other form of non-marketable wealth."[63] In their collective statement responding to the event, Cime de Queer wrote:

> The only alternative that we know of is resistance/existence [*r-esistenza*] that is born of the alliance among eccentric and excessive subjects which carries us on a path toward shared demands and struggles. We are the non-integrated, the ones who cannot be integrated; our goal is to dis-integrate the fascist and exclusionary policies of every state; we are the students who live in the rubble of a public school which has never been secular, trying to imagine it otherwise; we are the 'illegal' immigrants [*clandestine*] locked away in CIE [immigration detention centers], without even minimal, fundamental rights, guilty only of having looked for the spaces of freedom; we are the precarious who take to the streets, generalizing the strike to the bitter end; we are the women without the day after pill, stigmatized if we choose to abort even if we have only a blank contract, we struggle to affirm an authentic sexual freedom; we are the trans [people] who, in the face of pathologization respond with self-determination. [...] We are rebels and we are against a system that wants us to conform, to be standardized. We take to the square to remember D., whether simply to recall that we all exist and we are angry or to say that the faggots [*le frocie*] reject the cleaned-up gay-friendly image of Israel and stand by the Palestinian queers, the faggots oppose the EU's austerity politics and all politics of social devastation. We are more determined than ever to defend our pink trousers and our dildos, to claim a basic minimum income [*un reddito di esistenza*], to claim our right to study and to re-appropriate our knowledge and our political freedom to demonstrate. A boy has died, let us take up the struggle again.[64]

As a whole, the statement demonstrates a broader coordination among transfeministqueer groups some five years after the initial steps taken by groups such as Smaschieramenti to create a distinctive "area" of the social movements self-organized by transfeministqueer

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[63] Cime di Queer, "È Morto Un Ragazzo, Riprediamoci La Lotta! – Sommovimento Spontanenonazio-Anale," *Cimediqueer.blogspot.ca*, November 24, 2012, http://cimediqueer.blogspot.ca/2012/11/e-morto-un-ragazzo-riprendiamoci-la.html.
[64] Cime di Queer, "È Morto Un Ragazzo."

subjectivities and collectives. The statement does not limit itself to the organization of specifically transfeministqueer subjects, even if it clearly aims at mobilizing such subjects. The call echoes the feminist movement's response to the Reggiani episode in 2007––not least because of the timing of the incident just days before the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women––perhaps especially because it fervently opposes any instrumentalization of the event in mainstream discourses. As with the emergence of Smaschieramenti, the initial formation of SomMovimento subverted yet another victimized image of queerness in need of state or institutional protection, instead emphasizing self-determination, social and economic justice, and spaces for self-organization. What's more, the statement illustrates a decidedly non-reductive and anti-identitarian approach to collective politics. The various lines of connection expressed in the statement––to women, to immigrants, to Palestinians––are consistent with a transversal approach to politics, which emphasizes not the organization of a class/identity/subject-position solely for the sake of acting in its own interests, but of potentiating modes of collective subjectivation that crisscross various temporalities, spatialities, and struggles while elaborating a common "line" of political action. This kind of organizing does not take the subjectivities that it seeks to mobilize for granted. Instead, it centers the elaboration of collective subjectivities that refuse any explicit or implicit demand to be respectable, integrated, legible, and coherent. The common understanding of a shared struggle as expressed through a variety of scales and an emphasis on multi-issue politics is characteristic of statements emerging from the transfeministqueer movement during this period. Such statements suggest a form of dual attention on the part of the movement, both to the immediate circumstances of a particular collective in a specific local context and to the broader currents marking the horizons of liberation struggles.

In light of the emergence of the SomMovimento, it is clear that the transition between the first and second phases of Smaschieramenti's *auto-inchiesta* is repeated in the transition between the second and third phases of *auto-inchiesta*. Whereas the initial focus on relationships critiqued the centrality of specific forms of valorized relations––the heterosexual family and the monogamous couple form––such a focus necessarily found footing in a further examination of how the kinds of relationships and networks which are affirmatively constructed by the movement can, in themselves, constitute both a material response to and a political critique of the hollowing out of the welfare state in the age of austerity. In other words, the formation of the SomMovimento not only constituted a broad critique of the conditions that enable events such as the suicide of bullied gay teens or the failures of the movement in organizing around the needs of the most vulnerable, it also gave form and substance to a subversive imagination of "the national" as the appropriate container for a politics capable of addressing such events. Naming the "natioAnal" as a field of action is not just a clever pun, it is also, and perhaps more crucially, part of a wholesale effort to reclaim the abject political spaces left behind as the state, glacier-like, withdraws what little support it once offered in the form of welfare. It is this effort to address the hollowing out of the welfare state to which I now turn.

Auto-Inchiesta III: Work/Non-Work and Neomutualismo

The elaboration of *altre intimità* supported both Smaschieramenti and SomMovimento in the development an inquiry into the material conditions of work/non-work for transfeministqueer subjectivities. In light of the 2008 financial crisis and the generally dismal economic outlook for youth in Italy, the *auto-inchiesta* that would come to be known as

neomutualismo focused decisively on the concrete trajectories for constructing *welfare del basso*, or bottom-up/grassroots welfare. In this section, I focus on narrating the unfolding of *altre intimità* into *neomutualismo* and outline some of the characteristics of the praxis in its own right.

The elaboration of *altre intimità* revealed, in part, how social units such as the nuclear family or the couple often absorb or encompass the "appropriate" location of responses to issues such as precarity, lack of housing, or unemployment, especially in light of austerity politics. The elaboration of transfeministqueer affective and political networks and relations through *altre intimità* raised the possibility not only of examining, but also of strengthening, the ability of such networks and relations to respond concretely to the same issues while also developing a direct critique of institutionally imposed austerity measures.

Despite their clear connection, the hinge between *altre intimità* and *neomutualismo* is not, at least in my view, as clearly defined as the passage from the initial *auto-inchiesta sul desiderio (del) maschile* to *altre intimità*. In part, this is due to the fact that Smaschieramenti's areas of praxis, as a whole, are not strictly sequential. As should be clear by now, the specificities of Smaschieramenti's evolution depend on the composition of the Laboratorio, its relationship to broader networks and social movements, specific events unfolding in the political landscape, and the practical collective needs conditioned by efforts to respond collectively to such events. As such, it is appropriate to draw a clear line of connection between *altre intimità* and *neomutualismo*. As Renato Busarello explained, the two praxes are quite intimately connected:

> For us, [*neomutualismo*] is also connected to *altre intimità* in the sense that it is also a reflection on how it is possible to construct a social solidarity that is not based on family and parental ties, on the traditional family. Very often, what takes place in the moment where there is no welfare—and this is particularly true in Italy, where there is a particular type of "family welfare"—[is that] the networks that replace the state are family networks. [Smaschieramenti focuses

on] how much we manage to go beyond family networks, building networks of mutualism that can also be networks of economic aid, sharing of resources, knowledge, houses, [etc].[65]

The notion of mutualism itself, as Busarello also pointed out, has roots in *operaismo*

movement, as well as anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist political traditions. Most basically,

mutualismo often functioned as a complement to larger-scale actions, such as strikes, which

introduced requirements for mutual economic and material support to stand-in for needs that

workers would otherwise meet through their economic purchasing power earned through

wage labor. The re-appropriation of the practice of *mutualismo* within the context of

transfeministqueer autonomous politics takes account of the fact that the subjectivities and

actions in question will not necessarily fall within the same limitations and definitions set out

in the conjunctures in which the praxis had originated. The most potent illustration of the

transfeministqueer adaptation of the praxis as *neo-* refers to the combination of the practice of

mutualism itself with a critique of normative familial arrangements.

The effort to adapt the practice of mutualism to contemporary conditions of work/non-

work reflects a cumulative understanding of the ways in which the "old welfare," in part

created by the state as a recuperation of previous rounds of contention by workers––which I

discussed in Chapter 3––cannot necessarily meet the real needs of individuals (or

communities) for whom the very form of labor has changed alongside and in constant

feedback with their subjectivities. New questions emerge: What kinds of welfare are adequate

not only for base economic needs, but also for affective needs? And: What kind of organized

resistance and direct action are adequate to precipitate the transformation of the conditions of

labor confronted by transfeministqueer subjectivities under the conditions of neoliberalism

and neofascism alike? As in other passages of the collective, both the questions themselves

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[65] Busarello, interview.

and their "answers" emerge in the relay between localized experimentation with specific efforts to meet concrete needs and moments of encounter where these various approaches are discussed alongside broader systemic shifts and organizational strategies.

My experiences during fieldwork bear this point out. When I began attending assemblies, the Laboratorio was just reaching an end of a long attempt to create a transfeministqueer bloc within broader Italian and European networks attempting to organize a social strike (*sciopero sociale*), which I briefly referred to above. Though I lack the specific context to explain the significance of this passage for the Laboratorio as a whole, a series of indications suggested that the effort to elaborate the theme of *neomutualismo* within the purview of the social strike would not have been fruitful and could even have risked an erosion of the Laboratorio's position as transfeministqueer. Efforts to "contaminate" broader environments of organizing are, of course, not always successful. Such episodes are unfortunate, but not uncommon. As Francesca Bidasio put it quite plainly in our interview, such failures are in no way unique to Smaschieramenti or to the transfeministqueer movement, more generally.[66] I point to the difficulty that the Laboratorio faced in articulating *neomutualismo* within a wider social movement context because it suggests the complexity of negotiating the "internal" evolution of lines of praxis while also seeking to mobilize such evolutions in a wider "external" field of political actions as a means of shifting their foci or emphasis.

In lieu of possibilities for contamination in a wider movement context, the relationship between *altre intimità* and *neomutualismo* found a more highly elaborated form in *S/Coppia*, or "Un/Couple," a self-published text/zine that contains four key pieces focused on the

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[66] Francesca Bidasio, interview with author, July 20, 2015.

intersections of *altre intimità* and *neomutualismo*.[67] Together with "S/Family Way," a series of counter-demonstrations responding to the so-called "Family Day" demonstrations staged by right-wing and Catholic groups in 2007, 2015 and 2016 in opposition to the recognition of same-sex couples, *S/Coppia* represents the response of the transfeministqueer movement not only to the severely limited politics of gay/lesbian recognition, but also to the insistent right-wing and Catholic political agendas that tracked alongside the Italian state's austerity measures. *S/Coppia* outlines the contours of the praxis of *neomutualismo* and its place in the transfeministqueer autonomous movement. In "Altre Intimità, Precarietà, e Mutualismo Transfemminista Queer," a piece drawn on the work of SomMovimento nazioAnale, five key aspects of the connections among these praxes are discussed: the couple, the critique of the couple, the political value of other intimacies, their relationship with precarity, and struggles associated with each of these areas. I will briefly outline the arguments here in order to give a sense of both the scope of *neomutualismo* and its relationship to *altre intimità*.

First, the couple itself: Drawing on collective reflections and analysis, the piece explains that there are five key dimensions which define "a normal couple":

1. To be two people
2. To give priority to the couple-relation with respect to other affective relations that you might have [...]
3. To be monogamous or, at least, to desire to and pretend to be monogamous;
4. Aspire to fulfill, if not all, then at least 90% of your emotional needs with the other person
5. Project the relation into the future, imagine a future together.[68]

The key conclusion drawn about these five definitive aspects of being a couple is that they are assumed to be a "natural consequence of Love with a capital-L."[69]

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[67] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, ed. Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, (Bologna, IT, 2016), https://smaschieramenti.noblogs.org/post/2016/02/14/scoppia-una-fanzine-per-celebrare-san-valentino-2016/.
[68] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 7.
[69] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 8.

Second, the critique of the couple form in-itself, which arises from two observations

drawn from the *auto-inchiesta*: The couple makes one unhappy and the couple represents a

politically disempowering position.[70] The first observation falls within the normative

definition of the couple outlined above, noting that the couple itself tends toward isolation

and, further, reconnects the analysis to early reflections on violence by re-calling the

disproportionately high number of instances of "microviolences," sexual assault, and rapes

that are perpetrated by partners or ex-partners. The second observation explains the political

consequences of forms of support conditioned by the couple-form: "The couple, as a

paradigm of the privatization of life, of individualism (individualism for two […]), prevents the

development of forms of solidarity and of collectivity capable of opposing neoliberalism."[71]

Third, to give value to relations beyond the couple, as elaborated in *altre intimità* "is not to

idealize *altre intimità* and to make a new model, but to discuss [such relations] in order to see

what works, what doesn't work, and how we can make that work better."[72]

The third point is where the pivot to *neomutualismo* and an analysis of the intersection

between precarity, austerity, and relational forms becomes necessary, especially on account of

the way in which the SomMovimento definitively rejects a statement which makes too easy a

distinction between those in "heterosexual and normal" relationships and "everybody else."

Indeed, the predicate for "giving value" to alternate forms of relations is an outcome of the

very process of *auto-inchiesta* itself. Smaschieramenti and the SomMovimento did not use

auto-inchiesta to construct a new hierarchy of "vanguardist" relational forms, that is, to rank

them for the purpose of discerning the greatest exploitation and, therefore, the greatest

"transformative" potential. Instead, *auto-inchiesta* was used to discern the varying potentials

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[70] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 9.
[71] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 9.
[72] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 9.

for collective transformation that result from the differential positioning of all subjects

involved in the process. In this way, the *auto-inchiesta* produces a map of the social conditions

of transfeministqueer and other subjectivities and attempts to render their objective

conditions more clearly such that new forms of direct action and mutual support can be

devised and subject to experimentation.[73]

Fourth, is the relationship between *altre intimità* and precarity, which the

SomMovimento divides into two distinctive points: "(1) precarity as a cause [and] (2) precarity

as an effect of 'non conventional' affective relations."[74] In the first instance, the analysis points

to "sociological and media clichés" that tend to frame precarity as the reason that many

"youth" (or, indeed, those infantilized by the condition of precarity according to a

heteronormative timeline of the life cycle) increasingly do not opt to form traditional families.

Alternately, the analysis points to an ostensibly critical interpretation of precarity which

suggests that the further entrenchment of "neoliberal individualism" drives people to "change

partners like you change cell phones."[75] In keeping with an autonomous analytical framework,

the SomMovimento suggests that, beyond these diagnostics, feminism plays a central role in

the "crisis" of the traditional family form:

> From our point of view, if the couple relation is less stable today, surely it will
> be because of precarity, but, first of all, it was feminism and women no longer
> willing to sacrifice themselves for the duration of a relationship. Do not forget:
> Those who sacrificed themselves for the good of the family have been, above
> all, women.[76]

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[73] As the opening narrative of this chapter intimates, I have been deeply impacted by this understanding of *auto-inchiesta*, not least on account of my own mutualistic efforts to reconsider and to reconfigure my relationships in line with shifting material conditions. Such efforts have involved constantly questioning persistent tensions between more "outward" facing forms of political engagement, like direct action/public demonstration, and those that are normatively "interiorized" in the couple form, like childcare and emotional support.

[74] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 10.

[75] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 11.

[76] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 11.

This perspective re-centers the role of autonomous feminists in creating conditions of transformation that are deemed to be "crises" from the point of view of normative relations. A second, and crucial, point for *neomutualismo* follows on from this interpretation: the possibilities opened up by the "crisis" of the "Fordist model of 'work-marriage-children.'"[77] Here, several horizons of the crisis are identified: the enduring hope/desire that, based on the continuing possibility of an "ideal" relational model available only to a small minority, those who will never objectively be able to access such stability should strive to "stay busy, improve, work hard, and compete to achieve sentimental success." Alternately, one accepts the dislocation of this Fordist "good life" but strives to demonstrate their advancement through the life course by, for example, "furnishing your studio apartment with new Ikea furniture to show that you are no longer a student, but an accomplished adult," or, absent stable work, one decides "at least [...] to have a boyfriend, move in together, and have a kid before it's too late."[78]

In view of these all-too-real "solutions" to the hollowing out of social and material life arrangements, the SomMovimento connects *altre intimità* to *neomutualismo*, presenting an alternative:

> [G]iven that the work-marriage-child is nearly impossible to realize or, in any case, to realize before one is forty years old, this time opens the space to experiment with different forms of affectivity, other forms of solidarity to which we can choose to give legitimacy, sense, and to use as the basis for an imagination of other forms of social bonds and to construct a struggle.[79]

In this last instance, precarity-as-cause is torqued toward the recognition of the possibilities that ensue if its effects are filtered through a critical collective reflection on those very same conditions. Such collectivization has, in fact, not only been extended to individual members of

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[77] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 11.
[78] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 11.
[79] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 11–12.

Smaschieramenti's networks and the transfeministqueer community in times of need, but has also given birth to experiments in pooling monetary resources among precarious academics and collectively administering *welfare del basso* out of the funds.

Whereas the foregoing points focus on the diffuse condition of precarity-as-cause, precarity-as-effect is somewhat more straightforward: When one leads a non-normative life, the kinds of family-based informal welfare that act as a supplement in times of the absence or withdrawal of state-sponsored forms of welfare become quite scarce. Traditional families often abandon their queer and trans members. This is of course to say nothing of the lack of benefits that are afforded to couples in light of state recognition or the very real and everyday barriers posed to trans and gender non-conforming people in terms of participation in the labor market.

In view of this situation, the SomMovimento consolidated an agenda for *neomutualismo* in a section of *S/Coppia* entitled "What We Want." The collective authors are quite clear that they are not seeking state recognition, social approval, or permission to live the relations and modes of relationality outlined in the text. They write: "We are not asking permission to live our relations as we want to, but *for what we need* to be able to live our relations as we want to."[80] Social needs beyond the horizon of the nuclear family include:

> *the time* to take care of ourselves and our dear ones, whoever they are […] *the space*, that is a home […] *a wage*, and, if we work, *decent working conditions* […] to create *a culture* […] that produces experiential, relational, and emotional knowledge.[81]

Taken together, these demands seem obvious enough in light of the critique. And yet, they must be understood within the longer horizon of workerist struggles for specific kinds of working conditions and wage-based demands that too often took for granted or elided

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[80] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 12, emphasis in original.
[81] SomMovimento nazioAnale, *S/Coppia*, 13, emphases in original.

conditions of social reproduction, specific kinds of relational networks, and unwaged

emotional and affective labor. Within the specific context of transfeministqueer struggle,

demands for guaranteed income and housing must be understood as a modality of struggle

that contests very meaning of value in both a political and economic sense. In this way,

neomutualismo not only makes such demands in view of the historical recuperation of its

political antecedents by limited forms of state recognition or compromises between state and

labor, but also situates them within a broader tradition of *the refusal of work* itself.[82] As

Goffredo Polizzi affirmed in our interview:

> [M]ainstream gay politics has been advocating for *work* for gay people. [...] For
> a lot of people, work is empowerment, work is what gives you dignity, what
> gives you a social recognition, a [mobility]. So, there is a discourse on work
> which is very entrenched and it's something that we're trying to counter. Italian
> autonomia has done it for decades now and we are in that tradition. So,
> *neomutualismo* is also a way [...] to establish a grassroots welfare that hopefully
> can help you in your process of *rifuto del lavoro* [refusal of work].[83]

Crucially, such refusals cannot be understood in isolation from the construction of alternative

institutions or reimaginations of the kind of political action adequate to the "refusal of work"

in a moment in which the very constitution of what counts as work is subject to significant

transformations.

In this section, I have traced the emergence of *neomutualismo* from questions raised

during the elaboration of *altre intimità*. *Neomutualismo* overlaps in significant ways with the

ongoing work of the next area of praxis I will discuss: *consultoria*. As the closing pages of "Altre

Intimità, Precarietà, e Neomutualismo Transfemminista Queer," make clear, the most

elaborated expression to date of the creation of *welfare del basso* itself is the Consultoria

TransFemministaQueer Bologna, to which I now briefly turn.

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[82] David Frayne, *The Refusal of Work: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Work*, (London: Zed Books, 2015).
[83] Polizzi, interview.

Consultoria TransFemministaQueer Bologna

Though neither my interviews nor my primary fieldwork involved extensive engagement with the Consultoria TransFemministaQueer Bologna, which is a self-managed healthcare clinic, it nonetheless constitutes a crucial part of the overall suite of praxes and projects discussed in this chapter. The Consultoria, as I will call it, evolved through an interweaving of *neomutualismo* and *welfare del basso* specifically focused on issues of health for people living with HIV/AIDS and on the accessibility of hormones for trans and gender non-conforming people. In the five years since its first began meeting in Atlantide in 2014, the Consultoria has become a distinctive project in its own right, notwithstanding the fact that there is significant overlap between its membership and the everyday political concerns of the Laboratorio, especially those outlined above in the discussion of *neomutualismo*. The Consultoria took shape as a collective experimentation with self-managed healthcare for transfeministqueer subjectivities.[84] While a full recounting of the self-formation and now five-year long experience of the Consultoria is beyond the scope of this chapter, I will point to a few key insights from the Consultoria, not least because the Consultoria has, in years following the eviction of Atlantide, which is the subject of Chapters 5 and 6, proven to be a central part of maintaining a forceful transfeministqueer spatial presence in Bologna.

The term *consultoria* itself is a neologistic feminization of the term *consultorio* (clinic), which refers to self-organized clinics established by feminists in the 1970s. Maude Anne Bracke describes the historical *consultorio autogestito* (self-managed clinic) as "a major element of feminist campaigning" and argues that the creation of the *consultori* was "important in

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[84] Throughout this section, I will generally use the lower-case *consultoria* to refer to the praxis-focused/subject-forming aspects of various projects and *auto-inchieste* related to self-managed healthcare and the upper-case/proper noun Consultoria to refer to actions, statements, and the like attributed to the collective-subject of the Consultoria TransFemministaQueer Bologna as it was constituted through the former "process.

gathering mass support for the broader movement for a change in abortion law."[85] It was, after

all, in the 1970s that the feminist movement campaigned not just for the legalization of

abortion, but also of divorce and of the sale of contraception. Crucially, like women's

bookstores, the *consultori* were a spatial element of the historical feminist movement; they

served not only as places where essential health services could be provided, but also as

locations for the further self-determination of feminist subjectivity evolving from the

experiences of *auto-coscienza.* As Louise Toupin explains in by way of situating the *consultori* as

a "counter-model" for institutionalized healthcare, they enabled the formation of "significant

alliances [...] among female patients, hospital workers (nurses, midwives), and activists from

feminist groups," all of which supported the broader movement denouncing and interrupting

violence against women, whether perpetrated in the home, in the exam room, or during

childbirth.[86] In short, the *consultori* emphasized cooperation between and among various

subjectivities and were crucial to the provision of services either denied to women in

institutional settings or undertaken in undeniably violent and belittling ways.[87]

In yet another mutational adaptation of an historical political form/praxis, the

emergence of the Consultoria as a distinctive outgrowth of Smaschieramenti's overall

approach walked a careful line between wholesale critique the historical feminist *consultori*––

and a reformulation of their praxes with an emphasis on attending to shifting material

conditions, like the dawn of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and the self-organization and self-

determination of emergent collective subjectivities, like trans and gender non-conforming

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[85] Maud Anne Bracke, "Building a 'Counter-Community of Emotions': Feminist Encounters and Socio-Cultural Difference in 1970s Turin," *Modern Italy* 17, no. 2 (2012): 229, https://doi:10.1080/13532944.2012.665283..

[86] Louise Toupin, *Wages for Housework: a History of the International Feminist Movement 1972–77*, trans. Käthe Roth, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 153.

[87] The historical form of the feminist *consultorio* offered something of a blueprint for the self-organization of more contemporary adaptions, including, most notably, the trans-focused *consultorio* organized by the Movimento Identità Transessuale (MIT), Italy's oldest and largest trans organization, which is based in Bologna.

people. Still, the work of the Consultoria is by no means solely focused on what is lacking in either the *consultori* or in institutional and formal approaches to healthcare. The Consultoria also addresses the extent to which immiseration to medicalized approaches produces transfeminist and queer subjectivities as unruly and, therefore, in need of management, in turn subjecting transfeminist and queer people to surveillance, infantilization, and techniques of overt social control while continuously failing to address the causes of gender-based violence, precarity, impoverishment, stigma, social isolation, lack of intimacy, and so on. Such techniques of management rely heavily on heteronormative pathologizing of sexualities/genders, the criminalization of sex work, the reproduction of stigma associated to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and the lack of social spaces organized by trans and gender non-conforming subjectivities.

Responding both to these issues and to those identified and analyzed during the Laboratorio's elaboration of *neomutualismo*, the Consultoria created a space in which the specific needs and desires of both trans and gender non-conforming members and members confronting various forms of medicalization could be met through collective action. The work of critiquing and reimagining of welfare was necessarily a part of the discourse surrounding the initial formation of the Consultoria because it is a radically affirmative and constructive experiment in self-managed *welfare del basso*. The work of the Consultoria revealed, at least in part, the material and social conditions that correspond to both the dismantling of the welfare state and the inherent inadequacies and lacunae that riddle whatever little support and resources remain, especially with regard to transfeminist and queer needs, desires, and subjectivities. Whereas the political analyses of the Laboratorio proper focus largely on articulating the historico-theoretical existence and evolution of these issues, the Consultoria emerged as a space, a method, and a meeting point where collective experiments in the self-

managed provision of collective care and *welfare del bass* could be rendered more fully as alternatives to these enduring everyday realities. In short, the Consultoria took shape as a new space of integration and experimentation of areas of praxis undertaken by the Laboratorio proper. In so doing, the Consultoria acts as a mobile set of practices and experiments that are diffused throughout the SomMovimento nazioAnale network. These becomings lead to one final stop on this tour of the praxes associated with the birth and life of Smaschieramenti.

#VeniamOvunque: We Cum Everywhere! The first natioAnal TransFeministQueer Demonstration
To further elucidate the interconnections of the praxes of Smaschieramenti with both SomMovimento nazioAnale and the Consultoria, it is useful to look, albeit anachronically, at a specific moment that speaks to the distinctive position of transfeministqueer autonomy in the political ecology of Bologna: the #VeniamOvunque (We Come/Cum Everywhere) demonstration held on May 21, 2016. #VeniamOvunque was the first––and, to date, the only–– explicitly transfeminist and queer demonstration organized on a national level in Italy (fig. 16). The demonstration was a result of the efforts of the Consultoria TransFemministaQueer Bologna working in collaboration with Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and the various collectives and individual activists associated with the SomMovimento nazioAnale network; it involved contingents from Milan, Perugia, Ponte Vecchio di Bassano, Florence, Padua, Trento, and Rome.[88]

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[88] To be clear, there have been numerous instances in which various collectives and/or segments of the transfeminist and queer movement, including the Consultoria, have participated in both national and international demonstrations, most notably the annual Global Women's Strike and Gender Strike held annually on March 8. Nevertheless, #VeniamOvunque was the first instance in which a demonstration *itself* was explicitly organized as transfeminist and queer and wherein the work was undertaken by the SomMovimento nazioAnale and, in its capacity as the key local point of reference for the demonstration, the Consultoria. Of course, there is significant overlap with the work/membership of the Laboratorio as well.

Figure 16. #VeniamOvunque Flier (Source: SomMovimento nazioAnale, used with permission)

My discussion of #VeniamOvunque will focus the call for the demonstration, the

"Declaration of Independence of the People of Twisted Lands," which was translated into

French, Spanish, and English.[89] I will also briefly note the various interventions that comprised the demonstration, which culminated in the birth of a new, and very short-lived, occupation.[90] Of course, the eviction of Atlantide, which occurred a scant eight months prior to #VeniamOvunque, had a significant influence on the discourses and strategies that informed the demonstration, not least the decision to occupy ex-Stazione Venete, a publicly-owned, abandoned train station located just outside the historical center of Bologna, proximate to the neighborhoods of Cirenaica and San Donato. At the culmination of the demonstration, the station was occupied and was "rebaptized" with the characteristically playful slogan: *fuori binario*, or off track.[91] #VeniamOvunque was not merely a response to the eviction of Atlantide.[92] The demonstration instead constituted a moment of affirmative/constructive praxis that characterizes the work of the Smaschieramenti and its related attempts to create new spaces for self-management and self-determination in a political and urban landscape seemingly evermore hostile not just to transfeministqueer subjectivities, but to all self-organizing autonomous entities. In this sense, #VeniamOvunque can and should be read as a transfeministqueer revindication of the practices and spaces of autonomous self-management for the whole of the movement. Indeed, such an expansive purview is in evidence when we look at the call for the demonstration.

The "Declaration of Independence of the People of Twisted Lands" ("Dichiarazione di Indipendenza Della Popola delle Terre Storte") is, in some senses, a metatext in that it acts as an index to the range of praxical, political, and theoretical work documented throughout this

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[89] I translated the English-language version of the "Declaration" as part of my ongoing work with both the Laboratorio and SomMovimento.

[90] It is somewhat proleptic to the narrative arc of the dissertation as a whole to discuss this demonstration here because it was staged eight months after the eviction of Atlantide, which is the focus of the next chapter.

[91] Zeroincondotta, "'Veniamo Ovunque!', E Nasce Una Nuova Occupazione," *Zeroincondotta*, May 21, 2016, https://www.zic.it/veniamo-ovunque-e-nasce-una-nuova-occupazione-fotoaudio/.

[92] The #AtlantideOvunque and #CheGenereDiCittà campaigns launched in the wake of the eviction were much more directly related to the immediate political situation surrounding the eviction of Atlantide.

chapter.[93] The call opens with four paragraphs that each repeat the same sentence at their

start: "These are dark times."[94] Setting the scene for the May 21 demonstration, each of the first

four paragraphs then goes on to describe a distinctive set of issues: first, the uptick in the

activities of neo-fascist and neo-conservative groups, like the Sentinelle in Piedi (Standing

Sentinels) that oppose same-sex marriage, adoption, hate crimes legislation, and the

ostensible promotion of "gender theory" in schools; second, the pallid acquiescence of the

mainstream LGBT movement to a political agenda dominated by advocacy for normative

forms of relationship, like marriage; third, the scourge of pinkwashing and paternalistic

security agendas that "demonize Muslims and militarize cities"; fourth, so-called diversity

management, or the exploitation of sexuality and gender identity in precarious employment

situations where in transfeminist and queer subjects are "obliged to donate our eccentricity to

the employer, to tailor it according to the whims of the marketing department."[95] In view of

these issues, the "Declaration," then goes on to invoke the various subjectivities that it calls

into being and into action *contra* just such "dark times":

> Uncivilized queers, exhausted creatives, old fashioned truckers, old queens
> with no welfare, euphoric trans* [people], critical housewives, broke butches,
> overworked whores, rebellious grandmas, outsourced precarious workers, we
> are all united and we proclaim to the world the …

> **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF TWISTED
> LANDS.**[96]

Recalling the menagerie of subjectivities first invited to participate in the project of Atlantide

in the late-1990s, the "Declaration" nonetheless exceeds the politics envisioned some two

decades earlier even as it builds in continuity with previous mobilizations, such as the

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[93] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Declaration of Independence of the People of Twisted Lands,"
SomMovimentonazioAnale, May 5, 2016,
https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2016/05/05/declaration-of-indipendence-of-the-people-of-
the-queer-lands/.
[94] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Declaration."
[95] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Declaration."
[96] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Declaration," emphasis in original.

mobilization for the defense of Atlantide, which I discuss in Chapter 6. In a pun-filled, ironic, playful style that, by the time of #VeniamOvunque, had become a shared characteristic of the SomMovimento, Smaschieramenti, and Consultoria alike, the "Declaration" unfolds an affirmative vision of transfeministqueer autonomy that invokes a range of operations of resistance and reclamation alike:

> We are the guerillas of the anal struggle against capital. We snatch our creativity from fashion brands. [...] We set up ephemeral apparatuses for the funeral of mandatory heterosexuality. [...] We interrupt this broadcast of sexual roles and the programming of brand new, ready-made identities to announce that we produce a new format: Subversion. [...] With the powers vested in us, we abolish the cult of self-employment and the obligation to transform everything which we are and everything we do into marketable skills. *My Cunt is my Startup!* [...] We snatch forevermore the knowledge that we have produced from the Academy of Capital in order to return it to open circulation. [...] We autonomously generate knowledge 'about us', about human and nonhuman animals, and about the world. [...] In the trans*feministfaggot/queer [*transfemministefroce*] peer counseling spaces [*consultorie*], we deconstruct and reconstruct our bodies with any and all the physical and chemical prostheses we desire; we reinvent aesthetic standards, pleasures, the concept of health and we subvert the practices of care.[97]

More or less in direct correspondence to the diagnostics of the opening paragraphs, the second half of the statement outlines the various ongoing practices and praxes that, while largely developed by Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, had been put into circulation in the SomMovimento nazioAnale.

The statement is both performative and prefigurative in multiple senses: The open critique of interlocking systems, social relations, and spaces of exploitation and oppression–– from the workplace to the academy––are not merely targeted in ideological terms, they are answered with alternative constructions. The work undertaken within such constructions does not anticipate a mythical point *after which* a total transformation of existing social/sexual/gender relations will ostensibly allow for experimentation but, instead, enacts

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[97] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Declaration," emphasis in original.

such relations in the here and now. Just as the "Declaration" constructs a field of socio-political action, the #VeniamOvunque demonstration itself translated that field into a mobile mapping through the very form that it took as it moved throughout the city. The route of the demonstration entailed making a number of stops (*tappi*) at which various performative interventions unfolded, each one speaking to and seeking to further elaborate the transversal work of transfeministqueer autonomy.

For example, a stop in Piazza VIII Agosto involved an elaboration of the no borders dimension of the "Declaration" undertaken through the collaborative work of the NoBorders collective, Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, and BellaQueer, a collective based in Perugia. At this stop, organizers constructed a wall, read an intervention that combined insights and ideas from various theorists and activists, and then destroyed the wall. This intervention became the occasion to share political work linking the destruction of borders separating genders and the destruction of national and international borders, boundaries, and walls: "*Feminists, migrants, and faggots/queers* [frocie] *of every color already march together to destroy borders and to enable unlimited movement between genders and territories.*"[98] Another stop, in front of Italy's first fully privatized orthopedic emergency clinic on Via Irnerio, entailed a presentation curated by GRUPPA and fuxia block in opposition to the privatization of healthcare. There, the demonstration was treated to a contrasting view of a private facility, part of the Sant'Orsola Hospital, and an abandoned building owned by the same hospital where, just weeks before the #VeniamOvunque demonstration, a group that had occupied the building had been evicted. Demonstrators quipped: "We are pleased that this tour takes place after the eviction

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[98] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Contro Tutti I Confini," *SomMovimentonazioAnale*, May 21, 2016, https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2016/05/21/contro-tutti-i-confini/, emphasis in original. I attribute the texts from the various interventions made throughout #VeniamOvunque to the collective authorship of the SomMovimento nazioAnale notwithstanding the fact that each stop was organized by various constituent collectives/activists that participated in the demonstration. This is in keeping with the reality of collective authorship that informs a movement-based citational practice.

of May 3, so that we can show you the building in its original form: without life and without use."[99] Further stops in front of clinics, hospitals, and pharmacies continued by building longstanding efforts to identify and demand the expulsion of so-called conscientious objectors who oppose the provision of free, accessible, and safe abortions from Italian hospitals and clinics and to raise consciousness about the (in)accessibility of hormones––including estrogen, progesterone, androgen, and testosterone––to transgender and gender non-conforming people.[100]

Following the various stops discussed above, #VeniamOvunque finally arrived at Via Zanolini 41. There, the hundreds who had participated in the demonstration formed a protective boundary in front the abandoned train station to block the view of the police gathered nearby and to protect those activists who, soon after the arrival of the march, gave birth to a new, and very short-lived, occupation of the long abandoned publicly owned space that was to be self-managed by the Consultoria TransFemministaQueer Bologna and which would have also become a new home for Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. As with the closing moments of the #VeniamOvunque, so too with the closing passage of the "Declaration":

> We take all the space we need. *Firemen up in the trees meow, evictions ciao!*
> We, People of Twisted Lands, we invade this public space in opposition to and
> in excess of authorized life-styles. We are coming out of the dark rooms, out of
> the gyms, out of our rural retreats, we flood from evicted and self-managed

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[99] SomMovimento nazioAnale, """Sì Ma Quanti Siete? Un Fiorino!" Azione Contro La Privatizazzione Della Sanità Durante VENIAMO OVUNQUE'," *SomMovimentonazioAnale*, May 21, 2016, https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2016/05/21/si-ma-quanti-siete-un-fiorino-azione-contro-la-privatizzazione-della-sanita-durante-veniamo-ovunque/.

[100] Law 194––the law legalizing abortion, a victory of the feminist movement of the 1970s––contains a provision allowing for doctors and other medical providers to declare themselves "conscientious objectors." Right-wing and conservative parties and movements have promoted the widespread declaration of "conscientious objection" throughout Italy, effectively making abortion inaccessible in many smaller towns and rural areas and limiting accessibility in cities. Previous campaigns on the part of various coalitions involving Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and the Consultoria, among other groups, popularized the slogan #MoltoPiùdi194, or #MuchMorethan194. Regarding hormones, the Consultoria prepared a "fake" pharmaceutical information sheet on hormones that was affixed to the door of a pharmacy during the course of the #VeniamOvunque demonstration. For the full text, see SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Il Bugiardino Delle Ormoni Sessuali," *SomMovimentonazioAnale*, May 21, 2016, https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2016/05/21/il-bugiardino-degli-ormoni-sessuali/.

spaces, from streets and sidewalks, from the bounded spaces where they wanted to ghettoize us. We converge in continuously expanding common spaces. We contaminate every place with our Fabulosity: Every street, every boulevard, every corner that is useful for re-drawing the geography of our desires and our pleasures. They wanted us vacuuming up dust at home? They'll find us in the street spreading the ashes of gender roles.

We are the glitch in the gears of capital! Cum and enjoy with us![101]

Considering that Bologna's mayor had sought to forbid the demonstration in the first place, it is not surprising that the occupation of ex-Veneta––which, like so many publicly-owned abandoned spaces had been 'awaiting' a long-promised repurposing that had never come–– was so short lived.[102] Rather than facing a forcible and potentially violent eviction at the hands of a phalanx of riot police, the occupants departed the space after only a few hours and concluded #VeniamOvunque in Piazza Maggiore, the main square of Bologna. Still, the occupation served as something of a test-case for the capacity of the transfeministqueer movement to succeed in engaging such a tactic.[103] As the closing words of the "Declaration" make clear, the demonstration also served to reveal another layer of the "geography of [...] desires and pleasures" that informs the everyday practice of the multi-scalar political ecology which encompasses not only the Laboratorio, but also the SomMovimento, the Consultoria, and the constellation of other transfeministqueer collectivities and formations that had taken shape in the ten years since Smaschieramenti was born. That such a map was not only

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[101] SomMovimento nazioAnale, "Declaration."

[102] Alessandro Cori, "Sfila in Strada L'orgoglio Gay in 500 al Corteo Per Atlantide," *La Repubblica*, May 22, 2016, https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2016/05/22/sfila-in-strada-lorgoglio-gay-in-500-al-corteo-per-atlantideBologna09.html?ref=search.

[103] Indeed, less than a year after #VeniamOvunque, the Consultoria, organizing within the context of Non Una di Meno, the Italian wing of an international feminist movement, staged its annual International Women's Day demonstration/Gender Strike manifestation in such a way that it also culminated in an occupation. In this instance, the occupation lasted a matter of days before being evicted. For further information, see Consultoria Queer Bologna, "La Consultoria TFQ Non Si Ferma con uno Sgombero!," *Consultoriaqueerbologna.Noblogs.org*, March 10, 2017, https://consultoriaqueerbologna.noblogs.org/post/2017/03/10/la-consultoria-tfq-non-si-ferma-con-uno-sgombero/; and Consultoria Queer Bologna, "The Day After: Consultoria Transfemminista Queer Bologna Sgomberato la Mattina Dopo LottoMarzo," *Consultoriaqueerbologna.Noblogs.org*, March 9, 2017, https://consultoriaqueerbologna.noblogs.org/post/2017/03/09/the-day-after-consultoria-transfemminista-queer-sgomberata-la-mattina-dopo-lottomarzo/.

palpable, but also conceived of as showing the extent of a political terrain unified in its "twistedness" [*storte*] speaks to both the potency and the pliability of the praxes adapted and innovated by the transfeministqueer movement in the relatively short space of a single decade. But, as the next two chapters will track in greater detail, this assertion of the will to "contaminate every place with [...] Fabulosity," was not a simple reflection of the unimpeded expansion of the movement, but an expression of rage, frustration, and, crucially, collective self-understanding with regard to the need to constantly re-establish spaces and relations of self-management and self-determination in the face of local, regional, and national state efforts not just to dismantle such spaces and relations, but to absorb their creativity and their creations alike as part of state-managed redevelopment and gentrification. The overall significance of #VeniamOvunque as a response to just such redevelopment and gentrification becomes much more concrete in light of the evolution of municipal politics in Bologna since the late 1990s, which is precisely the focus of the next two chapters.

Atlantide R-Esiste!

Returning

I had scarcely been back in Toronto a month when I received a WhatsApp message from

Babs: "We got an eviction notice. Fuck."

I didn't comprehend at first.

"Who? You?"

"No. Atlantide."

I wasn't ready. After all that, were any of the comrades ready? Of course: they'd been

living it for years. Of course not: one can never be ready.

During my time in Bologna, I had often wondered how, in light of the waxing and

waning of the threat of eviction over the years, members of Atlantide's collectives managed to

be so apparently unperturbed about the state of affairs. When I questioned comrades about

the possibility of eviction, many responded that it been much more palpable in prior years. By

2015, negotiations to relocate the space were ongoing, a new site had been named, monies had

been allocated for the retrofit of a new building. The general atmosphere was a mixture of

cautious insistence on the part of those involved in the negotiations and reluctant acceptance

among those at some distance from them.

I also often asked comrades what they thought about the move: How much of a

difference did it make that Atlantide existed in *that* particular building? Was the move likely

to happen while I was in Bologna? (No, probably not.) Would there be ample notification of

the date of the move? (Most likely.) In short, the comrades didn't seem worried about an

eviction. After years of defeating and evading more imminent threats, there seemed to be a

shared sense of relief, if not resignation, at the prospect of a relocation. A previously

unimaginable possibility was coming into view: Atlantide would have a new space and that

space would quite possibly signal a shift in the relationship between the municipal

government and the various self-managed spaces and projects in the city. So, I left Bologna

fully expecting that my return journey would be connected to the moment of relocation. Just

such a possibility had been something of a refrain during our weeks and months constructing

the Eccentric Archive. We had tried to imagine what kind of event, what kind of moment,

what kind of process, what kind of ritual, even, might be adaptable to the work of "archiving"

all that had happened within those walls (figs. 17–20). And what about the walls themselves?

What about layers of sweat, dirt, and glitter? What about the thousands of people who had

passed through Atlantide?

Figure 17. Interior of Atlantide, Bologna, Italy, October 2015

Figure 18. Interior of Atlantide, Bologna, Italy, October 2015

Figure 19. Interior of Atlantide, Bologna, Italy, October 2015

Figure 20. Interior of Atlantide, Bologna, Italy, October 2015

Notwithstanding the lack of sentimentality expressed by some comrades about the building in-itself, it was clear that the process of relocation would be more than a mere formality. It would bring a significant, if uncertain, shift in the texture of the everyday life of the collectives. It would conclude a significant chapter in the history of self-management in Bologna. Atlantide was, after all, the last blinkering star in a constellation of self-managed spaces that had dotted the central city since the 90s. Its situation was, for example, the perspectival focal point (*punto di fuga*) of a mural painted on the side of XM24 by the legendary street artist Blu. The mural depicted the two towers of Bologna using themes and motifs from J.R.R. Tolkein's eponymous book to narrate a battle between the so-called *forza del ordine*––the forces of order––and the chaotic vitality of autonomously organized social and political life in the city. What would Atlantide's move mean for the future of self-management in Bologna? And how would the event change the view from the space itself? These were the kinds of questions that preoccupied me in the interviews. I found that many comrades simply did not want to speculate about how the move would change things. *Que serà, serà*. My overall sense of this hesitation was that the incredibly trying period preceding the emergence of negotiations with the municipal government in 2014 was, for many comrades, something better consigned to memory, a sad and exhausting chapter that would soon be concluded.

The arrival of the eviction notice on the doors of Atlantide in October 2015 brought the issue to the forefront with shocking speed, abruptness, and violence. Nobody seemed to have been expecting it. How can you expect the threat that you've lived with for years?

There I was, in Toronto, asking myself what to do. After a few phone calls and some logistical planning, I decided to return to Bologna immediately. My decision was not prompted by the pretense that my presence would make any real difference to the unfolding of events. Instead, the impulse to return reflected the extent to which the space had become a

part of me. My work felt unfinished; I felt obliged to be a witness to and a collective

participant in whatever might unfold. I was not, as I had hoped, returning under the guise of

conducting a ritual of orderly departure from the historical home of Atlantide. Since I had

begun work on this project, I imagined the move to a new space would be an opportunity to

stage a marvelously ironic "resurrection" of the old coffin factory to which they were sending

us. What better location for a new queer-punk knowledge and culture factory?

Instead, in an inverse repetition of the moment in which I jumped on a plane because I

feared missing a birth, I suddenly found myself rushing to the bedside of a gravely ill friend,

that old building. As I boarded the plane to Rome, I did not settle into my seat with the same

flavor of anticipation I had regarding the birth. I did not have the same intuitive confidence

that I wouldn't miss it. I was already missing it and it wasn't even gone yet. Returning was, in

many ways, a morbid opportunity to experience, if only for a short time, the tension, the

stress, and the togetherness that I had marked the most decisive moments in *la difesa di

Atlantide*—the defense of Atlantide––in recent years.

The week I spent in Bologna in October 2015 felt as full, if not fuller, than all the

months I had spent there prior. Every moment was choreographed chaos, overflowing with

details. It felt impossible to record them all. It felt necessary to record them all. From the

second I landed in Rome, the week ahead cast a long shadow. It certainly didn't help my mood

that all trains leaving the airport for Termini station, where I was to board a train to Bologna,

were delayed. The negotiation of a crowded, confused platform did, however, give me the

chance to recall my language skills and to center myself as I headed into the cyclone. I found a

helpful stranger, a plastic surgeon, who negotiated to get us onto a crowded express train to

Termini. We'd arrive just in time for our shared connection to Bologna. He was kind, but I

struggled to explain to him why I was there when he asked me. An hour later, we made it to

Termini and changed trains. He went to first class and I settled into my narrow second class seat and caught up on the day's news from the listserv and my WhatsApp messages: Assemblies, demonstrations, media blitzes, a concert, comrades coming from around Italy–– who can host!––tactics, strategy; not much time for emotion. The water was rising around us. Emotion: the sea in which we were struggling to stay afloat. Rage and irony: like always, our rafts.

Two-and-a-half hours later, I disembarked in Bologna and hailed a cab to Atlantide. I never took cabs in Bologna; nobody I knew did. As I arrived at the steps of the Atlantide, the doors flung open. The day's emergency assembly had just ended. I had never witnessed a daytime assembly. I set down my luggage and warmly greeted everybody. I was met with tired faces, but high spirits. What had I missed? We'll get caught up. It just finished; it's just beginning. Have to rush to the apartment, life doesn't stop just because they're evicting us. Double duty. I fell into the embrace of my comrades and, shortly after, found myself certain that I was exactly where I needed to be. Again. We were going to be evicted, there'd be no avoiding it this time. My only question: How could this have happened?

Chapter Outline

In the preceding three chapters, I traced the genesis of both the initial political occupation of Atlantide in 1998 and the emergence and evolution of the transfeministqueer Laboratorio Smaschieramenti in 2007–2008, nearly a decade later. As Chapters 2 and 3 recounted in detail, the initial occupation was undertaken with a view toward creating a specifically anti-identitarian and self-managed political space. Such an aspiration was embodied not only in the desire and the need to envisage a political space beyond the form of the Centro Sociale

Occupato e Autogestito (CSOA) and its tendency to be identified with a single line of political praxis, but also in the related need to create a self-managed and occupied space whose everyday political life might allow for an experimental cultivation of politicized subjectivities not well supported elsewhere in the terrain of Italian social movements. Building on this history, Chapter 4 provided a detailed account of how such a space allowed for and supported the evolution of Antagonismo Gay into Laboratorio Smaschieramenti. It also showed how the latter's experimental political praxes endured well beyond their inception, constituting iterative engagements and adaptations of historical autonomous praxis of *auto-inchiesta* and the historical feminist form of the *consultorio*.

In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between these key passages and the shifting situation of the occupation of Atlantide itself, with a particular interest in the relationship between "internal" and "external" dynamics preceding and leading to the eviction of Atlantide. I show how the effort on the part of Atlantide's collectives to maintain the space as an anti-identitarian, self-managed, occupied, and autonomous entity shifted in tandem with the collectives' approach to dealing with municipal government and local political institutions. With echoes of my discussion of the institutionalization of intersectional critique in Chapter 1, I further detail how these dealings prompted Atlantide's re-emergence as an autonomous spatio-political subject. Beyond the institutional dialectic, Atlantide's re-emergence unfolded through re-negotiations of longstanding internal relationships and dynamics among the collectives that inhabited the space.

The threat of eviction is, in some ways, a perennial part of nearly any autonomous occupation that has reclaimed a state/privately "owned" space and sought to establish a wholly self-determined, non-state relationship to that space. Like any occupied and self-managed space––and like many of the members of Smaschieramenti, who had been evicted

from their families of origin, the places they grew up, their jobs, and/or full citizenship––

Atlantide had faced the possibility of eviction many times, if not continuously, throughout its

lifetime.[1] Nevertheless, the situation shifted categorically with the issuance of a *bando pubblico*

(public announcement) for the "reassignment" of the historical home (*sede)* of Atlantide at

Porta Santo Stefano 6a following the expiration of a three-year *convenzione*

(convention/agreement) that had temporarily legalized the situation of Atlantide. The

expiration of the *convenzione* in 2011 inaugurated a cycle of contention that culminated in the

eviction in 2015. In this chapter, I will discuss the period of the *convenzione* (2008–2011) and the

period following its expiration (2011–2015) in detail. During this period, the relationships

between the praxes of Smaschieramenti, the various collectivities constituting the self-

managed occupation of Atlantide, and successive administrations of the Bologna municipal

government shifted significantly.

     These shifts reveal a series of problems both for the specific project of

transfeministqueer autonomy as it is practiced in Bologna, for broader conceptions of urban

spatial praxis, for questions of political self-determination, and for understandings of how

such praxes and questions render both forms of subjectivity and processes of subjectivation

anew. In this light, the chapter not only documents those key passages as viewed through the

experience Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and Atlantide, but also points toward the broader

consequences of Atlantide's eviction for overall situation of self-organized and self-managed

culture in Bologna. The latter will be subject to a fuller discussion in the next chapter, in

which I focus on *la difesa di Atlantide*, the defense of Atlantide.

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[1] I have meditated at some length on the valences of "eviction" as a mode of relating to gender/sexuality. See the
letter that I have included in Appendix F, which I wrote on the occasion of the eviction of Atlantide.

Methodology: Archives and Media

My approach in this chapter is closely related to that of the preceding chapter in that it is based both in the interview materials gathered during my primary fieldwork period and in my own direct participation and observation in the everyday life of the Laboratorio and the space of Atlantide. My documentation of direct participation in and observation of both the everyday life of the Laboratorio and the demonstrations organized during my time in Bologna consisted primarily of ongoing field notes and expository writing, both of which have informed the narrative introductions with which I begin each of the chapters. I also joined the listservs of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti, Atlantide, and the SomMovimento nazioAnale, which I followed daily during my time in Bologna and continue to follow still. Taking a cue from the archiving praxis documented in Chapters 2 and 3, I constructed a small analog archive of materials gathered at assemblies and events like the summer *campeggia* of the SomMovimento nazioAnale and, as I outline below, maintained a digital archive comprised of local media accounts of demonstrations and goings-on related to Atlantide. Lastly, I took many photos during my time in Bologna, some of which I have included throughout the dissertation.

As outlined in the previous chapter, the interviews focused not only on the various modes of arrival and *percorsi politici* of comrades of Smaschieramenti both to the work of the Laboratorio and to the space of Atlantide, but also on cultivating an understanding of the evolution of the Laboratorio's political praxes in relation to the shifting situation/position of sexualized and gendered subjectivities vis-à-vis the state, the market, institutions, and social movements. As I explained in the methodology section in Chapter 4, the third section of my interviews with the comrades of the Laboratorio encompassed inquiries related to the prospect of eviction, to issues concerning the space itself, and to Atlantide's relationship to

municipal politics and local institutions. Nevertheless, because the third section of the

interviews typically followed hours of intensive discussion related to Smaschieramenti's

praxes, it was often more truncated. So, my questioning generally focused most pointedly on

attitudes related to the physical space, speculations about the impact of moving to a new

space, and the possibilities and challenges represented by moving to a different part of the

city. While these discussions inform my account in this chapter they cannot, in light of the

eventual eviction, provide a complete picture. By the time I conducted my primary fieldwork,

the operative assumption of members of Smaschieramenti was that the then-ongoing process

of negotiation with the municipal government would result in a move to a new space. That

space, located in Via Del Porta 11/2, was the abandoned coffin factory to which I referred both

above and in the Introduction. The building is located in the vicinity of several other

important sites directly or indirectly associated with the LGBTQ movement.[2] As the detailed

account in this chapter will reveal, the prospect of relocation had not been a benevolent offer

on the part of municipality. Instead, it was a result of years of political struggle both within

and beyond walls of Atlantide, including among its collectives and various municipal and

neighborhood administrations. I am highlighting this point here both to account for my

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[2] The proposed site for Atlantide's new home was proximate to the headquarters of Movimento Identità Transessuale (MIT), the largest and oldest trans* organization in Italy; Cassero, the seat of the national gay organization ArciGay; Cineteca Bologna, where the queer festival Gender Bender has historically been hosted; and Museo d'Arte Moderne di Bologna (MaMBO), the contemporary art museum of Bologna. In a 2015 published in *La Repubblica*, Green Party (SEL) city councilor Cathy La Torre––who, among the elected officials of Bologna, was perhaps the most sympathetic to Atlantide––was quoted: "With respect to other cities, the particularity of our gay district will be services. There we will offer gay people not only shops and entertainment, but, above all, a very articulated network with many possibilities and occasions for cultural engagement." The notion of a "gay district" was greeted with both humor and derision by members of Smaschieramenti. For many, a key symbolic aspect of Atlantide's location at Porta Santo Stefano was its proximity to one of the only right-wing neighborhoods in Bologna whose District Council President, Ilaria Giorgetti, had long been a harsh and homo/transphobic critic of the space. In the same article, Giorgetti is quoted describing the various complaints (*esposti*) she had filed against Atlantide: "There are four: Two of mine for illegal occupation [*occupazione abusive*] and one to the postal police, also mine. Then there is another of the residents against the mayor for omission of official acts, after the withdrawal of the order requiring the eviction of Atlantide." "Atlantide Cambia Casa Da Porta Santo Stefano Trasloca in via Del." June 28, 2015.
https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2015/06/28/atlantide-cambia-casa-da-porta-santo-stefano-trasloca-portoBologna02.html?ref=search&refresh_ce.

handling of the unanticipated turn of events shortly after I returned to Toronto following my initial fieldwork and to explore a key tension in autonomous approaches to collective subject formation, namely, the relationship between collective spatio-political subjectivities and the "wider world."[3]

Practically, because the eviction both fell outside of the initial scope of my interviews and largely beyond my direct experience, my account relies on key documents housed in the Eccentric Archive, local media representations, and publicly available statements from the web archive of Atlantide, which was formed in 2011. I will situate my engagement with each of these sets of materials here. First, following the eviction, Laboratorio Smaschieramenti comrade Bea Busi directed me to several archival documents to help to contextualize the spatial situation of Atlantide and of the politics of eviction, namely: the 2008 and 2012 *linee guida (*guidelines) for *bandi pubblici* and the 2012 *bando pubblico* itself (Appendix D) and the 2008 *convenzione* (convention/agreement) between what I will call the "avatar associations" of Atlantide and the Santo Stefano District Council (Appendix E). I relied on the *linee guida* and the *bandi pubblici* in order to reconstruct the city's and the neighborhood's strategy for the "reassignment" of the space and to point me to the laws and statutes that subtended that strategy. I also make reference to the *progettualità* (projects) outlined in a detailed plan submitted to the municipal government by the avatar association in response to the *bando pubblico*. Taken together, these documents provide a comprehensive view of the logic of *bandi pubblici* and their modes of interpellating self-managed and occupied spaces and their collectives. Further, these documents help to elaborate how the very project of autonomous self-determination is shaped and complicated by the implicitly or explicitly violent everyday operations of institutional, administrative, and governmental authority.

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[3] I am grateful to Stefan Kipfer for emphasizing this point.

Second, I draw on numerous local media representations related to the overall situation of Atlantide during the period discussed in this chapter. Media coverage of the situation is significant not only because it helps to fill in details that exceeded the scope of my interviews, but also because it illustrates a shift in the public perception of Atlantide resulting, at least in part, from the unconventional approach that the collectives took in order to resisting eviction. Especially following the expiration of the *convenzione* in 2011, Atlantide's perceptible identity began to drift from the initial vision elaborated in the founding documents of the space, which I discussed in detail in Chapter 3. While these differences are, in part, related to actual shifts within the internal ecology of the space, they are also a reflection of somewhat reductive logics of representation employed by most local media. Of course, media reductionism when it comes to complex subjectivities is far from uncommon. Atlantide's denizens maintain a high level of awareness about the politics of such representations, not least through the maintenance of very close relationships with a bevy of alternative media in Bologna and Italy. Nevertheless, given increasing mainstream media attention, in part as a result of strategies deployed by Atlantide, it is relevant to point to the limits and challenges posed by two-dimensional representations of the space, not least to signal that my use of such media is not meant to present them as wholly definitive. Indeed, I tend to rely on them here in order to substantiate factual information related to institutional political developments.

In light of my positionality as researcher and as a member of the Laboratorio, I tend to prioritize Atlantide's self-representations, which I view as less reductive than those in mainstream media accounts. Take for example, the tendency of local media to refer to Atlantide as an "LGBT social center" or "LGBT association." In light of analyses in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 and the account that follows here, I show how the identification of

the space with the mainstream acronym "LGBT" is at odds both with Smaschieramenti's

collective identification as transfeministqueer and with Atlantide's history as an anti-

identitarian space. Though seemingly trivial in light of the broader threats to the very survival

of Atlantide as such, distinctions between transfeministqueer and LGBT are central for

situating Smaschieramenti's and Atlantide's praxes in relation to both the political ecology of

autonomy in Bologna and the anglophone queer/feminist geographical approaches that I

discussed in Chapter 1. Especially as the Atlantide's situation came to involve evermore tense

relationships with local governing bodies and institutions, the stakes of the processes of

collective subjectivation and self-determination through spatial praxis––processes that have

rendered both Smaschieramenti and Atlantide distinctive in the landscape of urban politics

and transfeministqueer knowledge production––become much clearer.[4] At the very least,

local media representations show the challenges of translating these praxes for wider publics.

The effort to reach wider publics––including, though by no means limited to, other

self-managed spaces in the archipelago of autonomy––is reflected in the third constellation of

materials on which I draw here: The website/public archive of Atlantide. The Atlantide

website/public archive was created in 2011 and signaled the need for a platform and repository

that could accommodate the growing body of material and the burgeoning discourse related

to the *difesa di Atlantide*, sometimes referred to by comrades as the *mobilitazione per Atlantide*.[5]

Unlike the individual websites of the various collectives that inhabited the space, Atlantide's

site is focused almost solely on material related to: (1) the ongoing struggles to maintain Porta

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[4] For all of that, mainstream media representations *do* echo an important transformation that was taking place within Atlantide during the period in question. As noted in Chapter 3, not only did Clitoristrix/Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno, one of Atlantide's longtime resident collectives, leave the space in 2014, but Antagonismo Gay also transformed into Smaschieramenti as a result of the initial *auto-inchiesta*. These changes are subject to further discussion throughout this chapter.

[5] In reality, there are two websites for Atlantide, one from the first wave of *la difesa* (2011), the other covering the subsequent waves. I nevertheless treat these as a single archive owing to the fact that they serve exactly the same purpose.

Santo Stefano 6a as its historical *sede* (location/seat); (2) the effort to raise the visibility of the space itself; and (3) the burgeoning amount of material directly critical of the local government's role in the spatial situation of Atlantide and other social spaces. Prior to the expiration of the *convenzione* in 2011, these functions were not strictly necessary, given that each collective singularity in Atlantide managed its own political affairs. In this sense, the presence of the website/public archive serves as a living representation of the emergence of a broader strategy related to the translation of Atlantide's internally differentiated landscape into its presence as a spatio-political subjectivity, albeit one indelibly acting in concert with a variety of other spatio-political subjects, associations, individual activists, and others in the city and beyond.

An Overview of Municipal and Neighborhood Political Structures in Bologna

In this section, I outline the structures of institutional/state municipal politics in Bologna and trace some key passages in the relationship between those politics and the general situation of occupied and self-managed space in Bologna. Given my focus on Atlantide, I am particularly interested in the period 1998–2008, which corresponds to the years in which the main three collectives of Atlantide stabilized their tenure after the initial occupation of Porta Santo Stefano 6a by a coalition of other political subjectivities in 1998. I make limited exceptions for necessary context, that is, to account for the 2008 *convenzione* between the collectives of Atlantide and the Santo Stefano District Council/City of Bologna. In subsequent sections, I outline the evolution of post-*convenzione* relations between Atlantide, the District Council, and the City Council. These later sections are the venue for closer examination of the attempts of the District Council to reassign the space through the issuance of two *bandi pubblici* in 2011 and

2012, through which *la difesa di Atlantide*, which I discuss in the Chapter 6, and the post-eviction campaigns #CheGenerediCittà and #AtlantideOvunque, which animate the Conclusion, become relationally sensible.

In order to situate both the legal/juridical arrangement established by the *convenzione* signed in 2008 as well as the crisis that followed its expiration in 2011, it is necessary to have some understanding of the basic structure of the municipal government of Bologna.[6] In 1962, as part of a process of *decentramento* (decentralization) of some of the functions of municipal government, the Comune di Bologna was officially subdivided into fifteen *quartieri* (districts), each with its own council. It is useful to note that these changes were part of a larger strategy of involving residents of the city in the administration of the social services that comprised a significant part of the governing strategy of the Communist administrations that dominated post-War municipal politics.[7] In 1966, the central city district was further subdivided into four distinct areas. In 1985, the then eighteen official districts were consolidated into nine. Finally, in 2016, these nine districts were further reduced to the six *quartieri* that currently comprise the City of Bologna: Borgo Panigale-Reno, San Donato-San Vitale, Navile, Porta-Saragozza, Santo Stefano, and Savena.[8]

This history of subdivision, decentralization, and subsequent re-concentration of municipal authority yielded two primary administrative units relevant to my discussion here:

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[6] In 2014, National Law 56 officially reclassified the greater metropolitan area of Bologna as a *città metropolitana* (metropolitan city), replacing its former status as a *provincia* (province). Practically, the reclassification meant that the Mayor of Bologna became a *Sindaco metropolitano* (Metropolitan mayor) and head of a council comprised of the Mayors from each of the eighteen municipalities within the *città metropolitana*. Combined with the reform of *quartieri* within the city itself, this new arrangement concentrates significant administrative, financial, and planning power to the capital city and to the Mayor. Bologna is also the capital of the Emilia-Romagna regional government.

[7] Jäggi, Müller, and Schmid, *Red Bologna*.

[8] For further information, see Comune di Bologna, "Dal Prossimo Mandato I Quartieri Passano Da 9 a 6, I Consiglieri Da 152 a 90. Nuove Funzioni E Più Partecipazione," *Comune di Bologna*, July 20, 2015, http://www.comune.bologna.it/news/dal-prossimo-mandato-i-quartieri-passano-da-9-6-i-consiglieri-da-152-90-nuove-funzioni-e-pi.

the Consiglio Comunale (City Council) and the Consigli di Quartieri (District Councils).[9] The

City Council is responsible for the administration of the city as a whole, including budgets,

statutes, urban/municipal/regional planning, public works, and, crucially for my discussion of

the situation of Atlantide, for coordinating the issuance of guidelines that shape *convenzioni*

made by the *quartieri*.[10] As a representative of the majority party, the mayor of the city

appoints a Giunta Comuale (Municipal Cabinet) made up of *assessori* (attachés), who can be

either elected officials or appointed officials sought out for specific roles, such as the

administration of cultural programs.[11] In the case of Atlantide, the role of the Assessore alla

Cultura (Cultural Attaché) is particularly significant in that this official would eventually

become the primary interlocutor coordinating negotiations among Atlantide, the

Municipality, and the District Council of Santo Stefano.

Though their influence has changed over time, the District Councils, which are

technically organs of the municipal government, nevertheless have their own semi-

autonomous administrative status. They are headed by a Presidente del Quartiere. The

neighborhood Presidents are elected and assume the role of administering the Consigli di

Quartieri, which are composed of technical and bureaucratic staff headed by a *direttore*

(director), an ostensibly apolitical bureaucrat tasked with the everyday management of the

quartiere itself. The district Presidents are elected contemporaneously, though on a separate

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[9] For further information, see: "La Politica del Decentramento," *Comune di Bologna*, accessed February 21, 2019, http://www.comune.bologna.it/storiaamministrativa/stories/detail/40258."La Politica Del Decentramento," *Comune Di Bologna*, accessed February 21, 2019, http://www.comune.bologna.it/storiaamministrativa/stories/detail/40258.
[10] These coordinating functions are not monodirectional, even if the technical authority rests with the Comune. Their fluidity––both politically and technically––will be revealed throughout the chapter, as will the influence of Atlantide and other social spaces in precipitating the "crises" of authority that have accompanied this fluidity.
[11] Since the dissolution of the PCI, the municipal governments of Bologna have, with notable exception discussed later in this section, been governed by a series of coalition governments headed by the various iterations of the center-left parties: Partito Democratico di Sinistra (PDS), Democrazia Sinistra (DS), and Partito Democratico (PD), which is the lead party of the present mayoral administration.

ballot, with the City Councilors, meaning that it is possible for the party affiliation of the Neighborhood Council/s to differ from the City Councilors serving the same part of the city. In this sense, there can be a degree of political distinctiveness expressed at the district level which may or may not be mirrored in the wider city government, itself composed in a manner similar to many national parliaments, that is, according to majorities and coalitions.

The District Councils do not have the same authorities of the larger City Council, not least because they do not have the authority to implement wholesale policy in the same manner as the Municipality itself. They are intended to be a first point of access for residents of a given neighborhood to the everyday provision of social services and to participation in the organs of representative governance of the city as a whole. Despite their subordinate relationship to the Municipality, the District Councils play an important role in some of the most consequential aspects of the institutional administration of everyday municipal politics and they have an important role in dealing with individual businesses, associations, and social spaces within the boundaries of a given neighborhood. In practice, these relations are not fixed and predetermined, but are subject to contestation both from within the official organs of government and from the wider landscape of non-institutional politics.

Atlantide itself sits within the boundaries of Santo Stefano, a large district in the southern half of the city. The neighborhood is home to some of the city's wealthiest residents.[12] Santo Stefano is also the only neighborhood which, during the period I consider in this chapter, has consistently supported right-wing candidates in local elections.[13] As Daniela

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[12] Santo Stefano is also home the city's largest park, Giardini Margherita, and includes significant green space, especially outside of the more densely populated northern end of the district.
[13] In the second round of the municipal elections of 2016, Santo Stefano was the only area in the city to vote in a clear majority for Lucia Borgonzoni, the candidate representing the far-right Lega Nord party.

Corneo somewhat approvingly observed in *Corriere di Bologna*, a conservative newspaper, the

day after the 2009 elections:

> [T]here is a district, Santo Stefano, the same one which gave [center-left/Democratic Party] mayoral candidate [Flavio] Delbono a hard time, which has been passed back to the center-right. Historically a stronghold of the [right-wing] Christian Democrats, the district has always been defined as "white" because it is politically anomalous [...] since yesterday, Santo Stefano is in the hands of the PdL with 36.4% of the votes.[14]

Setting aside the particulars of the 2009 election, the "anomaly" of Santo Stefano as an

historically "white" neighborhood––a reference to the official color of the now-defunct

Christian Democratic (DC) party––must be indexed to the historical domination of the Italian

Communist Party (PCI) in Bologna.[15] During decades of PCI leadership in municipal

government, Bologna became something of a showcase city for the PCI to demonstrate the

possibilities of their governance strategies on a national stage. This municipal-national

dynamic endures, at least in some measures, even today. The governance strategies of the PCI

in Bologna––and, by extension, in the entire Emilia-Romagna region, which was the core of

Italy's so-called "Red Belt" of historically communist regions––contrasted with those of DC,

which dominated post-War national parliamentary politics in Italy for over four decades,

notwithstanding the reality that DC often governed as part of a coalition. The most notable

coalition was, however perversely, between DC and PCI, the so-called "historic compromise,"

that was officialized in 1973.[16] As I discussed in Chapter 3, the historic compromise played a

significant contrapuntal role in the emergence of the extra-parliamentary left in the 1970s.

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[14] Daniela Corneo, "Quartieri, Santo Stefano Torna a Destra; il Pd Tiene 8 Circoscrizioni su 9, Volano i Grillini," *Corriere Di Bologna*, June 10, 2009, https://corrieredibologna.corriere.it/politica/speciali/2009/elezioni2009/notizie/quartieri.shtml.

[15] The PCI held the mayoralty in Bologna between 1946 and 1993. Though the Party dissolved in 1991, the last PCI mayor of Bologna had been appointed in 1983. The electoral process changed significantly following the passage of the so-called Legge Mattarellum by the Italian Parliament in August 1993.

[16] For a further discussion of the consequences of the historic compromise for social movements, see, Tommaso Pavone, "The Contentious Italians: The Genesis, Evolution, and Decline of the 1968–1978 Protest Cycle," Princeton University, 2015, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/86f2/f973ecd90a9ef24301c45393aa93527655fd.pdf

Despite the fact that DC also had "left leaning" factions, it was generally opposed to socialist and communist politics as a whole. For its part, the PCI viewed working with DC in a more global context, especially in light of the coup in Chile in 1973, the same year that the compromise was forged. For many PCI leaders, the fall of the Allende government signaled the necessity for socialist and communist parties to seek out relationships with more "moderate" governing forces in order to maintain parliamentary significance.[17]

Even in the context of rapid industrial urbanization, municipal politics in Bologna and politics in Emilia-Romagna remained historically inflected by agrarian movements, union politics, and workers' cooperatives, which are very powerful in the region. These dynamics rendered Emilia-Romagna, of which Bologna is the capital city, an important proving ground for the policies of large post-War parties. In many ways, the significance of both the region and the municipality to national politics established during the PCI-era played a significant role in both the emergence of an extra-parliamentary left (i.e. *autonomia*) in the 1970s. Bologna's symbolic and actual significance is, for example, signaled by the fact that the city was the venue for the dissolution of the PCI in 1991 in the so-called Svolta della Bolognina, the "turning point" for the post-1989 PCI. The first meeting in what would become three-year process of the PCI's decomposition was held in the Bolognina neighborhood––literally, Little Bologna––a heavily working-class and migrant district on the northern edge of the city. The Svolta culminated in the 20th Party Conference in the coastal city of Rimini, during which the PCI fractured into several left and center-left parties, versions of which continue to dominate municipal politics in Bologna up to the present moment. The foregoing signals deeper historical resonances of the years surrounding the escalation of the threat of Atlantide's

[17] For more on the historic compromise and its geopolitical significance, see Alessandro Santoni, "Berlinguer, il Compromesso Storico e il Caso Cileno," *Contemporanea* 10, no. 3 (2007): 419–39.

eviction, years that witnessed significant shifts in local politics, especially for a city with both a long memory and a long history of left-wing extra-parliamentary contestation.

More contemporarily, Bologna has witnessed significant sociospatial transformations since the 1990s. In their analysis of these transformations, Stefan Buzar, Ray Hall, and Philip Ogden argue that the predominant focus of Anglo-American scholars on gentrification fails to describe adequately understand the nature of these changes, which they instead describe as "reurbanization."[18] With reference to Bologna's "long history of progressive political thought" and the city's "highly decentralized and elaborate system of local government," which I have described above, Buzar, Hall, and Ogden make the case for "set[ting Bologna] apart from both the broader regional milieu and the national context."[19] Though I have already problematized such an argument above and will do so further in my discussion of mayoral politics, their emphasis on the distinction between gentrification and reurbanization does invite an important piece of context for understanding contemporary sociospatial transformation in Bologna:

> [W]hile gentrification is generally described as a spatially distinct process, linked to the agency of particular social classes and/or groups, reurbanization is much more broad-based [than gentrification] in social and territorial terms, because it involves a variety of population changes in relation to both the second demographic transition and multiple migration flows.[20]

The "second demographic transition," which they largely describe in the objective/positivist terms of population geography, entails a number of dynamics that inform a sociospatial reading of Smaschieramenti's praxes: "population ageing, low fertility, the postponement of marriage and childbearing, declining marriage and rising divorce rates, increasing

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[18] Stefan Buzar, Ray Hall, and Philip E Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification: The Demographic Reurbanisation of Bologna," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 39, no. 1 (2007): 64–85, https://doi:10.1068/a39109.
[19] Buzar, Hall, and Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification," 69.
[20] Buzar, Hall, and Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification," 65.

proportions of children born out of wedlock, and growing numbers of households cohabiting or living in nonconventional or 'fluid' household structures."[21] Further, Buzar, Hall, and Ogden's analysis of the impact of "multiple migration flows," including the migration of both Roma and African people, is tentatively couched in terms that reveal, albeit indirectly, the shortcomings of institutional approaches: "The socioeconomic marginalization of ethnic minority populations may stem from their inadequate participation in decision-making processes..."[22] While they do cite a case study by Davide Però––which argues that "the mainstream Italian Left (in its civil societal as well as party and administrative components) is characterized by a politics that fails to 'integrate' ethno-cultural recognition with material justice"––neither they nor Però engage in any way with Bologna's autonomous social movements. This is curious, especially in light of the fact that these movements have generated sophisticated critiques of both right-wing politics and the "integrationist" horizon for left and center-left parties, which I address further in Chapter 6.[23] In lieu of such engagements, Buzar, Hall, and Ogden tentatively suggest that: "The demographic transformation of Bologna may be related to efforts of local authorities to create a politically, socioeconomically, and culturally attractive residential environment in the inner urban fabric."[24]

In the end, while Buzar, Hall, and Ogden's mapping of demographic trends provides some helpful context for understanding sociospatial transformation in Bologna in relation to the limitations of the immediate applicability of anglophone literature on gentrification, neither their brief discussion of the mayoralties of Giorgio Guazzaloca and Sergio Cofferati,

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[21] Buzar, Hall, and Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification," 64–65.
[22] Buzar, Hall, and Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification," 78.
[23] Davide Però, "Left-Wing Politics, Civil Society and Immigration in Italy: The Case of Bologna," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 5 (2005): 832, https://doi:10.1080/01419870500158877 quoted in Buzar, Hall, and Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification," 78.
[24] Buzar, Hall, and Ogden, "Beyond Gentrification," 72.

which I discuss at length in the next section, nor their analysis of these demographic shifts

takes an adequately critical stance. As such, their preference for describing such shifts as

"reurbanization" leaves too many political questions unaddressed.[25]

Municipal and Neighborhood Politics in Bologna (1998–2008)

With a general outline of the structures of local government and a sense of institutional and

demographic dynamics on the table, I now turn to the electoral landscape of Bologna between

1998 and 2008 with a particular emphasis on how Atlantide and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti

framed, understood, and engaged with sociospatial transformation in the city. Giorgio

Guazzaloca, Bologna's one and only post-War right-wing Mayor, was in office between 1999

and 2004. Former Laboratorio Smaschieramenti member Bea Busi, whose interview I draw on

at length later in the chapter, contextualized the anomaly of the city's right-turn under

Guazzaloca and pointed to its implications for occupied and self-managed spaces:

> The curious thing from a political point of view is that the politics of
> legalization of occupied spaces came from the first and only center-right
> mayor that Bologna has ever had [...] Guazzaloca. [He was] a rich
> businessman, an independent not tied to any party in particular but to a
> center-right coalition. So, it was probably this fact combined with his vision as

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[25] For a brief contrasting account, see: "What Is Really Happening in Bologna." *Struggles in Italy*, November 20, 2015. https://strugglesinitaly.wordpress.com/2015/11/20/en-what-is-really-happening-in-bologna/. See also note 77, this chapter. Additionally, Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn's account of urban squatters movements in Berlin provides important insights about the relationship between autonomous spaces, writ large, and neoliberal urban restructuring, not least by way of pointing out the influence that the Zapatistas and the Anti-/Alter-Globalization movement that began in the late 1990s has had on the resurgence of autonomous movements. While such context is undoubtedly important, it is not immediately comparable to the situation of Atlantide, which is my focal point here, because it is not a residential squat. Beyond my detailing of the spatial and ecological dimensions of Smaschieramenti's praxes throughout the dissertation and my positioning of such praxes in relation to queer/feminist geographies and urban political ecologies, a fuller unfolding of a transfeministqueer autonomous critique of urban renewal, as such, stands as one important critical horizon of this research, which is something I discuss further in the Conclusion. Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn, "Squatting and Urban Renewal: The Interaction of Squatter Movements and Strategies of Urban Restructuring in Berlin," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 644–58, https://doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.001009.x. I thank Stefan Kipfer for pointing me to this reference.

> a businessman [that led him to try to] lower the level of social conflict, or, in any case, to concede space, to concede some tranquility to the social centers, to the occupied and self-managed spaces. From a certain point of view, it seemed the best thing for him.[26]

Indeed, at the level of the Consiglio Comunale, there was relatively diminished political will during the Guazzaloca period to evict occupied and self-managed spaces, which were witnessing something of a renaissance in light of the insurgent "No Global" movement emerging out of Anti-WTO and G8 protests in Seattle (1999) and Genova (2001), respectively.[27] The Guazzaloca period instead became something of an *intermezzo* during which the various center-left elements of representative government reorganized themselves and attempted to craft a new vision for post-PCI governance. For Bologna, that vision would arrive with the mayoralty of Sergio Cofferati (2004–2009), which had grave consequences for the dynamics that I discuss in this chapter.

At first blush, Cofferati might appear to be a rather traditional center-left politician. He spent a decade as the leader of Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), the Italian General Confederation of Labor, one of the largest labor unions in Europe. Nevertheless, it seemed that he viewed his tenure as mayor as a kind of test case for renovating post-PCI center-left party politics at a national level, especially because the center-left was increasingly losing Northern parts of the country, where far right-wing parties, such as the Lega Nord and Forza Italia, had been growing steadily.[28] Without delving too far into

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[26] Beatrice Busi, interview with author, May 20, 2015. Though most of my interviews did not involve extensive discussion of representative politics, I did discuss them at some length with both Busi and Goffredo Polizzi. Polizzi explained that Guazzaloca indeed had close ties Forza Italia (FI) had been elected through a combination of center-left disaffection, which kept many from the polls, rendering the 1999 election something of a "protest vote" against the prevailing center-left parties by the normally left-leaning electorate of the city. Polizzi, interview.

[27] This is not to say that such evictions did not happen. For example, in 2002, Guazzaloca's administration presided over the eviction of l'ex Dazio in Via Mattei 28, a former customs house occupied by "a group of Pakistani migrants [...] at the end of the 90s." Zeroincondotta, "Chiedi Alla Polvere," *Zeroincondotta*, March 7, 2013, http://www.zic.it/chiediallapolvere/.

[28] For more detailed information regarding national political geographies, see John Agnew, *Place and Politics in Modern Italy*, (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

the dynamics of national party politics, it suffices to say that Cofferati's vision for Bologna

placed such an emphasis on policies of "security" and "legality" that he earned the nickname *il*

sceriffo: the sheriff.

Cofferati intensified racist institutional political instrumentalization of the so-called

crisis of in-migration to Italy––not least of stateless Roma people, prefiguring, in a sense a

political strategy that would underwrite racist legislation that I discussed in Chapter 4––to

justify evictions of housing occupations and the destruction of homeless encampments. He

was widely criticized for such actions and, not long into his mayoralty, was increasingly

viewed as a dispassionate, if not authoritarian, leader. For example, Cofferati was roundly

criticized for his handling of an instance in which a young woman was sexually assaulted near

the Casa delle Donne, an historic women's shelter. Though she shouted at passing motorists,

nobody stopped to help. After speaking to the woman's father in private, Cofferati neither

made a public statement denouncing the incident nor contacted any of Bologna's associations

or collectives with decades of experience supporting survivors. Confronted with his lacking

response at an event in Milan, Cofferati questioned about his seeming antipathy for a public

appeal, especially in light of the indifference of passing motorists. His paternalistic defense of

this public silence drew him into deeper discussion regarding what many viewed as another

particularly grave instance of his harsh approach to governing:

> Bologna did not become this way yesterday; it has been like this for years. It
> has changed under our eyes and we, the left, have done nothing because
> Emilia enjoyed the fruits of that position––the old Emilian model of good
> living, the positive collaboration between Communists and Catholics.
> Security, which is a theme of the right, does not, therefore, exist; only
> solidarity exists. But, one day, we will have to have a long talk about what
> solidarity really is. In the end, we would find out that certain [social] centers––
> established [*deputati*] and with a title to their space [*titolato*]––certain
> associations which you'll find in the newspapers everyday have been doing
> little for a decade, and that, even associationism [*associazionismo*] now often

acts according to the logic of delegation. [And yet] they ask the City [*Comune*] for autonomy of management and resources.[29]

Cofferati's push toward discussions of security and legality in this context cannot be fully understood absent either the apparent indifference of passersby or the fact that press across the political spectrum emphasized that the perpetrator was likely *un straniero*—a foreigner––a stipulation with strongly racist overtones.[30]

Beyond the racism that suffused mainstream responses to the incident, I draw attention to Cofferati's broader justification for his lack of engagement on the issue because it indicates his general attitude toward a longstanding culture of civic engagement in Bologna–– the associationism to which he refers––and, by extension, reveals his antipathy for forms of occupied, that is, *un*titled and *self-managed*, *non*-delegated, political culture. This is just one example among many of his far-reaching, even radical, efforts to delegitimize and disregard *both* recognized forms of civic engagement *and* those which maintained a long history of subverting the logics of institutional recognition. Other examples include his administration's eviction of the longstanding occupation of more than 300 people––many racialized migrants–– at the Ferrhotel. Cofferati neither asked for assistance from associations and autonomous groups already involved in organizing migrant housing nor did he make use of the government's own social services to aid evicted residents. Another example: his administration's eviction of a Roma occupation in Riva Reno, which resulted in the detention of thirteen people. Cofferati defended his actions in terms emphasizing safety and legality,

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[29] Quoted in Concita De Gregorio, "Cofferati: 'Sicurezza, Sinistra Sveglia' Bologna È Come Il Resto d'Italia," *La Repubblica*, November 28, 2005,
http://www.repubblica.it/2005/k/sezioni/cronaca/nuovepaure/coffesic/coffesic.html.
[30] See, for example, Luigi Spezia, "Una Fiaccolata per le Vie di Corticella di Notte Abbiamo Paura a Uscire di Casa," *La Repubblica*, November 26, 2005,
https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2005/11/26/una-fiaccolata-per-le-vie-di-corticella.html.

decrying the logics with which other parties, such as Rifondazione Communista (RC), understood the practice of occupation:

> Whether in Rifondazione or among the Greens, there's an activist spirit which thinks that you change the laws with the habit of breaking them. Consider the occupation of houses: First we occupy, then we change the criteria through which they are assigned. It's not like that. You respect the laws that are there and change them where appropriate. This is the point that has conditioned the action of the left: a certain indulgence, an underestimation of widespread illegality as "socially acceptable." The left has a conditioned reflex: Because legality has always been an emblem of the right, they can't talk about it, its taboo. Grave error. And this is demonstrated by the attitude of the right in Bologna today, which denies the existence of this theme because it no longer takes them anywhere [*non potendo più cavalcarlo*]. I read editorials that say: "By the force of talking about violence, violence arrives." Do you understand? It's as if it were a problem of words and those who use them.[31]

Those who had attended Cofferati's victory party held in Piazza Maggiore––staged, in part, to celebrate the return of the city to its traditional social democratic representation––must have met these words with more than a little surprise.

The bulldozed path that ostensibly led the city back to the center-left may have shocked some, but this did not stop Cofferati's administration from continuing to dispatch police and bricklayers to evict self-managed social spaces and housing occupations. In 2013, *Zeroincondotta* (ZIC), a Bologna-based self-managed daily online newspaper, published the special section "Chiedi alla Polvere," "Ask about the Dust."[32] The special section included an interactive map tracking evictions and empty/abandoned spaces in Bologna. ZIC's *inchiesta* into the situation of self-managed space was, in part, a response to unrealized promises from the municipal administration to publish a map of abandoned and unused spaces throughout the city. The results of ZIC's investigation document a wide array of collective actors who had staged occupations of both privately and state-owned buildings since the 1990s. Though the

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[31] Quoted in Concita De Gregorio, "Cofferati."
http://www.repubblica.it/2005/k/sezioni/cronaca/nuovepaure/coffesic/coffesic.html.
[32] Zeroincondotta, "Chiedi Alla Polvere."

investigation does not present itself as comprehensive, it nonetheless offers substantial insight into the temporal and spatial dynamics of the cycle of abandonment–occupation–eviction–abandonment. For one, the investigation reveals an acceleration of the cycle in the Cofferati period. Secondarily, it points to the reality that, when evicting either housing or political occupations of state-owned property, the administration often justified their actions by claiming that the spaces under eviction were needed for the provision of social services. Thus, the refrain quoted at the beginning of the piece: "C'è già un progetto." There's already a project happening here. In most, if not all, cases documented in the piece, the windows and doors of state-owned evicted spaces were bricked over immediately following the eviction. Despite the pretenses used to justify many evictions, the spaces remained empty.

More than this, ZIC's investigation distinguishes between short-term occupations, sometimes coordinated by existing social centers, that sought to (co-)organize housing for precarious and migrant groups, and longer-term, non-residential projects, like Atlantide. Though their engagements with these issues differ according to political genealogy, longer-term occupations––Atlantide, XM24, Teatro Polivalente Occupato (TPO), and Laboratorio Crash––function as enduring points of return and reorganization for more mobile and ephemeral occupations. As my reference to Atlantide's centrality in the mural that once enlivened the walls of XM24 above suggested, it is of particular significance on account of its non-singular political identity and its transfeministqueer approach to these transversal politics. As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Atlantide's founding as an anti-identitarian space has, in part, enabled its constant reinvention and perennial reassertion of an alternative both to masculinist autonomous politics––whose fidelities to singular lines of political praxis tends to relegate feminist and queer approaches to a secondary status, if not eliding them all together––and to state and market-driven spaces. As for shorter-term and residential

occupations, many of those documented by ZIC's *auto-inchiesta* lasted only a few days or weeks. Indeed, the politics of such occupations manifest as a kind of cat-and-mouse game in which elements of the so-called mixed movement––which I will discuss in greater depth below––rely on the tactic of occupation to elaborate antagonistic discourses surrounding municipal policies on the intersecting issues of housing, immigration, and urban (re)development.

In light of the disastrous consequences of Cofferati's brutal campaign of evictions under the guise of legalization and security, for racialized subjects and for autonomous political projects alike, we might ask under what auspices the collectives of Atlantide came to the point of agreeing to the conditions of a *convenzione*. This was not a question that I posed during my interviews. Instead, the question emerged from my efforts to put the self-perceptions of comrades with whom I spoke into conversation with the institutional artifacts documenting the exceptional period of Atlantide's recognition through the juridical instrument of the *convenzione*. I pursue the question here not so much to apply an abstract valuation of the "legitimacy" of claiming autonomy in a moment of state recognition, but to make sense out of what within the established anti-identitarian logic of the space itself–– Atlantide as a *realtà* (reality) without a singular political identity––enabled this passage and, in turn, what this passage enabled/disabled within the anti-identitarian practices of Atlantide.

"Atlantide: Spazi, Corpi, Desideri Non Convenzionale" (Atlantide: Unconventional Spaces, Bodies, Desires): The Paradoxes of Institutional Recognition

In February 2007, administrative actions leading to the *convenzione* between the District Council and Atlantide commenced. Ten years into Atlantide's occupation, the District

Council, under the Presidency of Andrea Forlani, placed a formal request to the Giunta Comunale to reassign responsibility for the municipally-owned building to the District Council. Up to that point, the building had technically been assigned to the Cultural Sector of the Giunta. The official act, which I will henceforth refer to as the Guidelines (Appendix D), that paved the way for the *convenzione* recounts several key moments in the history of the space and affords a perspective on how institutional authorities came to view Atlantide and to establish the legal framework for governing the *convenzione*.[33]

First, the Guidelines only and always refer to the space according to its civic address: Il Cassero di Porta Santo Stefano 6a. Albeit without context, the Guidelines affirm that, between 1997 and 2007, there had never been a formal request for the eviction of the space from either the District Council or the City Council.[34] Despite never using the self-appointed name of the space, the Guidelines do recognize that "in practice [the building] has been used since 1997 by groups committed to issues related to sexuality and to the politics of gender." Among the "many activities conducted continuously and with wide diffusion" nominated in the Guidelines, those that "stand out [are] a reading group, a theater group, musical events, and meetings of various kinds." By defining the space in this way, the Guidelines constituted a formal reduction of the multiplicity of subjects and activities that had called Atlantide home since its founding in the late 1990s. Such a reduction points to the gaps between modes of juridical/state recognition and autonomous self-determination. What's more, such reduction also mirrors my analysis in Chapter 1 of the ways in which queer geographer's embrace of intersectionality as an ostensible antidote to the pitfalls of "identity politics" too easily side-

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[33] The guidelines were approved by the City Council on a vote of 10–7 on January 17, 2008.
[34] Further, they point to a moment in 2001 when the District Council had proposed a reassignment both of the buildings at Porta Santo Stefano––including the identical building across the street, which is formally assigned to the anarchist social center Circolo Berneri––from the Giunta "on the basis of an agreed project." Without elaboration, the document indicates that the request was not accepted and that the proposal was not restaged by the District Council.

step the dialectic between institutionalization and autonomous self-organization. This is, of course, something that Nash picks up on in her call to revisit intersectionality's relationship to critical legal studies in light of its adoption as both a scholarly praxis and an institutional mandate.

The dynamic of juridical/state (mis-)recognition is also evident in the formal process by which Atlantide's collectives registered as associations. Under the terms of the Guidelines, such registration was a predicative necessity for the assignment of the space via the *convenzione.* By submitting to the conditions of the Guidelines, the collectives of Atlantide did not use their self-appointed names. Nulla Osta became "Lo Spazio," "The Space." Clitoristrix became "Donne di Mondo," "Women of the World." Antagonismo Gay/Smaschieramenti became "Eccentrica," "Eccentric."[35] Lo Spazio, Donne di Mondo, and Eccentrica became institutional avatars of the otherwise autonomously operating groups. The gesture of assuming an official name different than a given group's self-appointed name subtly subverts, without fully evading, logics of institutional recognition and plays with the paradox of institutionally recognized autonomy.

Each of the associations was registered on the municipal list of Free Associative Forms, which governs the organizations of civil society and lays out the terms for the assignment of space. Each association was formally placed within the "thematic section" called "Civic responsibility: protection and promotion of human rights," with specific qualifiers added within the Guidelines to indicate the ways that each association fulfilled the mandates of the thematic section. Lo Spazio is described as concerned with "the promotion and development [*valorizzazione*] of musical self-production [*auto-produzione*];" Donne di Mondo with "the

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[35] As with many instances in which the term "eccentric" is used Smaschieramenti, there is more than an incidental reference to Teresa di Lauretis's eponymous text.

struggle [*lotta*] against every form of discrimination against women;" and Eccentrica with "the promotion of the culture and the rights of gay, lesbian and transqueer people."[36] From a practical point of view, these descriptions more or less aligned with the activities of each group, though, again, they obviously compressed their activities into relatively narrow, albeit negotiated, bandwidth.

Turning to the Guideline's references to the wider legal framework for managing the space, they proclaim that: "After more than 10 years of informal and unregulated use of the spaces of the building it is deemed necessary to proceed to a formal regulation." With that, the space was brought under the auspices of Articles 37 & 38 of the Statutes of the City of Bologna and Article 12 of the Rules on Decentralization. Article 37, "Assignment of the District Councils," outlines the role of the District Councils, which I briefly explained earlier in this section. Among its eight substantive points, the first is particularly relevant here: "insofar as [the Councils] are organs of direct representation of the citizens, [they are] guaranteed the exercise of a political, proactive, and advisory role in the formation of the direction and the choices of the Municipal Administration as a whole."[37] In this context, Article 37 merely provides the legal justification for the assignment of the space to the District Council. In so doing, however, it also opens a wider role for the "political, proactive, and advisory" capacity of the District Council in the administration of the space going forward. This point became crucial following the expiration of the *convenzione*, especially in light of the fact that Article 37 requires a justification on the part of the municipal administration in the event of "the possible rejection of proposals and opinions expressed by the District Council."[38] In its

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[36] This is, to my knowledge, probably the first time that the term "transqueer" was included in an official government document in Bologna, if not in all of Italy.
[37] Comune di Bologna, *Statuto Comunale (Testo Consolidato)*, 1991, 22, http://www.comune.bologna.it/media/files/statuto_consolidato.pdf.
[38] Comune di Bologna, *Statuto Comunale*, 22.

subsequent points, Article 37 delineates that the District Councils remain subordinate (i.e. play a contributive rather than a determinate role) to the City Council when the Council itself exercises "the function of political direction." Again, this provision becomes significant because it helps to delineate specific discourses deployed by Atlantide during the course of the defense of the space following the expiration of the *convenzione* and during formal eviction proceedings in 2015. In substance, Article 37 is relevant because it points to the institutional arrangement establishing the District Councils as "protagonists in fostering and promoting listening and collaboration of citizens."[39] In basic terms, we can see the contrast between institutional logics and self-organizing logics, which more often portray themselves as "antagonists." Operating through a representative logic, Article 37 affords the District Councils a wide berth in determining how best to meet "the immediate needs of the population" and in undertaking the "design and integration functions in particular concerning the care of the community and the care of the territory in parallel with the activities of promotion and support to create community networks."[40]

Given that Atlantide and its collectives operated in a transversal manner––linking both geographies and collectivities not expressly bound by traditional borders and/or exhausted through the legally legible categories of liberalism (i.e. "citizen")––the seeds of institutional discontent are already germinating in the gap between these logics. When the Santo Stefano District Council passed to the right in 2011, these seeds were fertilized with a heavy dose of homo/transphobia. Santo Stefano's new President shaped discourses and opinions related to Atlantide under the guise of "care of community" and "collaboration of citizens." From the point of view of right-wing politicians, punks, transfeministqueer subjectivities, and lesbian

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[39] Comune di Bologna, *Statuto Comunale*, 22.
[40] Comune di Bologna, *Statuto Comunale*, 22.

separatists are relatively easy to dismiss as subjects both unworthy of such "listening" and as something other than full "citizens." Indeed, as a space for radical alterity, Atlantide's existence, let alone its resistance and persistence, already subverted the representative logics of underwriting the function of the District Councils. Nevertheless, with the *convenzione*, their fates became intertwined.

Article 38, "Scope of the Delegated Functions," elaborates the particularities of how the City Council coordinates and assigns both funds and functions to the District Councils. It further elaborates that it is the purview of the Councils "in their own decision-making autonomy and with respect to the total allocated resources and objectives set to formulate a program in which the annual budgets of the individual services and interventions are determined."[41] The particular issue of allocated funding did not pertain to the situation of Atlantide because it was never actually allocated funds from the municipal budget. Still, the delegation of coordinating functions is relevant because, under the direction of a right-wing President, the Santo Stefano District Council effectively decided to determine the relationship of subsequent *bandi pubblici* for the space according to the President's interpretation of municipal priorities as they related to politicized perceptions of the character of the district itself deriving from an electoral mandate and disavowing the "collaborative" and "participatory" dimensions of self-managed spaces. Further, Article 38 emphasizes the role of District Councils in "encouraging interrelations and collaborations between different areas of intervention."[42] Such coordination is relevant to the failed proposal for the relocation of Atlantide to the abandoned coffin factory in Via del Porto, which, at least in general

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[41] Comune di Bologna, *Statuto Comunale*, 23.
[42] Comune di Bologna, *Statuto Comunale*, 23.

discussions, was portrayed as more suitable to the "objectives" of Atlantide on account of its

proximity to other LGBT organizations.

Turning briefly to the third area of legal significance, Article 12 of the "Regulations on

Decentralization," we see a final point of interest for institutional representations of

autonomy. Article 12, "Deliberative Acts" falls under Section 4 of the Regulations,

"Deliberative Activity and Control of Acts."[43] The Article redoubles the declarations of the

foregoing Articles from the Municipal Code, stating that "Within the assigned functions and

in the matters delegated to them, the District Councils are granted decision-making autonomy

for the exercise of decision-making functions."[44] The relevance of this statute to the post-

convenzione period rests in its specification that "The opinion on technical-administrative

regularity is made by the District Director."[45] Unlike the District President, the District

Director is not an elected official, but a bureaucrat. In all of these legal details, the most

important fact is that the Guidelines that set the stage for the negotiation of the *convenzione*

substantially decentralized authority for determining the future of Atlantide from the

Comune to the District Council, effectively granting the latter much more latitude in claiming

to represent the "will of the citizens" of the District in regards to the situation of Atlantide.

For all of the legal definitions regarding the institutional autonomy of the District

Councils in relation to the municipal government, the Guidelines for the *convenzione*

nevertheless went on to rather clearly delimit the ability of the District Council to restrict

either uses or access to the space according to such "autonomous decision-making" authority.

The Guidelines themselves clearly state that the building is to be assigned to the three avatar

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[43] Comune di Bologna, *Regolamento Sul Decentramento (Testo Consolidato)*, 1995,
http://www.comune.bologna.it/media/files/regolamento_sul_decentramento.pdf.
[44] Comune di Bologna, *Regolamento Sul Decentramento*, 7.
[45] Comune di Bologna, *Regolamento Sul Decentramento*, 7.

associations in a manner "reachable through autonomous entrance […] in consideration of the continuity of the premises over time and [with] the intention to favor a positive and formal inclusion of the Associations already present in the field of activities with public relevance." The assignment of the space to the authority of the District Council placed the determination of "public relevance" in the hands of the President of the District and explicitly recognized the weight of that "relevance" in the very letter of the documents that effected the assignment of the space to the avatar associations. On one level, then, the Guidelines simply sought to legitimize the state's intervention by giving permission to continue activities that were already in progress in the space for over a decade. *C'è già un progetto*. At the same time, the Guidelines also established a forward-looking arrangement. For example, they stipulated that the assignment of the space encompassed "future formal acts, in consideration of the objective needs of new spaces linked to the projects in progress or being defined."

Building on these principles and precedents, the Guidelines go on to elaborate the terms that would structure the *convenzione*: a duration of 3–5 years; the provision of "services" on the part of the avatar associations to be provided for free to all interested citizens; the payment of a rent indexed against the value of these "services" as compared to the expenses paid on the part of the avatar associations to maintain the space; a specification that the avatar associations should develop activities "compatible with the internal characteristics of the space and with the surrounding external environment;" and a declaration that the responsibilities for the "activities developed, services offered, and the condition of the space […] must be understood as constituted 'jointly' by the signatory Associations." The *convenzione* was signed three months later on April 7, 2008.[46] The *convenzione* itself encompassed the

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[46] The date falls, coincidentally, 29 years to the day that hundreds of autonomous militant activists were arrested and detained based on accusations of terroristic involvement in the Red Brigades.

minimum period suggested by the Guidelines and was in force from March 1, 2008 to February 28, 2011.

Having laid out the legal framework that officially assigned institutional responsibility for the space to the District Council and set the terms for the *convenzione* (Appendix E), I will not go into the same level of detail regarding the latter document. I will, however, point out that the terms of the *convenzione* further recognized the principles of "self-production" (*auto-produzione*) and autonomy. Article 2 of the document, titled simply "Objectives," affirms that the activities of the avatar associations comprise both "support services contrasting the dynamics of marginalization, discrimination, oppression, and violence" and

> the promotion and development [*valorizzazione*] of self-production [*auto-produzione*], with particular reference to bodily, artistic, and musical expression, to personal and social growth [*accrescimento*], and to the developmental autonomy of individuals and to the spirit of the community.

In this sea of technicalities and legalities, many of which were deployed *against* other social spaces in the city during the same period, the collectives of Atlantide managed to translate ten years of autonomous cohabitation into an agreement that would provide a certain measure of serenity during the three years in which the *convenzione* was in force.

In a perverse way, the *convenzione* rendered Atlantide a port in the storm that had been engulfing many other social spaces in the city. Atlantide's translation of their ten-year occupation into a *convenzione* was perhaps a necessary compromise, albeit one with uncertain costs. As Bea Busi explained to me in our interview, the atmosphere from which the *convenzione* emerged was consumed by the *political* threat of eviction emanating from the Cofferati administration's emphasis on legality, security, and regularization. In this situation, she explained, "[I]t had really become a game [in which] the survival of the experience, of the

whole experience from 1997 to that moment [was at stake]."[47] With such high stakes, "it was in that moment that [Atlantide] succeeded in giving [the space] an image––well, not homogenous because you can't give Atlantide an homogenous image––we had such different characteristics…"[48] Busi's inconclusive statement about the image that Atlantide *gave itself* during the *convenzione* period marks the distance between the everyday reality of self-management and the legal and juridical representation of that reality. Up until this point, I have focused on the legal and juridical dimensions of that reality. In order to understand the situation more fully, I now turn to describe the impact that the *convenzione* had on the internal dynamics of Atlantide.

"Una convivenza nello stesso spazio di differenze" (A cohabitation of differences in the same space): Atlantide's Internal Ecology (1999–2011)

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated how the first fliers for Atlantide reclaimed Porta Santo Stefano 6a *as Atlantide*, that is, as an anti-identitarian, self-managed, and occupied space. As both a tactic and an event in itself, the occupation witnessed the birth of a new collective spatio-political subject in the political terrain of Bologna. Interpellating the space through the act of occupation, the initial denizens of Atlantide sought to create a political space which, to paraphrase the first fliers, would be frequented by a multitude of subjectivities. They had hoped, in turn, that such a space would shape and be shaped by an array of subjects-in-formation, especially those excluded from institutional politics and from narrowly defined versions of autonomous politics. In the previous sections of this chapter, I showed how the

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[47] Busi, interview.
[48] Busi, interview.

347

evolving institutional political context, especially in the Cofferati era, relied on the logics of

legality and the specter of forced evictions to reshape the center-left parties as concerned with

the "taboo" issues of legality and security. The power of the legality and security discourse was

that it created a *sine qua non* for occupied and self-managed spaces: they either had to valorize

their already-existing projects as "services" provided to the citizenry and, therefore, they

become subject to the management schemas of municipal law or they had to face the police,

the bulldozers, and the bricklayers. Indeed, as we will see, both sides of this binary could exist

simultaneously; spaces could and would be both drawn into the legalization discourse and

simultaneously delegitimized, stigmatized, and/or evicted. My brief inventory of the cat-and-

mouse eviction game above demonstrated the panoply of different styles, intentions, and

strategies surrounding political occupations during the Cofferati-era. Of course, many of the

evictions that took place were not the result of a process in which a given occupation was

offered the opportunity to regularize its activities; some were justified as interventions

regarding public safety, others administered as punishments for not "following the rules."

When relying on discourses of safety and security, the municipal administration explicitly

devalued the political intent of occupations, such as those which provided housing to

migrants. In turn, the administration reinforced existing legal frameworks regarding

migration and citizenship and demonstrated the ability of center-left municipal governments,

which progressively concern themselves with what Wiegman calls "identity knowledges," to

align themselves with the conservative priorities of national parties and coalitions.

Notwithstanding the logics of legalization and security, Atlantide was able to

(re)present itself as a singular spatio-political subject nonetheless composed of distinctive

entities. In so doing, the collectives took part in a kind of institutional political drag show.

Along the way, they paradoxically managed to enshrine the very concept of autonomy within

the legal frameworks that would come to "regularize" their existence for three years. In all of this, the principles and practices of "autonomy" trafficked between institutional and non-institutional contexts, shifting meaning along the way. Institutionally, the delegation and decentralization of municipal authority to the District Council was an ostensible affirmation of the principle of autonomy in a representative governing context. Significantly, this principle is based on the notions of "delegation" and "decentralization," both of which come to reify the authority of the delegating power itself. Non-institutionally, through the transmutation of what I will call the mutually existing (quasi-)separatisms of Atlantide's collectives into the avatar associations, the collectives of Atlantide created a Cerberus–like entity which, according to the Guidelines and the *convenzione*, assumed a shared responsibility for the space that they had already been occupying more-or-less harmoniously for a decade.

In this section, I delve deeper into the internal evolution of Atlantide during that decade, with a particular interest in the *convenzione* period. I highlight the transformation of the internal dynamics of the space in such a way as to illuminate the politics of divergence to which I referred in my review of queer and feminist geographies. To start, I draw heavily on my interview with Beatrice Busi who, alongside a handful of other comrades, has been connected to Atlantide from its very beginnings.[49] I conducted my interview with Busi both before I had finalized a formal schedule of questions and before I had a strong grasp of the Italian language. As a result, the interview focused primarily on the relationship between Atlantide and the organs of institutional politics, an area in which Busi has a particularly deep knowledge. Prior to delving into the particulars, Busi recounted her path of arrival to Atlantide. Her story illuminates several important dimensions of the internal spatio-political ecology of the space in the years preceding the expiration of the *convenzione*.

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[49] Busi has since left the Laboratorio and now participates in CRAAAZi.

Apart from a period during which Busi lived in Rome (c. 2001–2007), her political

involvements are deeply rooted in Bologna and Atlantide. Like many of the activists that I met

in Bologna, Busi's earliest political engagements took place in her late teens during an

occupation of the *scuola 350uell350e350* (high school) that she attended in the early 1990s,

which coincided with the beginnings of the Pantera movement (1991–1992).[50] Busi

characterized her earliest experience of politics as *misto* (mixed) in that it was not expressly

feminist, though it shared with autonomous feminism the common element of self-

organization *dal basso* and, further, emphasized the politicization of subjectivity and processes

of subjectivation within and against institutional contexts.[51] By the time that Busi enrolled at

the University of Bologna in 1993, the Pantera movement, which I discussed in Chapter 2, had

died down but, as she noted, there were still "some experiences" from the movement that

influenced the general political and organizing atmosphere.

Entering university in the shadow of the Pantera imbued Busi's everyday life as a

student with political engagement. The primary locations of her engagement were occupied

and self-managed *sala studi* (study rooms), including one in Via Zamboni 36, named after its

location in a university building on one of the main student thoroughfares, and another called

Aula Bianca. Like many politically engaged university students both in the 1990s and in

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[50] See Chapter 2; The Pantera Movement was a large-scale resistance movement against proposed neoliberal reforms of the University system. It was among the most significant political mobilizations of the post-1977 period.

[51] Throughout my time in Italy, the use of the term "mixed" was used to signal common denominators linking disparate approaches to politics which, nevertheless, exist within the broader framework of autonomous organizing. The term largely refers to the general "area" of autonomy and radical politics but, in the transfeministqueer context (i.e. the one in which Busi was relaying this to me), it often carried the double sense of referring to the lack of a centrally feminist approach to organizing, in which there are still more distinctions (separatist vs. not, etc.). My understanding of the multiple valences of the term is that, in some instances, it is a neutral reference to the underlying practices of self-organization and the commonly stated commitments to anti-sexism, anti-racism, and anti-fascism. In other instances, the term carries a more critical edge, especially when it was used to contrast emergent forms of self-organization––like many practiced by Smaschieramenti––which questioned the extent to which autonomous organizing was, despite its commonly stated commitments, implacably masculinist/macho. Most often, both senses played in the use of the term.

previous generations, Busi "never went to school [classes]," instead preferring to study in the

occupied and self-managed *sala studi*, attending exams and going to classes "strictly when

necessary."[52]

In the *sala studio* in Via Zamboni 36, Busi encountered both "Bolognese autonomy" and

"the first feminist collective" of which she became aware: Lillith Luna Nera.[53] The collective

itself no longer exists, though several of its comrades would go on to form Clitoristrix, the

lesbian and feminist separatist collective that would eventually make its home in Atlantide in

the late-90s. Busi herself was a member of neither Lillith Luna Nera nor Clitoristrix, though

she encountered both collectives and their respective approaches to politics as a result of the

time she spent in the *sala studio* and, subsequently, in Atlantide. During her university years,

she continued to participate in the mixed movement. Busi's characterization of these politics

provides a useful outline of one of the primary enduring forms of political participation in

Bologna, an experience which was, to a greater or lesser degree, shared by many members of

Smaschieramenti at the time I conducted my research:

> For several years, with a great sense of frustration, I continued to do mixed
> politics; that is to say, not feminist and not separatist. This environment felt
> very close to me, above all from the point of view of class, at least because of
> the discourses being used [and] the interpretive category [used to make sense
> of] the social relations which were at the center of this mode of doing politics
> [...] In reality, although it was a place [*luogo*] inside the university––*una sala
> studio* principally *occupata e autogestita*––it meant doing politics in the city,
> locally [*sul territorio*], not only within the university, that is, not only criticizing
> the internal mechanisms of the university. It was politics, *punto*, in general,
> locally. I felt very close to this way of doing politics––self-organized––a
> politics that was completely different from those of the party, from those of

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[52] In my life historical interview with Sandro Mezzadra, he referred to similar experiences in university in the
1980s, in Genoa: "In the first couple of years [of university], I did an experience that was quite interesting,
meaning the experience of the *Seminari Autogestiti* that came from the '70s basically. But this was the only real
interesting experience between the movement and the university. And it was a kind of remnant of the '70s, with a
couple of professors who were linked to the movement in the 70s, and, so, they allowed us to do that [D: Can you
tell me a little about it...?] We do not attend classes, we do a collective work on Marx and Technology, for
instance––this was the first one––then we come to the exam, we don't take the exam individually, we make a
collective presentation and you give us the highest note [mark]. This was the method..." Mezzadra, interview.
[53] Busi, interview.

the unions, [a politics] which left space to singularities [*alle singolarità*], to expressing them, in some way. But, evidently, this was not enough for me, because I felt that my being a woman was never contemplated, it created power relations within these groups, which were basically sexist. But I still didn't have this kind of vocabulary, so I felt a frustration. When I could, I pushed myself to speak *as* a woman to make these power relations evident, pointing, for example, to the kind of language that was being used. And so, it was after several years that I was able to transform this frustration into a stimulus to change [...] my way of continuing to do politics; this came to pass at Atlantide.[54]

Immanent to this experience is a theme that emerged across my interview with Busi, one which bears metonymic significance for the longer trajectory of Atlantide itself: Separatism. When I asked Busi why she did not move from the mixed movement to the feminist collective while she was active in the *sala studio* she replied that it had to do with the fact that participation in the separatist collective required, in her view, an "adhesion to that kind of organization of politics" to which she was not attracted. She identified her disinclination to separatism as something that she had carried throughout her political life, something that ultimately led her to "make a queer choice that instead managed to render this tension productive."[55] That tension—"between the desire [*voglia*] to do feminist politics and, at the same time, to stay in mixed politics to lift up contradictions and try to transform them"— would come to the fore more pointedly when Busi became involved with a wider mobilization (*una politica cittadina)* in Bologna around the role that sexual/gender violence played in the war in ex-Yugoslavia.[56] This mobilization encompassed a public *percorso* of assemblies, marches, discussions, flier distribution, and the like, involving multiple subjectivities. Out of this mobilization, a group (*un gruppo*) formed. The group involved both members of Clitoristrix and other individual activists, primarily women from the university. When the

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[54] Busi, interview.
[55] Busi, interview.
[56] Busi, interview.

network began meeting at Atlantide, where Clitoristrix had already taken up tenure, Busi followed them there.

The complexities of delimiting a separatist politics and understanding its spaces and modes of operation became more evident––and more connected to the internal dynamics of Atlantide––as we discussed Busi's mode of arrival to the space proper. Busi did qualify the anti-war mobilization and the group alike as "having a separatist character."[57] Nevertheless, she stipulated that, because both the group and the mobilization were "more public, maybe, more diversified in terms of participation, perhaps more free [*libera*]," it was "enough to be a woman" to participate; one did not have to "adhere to the identity of a collective, specifically."[58] Even though Busi's aversion to such an adherence is particular to her *percorso politico*, it highlights the significance of Atlantide itself as a anti-identitarian occupied and self-managed space in which it was possible to maintain multiple forms of political affiliation without strict adherence to a politics tied, whether implicitly or explicitly, to the everyday operation of the space itself.

Busi was not the only denizen of Atlantide to mark the significance and complexity of a feminist and lesbian separatist presence in Atlantide in relation to the space itself. When I interviewed Enrico Campagna––a founding member of the DIY punk collective Nulla Osta, which had taken up residence in Atlantide in March 2001––we spoke about the organizing practices of the space prior to the *convenzione*.[59] He explained that, from his viewpoint, the feminist separatists were "almost mythological...I didn't even know who they were." Campagna's lack of knowledge about the feminist and lesbian separatists is, in part, a reflection of the organic openness of the space to a wide variety of uncoordinated activities

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[57] Busi, interview.
[58] Busi, interview.
[59] Enrico Campagna, interview with author, July 27, 2015.

during the pre-*convenzione* era. As Campagna explained, Nulla Osta's arrival to Atlantide came about when the group, which was primarily focused on the self-production of a small fanzine by the same name, sought out a location in which they might stage events to finance its ongoing production. Campagna contacted some friends connected to the mixed movement space TPO, which was, at the time, located in Via Lenin.[60] They suggested that he contact Renato Busarello and, not long after, Nulla Osta organized its first hardcore punk concert in Atlantide. Campagna had no sense of how successful the night would be. Building on that success, Nulla Osta continued to organize concerts every one or two months and would remain in the space for the next fourteen years. On account of having played at Atlantide not long after its initial occupation, Campagna had some familiarity with the space prior to organizing Nulla Osta's first show there. Though, as he explained, Nulla Osta's initial entry into the space happened somewhat "by chance."[61] Even after it became a constant presence, Campagna described Nulla Osta's relationship to the space as "a bit shy," further suggesting that "in the beginning [...] we always felt like an element external to Atlantide."[62] Despite an initial sense of separation, Nulla Osta remained. When I asked him if and when this shifted, he pointed to the role played by earlier (i.e. pre-*convenzione*) threats of eviction, which were less serious:

> Now I don't remember well, but I think that we somehow felt more a part of Atlantide with the first threat of eviction, early in the 00s, it would have been 2003.
>
> [How many threats were there?]
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> I don't know, so many! Every two or three years, they slowly became more and more real. This rumor had come out that there might be an eviction [that]

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[60] TPO was, incidentally, the space to which the Bologna faction of the Tute Bianche, which had been among the initial occupiers of Atlantide/Porta Santo Stefano 6a, eventually relocated itself. Il Collettivo Banlieues, which Campagna characterized in our interview as "a communist university group," was also one of the groups who had been among the initial occupants, was still present in the space when Nulla Osta arrived.

[61] Campagna, interview.

[62] Campagna, interview.

summer, but, then, nothing happened. After that, in some way, I'm not even sure exactly how, we felt more a part of Atlantide.[63]

Campagna's response suggests that the underlying commitment to enduring anti-identitarian self-management was also operative for Nulla Osta, despite the fact that it did not explicitly take on the same kinds of political projects that characterized the work of the other collectives. Campagna further explained how, around the edges of each collective's particular use of the space, trusting and important relationships formed, notwithstanding sometimes categorial differences in the collectives' modes of operating within the space, to say nothing of the political praxes of the groups involved. I asked him how he might explain the nature of these relationships to someone who knows nothing about the space, emphasizing that my curiosity was not so much about the political dimension, but about the functionality of internal relationships at the level of the use of the space itself. He replied:

> I think that, somehow, [in the beginning] it was a bit the peculiarity of Atlantide, in the sense that the way that it was and is used as a space permitted the coexistence of three different entities. [...] But it was not impersonal [*asettico*], that's where the relationships intervene. Perhaps, at the beginning, it was a bit more impersonal. We knew which day we'd be there and so, in a way, nobody would have busted our balls [*rotto I coglioni*]. But then, getting to know each other, having something to do with each other, things became more united, a bond is born; the bond is that, in the end, it's a bond between people.[64]

Campagna used the phrase *stare insieme*—literally, to stand together––to speak about the way that apparently incompatible uses, personalities, and purposes became transformative forces for each of the groups that comprised Atlantide. But what made this togetherness distinctive, perhaps unique?

> I think that there has always been the utmost respect, which is not taken for granted [*scontato*] this––eh––you see, at a social level, in a thousand situations, even in the workplace, you realize that the abuse of power, one person over another, is always there. [Among us], right until the end, there has always

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[63] Campagna, interview.
[64] Campagna, interview.

been…a respect that, in my opinion, was a peculiarity, something not entirely obvious. It's a thing that I've always loved so much because it means that there is a trust in people and a respect for what they are doing. It's undertaken a bit blindly, for example, many of the things that Smaschieramenti does, I don't even know what they are, almost all of the things that the feminists were doing, I [didn't] know what they [were]; also them, they don't have a clear idea of what it is we are doing in the concerts.[65]

Persistent empathetic proximity to that which we do not fully understand, which is perhaps a more affirmative way to describe the politics of contamination, is a rare virtue. Cooperating to ensure the thriving survival of that space of near misunderstanding, rarer still. To bridge the distance between these two modes of being-together, one must crack the veneer of every moralism. Consider the casual assumptions that one might make about a collective of DIY punks or of hardline lesbian and feminist separatists. These two social formations are not *prima facie* predisposed to cooperation and cohabitation. And yet, Atlantide was home to both. Of course, this rather queer cohabitation did not mean that the coexistence of the three groups was always easy, ideal, or trouble free. As the eventual departure of Clitoristrix attests, not everyone would continue to share the same commitment to evolving from a state of mutually existing (quasi-)separatisms into a more collaborative mode conditioned by the need to defend the space from the increasingly plausible threat of eviction that arrived with the expiration of the *convenzione*. And yet, for more than a decade, it worked.

Notwithstanding the quotidian work that enabled Atlantide to function in line with the mission established from the earliest days of the occupation, the arrival of the *convenzione* did bring about a slightly greater degree of coordination than the foregoing characterizations by Busi and Campagna highlight. Some of these changes were practical and material, as Ale/Leo Acquistapace explained in our interview:

At a certain point, the District Council created a convention, so it regularized our situation. But, in regularizing it, they asked that we pay rent. A low rent,

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[65] Campagna, interview.

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but, anyway, a rent. Prior to that, each collective had its own funds [*la sua cassa 357uell357e357*] so, if it was necessary to buy something for Atlantide, it was done. We never had done *auto-finanziamento* together, each one had done its own [*auto- finanziamento*]...From the moment in which we had to pay rent, we began to throw parties all together and so we related in a more strict [*più stretta*] and also more practical way with the members of the other two collectives.[66]

The practice of *auto-finanziamento* (self-financing), is common within self-managed spaces, especially in light of the fact that such spaces most often politically refuse to seek source of income or funding from institutional or governmental agencies.[67] *Auto-finanziamento* can take many forms: Selling goods, hosting events and collecting donations, and so on. In Atlantide's case, as Acquistapace and others explained in the course of interviews, the pre-convention practice of *auto-finanziamento* was divided among the three collectives, with each pursuing versions of the practice appropriate to their politics, interests, and needs. Antagonismo Gay hosted parties and *aperitive*; Nulla Osta hosted concerts that brought punk bands from around Italy and the world to play in the space; and Clitoristrix staged various presentations and also *aperitive*. The beginning of communal parties––*feste di Atlantide*, Atlantide parties––not only served the practical need of paying the rent, but also contributed to an elaboration of new relational forms between and among the collectives. Acquistapace continued:

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[66] Acquistapace, interview.

[67] In my interview with Aldara Pérez Peredes, she explained the aesthetic and experiential dimensions of the relationship between legal status and the financing activities which pertain to a given status with greater nuance. She used two longer-term occupations, Crash and TPO, as examples: "Before arriving at Atlantide, I used to go to TPO, Crash, more than anything, for concerts. [...] Spaces anyway of the 'mixed' [movement]. [...] For me, the differences are that Crash and TPO [...] both have a presence of men and of women who aren't feminists [*femmine non femministe*]. Even without understanding how feminist politics in this country works, you realize that there are significant differences even within the movement, looking at two spaces that, for someone who is not politicized, might look the same. But they are not. And you see it. You see it at an aesthetic level, how the spaces are made. Crash is an occupation, TPO has a *convenzione*. And even if you do not know this stuff, you can still see it. Because, obviously, Crash must self-finance while TPO takes its pennies from papa Comune and Regione. They have European [Union] *bandi*. They pay the rent, but, on account of their [EU] *bandi*, the rent is practically paid. They make a lot of money. So, you have heating, four bathrooms. Also, on the architectural level it is different. And the aesthetics of the posters, the fliers that you find there, and also the people you find." Peredes, interview. While a lot of detail in Peredes's observations is clearer in light of the rest of the chapter, I include her lengthy observation because it serves to illustrate the impact of underlying agreements (or the absence thereof) on the self-presentation of spaces and to distinguish them among activists. Among other things, Crash also staged occupations of other buildings throughout the city.

I think that, on the one hand, we queered [*frocizatto*] the punks very much [...] I had also noted that in the parties that we three, or rather two, collectives organized. Whereas, during their nights, in their concerts, they had a very different approach, also a physical approach to operate the entrance [*fare l'ingresso*], in managing or throwing people out, everything.[68]

Changes in the identity of the space were quite palpable even during my fieldwork in the post-*convenzione* period. I attended and helped to run several Atlantide parties during my time in Bologna.[69] They were undeniably queer, a fact immediately sensible through the music and the crowd, which comprised of a mix of students, comrades from other social spaces, and, for lack of a better term, mainstream gays. Organizationally, the approach to managing a party seemed, paradoxically, both chaotic and seamless. There was no clearly outlined set of tasks, no to do list posted on the wall. People took on key responsibilities––such as buying alcohol, DJ-ing, working the door––based on minimal discussion, usually coordinated through the listserv and confirmed at the assembly preceding the night of the party. Out-of-pocket expenses were reimbursed from the *cassa mutuale*––the collective savings––of Atlantide.

On party nights, the space exuded an electricity, imbuing me with the immediate sense of needing and wanting both to help and to let loose. In the hours preceding the start of the party, nobody blatantly told anybody else what to do. During my first party, I recall asking comrade after comrade what "should" be done: a fruitless question. Do what needs to be done, what you feel capable of doing, with the faith that everything will be taken care of and that, if someone requires relief, they ask for it. So, over the course of the parties that I attended, like many comrades, I drifted in and out of multiple roles: bartender, DJ, door person, reveler. The

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[68] Acquistapace, interview. Acquistapace's slippage in referring to the three collectives suggests that these modes of intra-collective contamination were not limited to the relationship between Smaschieramenti and Null Osta and were not, as the eventual departure of Clitoristrix attests, always enabling.

[69] During my primary fieldwork, I did not attend a punk concert in the space. I would do so only when I returned to Bologna in October for the final Nulla Osta concert in Atlantide, which I would hesitate to draw too many conclusions from, given the charged atmosphere surrounding the eviction. My reasons for not attending a punk show were almost totally unconsidered, as if my participation in Smaschieramenti did not immediately lend itself to being present for other events.

fluidity of these roles also extended to the social aspects of the party. Of course, accounting for personality, most comrades seemed looser in their own self-presentation. Lesbians would make out with fags, normally shy people might shed their tops, serious intellectuals would lose their minds for the right song. This too is a form of transversality. In all of this, there was rarely perfect harmony, somebody would get too drunk and abrogate a responsibility, so-and-so would not stay to clean *again.* These issues were handled with a kind of begrudging kindness. If something was truly a problem; if harm was caused or there was an unruly partier who had to be thrown out, the situation would usually be assessed at the subsequent assembly and a consensus would be reached on how to try to avoid it going forward.[70] When the end of the night came, usually 5 or 6am, a handful of us would stay to clean. We'd put on some classic anthems and mop together as the sun poured through the open windows and traffic picked up on the *viale*.

By the time that I began fieldwork in Bologna, several years had passed since the expiration of the *convenzione* and the departure of Clitoristrix, so the character of the parties in which I participated was different than those that took place between 2008–2011. My interview with Campagna gives further insight into the nature of these changes. As we spoke about the Atlantide parties, Campagna noted that, during the *convenzione* era, "the boundaries [between the three collectives] became much more malleable, less defined."[71] Such a claim stands in contrast to the normatively individualizing tendency in disciplinary spaces of institutionalized knowledge production to emphasize, if not to require, divergence. As an example of how the

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[70] One of the issues that came up during my time in Bologna had to do with the balance of subjectivities present in the parties. While no "ideal" composition was ever explicitly defined, there was a general sense––at least pertaining to the handful of parties I attended–events were starting to skew somewhat more toward mainstream gay men. Given the increasingly close identity of the space with the transfeministqueer politics of Smaschieramenti and the implicit distinction to parties that took place at the mainstream gay space operated by Cassero, this concern points a bit more toward the evolution of Atlantide's spatial subjectivity as a whole.
[71] Campagna, interview.

parties "for the subsistence of the space" contributed to this malleability, Campagna cited the fact that, "when the feminists [Clitoristrix] needed something for their events they would ask more openly [if we were] available to help, before, but also during, [events]."[72] When I asked if the spatial dynamic had shifted since their departure, he replied that it "certainly had," though he did not root this shift in the relationship between Nulla Osta and Smaschieramenti specifically.[73] In keeping with his general tone throughout our interview, Campagna emphasized that, for him, the shift was not fundamentally linked to the absence of the feminists from the parties, but had more to do with

> the variety inside Atlantide, [it's] about the feeling, not something physical or something else, but something about this variety, this somewhat absurd equilibrium inside the space [...] by now you've understood that my political discourse is very much tied to personal relationships [...] So, when it comes to the absence of some person, of some point of reference, it creates a little bit of grief [*dispiacere*] for me.[74]

Stretching back to the initial occupation, the vision for Atlantide enabled a functional balance among the three collective subjects that came to call it home. Each was able to maintain its own praxes/areas of concentration thanks to a kind of rigorous informality, a condition that had implications for the individuals involved in each group. In some ways, relationships were strengthened during the *convenzione* period; groups and subjectivities which might not have otherwise been inclined to interact found common cause in facilitating the smooth operation of the space. To be sure, comrades of Smaschieramenti had distinctive ways of describing this relationship. These ranged from the description offered by Bea Busi––"a cohabitation of differences in the same space"––to the one offered by A.G. Arfini as they reflected on Clitoristrix's departure––"their presence created Atlantide as this sort of *condominio* [laughing]

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[72] Campagna, interview.
[73] Campagna, interview.
[74] Campagna, interview.

in which things that, at face value, shouldn't be together [are]. As activists, we stuck together."[75]

Considering these characterizations alongside the range of political projects sustained in Atlantide helps to elucidate what I mean by mutually existing (quasi-)separatisms, itself a kind of queer urban ecology.[76] Compared to other political spaces in the city––most notably traditional squats, residential occupations, and CSOAs––Atlantide was distinctive both in principle and in practice. In this section, I have discussed various dimensions of separatism operative in the space, ranging from the singularity of a political collective in its identification with positions such as women, lesbians, or gay men to the more functional dimension of separate and distinctive uses of the space itself. If the founding documents of Atlantide constituted a mandate for the space in principle, we can see that, in practice, each of the three collectives was organized around more or less palpable collective subjectivities. In adhering to the principles of Atlantide as a space for fostering the elaboration of multiple subjectivities, the collectives stood both alone and together in the space. Each was committed to the ongoing evolution of a process of collective subjectivation that sought to realize the transformative potential of their identification I its (mis-/non-)recognition in other social movement and institutional space in the city. In this way, Atlantide itself became a location in which mutually existing (quasi-)separatisms could nonetheless move in the same direction by striving for the realization and endurance of autonomous self-management.

Without falling into nostalgic tropes that impute a perfect balance to the inter-collective relationships, it is clear that the pre-*convenzione* experiment in maintaining

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[75] Arfini, interview.
[76] Though this characterization will be rendered more explicitly in Chapter 6, where I discuss the post-*convenzione* campaign, "Siamo Noi La Biodiversità" (We Are Biodiversity), it already applies to the dynamics discussed in this section.

distinctive uses in the same space enabled a relatively smooth transition to the period of

regularization ushered in by the *convenzione*. The descriptions of comrades of Nulla Osta and

Smaschieramenti demonstrate that the enabling causes for the success of this transition are

multiple: personal relationships, mutual respect, functional coordination of uses, willingness

to cooperate, a process for conflict resolution. This multiplicity of explanations for "how

things worked" between 1997 and 2011 is itself evidence of the strength of the vision laid out for

Atlantide in its founding documents.

Of course, matters of worldly endurance are not easily accounted for by textual

explanations alone. The founding documents, much like the *convenzione* itself, must instead be

considered as open-ended processes of negotiation, whether among the denizens of the space

or between the denizens of the space and institutional actors. In both instances, a certain

amount of serendipity and creativity went a long way. For instance, while it is not entirely

clear why, in the Cofferati era, the municipal administration was so amenable to the

designation of the space to the Santo Stefano District Council and, ultimately, to Atlantide, it

is clear that the collectives themselves were able to leverage their differences in a direction

that would be legible enough to local authorities to underwrite this decision. In light of

Cofferati's overarching emphasis on legality, it seems that the delegation of the space to the

District Council represented an opportunity for the city government to affirm long-standing

institutional principles and practices of neighborhood autonomy and the decentralization of

authority in keeping with longer traditions of "civic collaboration" in Bologna.[77] Acting in

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[77] Indeed, such a municipal institutional emphasis on "collaboration" was proffered as the core principle of a marketing and urban social development framework for the city called "Collaborare è Bologna" ("To Collaborate is Bologna"). As my discussion of municipal antipathy for forms of self-managed culture in this chapter and my summary of the post-eviction campaigns in the Conclusion suggest, frameworks such as this function as apparatuses of capture in that they seek to capitalize on and regulate extant forms of autonomous social organization under the guises of legality, development, and civic participation. In Italy, these frameworks are often presented as part of a notion of "Beni Comuni" ("Common Good" or "Commons"). For more on the framework itself, see: Comune di Bologna, *Collaborare È Bologna*, accessed August 12, 2019,

concert, the collectives of Atlantide were secure enough in their embodiment of self-managed autonomy that they did not interpret the "regularization" of this practice in the *convenzione* as a sacrifice of each collective's principles and praxes.

Indeed, the *convenzione* period witnessed a strengthening of bonds among the collectives and brought about an experimental reinterpretation and adaptation of the overall project of Atlantide amidst a challenging entanglement with representative governance. In so doing, Atlantide not only became a central point of reference for other self-managed spaces in the city, it also, I argue, increasingly came to embody a queer urban ecology. In keeping with an ecological approach to autonomy, I understand Atlantide as a space in which a variety of seemingly incongruous uses, presences, and subjectivities managed to materialize something more than an opportunistic/ephemeral inhabitation of a space abandoned by institutional and/or market uses. Over ten years of actual cohabitation, if not outright collaboration, the collectives had produced deeply impactful experiences for their comrades and for anyone who had spent time in the space. What's perhaps more remarkable is that these forms of *auto-valorizzazione* were recognized by the municipal administration, notwithstanding a burgeoning emphasis on legality. Recall that Cofferati had described his frustration with groups that occupied spaces and then sought, at least in his characterization, to change the criteria by which they were assigned. Yet this is exactly what happened in Atlantide's case. In short, during the *convenzione* period, the collectives of Atlantide relationally reinvented the space as a place where the narrow necessity for survival could be transmuted into a thriving, open-ended elaboration of the initial project.

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http://www.comune.bologna.it. For alternative notions of the commons, see: Federici, *Re-Enchanting the Commons* and Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *Common: On Revolution in the 21st Century*, trans. Matthew MacLellan, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

Along the way, both Atlantide and its inhabitants were iteratively reshaped. It was, after all, during the *convenzione* period that Smaschieramenti itself was born out of Antagonismo Gay's reflexive engagement with precisely the kind of lesbian and feminist separatism that Clitoristrix practiced. Indeed, Clitoristrix had been active in the national network that, in 2007, made the call for male-dominated collectives to reconsider their politics and their praxes. It would be difficult to deny the importance of the influence that this call had in light of the two collectives' proximity to each other as occupants of the same politicized space. Still, for all the potentialities embodied in Atlantide's anti-identitarian approach to autonomy both prior to and during the period of the *convenzione*, the experimental proliferation of affirmative contaminations would not survive the difficulties that ensued following the expiration of the *convenzione*.

"Vite al Bando!" (Screw the Bando!): Atlantide Remains, Non-Conventionally

In this section, I return to the municipal political scene to track the conditions leading to the emergence of *la difesa di Atlantide*, the defense of Atlantide, which is the subject of the next chapter.[78] On the institutional front, I trace several key passages in the electoral political landscape in order to establish context for the description of two *bandi pubblici* for the reassignment of the space. The first, issued in 2011 was cancelled; the second, issued in 2012, was seen through to the point of assigning the space to three new associations. In this section, I summarize key moments following the failure of the first *bando* through to the emergence of negotiations with the *giunta* of Mayor Virgino Merola, who previously served as the Cultural

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[78] More affirmatively, *la difesa* has also been referred to as *mobilitazione per Atlantide*, the mobilization for Atlantide.

Attaché in the *giunta* of Sergio Cofferati. This period witnessed a number of changes within Atlantide, most notably, the mutation of Clitoristrix into Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno and the subsequent departure of this feminist and lesbian separatist presence from Atlantide. In light of the fact that I interviewed only one (former) member of Clitoristrix/Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno during my primary fieldwork, I do not claim to provide an authoritative account of the reasons for their departure, nor do I think such an account is appropriate or necessary to the wider analysis offered in this chapter. Nonetheless, I draw on the other interviews to situate the departure of the last formally separatist element from Atlantide as a fraught moment for the self-management of the space as a singular spatio-political subject in the wider political landscape. The post-*convenzione* period also saw the formalization of the first "general assembly" of Atlantide, which is generally referred to as the *comitato*, the committee. By 2014, three years after the *convenzione* expired, Atlantide's identity, as a whole, had become noticeably more coincident with the transfeministqueer politics of Smaschieramenti, not least because of the less explicitly political orientation of Nulla Osta. The shift intensified Smaschieramenti's obligations both with regard to the space and with regard to the survival of Atlantide following the eviction.

In June 2009, little more than a year after the *convenzione* between Atlantide and the District Council was signed, elections were held in Bologna. In October 2008, prior to the commencement of the electoral campaigns, Sergio Cofferati announced that he would not seek re-election. In his announcement, he explained his decision by referring to the fact that his wife and young son lived some 300 kilometers away, in Genoa. Cofferati assured voters: "The reasons are purely private."[79] However, given the divisive emphasis on legality that

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[79] Quoted in Claudia Fusani, "Bologna, Cofferati non si Ricandida 'Ho Deciso per Motivi Familiari,'" *La Repubblica*, October 9, 2008, http://www.repubblica.it/2008/10/sezioni/politica/bologna-cofferati/bologna-cofferati/bologna-cofferati.html.

defined his tenure as "Sheriff," speculations abounded that the motivations for his declaration

had at least as much to do with the likelihood that he would not be re-elected as with anything

else. He would, as it turned out, go on to run for and win a seat in European Parliament in

2009.

Given the extent to which Cofferati's administration had reshaped the relationship

between various left and center-left parties––recall his outright criticisms portraying left

parties, in particular, as having a "conditioned reflex" on account of their relationship to social

movements––the PD found itself in a position of having to offer a candidate who could hold a

coalition together. Their answer came in the form of Flavio Delbono, an Oxford-educated

economist who had studied under Amartya Sen. An establishment candidate *par excellence*,

Delbono had previously held posts in both the municipal government and the regional

government of Emilia-Romagna. Delbono would be supported by a variety of PD leaders

nationally, including former President of the European Commission and Prime Minister of

Italy, fellow economist, and one-time advisor to Goldman Sachs, Romani Prodi. Prodi's

endorsement characterized the candidate as the best person "to bring about those innovations

and changes which Bologna [needs] to be on par with other major European cities."[80] In

excess of Cofferati's emphasis on legality, Prodi's endorsement indicates the institutional

logics that had begun shaping representative politics in Italy during the emergence of the

global financial crisis.[81] These logics also reflect earlier efforts to bring center-left municipal

governance in line with the larger aspirations of the party.

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[80] Quoted in Luciano Nigro, "PD, Prodi Promuove Delbono," *La Repubblica*, March 9, 2009, https://bologna.repubblica.it/dettaglio/pd-prodi-promuove-delbono/1597912.
[81] As far as the city was concerned, these logics would continue to play out over the subsequent decade, not least through the administrative reorganization of Bologna into a so-called Metropolitan City. Successive administrations would seek to transform Bologna's legacy of communist rule and social democracy into a marketable vision of the city that proffered "collaboration" and "innovation"––alongside Bologna's image as a capital of gastronomy and culture with one of the best "preserved" medieval city centers––as key "selling" points for investors and tourists alike.

Following a first-round vote that also included former mayor Giorgio Guazzaloca, Delbono was elected in the second electoral round in 2009. As I noted earlier, the 2009 elections also witnessed the passage of the Santo Stefano District Council into the hands of a right-wing President, the only district to take this turn. On a neighborhood level, the ouster of Andrea Forlani, the center-left President of Santo Stefano, was described by his presumed successor, Maria Teresa Bartolini, in terms that foreshadowed a disastrous shift in the dynamic between Atlantide and the District Council, "Bologna is finally waking up a bit less red: Finally, Santo Stefano returns to the right."[82] Indeed, Santo Stefano was the only one of the city's nine neighborhoods *not* to elect center-left candidates.[83] While the city as a whole avoided falling into the hands of Berlusconi-affiliated far-right parties, the right basked in their symbolism of their victory.

On January 25, 2010, little more than six months into his administration, Delbono resigned under the weight of charges of embezzlement, abuse of office, and aggravated fraud.[84] One year and a day after his resignation was formalized, on February 18, 2011, Delbono was found guilty. Following his resignation, the City Council and the District Councils alike were suspended and a so-called technical government was instituted, leaving no elected intermediaries in either level of city administration. Bologna now found itself under the rule of Annamaria Cancellieri, a specially appointed Commissioner, and four appointed Subcommissioners, one of whom subsequently served as the Prefect of Bologna. Cancellieri, who would go on to serve as Interior Minister under the national Presidency of Mario Monti, had served as a prefect in numerous other cities in Italy. While not technically

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[82] Quoted in Corneo, "Quartieri."

[83] See Valerio Varesi, "Nei Quartieri 8-1 per il Centrosinistra Cazzola Conquista il Santo Stefano," *La Repubblica*, June 10, 2009, https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/06/10/nei-quartieri-per-il-centrosinistra-cazzola.html.

[84] See Micol Lavinia Lundari, "Delbono in Consiglio: 'Mi Dimetto.' Prodi: 'Gesto di Grande Sensibilità'," *La Repubblica*, January 25, 2010, https://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/01/25/news/del-bono-dimissioni-2073758/.

politicians, prefects nonetheless can have, especially from the point of view of autonomous politics, a rather striking political impact given their tendency to emphasize a very strict "letter of the law" approach to governing.

This turbulent period for electoral politics in Bologna coincided almost precisely with the expiration of the *convenzione* between Atlantide and the Santo Stefano District Council. For Atlantide, the outcome of this moment was far from guaranteed. The suspension of elected officials and the installation of Cancellieri as Special Commissioner meant that "political" decisions were supposed to have been forestalled until municipal elections, slated for May 2011, could be held. In the midst of this ostensible state of exception, Cancellieri nonetheless declared that she would instruct the Director of the Santo Stefano District Council *not* to renew the *convenzione*, notwithstanding the fact that the Guidelines had provided an option for the automatic renewal of the agreement for a period of up to two years.

As Renato Busarello explained to me, Cancellieri's decision had a decisively political character.[85] Given that Atlantide had operated without any official denunciation for the period of the *convenzione*, its expiration should have either resulted in an automatic offer of renewal or, at least, a process of renegotiation with the District Council. Such processes had been mediated by other elected officials and/or the appropriate *assessore*. From a technical-juridical point of view, the fact that Atlantide had held a *convenzione* meant that it could no longer be considered a so-called *occupazione abusive* (abusive occupation), which was a designation invoked, for example, when Cofferati evicted Roma housing occupations during his administration. Instead, the presence of the avatar associations in the space rendered them *occupanti senza titolo* (occupants without a title). From an institutional point of view, the *convenzione* had not only recognized and "regularized" the activities of the associations, it had

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[85] Renato Busarello, Skype conversation with author, February 1, 2018.

also fulfilled the demand made by the civic administration that the assignment of the space be indexed against the "value" of the "services" provided by the avatar associations to the neighborhood and to the city as a whole. Indeed, the service-value logic was written into the *convenzione* in that it provided a 50% discount on the rent in recognition of the value of precisely these services. Nevertheless, official documents providing the reasons for Cancellieri's decision stated that, "The assigned associations have used the property in a manner different from the contents of the agreement [...] causing disturbance to the public peace at night."[86] Cancellieri's selective reduction of the *convenzione* to such minor points demonstrated, even if it did not reveal in detail, that the technical government was indeed engaged in politicized actions and interpretations of existing agreements between the organs of representative government and officially recognized associations. Such a claim is supported by the fact that, within a very narrow timeframe, Guidelines for a new *bando pubblico* for the assignment of the space were issued by the Commissioner. The timeframe suggests that the Guidelines had already been drafted at the time that the *convenzione* expired or very shortly thereafter. Given the foregoing discussion regarding the nature of District Councils in determining the kinds of activities that should be prioritized based on the civic participation of neighborhood residents, it is clear that the crafting of new Guidelines to be handed down to the District Council cannot be viewed as a merely technical matter, especially considering that they were written in such a way as to exclude *exactly* the uses to which Atlantide had put the space according to both the previous Guidelines and to the *convenzione*.[87] Further, absent

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[86] Quoted in "La Cancellieri 'Sgombera' il Cassero di Porto Santo Stefano," *La Repubblica*, March 30, 2011, https://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2011/03/30/news/la_cancellieri_sgombera_il_cassero_di_porta_santo_stefano-14286938/.

[87] Recall that these were "recognizably democratic" aims classified under the category of "Civic responsibility: protection and promotion of human rights" placing a particular emphasis on self-produced music and the "thematics" of gender and sexuality.

designated intermediaries, the issuance of new Guidelines from the Special Commissioner

leaves open the question of who, exactly, had influence over their content.

Substantively, the new Guidelines defined the District Council's intention to assign the

space to associations which could attract "new publics" under the themes of: "'cultural

tourism and the protection of public heritage,' with particular attention to the protection of

greenery and environmental education."[88] The new Guidelines also stated that they would

favor proposals that "envisage[d] synergies with other organizations [*realtà*], not only civic"

and further sought to attract proposals from entities engaged in the "promotion of forms of

revitalization of some areas of the Santo Stefano district."[89] Apart from being written in an

exclusionary manner, the Guidelines prefigured the logics through which politicians and

bureaucrats in the District Council of Santo Stefano both (mis-)apprehended the scope of

Atlantide's activities and would continue to denounce them in thinly veiled bureaucratic

language in the years to come. Indeed, the Guidelines also fit into the evolving effort to

"revitalize" Bologna according to logics familiar to any critic of neoliberal urbanization.[90]

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[88] Quoted in "La Cancellieri."
[89] Quoted in "La Cancellieri."
[90] In Bologna, the role of occupied and self-managed spaces is antagonistic to these efforts. And yet, such antagonisms do not account for the role that officially recognized associations have played in the rhetorics and practices of urban revitalization efforts. In this sense, there is a divide between occupied and self-managed realities and formal associations, where the latter acquiesce to institutionally determined criteria for "civic participation." One such example that emerged during my time in Bologna was the Bolognina-based association Baumhaus Network, whose main organizers are friends of many members of Laboratorio Smaschiermenti, including me. The Baumhaus Network organizes BAUM, an annual "open culture festival" (*festival della cultura aperta*), engages in youth-focused educational activities, including in public schools, and runs a recording studio, which is an outgrowth On the Move, a predecessor to Baumhaus, which worked with largely migrant youth to produce and record hip-hop. baumhaus network, "About," *Baumhaus*, n.d., accessed August 12, 2019. While there were numerous informal and critical discussions among the organizers of Baumhaus and members of Atlantide and other autonomous collective about the pitfalls of embracing neoliberal forms of collaboration with the state, these discussions did not rise to the level of public denunciations of the organization itself. The antagonism of autonomously organized initiatives is directed at the state rather than being directed at initiatives such as Baumhaus, which most comrades appreciate, even if they do not participate in the organizational aspects of these initiatives. Having said that, and as Chapter 6 will show in greater detail, Atlantide and other social spaces are in no way shy about launching public critiques and engaging in direct actions which are critical, if not openly hostile, to the state's use of juridical and police power to dissuade autonomous self-organization and to push neoliberal frameworks of "collaboration." See also note 77, this chapter.

With that, the groundwork for *la difesa* had been laid. Atlantide's first statement on the matter was titled "Le convenzione, per fortuna, cambiano. I percorsi politici restano" (Fortunately, conventions change. Political paths remain).[91] With characteristic precision and no lack of irony, the statement responded to Cancellieri's swift issuance of new Guidelines and insistence on eviction a mere twenty days after the expiration of the *convenzione*. First, the statement pointed to Atlantide's significance as a "point of reference for local, national, and global networks that work for the self-determination of sex, gender, and sexuality, and against male violence against women, gays, lesbians, trans people and eccentric subjects."[92] Second, it characterized the previous process of interaction with the local government from the initial occupation of the space through to the end of the *convenzione*: "The *convenzione* is not the result of a political game [*uno scambio politico*] but of a dialectic between the movement and local institutions."[93] This characterization draws a distinction between the paternalistic logic of "assignment" of the space and the autonomy of the collectives of Atlantide and, by extension, the self-determination of individual and collective subjects, more broadly. In so doing, the statement clarifies the stakes both of translating autonomous relationships as part of a dialectical relationship with institutions and of the refusal of concessions. Such a translation harkens to Ferguson's critique of the institutionalization of minoritized knowledges in the form of the "interdisciplines." Here again we see the mutation of the concept and the practice of autonomy both in practice and in principle.

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[91] Atlantide, "Le Convenzione, per Fortuna, Cambiano. I Percorsi Politici Restano.," *Atlantide Resiste*, March 31, 2011, http://atlantide-resiste.blogspot.com/2011/03/le-convenzioni-per-fortuna-cambiano-i.html.
[92] Atlantide, "Le Convenzione."
[93] Atlantide, "Le Convenzione." The word "scambio" has multiple senses. At first, it would seem that most obvious for this context is 'exchange,' as it evokes a commodified/transactional dimension to which the statement opposes a dialectical engagement. Other senses also inflect this sentiment, however. "Scambio" can also refer to a volley in tennis, for example, implying an insubstantial, game-like dimension to the counterpoint for Atlantide's analysis. The final sense of "scambio" is a mistake, something done in error or confusion. I do not think this sense is so directly evoked, but perhaps hovers in the margins of the analysis in that the politics leading to the *convenzione* should not be taken as an error to be corrected, but as an ongoing process.

The statement also points out that, materially, despite the fact that the collectives had provided services with a value recognized in the form of a discounted rent, neither the District Council nor the City ever made physical improvements to the space during the period of the *convenzione*: "the only improvements were made by the collectives at their own expense."[94] Such a contradiction recalls Nash's critique of the institutionalization of intersectionality insofar as institutions often claim the mantle of autonomously invented and sustained practices only to systematically devalue them while simultaneously failing to address their explicit politicization of forms of institutional violence. Third, harkening to the increased preoccupation of the center-left in the post-Cofferati era with security, the statement argues that Atlantide has "never represented a problem of disturbing public security, unless one considers the free expression of lesbian, gay, trans*, and eccentric subjects such [a problem]."[95] Turning the language of the Guidelines on its head, the collectives of Atlantide ask, in this light, "what the Commissioner means when she speaks of 'new publics.'"[96] Here, we can see resonances with Wiegman's critique of the institutionalization of "identity knowledges" on the basis that the formal codification of such knowledges more often than not inhibits those who are attached to such identities from realizing their political aspirations on their own terms. Fourth, the statement points out that there had never been any fines or official complaints against Atlantide and, further, accuses the Commissioner of using the Municipal Police to create a pretextual "dossier" of complaints in order to justify her move to evict the collectives. Here, we see a classic tactic of revanchist urban policy: The selective enforcement of the law against subjectivities deemed unruly and undesirable. Such moves also resonate with Sara Ahmed's critique of diversity work insofar as institutional declarations

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[94] Atlantide, "Le Convenzioni."
[95] Atlantide, "Le Convenzioni."
[96] Atlantide, "Le Convenzioni."

of a commitment to diversity––such as those spelled out in the *convenzione* and in the Guidelines––are quite often mobilized to label those who point to the failures to enact such commitments as the problem, which is why she characterizes such commitments as non-performatives.[97]

Finally, the statement responds to indirect offers on the part of the Commissioner to meet with Atlantide to discuss their participation in the new *bando pubblico* based on the Guidelines. The collectives interpreted these offers, made only through the media, as a meaningless gesture of inconsequential consultation––a very familiar paradigm for anyone who has been interpellated into the position of "stakeholder"––on the basis that the Guidelines themselves "in fact exclude us by specifying areas of activity that are 'strangely' far from those that have always characterized Atlantide."[98] Throughout their analysis, we see that the collectives of Atlantide, acting in concert, indeed sought to 'unmask' the technical government, revealing its political nature.

Of course, debate over the meaning of politics itself subtends the analysis offered in the statement. In one sense, the Cancellieri moment forced the collectives of Atlantide to rearticulate the nature of their political existence––not least with the hope of averting an eviction at the hands of the police––by recasting the decision to issue new Guidelines *as political*. Whether or not the collectives thought they could gain a renewed stability vis-à-vis the institutions, the expiration of the *convenzione* pushed the collectives toward an ever more explicit engagement with the broader stakes of autonomous politics in the contemporary moment. Though it is absolutely not the case that Atlantide had, in the nearly fifteen years of its existence, in any way avoided wider engagement with the stakes of institutional

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[97] Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
[98] Atlantide, "Le Convenzioni."

recognition of autonomous self-organization, the acute threat of eviction brought about new

expressions of Atlantide as a singular spatio-political subject both in-itself and for the wider

movement. This level of articulation introduced the politics of urban spatial praxis into

Atlantide's discourse in an entirely new way. Though the wider area of autonomy is

sometimes marked by significant ideological divisions and strategic differences, there is

relative unanimity when it comes to the need to defend the endurance and existence of

threatened spaces. One may disagree with their Marxist-Leninist counterparts, but that

doesn't mean that they ought to be evicted. And yet, such mobilizations of mutual defense, let

alone a strategic rearticulation of autonomous spatial praxis, cannot be taken for granted.

They must be (re)constructed. Surely, an appeal to transversal unity against institutional

authority is a powerful calling card. As the statement itself articulated:

> A Commissariat which is about to expire cannot, with a bureaucratic and
> authoritarian attitude, attempt to erase subjectivities strongly rooted in the
> urban context, intertwined with feminist, lesbian, gay, trans, queer, anti-
> fascist, anti-racist political pathways [*percorsi*], with social spaces [*spazi sociali*],
> and with associationism [*associazionsimo*] and a local and national level.[99]

Coming on the heels of Atlantide's first and only entanglement with institutional recognition,

this statement simultaneously refuses Atlantide's reduction to a "service provider" while

affirming its existence as part of a complex political ecology that included not just a wide

variety of individual and collective subjectivities, but also a wide variety of modes of

organizing urban spatial praxis, which itself constituted a direct threat to the state's claims to

"good governance" over the territory. The collectives indeed mocked Cancellieri's putative

technical neutrality when they suggested that "the only gift [she] could give, as a last act, is to

tiptoe away and give the city back to its politics, to those who live them, those who enrich

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[99] Atlantide, "Le Convenzioni."

them, and those who transform them through their daily commitment to them."[100] With this,

the statement invites everyone in the city––its residents, other social spaces, and associations–

–to join the first campaign in defense of Atlantide.

[100] Atlantide, "Le Convenzioni."

6

The Lost City

Atlantide is not a space. It is not simply a space. Atlantide is what is happening between me and you...Atlantide is everywhere.

—Viviana Indino, Smaschieramenti Comrade, October 10, 2015

October 9, 2015

They dragged them out in the morning darkness. My comrades; the strongest. We had been prepared days earlier, when the order took effect, but the real eviction came on Friday morning, after years of negotiations, after all the threats, after all the speculations, after all the paranoias, after the assembly in the rain, and the assembly across the street, and the assembly in TitanPad, and the assembly before the next assembly.[1] It came after the mornings when you couldn't tell what year it was, and after the radio interview during which we cheered so loudly on the stairs of Atlantide that our voices fed back into the broadcast twice over and so we cheered even more. After that moment in the city council chambers where Babs shouted, over and over: "Vogliamo una risposta politica!" (We demand a political response!) That shout, which echoed so loudly that it fed back through the councilors microphones, which brought shrill feedback into the sound system, an aural mirror of our rage. After all those years of demonstrations, voices amplified, multiplied, recognized, but never really heard. After reading the newspaper together on the steps while waiting for tiny pots of coffee to brew. After the last punk concert, my first ever in Atlantide. After the end of the 90s, the end that came long after the 90s. After the last instance. After all that, it really came (fig. 21).

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[1] Similar to Google Docs, TitanPad is a platform that enables collaborative drafting of documents.

Figure 21. "In the ass, yes, but not like that!" Atlantide, Bologna, Italy, October 2015

Atlantide si tocca ma solo per godere.²

You can touch Atlantide, but only if you're going to come.

They didn't understand the message, apparently. True, they came in numbers, in riot gear (fig. 22). They came before the traffic on the *viale* reached its morning peak. But they didn't come for pleasure, unless they took pleasure in walling off seventeen years of self-management. Before they arrived, a crowd gathered across the street. It was full of people for whom Atlantide had a great significance; there were members of collectives and political spaces from across the city and the country. The feminists and lesbian separatists returned to the space that they had left years earlier. The members of the dormant feminist separatist collective Figlie Femmine reunited to lead the classic feminist chant: "Poliziotto che ci stai a

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² "Godere" has two senses: To enjoy, to be satisfied and also to climax.

fare? A casa ci sono i piatti da lavare!" (Cops what are you doing? At home there are dishes to wash!) The length of our memories countered the brevity of their actions.

Friday is for the dead.

Friday is for building walls.

Figure 22. The bricklayers, Atlantide, Bologna, October 9, 2015

The night before it happened, both buildings at Porta Santo Stefano were incandescent with music, tension, plans, negotiations. We were across the street in Circolo Berneri, a building identical to Atlantide, its mirror image. Could we sleep there so that we could be inside before the police came? How would the phone chain work? Who would send the first message? There was no doubt that il cuore––the core, our heart––could be inside from the start. They weren't going to fight. They weren't going to mount what someone who wasn't from Atlantide painfully called a "real resistance." "Real" meant violent, or at least forceful. It is no small deal to propose violence as the "real" form of resistance to us *finnochie*

378

selvatiche, to us flowering punks, to us transfeministqueer shapeshifters. Our reality meets violence daily. Not to be forgotten: This is a city, indeed a country, where the "real" movement was crushed by the violence of the fascists and terrorists, by the CIA, by shadowy forces from corners still unseen. They unleashed their shattering force on all that the movement constructed joyfully, in the sprit not only of refusal, but also of creativity. And when violence wasn't enough, just like they did to the Black Panthers in the U.S.––communists, but not in the same exact way––they flooded the streets with heroin to quell "violence." Now, they've tried to get clean, they try to exhaust us technically, with finer instruments, with *bandi* and guidelines. But we mounted a real resistance and so they couldn't avoid it anymore. So, though they came in darkness, in riot gear, we finally saw their true faces.

No, we would not be beaten. We would be carried out, one-by-one. We would pick each other up, one-by-one. And, as we stood across the street, we watched as Atlantide sank beneath the waves: A lost city.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 5, I described the various ways that the collectives of Atlantide effectively politicized, and thereby resisted, the efforts of the municipal government of Bologna to use the tools of state-craft to evict Atlantide. Because this dimension of Atlantide's history witnessed the temporary legalization and regularization of the space, its internal ecology shifted somewhat dramatically. From the point of view of the local state, the story depends on the minutiae of bureaucratic rationality: statues, guidelines, contracts, and so on. This is what passes for politics, in the most banal sense. From the point of view of Atlantide, whose collectives had created a veritable oasis of self-manage punk, dyke, fag, and trans culture and

379

politics, these minutiae became the tools with which they unmasked the process of "legalization" and "regularization" and, following the expiration of the *convenzione* managed to remain in the space for a further four years.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the creative autonomous strategy and tactics elaborated by Atlantide's collectives during this period, which I refer to as *la difesa di Atlantide*, the defense of Atlantide; or, more simply: *la difesa*. I divide the defense into two waves, which I describe in two separate sections of this chapter. In between my narration of these waves, I describe the emergence of another area of praxis, *frivolezza tattica* (frivolous tactics) and reflect on its distinctiveness in light of my extended discussion of Smaschieramenti's areas of praxis in Chapter 4. Among the many important passages in *la difesa*, I highlight the discursive and performative content of one particular campaign in which the collectives of Atlantide used the rhetoric of biodiversity to subvert the logic of the first *bando*. Besides the relevance of this campaign to my portrayal of Atlantide as a queer urban ecology in-itself, the details of the campaign also point toward a more extended discussion of the praxis of *frivolezza tattica*. Overall, recalling my discussion of Nash's critique of the politics of defensiveness in Chapter 1, this chapter shows how the strategies of *la difesa* enabled the collectives of Atlantide to remain at Porta Santo Stefano 6a until their eviction in 2015.

Along the way, I describe key moments in electoral politics to show how the dynamic of regulation of gender and sexuality has come to play a role in the rollout of center-left neoliberal urban spatial governance in Bologna. By reading these moments through the various discourses that Laboratorio Smaschieramenti and Atlantide deployed to resist and refigure the threat of eviction, I redefine the stakes of contemporary regimes of urban spatial politics by articulating more socially just, radically participatory, bottom-up practices and politics. In short, by recentering transfeministqueer autonomy not merely as an effect of

governmental power, but as a self-determining and self-organizing force capable of meeting that power on their own terms. I do not read the eviction as a failure of *la difesa*, but as its exhaustion. There is a simple principle which guides me in making that determination: If the state is compelled to use force to evict your project even as it absorbs your logics, you are doing something right. At the same time, one cannot abide in the mode of defensiveness forever. Of course, there are more complex readings of the outcome of the eviction, such as those I discussed at the end of Chapter 4, when I described the #VeniamOvunque demonstration. I point to that moment again here to highlight the promises and perils of an explicit engagement with the politics of urban redevelopment and to subvert the particular logics that have inscribed those politics in Bologna.

La Difesa di Atlantide: First Wave

The first wave of *la difesa* encompassed a large scale mobilization involving public assemblies, e-mail blitzes to Commissioner Cancellieri, a project to paint and beautify Atlantide itself in defiance of the rhetoric of the "degradation" of the space, and a march on April 8, 2011, one year and a day after the *convenzione* was signed.[3] I will focus here on the demonstration because it illuminates both the emergent strategies of *la difesa* and further situates my interest in elaborating both the internal and external realities of Atlantide and the broader self-managed political scene as a queer urban ecology.

Video documentation of the April 8 demonstration in Piazza Re Enzo––steps from the Palazzo d'Accursio, the official home of the municipal government of Bologna––opens with

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[3] For an example of the ways that the collectives played with the notion of degradation, see toletvideo, "TO / LET Today and Tomorrow," April 15, 2011, YouTube video, 5:43, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flU4qkUHoK0.

sweeping shots of hundreds of people gathered in front of a decorated van equipped with a

powerful sound system.[4] A large white banner that hangs on the building behind the van

reads "Atlantide: Unconventional Spaces, Bodies, Desires." Another banner, this one red, is

affixed just below that: "No political games [*scambi politci*] on women's bodies." As the opening

soundtrack fades, the camera focuses on a comrade of Smaschieramenti standing in front of

the van. She proclaims into the microphone: "Visti! Siamo noi la biodiversità!" (Look! We are

biodiversity!) As she speaks, several people drop a fifty-meter-long swathe of green tulle

decorated with flowers from a second-floor window in the building behind her. The

assembled crowd cheers and claps wildly. She continues:

> We are the most breathable air. We are feminists in the grass [*in erba*]. We are
> lesbians in the grass. We are wild faggots [*finnochie selvatiche*]. [...] We are
> punks in bloom [*in fiore*]. And we do not want to go. We want to stay here.[5]

As the tulle reaches the ground, the assembled crowd raises it up and passes it around,

ensconcing themselves. The camera pans to the adjacent window. Another comrade raises her

arms and gives the feminist salute: hands drawn together in a triangle over her head. Then

there are more speeches outlining the history of the space, how it was abandoned and

reclaimed, how, year after year of the occupation, it became a space for the "elaboration of

politics *dal basso*."[6] Numerous speakers describe Atlantide in terms very similar to those used

in the first fliers. They emphasize the debate, criticality, and multiple viewpoints cultivated

there. Atlantide is of a piece with a political vision of the city itself, definitively not a

monoculture, let alone a commodity. One speaker expresses admiration for all of the other

spaces that have been evicted or displaced "far away from the central city."[7] Porpora

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[4] enricosumo, "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv," April 10, 2011, YouTube video, 6:02,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9nsWfkydWY.
[5] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."
[6] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."
[7] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."

Marcasciano, takes the microphone and speaks on behalf of MIT about "all of the groups" that

had crossed paths at Atlantide:

> They produced culture, they produced politics, they produced fabulosity [*favolosità*]. This, we reiterate, [inaudible], we claim as our own, not only ours, but of the whole city, of the whole LGBT community in Italy and beyond [...] Atlantide: We won't leave you. The spaces: We won't leave them. Bologna: We won't leave it. It's ours and we'll keep it.[8]

Cut to hours later. A spontaneous march winds through the city, leading the crowd to

Atlantide. The sun is setting behind the Palazzo d'Accursio, which glows as if aflame in the

distance. We see the crowd holding the length of the tulle, waving it up and down. They

chant: "Atlantide resists. Atlantide exists. Atlantide persists."[9] A comrade takes the

microphone and announces:

> A little interruption of the *aperitivo* Bolognese for a march––or better a spontaneous walk––of the eccentric subjects in defense of cultural and political biodiversity. We are moving from Piazza Maggiore to Atlantide, Piazza Porta Santo Stefano, a space that [...] the extraordinary Commissioner Cancellieri wants to make into a destination for the defense of the environment [*verde*]. We are the environment! There's just this little detail: Nature in itself is a cultural construction. We are also the real nature [*la natura reale*]. We've been here since 1997 and we intended to keep on our path and keep going.[10]

And so, the march continues. In the last scene, we hear Renato Busarello speak in front of the

Sette Chiese in Piazza Santo Stefano:

> The pathways paved by the collectives of Atlantide are public, they are political, they are not a clientelistic bargaining over space, they [...] must remain open and fluid for the entire city. [Atlantide is] a space for experimentation with the richness of this city which, together, we have to keep alive, multiply, and spread.[11]

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[8] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."
[9] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."
[10] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."
[11] Quoted in "Atlantideresiste2011.wmv."

The communicative strategy of the march was organized around a simultaneous subversion and embrace of the logic of the newly issued Guidelines that had been issued by the so-called technical government following the demise of Mayor Delbono. With characteristic wordplay and material innovation, the collectives (re)appropriated both the images and the rhetoric of biodiversity to describe the collectives of Atlantide: "Femministe in Erba," where "erba" refers both to the wild grass that grows in the cracks between pavement and to cannabis; "Finocchio selvatiche," wild faggots, "finocchio" means fennel, but is also a slur used against gays, reappropriated here in a feminized form; "Punx in fiore" refers, of course, to blooming flowers and is used to subvert the stereotype of anti-social punks by rendering them as sweet, innocent, multi-colored plants. Speakers not only articulated the actual enmeshment of the space in a wide variety of mycelial political networks in the city, but also characterized Atlantide's endurance in and through these networks as a matter of "cultural biodiversity."[12]

Each in their own way, the collectives had been metabolizing historical dimensions of Bologna's political and cultural history, to say nothing of its physical decadence and their proximity to the city's largest park. They bodied forth its status as the queer capital of Italy, they defended its formative role in the Punk movement of the 80s, they enacted its enduring

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[12] In the period surrounding the first wave of mobilization for *la difesa*, Atlantide received numerous expressions of solidarity from a wide variety of entities. Among them, the open letter from the organization NaturalDurante stands out for its furtherance of the ecological analysis. They write: "The cultural and human biodiversity offered by Atlantide, the rationales [*le ragione*] and the work toward the acceptance of all human beings, the politics of rights opposed to those of the [neo]liberal commodification of existence and to the homo- and xenophobic intolerance now prevailing in our country, these are the starting points for every truly 'ecological' idea of politics and life as such." The letter goes on to situate the decision of the Special Commissioner's administration alongside the politics of water privatization, trash collection, and nuclear weapons. Their excoriating conclusion is that, "instead of truly listening to the cultural and social realities [*realtà*] that have been concerned with sustainability for decades," the administration's Guidelines instead make space only for "those pseudoenvironmentalist vassals whose work does not improve the physical and mental health of the city one bit." Atlantide, "Ambiente vs. Omosessuali? Lettera Aperta Di NaturalDurante - Educazione Alla Sostenibilità," *Atlantide Resiste*, April 9, 2011, http://atlantide-resiste.blogspot.com/2011/04/ambiente-vs-omosessuali-lettera-aperta.html.

image as a radically distinctive political reference point for the feminist movement throughout Italy. Through their various approaches/praxes, the collectives unfolded a living history. Their struggle for memory––a remembering-in-movement––was no static memorialization, it was a raucous seed bomb. In repurposing unappropriated culture and politics and reclaiming that which had been captured, they exposed the homogenization of spaces by the logics of *bandi pubblici*. They educated themselves and the movement about the fraud perpetrated by bureaucratic typologies of so-called social services, which were always narrowly defined according to verticalized schematics of authority, as opposed to the submerged transversal connectivity of the movements. Further, as future mobilizations in defense of the space would illustrate, they actively opposed the mortification of living landmarks in the political landscape through the logic of "museumification," in which autonomously produced culture would be sanitized, re-packaged, and re-presented as "art" or "civic heritage."

As Renato Busarello's closing statement at the demonstration evoked, the *bandi pubblici* attempt to enforce a clientelistic relationship not only between social spaces and the city, but also between the spaces themselves and those who would seek to use them. Justified through the techno-political evolution of the principle of "democratic decentralization," the assignment of local spaces to District authorities mystifies the actual everyday work of making political space and of making space political. The juridical demands of maintaining official association status, themselves justified in terms of service provision, safety, legality, and falsely meritocratic evaluation, can and, in many instances, do exhaust the resources and energy of groups whose aims are not themselves comprehensible as service provision, even if they somehow become more "legible" in this optic. Such spaces are, instead, immersed in the open-ended, intensive work of collective-subject formation, of political praxis, of movement-

385

building, and of purposeful self-management and self-reflection. These activities are, almost by definition and certainly by necessity, resistant to any form of regulation or Ivaluation, especially those that attempt to appropriate the labor of self-determination and to redistribute it as "civic good." Autonomous praxis reorganizes the processes of these politics through the immanent critique of notions such as "human resources" and "diversity management." The work of such organizing reclaims affect and sensuality alienated by the monotony, humiliation, and isolation of wage-labor, conditions which, for most women, queers, and trans* people are additionally violent, exploitative, and precarious.

In the demonstration, the particularity of Bolognese autonomy and transfeministqueer autonomy is cast in a new light: It is a joyfully heretical refusal to accept fully the legitimacy of any form of state authority or paternalistic moral superiority. Such particularity is evidenced in the subversive relationship of Atlantide to the administrative logics imposed on the collectives, in the ideas of nature refigured by the demonstration, and in the creative will to unmask the dissembled artifacts of bureaucratic management by turning them into pun-filled public pedagogical moments. *La difesa* embodied these strategies and tactics. It also initiated a significant evolution within Atlantide: The formation of a general assembly/committee to organize both the defense of the space and to coordinate the dialectical relationship with the District and City administrations. In the previous chapter, I showed how the seeds for an increased interaction among the three collectives of Atlantide were sown during the *convenzione* era, particularly through *auto-finanziamento* and hosting parties in the space. As Bea Busi put it in our interview, the arrival of the new Guidelines in 2011 signaled a definitive turning point for the internal dynamics of the space: "It was that moment which created an assembly of the space among the three collectives that was completely different from what it

had been in the fifteen years prior."[13] Recalling her characterization of this period from the

section focused on the *convenzione* period, we can now begin to understand the nature of the

transformation with greater precision, especially with regard to the beginning of *la difesa* and

the kinds of relations that it prompted both with the broader reality of socio-spatial politics in

Bologna and within the space of Atlantide itself. Busi again:

> [...] in reality, the passage that we are talking about now is relative, above all,
> to the identity of the space, not to the kind of politics that the space itself was
> doing or that the collectives within it were doing. Because [...] politics, political
> autonomy, is a trait––was always a trait––common among all three collectives.
> [...] Because the occupation was done together and, anyway, Atlantide, its
> identity as a space, has above all, always, and fundamentally had that
> characteristic of adherence to and participation in anti-fascist and anti-racist
> demonstrations.[14]

A number of interconnected fragments come into view with this explanation. First, as we have

seen throughout this chapter and in the discussion of Atlantide's identity in Chapter 3 and

Smaschieramenti's praxes in Chapter 4, the *sine qua non* of autonomous social spaces is the

trinity of anti-fascism, anti-racism, and anti-sexism.[15] In this sense, the political orientation of

Atlantide did not change either in the *convenzione* period or after it, notwithstanding the

evolution of its implementation in everyday situations, such as with Nulla Osta's increased

awareness around the lyrical content of groups whom they invited to play at Atlantide.

Second, we see that this politics is based on the spatial practice of occupation itself, a practice

which is comprehensible across a wide array of political orientations. In this sense, despite its

distinction from other kinds of occupied spaces, Atlantide nonetheless shared *una politica di*

base that rendered it a part of this broader constellation. Lastly, in view of the launch of *la*

difesa, we can understand Atlantide's spatio-political identity as a fundamental dimension of

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[13] Busi, interview.
[14] Busi, interview.
[15] Although Busi did not name anti-sexism in our discussion, the context of her comment implies that it was among those characteristics that she did name.

its ability to mobilize a wide variety of political subjects, regardless of ideological, praxis-

based, or historical differences. In short, notwithstanding its taxonomic classification as a

result of the *convenzione*, Atlantide retained its self-defining and self-differing identity at the

level of spatial praxis.

However, the expiration of the *convenzione* and the initiation of techno-political threats

of eviction-by-*bando* effected a transformation in this praxis. Such threats necessitated a

heightened degree of practical reflexivity on the part of the collectives with regard to a

strategy adequate to evading eviction and to defending the historical occupation of Atlantide.

This reflexivity was clearly not easy for the collectives to mediate as the dialectical

relationship embedded in the *convenzione*, during which the avatar associations assumed the

function of a buffer against both the wholesale imposition of a representative political logic

and the suffusion of the space with tensions that would have flared had that imposition not

been understood and implemented with creative antagonism vis-à-vis the institutions. As Busi

explained, the overall situation was unique neither to Atlantide nor to Bologna:

> [Atlantide] has always perceived itself and has always been perceived as an
> antagonistic space, independently autonomous from the configurations [that
> were and] that may have been made in relation to the institutions. All [social
> spaces] in the city––and not only in the city, but in Italy generally––have lived
> through this season of legalization and transformation of social centers.[16]

Following the expiration of the *convenzione*, the praxis of antagonistically negotiated

autonomy not only transformed the situation faced by the space itself, it also changed the

kinds of politics required to prevent this tension from destroying the space outright.[17]

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[16] Busi, interview.

[17] In Atlantide's case, the added dimension of inter-collective negotiation would, in part, contribute to the departure of Clitoristrix. Albeit in a different context and moment, the transformation of Antagonismo Gay into Smaschieramenti is relevant to understanding the departure of the lesbian and feminist separatists from Atlantide. As I explained in Chapter 3, Antagonismo Gay, which had been a separatist collective of gay men, confronted the strategic essentialism of the November 2007 demonstration through a process of autoinchiesta regarding the centrality of male dominance and violence not just within the institutional political arena, but also within the social movements themselves. While this transformation arose from within the movement–precisely

The emergence of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti as a stable collective subject within Atlantide introduced a certain degree of implicit political tension with the practice of lesbian and feminist separatism, not least because Smaschieramenti approached feminist politics with a transfeminist and queer inflection, one which neither rested on the centrality of a singular political subject nor invoked the assumption of a particular political line arising from that centrality. When an explicitly anti-identitarian transfeministqueer Laboratorio must negotiate a situation as pitched as *la difesa* it is not difficult to imagine the possibility for frayed relations. Add to this the fact that, for reasons that remain unclear to me in light of my fieldwork, Clitoristrix had, at some point during the early 2010s, ceased to be a definitive collective in itself and had transformed into a more loosely organized network called Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno. Busi explained the moment more synthetically:

> And so, in this moment, Smaschieramenti interprets––let's say, in some way––
> the transfeminist characteristic and so the separatist component is no
> longer...how to say it? [...] The clash with the institutions changed the ecology
> of the internal political relations of the space and determined a strong change
> with respect to the history of that space.[18]

As with other transformations within Atlantide and its collectives, it is neither particularly possible to identify a singular cause for this transformation, nor is it prudent to attribute one comrade's perspective with a definitive authority. At the same time, it is important to track the ways in which a rapport with the state tended to be a rigidifying force within the internal ecology of the space. For my analysis here, naming that force enables a fuller inventory of its effects to the point that they are productive of new political possibilities.

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as a result of its refusal of institutional logics–there were certainly no guarantees about its outcome. Recall, for instance, that dynamics internal to Antagonismo Gay's understanding of the efficacy of gay separatism and to its operative approach to queer theory were also at play in the collective's transformation into Smaschieramenti.

[18] Busi, interview.

La Difesa: Frivolezza Tattica (Tactical Frivolity)

Though this chapter is not principally focused on the particularly transfeministqueer

adaptation of the "classic" tactics of the feminist and *operiasta* movements, the praxis of

frivolezza tattica emerged during the period of *la difesa* and therefore merits further discussion

insofar as it is related to the evolution of Smaschieramenti and its gradual convergence with

the space of Atlantide. Broadly, *frivolezza tattica* concerns Smaschieramenti/Atlantide's

approach to public demonstration and direct action. Owing to the fact that my fieldwork took

place after the most intense period of *la difesa*, my direct experience of *frivolezza tattica* was

filtered through demonstrations staged around the Laboratorio's core areas of praxis. Though

these areas clearly to the overall identity of Atlantide, their expression in demonstrations

otherwise more squarely connected to Smaschieramenti lends them a distinctive tone and

tenor. With that in mind, the Smaschieramenti-organized demonstrations that I attended

during my primary fieldwork included: a march in support of free, safe, and accessible

abortion and transfeminist healthcare (figs. 23–26), a counterdemonstration against the right-

wing group Sentinelle in Piedi (figs. 27–31), and the annual counter-/alter-pride. Drawing on

these experiences and my interviews, I trace the Laboratorio's embrace of *frivolezza tattica* in

order to outline some of the key details of the immediacy of these experiences with an eye

toward the final section of this chapter, in which I return to *la difesa* proper and follow it to the

moment of eviction. I take this praxis-focused detour to evoke the increasingly close

identification of Smaschieramenti with the spatio-political subjectivity of Atlantide itself.

The particularity of *frivolezza tattica* as a praxis was evident to me throughout my

participation in Smaschieramenti demonstrations. Bologna has highly codified, if diverse,

aesthetics of political demonstration, as the narrative prelude to Chapter 3 described in some

detail. Each segment of the movement has its own look and feel: The *duri e puri*—the hard and

Figure 23. #MoltoPiùdi194 (#MuchMoreThan194) Demonstration against anti-abortionists/for much more than Law 194, Piazza Maggiore, Bologna, Italy, June 13, 2015

Figure 24. #MoltoPiùdi194 (#MuchMoreThan194) Demonstration against anti-abortionists/for much more than Law 194, Piazza Maggiore, Bologna, Italy, June 13, 2015

Figure 25. #MoltoPiùdi194 (#MuchMoreThan194) Demonstration against anti-abortionists/for much more than Law 194, Piazza Maggiore, Bologna, Italy, June 13, 2015

Figure 26. #MoltoPiùdi194 (#MuchMoreThan194) Demonstration against anti-abortionists/for much more than Law 194, Piazza Maggiore, Bologna, Italy, June 13, 2015

Figure 27. Froce in relax (Fags relaxing), Demonstration against the Sentinelle in Piedi (Sentinels on their Feet), Piazza Santo Stefano, Bologna, Italy, April 19 2015.

Figure 28. Froce in relax (Fags relaxing), Demonstration against the Sentinelle in Piedi (Sentinels on their Feet), Piazza Santo Stefano, Bologna, Italy, April 19 2015

Figure 29. Froce in relax (Fags relaxing), Demonstration against the Sentinelle in Piedi (Sentinels on their Feet), Piazza Santo Stefano, Bologna, Italy, April 19 2015

Figure 30. Froce in relax (Fags relaxing), Demonstration against the Sentinelle in Piedi (Sentinels on their Feet), Piazza Santo Stefano, Bologna, Italy, April 19 2015

Figure 31. Froce in relax (Fags relaxing), Demonstration against the Sentinelle in Piedi (Sentinels on their Feet), Piazza Santo Stefano, Bologna, Italy, April 19 2015

pure––autonomists typically appeared in an all-black uniform, played more hardcore music at their demos, and sported monochromatic black and white signage, for example. Smaschieramenti's approach to demonstration and direct action stood out because of its embrace of an exuberant subversion, an element which sought to make demonstrations not just communicatively effective, but also fun and not exhausting. (The heat and humidity took care of that.) Our demonstrations always featured multi-colored signs, breaking the monotony of black text on white paper; there were often protestors in drag or sporting brightly colored wigs, which are also common in feminist demonstrations.

Perhaps most evocative manifestation of *frivolezza tattica* was the Chorale di Atlantide, the Atlantide Chorus, which was created during *la difesa*. Even after the immediate threat of eviction in 2011 abated, the Chorale remained a regular part of almost every demonstration. The songbook for the chorus was drawn from popular music and sometimes included the theme songs of cartoons or game shows alongside the stalwart tunes from the resistance to fascism and from the Movement of 1977. In every case, the lyrics were rewritten for the occasion––always with a few standbys on rotation––and deployed irony, humor, double entendre, puns, and wordplay. The hallmark of the choir was that nobody––really, nobody–– put too much emphasis on singing well. A.G. Arfini spoke about the chorale's significance to Atlantide's effort to create a new "political repertoire of action," explaining that the latter was among the most difficult practical questions faced by the Laboratorio during *la difesa*.[19] Arfini characterized the challenge as oscillating between, on the one hand, staging demonstrations irreducible to mere spectacle while, on the other, contriving public "performances" that neither fell into the trap of continual self-improvement nor became so narrow that they were

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[19] Arfini, interview.

illegible to broader publics. The goal, after all, was to build a political movement in support of

Atlantide. Among the frivolous tactics employed to do so, the chorale stood out to Arfini:

> [I]f you think about the experience of the chorale, that one is interesting because I think, at a certain point, we sort of consciously, purposely chose not to get better at singing. [...] We tried that, we had a director, a musician of some kind coming in and having us––lectur[ing] us on pitch and stuff like that––which, of course, we couldn't get. [...] It was a disaster! But, besides that, we thought, okay, we might get better, maybe [not], but potentially. But, at a certain point, what we thought was, "That's not why we do it." [...] I think we are also aware of this potential trap when it becomes, you know, a competition of who has the most creative thing to do. And then you risk losing attention or losing sight of what's important to say politically.[20]

Though harkening to notions of queer failure that I discussed in Chapter 2, the risk that Arfini

speaks about might, at first blush, not be obvious.[21] It is also important to remember that

Bologna is a city historically associated with the "creative" wing of the autonomous movement

of the 1970s, in which both political and performative innovation played a central, if

enigmatic, role. Even today, there are political groups in the city who have paid members,

creating a kind of "professionalized" activist presence. Many members of Smaschieramenti

have had direct or indirect experiences of these kinds of politics and many found them both

implicitly and explicitly hostile to transfeministqueer subjectivities. Coupled with the frictions

imposed by Atlantide's rapport with the state, the situation became overburdening and

started to create a crisis of burnout. Given the extent to which the internal activities of

Smaschieramenti are sometimes intentionally––and sometimes unintentionally––illegible to

broader publics, tactical frivolity acts as a hinge between the translation of those activities and

the presentation of their emergent outcomes in public space. In this way, tactical frivolity

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[20] Arfini, interview.
[21] For further on the notion of queer failure from an aesthetic and theoretical vantage point, see Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*.

constitutes an effort at *frocializzazione*: the queering––better, the faggotization––of public politics and political demonstration. (And, yes, the Punks also participated!)

The praxis is differentiable from more well-established modes of public demonstration and protest, including both misogynist iterations of autonomy and feminist and lesbian separatism. In light of my discussion in the last chapter about the internal transformation of Atlantide and the departure of Clitoristrix/Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno, Claudia Stella's take on the praxis is particularly insightful. Stella had become a member of Clitoristrix in the early 2000s, following a public call for a demonstration in support of a lesbian feminist separatist comrade who had been raped and who "wanted to transform the experience she had lived through [...] in a political way [...] to make it public and to confront it alongside others."[22] At the time, Stella was a member of the feminist separatist group Fuori Campo, but, as a result of her participation in events organized around the public call, she had gradually become more involved with Clitoristrix. She eventually spent nearly a decade working with the collective before joining Smaschieramenti. Stella's formation through feminism and lesbian separatism had to do with her sense that "in those years, it was necessary to affirm lesbian visibility, which was so non-existent that, the first thing I felt was that I needed to arrive at that sense of lesbian pride, [so] the first thing I needed was the lesbian separatist movement."[23]

After nearly ten years in Clitoristrix, whose politics centered questions of gender and sexual violence, Stella moved to Smaschieramenti.[24] When I asked her about her decision to

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[22] Claudia Stella, interview with author, July 20, 2015.
[23] Stella, interview.
[24] Even if, as Stella pointed out: "To say [that we worked] only on violence is almost impossible, because violence encompasses everything. So, we concentrated on violence also because we were very diverse [as a group] ... whether as a part of other groups or as individuals who worked on other issues in that area [*territorio*], but, in any case, violence permeated [*attraversato*] everything. That was our starting point [...] because there had been a lot of analytical work: what violence is for us, how you live it, individual perceptions of violence [...] And, at the same time, we came out publicly because what we all agreed on was [that we wanted to] support other women so that violence was not experienced as a private thing [...] the tendency is to live it in a victimized [*vittimistica*], instead, we wanted to make our voice heard, almost our screams." Stella, interview.

move, Stella named a number of factors. She spoke about her own sense of development after

a decade in lesbian separatism and the confirmation it had offered that it was continuously

necessary to speak of both women and lesbians. She explained:

> I cannot say that the lesbian movement was limited, perhaps it was I who
> needed to see only one part of it. With feminism, you realize that something is
> missing and you cannot understand [what it is]. But, in the meantime, ten
> years have passed, and the world has changed around you. [...] In every
> [feminist] discussion, we had to remember that it was necessary to say that we
> are all women, but that we are also lesbians. Because, if you do not say it, the
> world sees you differently; it is important that [remind the world that] you are
> there. I saw that many feminists would go back home and have their straight
> life [...] and this created a bit of a rift [spaccatura]. Now, perhaps, it's a bit
> trivial to say, but it was like that. In many situations, I found myself not there.
> Hence the importance of naming it, not only for the word itself, but for all that
> you carry with you. I saw that there were still walls, that it was still difficult to
> make a heterosexual understand that it was different, that the women's
> struggle [la lotta per la donna] is not enough, but that you have to ask more of
> yourself, you have to open your life to more perspectives.[25]

As a member of one of Atlantide's original collectives, Stella was a proximate witness to just

such an opening of perspectives. Among them, of course, was the evolution of Antagonismo

Gay into Smaschieramenti. As I described in Chapter 4, this evolution was not simply internal

to Atlantide, but constituted an engagement with enduring tensions and evolutions of the

broader feminist movement in Italy and, indeed, globally, especially concerning trans politics

and visibility. In light of both her personal trajectory and her perspective, unique among the

comrades whom I interviewed for this project on account of her previous participation in

Clitoristrix, Stella's observations on *frivolezza tattica* reveal subtle distinctions between the

praxis and more mainstay approaches adopted in lesbian and feminist separatist movements,

including, for example, take back the night marches. Such demonstrations perhaps

necessarily take on a specific tone and affective content, especially in light of the enduring

erasure of specifically lesbian experience within the feminist movement. Stella explained:

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[25] Stella, interview.

In Bologna, [the distinctiveness of tactical frivolity] can be seen by comparison with the practices of feminist separatism, using the example of [...] taking to the streets. The difference of *frivolezza tattica*, for me––well, the easiest point is that of self-irony [*auto-ironia*]. In reality, self-irony allows one to have less hostile attitude. [...] That does not mean that you are less furious, less angry, but simply that you feel better, because you are less frantic [collerica]; joking, living it like this, makes me feel better. It's almost as if I live [the experience] with more power because, when you're emotionally shaken, agitated–well, at least I'm more unstable. [...] [T]hat anger has served to make me take to the streets with awareness as a woman, as a lesbian. But now, in the square, to me, that anger destabilizes me, it makes me less secure, less centered. Instead, this tactical frivolity can be drag, it can be a game, a game which has a political significance [...] When you do it as a game, this lightens things and you feel more centered and more powerful. And then, externally, there is an additional line of communication, above all [compared to] the masculine [repertoire of political action], because the masculine is seen as more threatening. Instead, [a demonstration] queered [*queerizzato*] with the practice of *frivolezza tattica* is not perceived as threatening but it makes one curious, and one approaches. So, tactically, it works more as a mixture.[26]

Stella's characterization adds an important dimension that points not only to how Smaschieramenti attempted to evolve historical political praxes, but also to its everyday strategies for creating more enlivening and affectively non-diminishing modes of public demonstration.

The everyday dimension of tactical frivolity as an enlivening, self-ironic mode of demonstration is directly connected to the fact that it emerged as a praxis during *la difesa*, when tensions surrounding the eviction escalated the degree of stress within the space by several orders of magnitude. In this context, Smaschieramenti comrade Otto Pagone offered a concise and clarifying explanation of the significance of *frivolezza tattica* to the defense strategy, writ large. I asked Pagone about how Atlantide had changed during the course of the eviction saga, especially in light of the presence of multiple collectives:

First of all, when you talk about eviction here, in the practice of city politics [*nella pratica politica cittadina*], but also nationally, when a place is under eviction [*sotto sgombero*], there are very specific political practices, typical practices for the defense of the space; for example, the use of barricades to

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[26] Stella, interview.

avoid losing the space. From the beginning, what I appreciated, what interested me and brought me closer––coming from outside the space––to the politics of Atlantide and Smaschieramenti…was the choice of a different practice of defense. What was beginning was really a construction, even on the level of language, asking, "What does it mean to defend a space?" [The answer] is not immediate, especially because there were different subjectivities present: there was the feminist separatist group, Smaschieramenti, and the punks, so, that is to say, three very different points of view.[27]

Absent an experience of Atlantide predating the period of *la difesa*, Pagone's perspective is distinctive and particularly illuminating. While Pagone had become aware of Atlantide in 2011, he had been in Bologna since 2008 and had become aware of Smaschieramenti during their presentation of the results of the first *auto-inchiesta sul desiderio maschile* at the Anti-Fascist festival that I discussed in Chapter 4. Pagone only "officially" began participating in Smaschieramenti––that is, participating in the assemblies––after several years of involvement with the Laboratorio's public activities and, subsequently, with the mobilization for the defense of the space. Indeed, Pagone's participation is, in itself, a testament to the efficacy of tactical frivolity in interpellating new subjectivities into the everyday praxis of the Laboratorio and, by extension, Atlantide. Consider that Pagone had other experiences of politics: "I was coming from a collective [experience] that had self-destructed [auto-distrutto] and so for a while I was…taking a break."[28] The fact that the public process of defending the space drew Pagone to deeper participation helps to highlight the distinctiveness of Atlantide's within the broader landscape of the politics of occupation and self-management in Bologna.

As the exploration of Smaschieramenti's praxes in Chapter 4 suggested, it was typical for the group to repurpose well-established political modalities, whether those of historical feminism, of mainstream gay politics, or of mainstay anti-fascist organizing. To be sure, each mode of engagement sought not a wholesale negation of established practices, but was instead

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[27] Otto Pagone, interview with author, June 16, 2015.
[28] Pagone, interview.

aimed at what Busarello had characterized as a "kind of torsion" of already existing political praxes.[29] When placed within the context of the historical reality of Atlantide as a specifically anti-identitarian space and, further, as the last of the self-managed and occupied spaces in the central city, tactical frivolity takes on an even more significant dimension. In this light, it bears not only on the processes of collective subjectivation at work within any given collective housed in the space, but also on the very survival of the project of Atlantide itself and, in turn, on the evolving possibilities for other spatio-political subjects to devise new forms of resistance in light of repressive municipal politics. Though not explicitly drawing a connection between internal dynamics and the mutations of wider fields of political action, Pagone's characterization sheds further light on the whole ensemble:

> At first, seeing it from outside, one might not have clearly understood [*non si capiva bene*] how the collectives were defending Atlantide, which I say because I saw it from the outside. Then, little by little, I entered the space and, when I arrived, I understood that the defense of the space was played on another kind of level [*era giocata sul un altro tipo di piano*], not the traditional one. It was a communicative strategy based on our usual tactical frivolity, [a strategy] which had gathered political force. Because, at that point, to go and evict Atlantide had become something which meant taking a much bigger political responsibility. I mean, to get rid of us, it would have taken a nanosecond. We're not standing outside with clubs [in our hands]. So, the city and the police don't have to send ten truckloads of police to evict us. But the political responsibility had become much higher, it had been built up through this defense strategy which was not a defense strategy: I stand here now and I'm not leaving.[30]

Pagone's elaboration highlights the emergent impact of tactical frivolity on local politics vis-à-vis *la difesa di Atlantide*. At the same time, Pagone highlights the extent the mutual constitution of the praxis of *frivolezza tattica* and the defense of Atlantide. Here, the tagline of Atlantide's web archive signals the relationship between the two, especially as a "communicative strategy:" *Atlantide R-Esiste* (Atlantide resists/exists). Resistance manifests as the insistence on

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[29] Busarello, interview.
[30] Pagone, interview.

persistent existence. We are here and we are not leaving. The power of this refusal, this declaration of immobility, had accumulated some leverage with the institutions through the previous recognition of the work of the collectives in the *convenzione*. And, though, as it would turn out, the city did eventually send dozens of armed police to conduct the eviction, they were much more careful in their handling of Atlantide's eviction then they would eventually be with other extremely violent evictions of migrant occupations during the same period. This is, of course, neither a credit to the police nor an indictment of the strategies of residential occupations comprised mostly of families. Nonetheless, as the first passage of *la difesa* demonstrated, it could not be taken for granted that the prior arrangement would provide enough ballast to rebut the insistent clamor of a new band of politicians agitating for the eviction of the space through the masked use of *bandi pubblici*.

La Difesa di Atlantide: Second Wave

I have now described a wide variety of changes in the evolution of Atlantide as a spatio-political subject, including its internal self-organization and the dialectical relationship between this organization, two mayoral administrations, and the period of so-called technical government. I have moved forward and backward in time to trace several layers of these transformations, including the departure of Clitoristrix/Quelle Che Non Ci Stanno from the space, the emergence of the general assembly of Atlantide through the process of organizing *la difesa*, and the coeval formation of new discourses and practices related to both Smaschieramenti's and Atlantide's approach to public demonstration and direct action. I described the efficacy of *la difesa* in coordinating a broad network of support, an effort that effectively forestalled the eviction during Cancellieri's tenure as Special Commissioner.

403

Nonetheless, the failure of the reissued Guidelines to yield a successful response to the first *bando pubblico* did not halt the process writ large.

In this section, I return to the municipal political scene, where a new round of elections in May 2011 brought about the mayoralty of Virginio Merola (Partito Democratico [PD]/center-left) and the election of Ilaria Giorgetti (Il Popolo della Libertà[PdL]/right-wing) to the Presidency of the District Council of Santo Stefano. Having already contextualized the consequences of the (re)turn of the Santo Stefano District Council to right-wing politicians in Chapter 5, here I will focus on the outcome of the second *bando*, which resulted in the assignment of the space to two new associations. Notwithstanding the District Council's technical responsibility for this process, in this period, *la difesa* used *inter alia* the approach of *frivolezza tattica* to build on the first-wave mobilization and to politicize the situation of Atlantide at the level of municipal and, indeed, national politics. The narrative in this section draws on the multiple passes we have made thus far in order to focus more concisely on the key points leading to the eviction of the space in October 2015.

Virginio Merola began his political career as a member of the PCI and remained a loyal party politician through the various mutations that preceded its stabilization as the PD. He was, in fact, among the founding members of the PD, the party that he carried to municipal victory in 2011 as part of a coalition that included members of more "radical" parties such as Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (Left Ecology Liberty [SEL]/socialist) and Rifondazione Communista (Communist Refoundation [RC]/communist). When he arrived to Palazzo d'Accursio on May 25, 2011––the first official day of his administration––his cordial words toward the outgoing Special Commissioner Cancellieri signaled what was to come with regards to the ongoing campaigns of "legalization." Merola described Cancellieri's administration as "an example" worthy of earning her the title of "honorary citizen" of

Bologna.[31] Just a few months later, in July, Merola presented the priorities of his five-year

term. Prime among them was a task force "against the degradation of the historical center" of

the city and a "security crackdown."[32] Amidst significant austerity measures emanating from

the national government, Merola also chastised his own majority and reached out to right-

wing elements, declaring that "Public services are no longer enough."[33] The task force not only

reinforced the discursive and juridical framework to conduct new waves of evictions of both

residential occupations and social centers during his administration, it also made a point of

targeting Piazza Verdi––the location of the demonstration that I described at the beginning of

Chapter 3––an historical gathering space for students and a key location in the autonomous

uprisings in 1977. With characteristic paternalism, Merola proclaimed:

> We inaugurate Piazza Verdi as a space for everyone, an urban space in which to
> live together, beginning with sharing beauty. But do not expect me to
> understand if you think freedom is just giving free rein to your individual
> desires.[34]

Merola lumped political protest in with banal quotidian uses of the space by students in

between classes, on weekends, and evenings.

Meanwhile, in Santo Stefano, the situation of Atlantide would not remerge into crisis

until the Guidelines issued by Cancellieri were reissued in July 2012. As I described in my

discussion of the first-wave mobilization, the 2011 Guidelines for a new *bando pubblico* were

written in a manner that radically reduced the likelihood of the avatar associations––Lo

Spazio, Donne di Mondo, and Eccentrica––from earning the number of points necessary to be

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[31] Quoted in Giovanni Bignami, "Merola, Primo Giorno a Palazzo La Cancellieri è Stato un Esempio," *La Repubblica*, May 25, 2011, https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2011/05/25/merola-primo-giorno-palazzo-la-cancellieri-stata.bo_005merola.html.
[32] Giovanni Bignami, "Merola: Task Force Anti Degrado," *La Repubblica*, July 26, 2011, https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2011/07/26/merola-task-force-anti-degrado.bo_008merola.html?ref=search..
[33] Bignami, "Task Force."
[34] Quoted in Eleonora Capelli, "Un Spazio di Tutti, non per il Libero Sfogo," *La Repubblica*, October 3, 2011.

assigned the space. The 2012 Guidelines followed this trend by prioritizing the following areas: civic education and artistic-cultural heritage; cultural tourism, with an emphasis on "synergies with organizations beyond the city;" neighborhood revitalization and the promotion of history, culture, arts, and literature; promotion of occupational placement for people under 35 with an emphasis on "professional requalification, keeping in consideration the rediscovery of arts and crafts as well as excellence in typical Bolognese professions;" and, of course, activities related to the "culture of respect for biodiversity," the "safeguarding of the environment [*del verde*]," and "environmental education and information." Tucked among these numerous areas, the new Guidelines also included the original area of focus of the *convenzione*: "development and promotion of human rights, with particular interest in themes related to gender and sexuality." The inclusion of this area could be viewed as something of a pyrrhic victory, given that it was sufficiently deemphasized in the list of priorities and overwhelmed by so many other categories as to ensure a wide range of responses from other associations. The guidelines appear more likely than not to have been written with specific replacement associations in mind.

Nonetheless, as they had done during the 2011 *bando pubblico*, the collectives of Atlantide, in their associational drag, submitted a 21-page plan for use of the space, outlining six distinctive areas of "service and activity" fulfilling the mandate of four separate areas of the second *bando pubblico*. Despite providing a detailed reconstruction of an impressive array of activities both within and beyond Bologna––from *laboratori* and reading groups to the provision of "drop-in" services for trans* people through the Consultoria to the auto-production of publications to the provision of self-organized assistance for migrants seeking asylum on account of homophobic discrimination––the *bando* resulted in the assignment of the space to three new associations. On the heels of the announcement of this outcome in

December 2012, the collectives of Atlantide issued a communiqué titled "Se Atlantide affonda, la cercherete per millenni!" (If Atlantide Sinks, you'll be searching for it for millennia!), which reads, in part:

> Today, the **perverse attempt to govern the wealth of our experience**, fielded over the last four years by the municipal administration and by the District of Santo Stefano, is trying to write the final act. **In light of the recent results of a *bando* for the assignment of the space, they let us know that Atlantide must die and that its collectives [...] must abandon the building to make way for three associations that are completely irrelevant to its more than ten-year history.**[35]

The communiqué goes on to redouble an analysis described above, pointing to the fact that the process, which the District Council and the municipal administration alike continually sought to portray as "technical," was comprehensible "to anyone who is minimally critical," as "**a precise political choice.**"[36] That choice was contextualized in terms that made reference to the national government, under the direction of the technocratic economist Mario Monti, who had been appointed to implement particularly harsh austerity measures:

> We have learned very well from the outgoing national government how the rhetoric and apparatuses [*dispositivi*] of "meritocracy" are nothing but stopgaps [*espedienti*] used to disguise nefarious political choices and not to assume responsibility for them.[37]

The collectives of Atlantide not only sought to unmask the properly political choices of the municipal administration, they did so in a manner that appealed to a broad audience through an incisive political analysis of a decidedly unpopular austerity government.

With this, Atlantide launched a new round of *la difesa*, expanding upon the previous round and developing a communicative strategy that soon witnessed the (re)emergence of the

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[35] Atlantide, "Se Atlantide Affonda, la Cercherete per Millenni!," *Atlantide Resiste*, December 27, 2012, https://atlantideresiste.noblogs.org/post/2012/12/27/se-atlantide-affonda-la-cercherete-per-millenni/, emphases in original.
[36] Atlantide, "Se Atlantide Affonda," emphasis in original.
[37] Atlantide, "Se Atlantide Affonda," emphasis in original.

matter in the mainstream local press. By January 8, 2013, just under two weeks from the publication of the communiqué, an online petition in support of the space had obtained over 700 signatures. Two days later, Xenia, one of the associations selected to occupy Porta Santo Stefano 6a in place of Atlantide, withdrew its application and declared that they would not take up residence in the space. By January 15, the number of signatories to the petition––which included many detailed statements of solidarity from social spaces, associations, and individuals around Italy and, indeed, globally––had reached 1,100. Over the next several months, local papers would publish scores of pieces on il caso di Atlantide. Just under two years had passed since the expiration of the *convenzione* and Atlantide's website/public archive, the de facto repository of the political work of the general assembly, was publishing almost daily. Even in this frenetic period, the collectives of Atlantide continued to organize events in the space, to participate in broader mobilizations, including for the mutual defense of other spaces under eviction or the threat of eviction, and even to host a workshop on transfeministqueer tango.[38] In short, the second-wave of *la difesa* gathered force not only on account of Atlantide's efforts to (re)politicize the resurgent rhetoric of "legality" and "security" through a decisive operation of unmasking, but also because of the interpellation of other social spaces, organizations, and individual inhabitants of the city in the large-scale demystification of the logics of redevelopment and the warehousing of spaces under the pretense of the provision of social services.

In terms of the relationship with local institutions, the dialectic previously described effectively became a trialectic during this period, with the strategy of Atlantide and its allies

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[38] Among the spaces with which Atlantide co-organized were: XM24 (threat of eviction), Cinema Arcobaleno (evicted), Bartleby (evicted), ex-Convento Santa Marta (evicted), and numerous evicted housing occupations that responded to the "so-called emergency [of in-migration] from North Africa." Atlantide, "Communicato Stampa Atlantidee Dopo l'incontro con Lepore di Mercoledì 17-04-2013," *Atlantide Resiste*, April 19, 2013, https://atlantideresiste.noblogs.org/post/2013/04/19/comunicato-stampa-atlantidee-dopo-lincontro-con-lepore-di-mercoledi-17-04/.

driving a wedge between the center-left government and the city's only District Council

headed by a right-wing politician. Notwithstanding the fact that elements of the municipal

government/mayoral administration certainly wanted to evict the space, by elevating the level

of political conflict, Atlantide had succeeded not only in gaining the attention of a swathe of

the city's politically active residents, but also of the assessore responsible for "marketing"

Bologna, Matteo Lepore, who was once described as one of Merola's "golden boys."[39] In 2013,

Lepore organized a meeting with Atlantide, during which the assessore proposed to relocate

the space. In light of the momentum of their campaign and the principles it was developing,

Atlantide refused the offer. Over the next year (April 2013–April 2014) the situation with

Atlantide fell into relative silence.[40]

On April 1, 2014, the silence was broken when the District Council announced, via

letter, their intention to evict Atlantide. Simultaneously, two of the associations that had won

the second *bando pubblico* declared their intentions in the local media: one would accept an

alternative space, the other reaffirmed its desire to take control of Porta Santo Stefano 6a in

order to turn it into a museum focused, ironically enough, on the history of the *porte* that

encircle the central city. So commenced another round of *la difesa*, during which Atlantide

built on their experiences in the previous three years, this time mobilizing a campaign that

elaborated the praxis of *frivolezza tattica*, including through interruptions of sessions of the

City Council and by way of choral performances on the steps of Atlantide.[41] By now, the

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[39] Giovanni Bignami, "Merola Rimescola La Giunta," November 27, 2013,
https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2013/11/27/merola-rimescola-la-giunta.html.
[40] Nevertheless, the political situation would evolve for other well-established social spaces, such as XM24, In 2013, the CSOA secured a *convenzione* to remain in the space they had been occupying since 2002, when they were assigned the space by the Guazzaloca administration. For a more detailed account, see "Il Re È Nudo - Il Contesto ed i Fatti Sulla Richiesta di Sgombero XM24," *Doglie Blu*, February 4, 2017,
http://doglieblu.blogspot.com/2017/02/lo-sgombero-dellxm24-contestualizziamo.html.
[41] La Corale di Atlantide, "La Corale Atlantidea in: Nessuno Ci Può Sgomberare!," YouTube video, 2:21, April 16, 2014, https:// https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tmVyhBsr_A.

petition in support of Atlantide had garnered more than 1,300 signatures and Atlantide had

received more than 40 expressions of solidarity from around Italy and the world.[42] The

rhetoric of the mobilization had evolved to ever clearer declarations regarding the threat

represented by municipal government's strategy: "**The events surrounding Atlantide [...] set

a serious precedent not only in the relationships between the administration and self-

managed social spaces, but also in relationship with the broader world of Bolognese

associationism.**"[43]

By September 2014, the rift between the District Council and Merola's administration

had widened significantly. A piece in Corriere della Sera marked the distance between Santo

Stefano District President, Iliaria Giorgetti, who had mobilized a small group of local residents

in an effort to give the administration an ultimatum: Either the space would be evicted or the

District Council would initiate legal action in the public prosecutor's office in an attempt to

force the eviction.[44] Meanwhile, Atlantide had entered into negotiations with Alberto Ronchi,

the administration's cultural attaché, whose public statements on the matter represented a

significant shift in tone:

> In the past, similar situations have been resolved by signing a *convenzione*. [...]
> For the city, that represented a savings [*risparmio*]. Among other things,
> Atlantide already had an agreement to use that space, having also made
> themselves available to pay back all expenses related to the space, which, for
> our part, needs to be evaluated positively. [...] I often hear about legality, and
> that's what we are doing: creating a path through which the rules can be
> respected.[45]

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[42] Atlantide, "Le Atlantidee Aprono le Porte, ma Possono anche Attraversare i Muri!," *Atlantide Resiste*, April 14, 2014, https://atlantideresiste.noblogs.org/post/2014/04/14/le-atlantidee-aprono-le-porte-ma-possono-anche-attraversare-i-muri/.
[43] Atlantide, "Le Atlantidee Aprono," emphasis in original.
[44] Mauro Giordano, "Atlantide, il Dribbling del Comune che Salva il Collettivo," *Corriere Di Bologna*, September 2, 2014, https://corrieredibologna.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/2014/2-settembre-2014/atlantide-dribbling-comune-che-salva-collettivo-23056540489.shtml.
[45] Quoted in Giordano, "Il Dribbling."

Three years into *la difesa*, the path to a compromise solution was gradually revealing itself. On the heels of two waves of coordinated resistance––a campaign which had exhausted the collectives of Atlantide to the point that one departed the space––the strategy began to shift back toward negotiations. As these unfolded, the number of posts and communiqués on Atlantide's website/public archive declined dramatically. Though an oblique indication of the significance of this development, the relative calm signaled the transformation of *la difesa* away from the ongoing effort to sustain a high level of public involvement alongside the already existing political commitments of the collectives of Atlantide, not least Smaschieramenti, through which much of *la difesa* had been sustained. Nevertheless, the collectives continued their support of other political projects within the city.

With two years left in Merola's administration and some significant victories for other social spaces being achieved, Atlantide saw the opportunity to leverage the successes of *la difesa* into what they would later describe as "a dialogue" which they saw as embodying "the possibility to create new forms of relationship between institutions and self-managed realities."[46] This dialogue had been predicated on the reaffirmed recognition of Atlantide as a self-managed space on the part of the institutions. The collectives attempted to leverage the paradox of recognized autonomy as a point of departure for negotiations, such that they might effectively subvert the claim of the municipal government to being sole entity with the authority to "delegate" spaces.

By this time, both the media and the collectives themselves situated the political dimensions of the longstanding conflict in decidedly historical terms. Across the political spectrum, the historical significance of self-managed spaces for the identity of the city––and, it

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[46] Atlantide, "They Want Us to Drown, They'll Make Us Overflow," *Atlantide Resiste*, April 10, 2015, https://atlantideresiste.noblogs.org/post/2015/10/04/they-want-us-to-drown-theyll-make-us-overflow/.

is not a stretch to say, of a cross-section of Italian and global social movements––became a

constant refrain. For example, in an editorial in Corriere della Sera, titled "Atlantide and the

Unresolved City," the journalist and historian Marco Marozzi wrote:

> Santo Stefano is the small, great [*grande*] example of the schizophrenia of
> Bologna. Between an overwhelming majority that wants it beautiful, clean, tidy,
> fine, Swiss, mirror-ready [*vetrina a specchio*] and the gangs [*bande*] and
> individuals that fill it with scribbles, decay, rage, otherness [*alterità*] of all kinds.
> Creative fireworks [*fuochi*] and destructive, anarchist fires [*fuochi*] with the
> deliberate absence of any context [*collegamento*], even with sparks of violence. It
> is the drama that exploded in 1977 and was never resolved.[47]

Here, the conservative tropes of a "silent majority," one which never managed to gather even

one hundred people to march in the streets even if it did send a lawyer to the public

prosecutor's office, are contrasted with the phobic and phantasmatic projections of a

misapprehended anarchist/autonomous politics. Marozzi deploys the retrospective

irresolution of the Movement of 1977 in an attempt to transcend the deadlocked discourses of

"legality" by appealing to an idealized mode of public communication: "Small fires should

perhaps be addressed with firm wisdom. Like Atlantide."[48] In an odd way, Marozzi both

implicitly chastises Atlantide for its ostensible utopian myopia and holds it out as an example

of effective communicative strategy.

Indeed, for their part, as the winds of eviction calmed, the collectives turned toward

another discourse. In a strategic evolution of their broader vision, they published a statement

titled "Anti-fascism is not a convention. For a strike of self-management." In the statement,

which affirms the fundamentally political character common to almost all self-managed

spaces, the collectives not only sketch the contemporary political ecology of autonomy in

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[47] Marco Marozzi, "Atlantide È La Città Irrisolta," *Corriere Di Bologna*, September 3, 2014,
https://corrieredibologna.corriere.it/bologna/notizie/opinioni/2014/3-settembre-2014/atlantide-citta-irrisolta-
23061887427.shtml.
[48] Marozzi, "La Città Irrisolta."

Bologna, they also chose a different historical point of reference than Marozzi, namely, Genoa 2001. They write:

> What would happen in this city if all the activists freely engaged in social processes just stopped doing them? If the self-managed canteens, unlicensed farmer's markets, Italian-language schools for migrants, the legal aid, the cycle shops, the self-training courses, the time banks, the craft workshops, the housing occupations, and all the grassroots cultural production went "on strike"? What would this administration have to offer Bologna in the face of a lacerating crisis and austerity policies that progressively increase poverty and, with it, social rage?

> If we do not depend in any way on *413uell413e413one* or institutional recognition to continue our social and cultural commitments, in which we believe deeply, with every fiber of our being, on the other hand, we cannot tolerate being forced into this unbreathable climate of arbitrary stigmatization.

> Since Genoa in 2001, we have understood, on our own skin, how much the mystical violence/nonviolence debate is functional only to eradicate conflict from public space. The same can be said for insincere appeals for institutional demonstrations against "violence."

> As some of us have written in the past, "Illegal does not coincide with violent and nonviolence is, in fact, not a synonym of legality, order, decorum, composure." To the legality of exploitation, to the order imposed by the "stronger," to the heteronormative decorum, to the composure of docile bodies, we will continue to oppose direct re-appropriation and self-organization, the indiscipline of differences, our indecorous paths of liberation and our unavailability to reproduce this kind of society.[49]

I quote this statement at length because it coincides with a degree of reflexivity on the part of Atlantide regarding the efficacy of a strategy of refusal in the face of enduring threats of eviction. With the ostensible recognition of the irreducible value of self-management on the part of at least one segment of the administration––the intermediary Alberto Ronchi, who adopted a "pacifist" approach to resolving the conflict––the pathway for a negotiated settlement of the conflict was open for consideration.

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[49] Atlantide, "L'Antifascismo Non è Una Convenzione. Per uno Sciopero Dell'Autogestione," *Atlantide Resiste*, October 22, 2014, https://atlantideresiste.noblogs.org/post/2014/10/22/lantifascismo-non-e-una-convenzione-per-uno-sciopero-dellautogestione/.

The day after the eviction notice was posted to the doors of Atlantide in October 2015, an article in the Corriere della Sera reported the situation, noting a demonstration staged by Atlantide in the chambers of the City Council.[50] In the piece, the mayor describes himself as "serene" at the prospect of the eviction, reflecting his resignation to the ostensibly technical and irreversible intervention of the Digos, a political police force, in response to a lengthy investigation of his office's inaction on an eviction order in 2014, though, it merits pointing out that the administration itself responded to the charge by characterizing the June 2014 eviction order as an "intimation to relinquish" the building.[51] Regardless of its technical status, the order had, of course, never been acted upon; instead, Atlantide had successfully used the strategies of *la difesa* to force the administration to rely on the negotiations between Atlantide and Alberto Ronchi to yield a solution.

This pathway toward a settlement collapsed when the administration succumbed to a drawn-out process of official denunciation that Giorgetti had initiated in 2014. The investigation itself had been pushed along by right-wing interests in Santo Stefano, who had aided a group of eight residents by supplying them with a lawyer previously associated with the Forza Italia party. In pursuing this path, Giorgetti and the right-wing group used the specter of legality to characterize the political path forced by Atlantide as an instance of mayoral abrogation of duty, evidenced, in part, by the restoration of municipal water service to the building after a period during which it had been cut off. Though the "ultimatum" came to fruition more slowly than Giorgetti had anticipated, it would, in the end, prove successful. As pressure from the Public Prosecutor's office (Procura) increased, the administration

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[50] Olivio Romanini and Gianluca Rotondi, "Atlantide, Inchiesta e Crisi," *Corriere Di Bologna*, October 3, 2015, https://pressreader.com/@nickname11968021/csb_AZJbwy9O8UvIbDd42cJ_TL06CZBtOwDjVCRameRTWjYlBm VJTBLv4xm9fNkZkYYF.
[51] Romanini and Rotondi, "Atlantide, Inchiesta E Crisi."

abandoned the negotiations. Attempting to obscure the reasoning for this abrupt shift, Merola said, "I received nothing from the Public Prosecutor, but I am calm. We cannot go any further, this is no longer political. I am the mayor and I cannot follow dreams, now I have to evict them."[52] The forces of "order" would arrive one week after the fourth, and final, eviction notice was delivered.

As this long, exhausting period of *la difesa* finally came to an end, the fight for self-management, for another kind of city, indeed, for another world, was far from over. Among the many statements posted by the collectives from around the country and world and among expressions of support from around the world, including by academic luminaries like Judith Butler and Teresa de Lauretis, a statement published the same day as the article in Corriere stands out for its meticulous unmasking of the official political and legal process. In response to Merola's declaration that the situation was "no longer political" and that he "cannot follow dreams," the denizens of Atlantide wrote:

> Our needs-&-dreams are extremely different from those of an administration which **practices pinkwashing by supporting civil partnerships** while at the same time forcefully evicting those queers who practice autonomy and self-management (*autogestione*). An administration which **fills its mouth with empty talk of "welcoming refugees"** while at the same time **beating those refugees** who don't comply with the city's guidelines for "integration." An administration which concedes **agency to sexist, racist and homophobic subjects in public space** (No 194, Northern League, Sentinelle), avoiding in each of these incidents, to face its political responsibility by hiding itself behind concepts of "legality" and "lawful procedures." **There is no such thing as a "democratic bulldozer."**

> [...]

> Though they want Atlantide to be "freed from things and people" (verbatim from the eviction notice), **they will find it full of free things and free people. Hordes of furious faggots, perverted feminists, warrior lesbians, unruly trans*, and unlabeled punks will flood every neighborhood.**[53]

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[52] Romanini and Rotondi, "Atlantide, Inchiesta E Crisi."
[53] Atlantide, "They Want Us to Drown, They'll Make Us Overflow."

With that, the Atlantideans proceeded to condense nearly twenty years of experience into one final week of demonstrations, parties, direct actions, statements, and commiserations. They channeled their rage. Just over a week after their own eviction, they would join countless residents of the city in resisting and denouncing the brutal eviction of Ex-Telekom. As always, the Atlantideans refused to separate their struggle from the broader politics enumerated in the statement. At least for a time, those hordes of furious faggots, perverted feminists, warrior lesbians, unruly trans people, and unlabeled punks did indeed flood every neighborhood, keeping each other afloat. Writing in support of those hundreds of migrant families that, after surviving treacherous journeys across the Mediterranean, now faced the batons of the police, they wrote:

> **Just as Atlantide was for us a testing ground [*un terreno*] to experiment with being at home in other places and for reconfiguring the forms of relationship and kinship, we support the occupants of Ex-Telekom, who were able to construct a real and concrete response to their own needs, a self-determined, grassroots alternative, an experience that goes far beyond the logic of "emergency" and "reception" [*accoglienza*]**
>
> [...]
>
> It is time for every individual, every formal or informal association, every self-managed experiment [*esperienza*], every spontaneous gathering, every autonomous producer of art, knowledge, and active citizenship that does not want to submit to the logics [of violent clientelism], to share [*mettere in 416uell416e*] our intelligence and our strategies for empowering viable social and political spaces for everyone.[54]

With that, and with no place left to call home, Atlantide and Smaschieramenti and many others found themselves adrift in Bologna, the capital of evictions. As they declared themselves to be everywhere with the #AtlantideOvunque campaign (fig. 32), Atlantide's collectives also set about posing the only logical question that could follow the construction of

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[54] Atlantide, "Sullo Sgombero dell'Ex-Telekom," *Atlantide Resiste*, October 21, 2015, https://atlantideresiste.noblogs.org/post/2015/10/21/sullo-sgombero-dellex-telecom/.

another brick wall over the door of a flourishing social space: "Dopo quel muro, che genere di città?" After that wall, what kind of city?

Figure 32. #AtlantideOvunque (#AtlantideEverywhere), Bologna, Italy, October 9, 2015

Conclusion:

An Intersectionality of Struggles

Back here, again

It's March 16, 2016 and I've been back in Toronto for as long as I had been in Bologna: five months. I visited Bologna briefly in December––Simone's third birthday––and participated in an assembly for the post-eviction campaign #CheGenerediCittà and interviewed Porpora Marcasciano, the last interview I did for this project. Then, just winter. I haven't heard much of anything from the comrades, or from Babs, for that matter. Everyone is exhausted. It's really gone. I haven't been able to do much––well, anything––in the way of writing, so I've been trying to focus on other things, but my nervousness about the open-endedness of my departure from Bologna keeps popping up. Usually, I don't leave without having a return date set, if not a ticket in hand. This time, things were feeling off and Babs and I agreed to postpone a planned return until I had time to wrap my head around the dissertation. Or, maybe I insisted on postponing until I had time to wrap my head around the dissertation. Either way, I don't know when I'm going back.

I'm shooing the orange cat away when my phone lights up; Babs on WhatsApp: "Angela Davis is coming to Bologna! She's doing a dialogue on academia and activism, remember the work we did at the *campeggia*?"

"Obv. I wish I could be there! Of course, she comes when I am not there."

"I'll give you the full update. Don't worry…how's the work?"

"Fine. Slow. It's fine! Excited to hear about the event!"

It all comes flooding back: The eviction. It's really gone. What is the work now? What does it mean for Atlantide to be everywhere? Do the comrades know about my relationship

troubles? Do they care? I wish someone would call. Are they mad? I haven't called. Am I mad? I shouldn't call until I have something to offer. Did I offer enough? Maybe too much. When can I go back? I can't go back. It's over. It's over and I can't admit it. It's okay. Tomorrow.

I go upstairs to my office and pull out the red notebook labeled "Fieldnotes #4," the last and current field notebook that I've kept. I'm looking for my notes from the December #CheGenerediCittà assembly. I leaf through the notebook for a minute before I realize it's the wrong one. I find this: Activism is fast. It maintains a pace that is relentlessly in the present tense. This is how it unfolds a world within the one which purportedly exists, a unity around us. Autonomy is, like activism, a declarative mood. It means: When something is happening–– something political or not yet––you, we, respond. A statement, an action, a phone call, an agenda item at the assembly. Among these, few traces remain. Sometimes, just a stub, tossed in a box. Something to be dealt with later, if at all. (It is fitting that I should begin with an event that I didn't experience.)

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September 2016: Start of a new school year in Toronto. It has taken until now to get the video of Davis's dialogue on academia and activism from the event organizers at the University of Bologna. I am delighted when I come home to find the e-mail with the link. I know Babs is at the end of the video, but I don't skip ahead. In April, we broke up. This is the first time that I'll see them since then.

Wrapped in a purple scarf, Angela Davis sits at the front of a lecture hall in Via Zamboni 38. Tonight is the first of two events she has scheduled in Bologna.[1] Tomorrow, she is

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[1] Angela Y. Davis, "Academic Research and Activism: A Dialogue with Graduate Students" (Public event, Università di Bologna Facoltà di Lettere, Bologna, Italy, March 16, 2016), http://web.dfc.unibo.it/conv/16mar2016/angela_davis_xm.mp4. http://web.dfc.unibo.it/conv/16mar2016/angela_davis_xm.mp4. All quotes and descriptions are derived from a video recording of the event.

presenting a lecture entitled "The Meaning of White Supremacy Today." Tomorrow.

Hundreds of students, activists, and professors fill the seats in front of her. The crowd spills

over into the aisles. At the top of the amphitheater, people lean casually over railings.

Professors gather at the edges of the table where Davis is seated, flanked by Maria Patrizia

Violi, who will introduce her, and Marica Tolomelli, who will moderate the discussion to

follow.

Scarcely more than a month has passed since the body of the Italian student Giulio

Regeni, who was studying the labor movement in Egypt, was found half-naked on the side of a

highway in Cairo. Regeni, a PhD student at Cambridge, had been tortured for more than a

week. The event has raised tensions among politically involved students, not least because of

the fear that Regeni's death will be instrumentalized to justify increasing calls for "security"

on the part of the Italian state. In recent days, international media have reported conflicting

information regarding whether or not Italy is prepared to send 5,000 troops into Libya, a

country that Italy colonized for nearly thirty years. Libya is home to several of the main ports

of departure for the tens of thousands of migrants seeking to cross the Mediterranean Sea in

order to enter fortress Europe. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has vowed that he will not pursue

explicit military action––nominally, against ISIS militants––while the U.S. Ambassador says it

is a strong possibility that a coalition of forces led by Italy will be dispatched. In either case,

U.S.-American operations across the region will continue to be staged from airbases built in

Sicily and Southern Italy following the end of the Second World War.

Following Violi's introduction, Davis takes the microphone. Without any prefatory

remarks, she opens the dialogue. A young woman stands to pose the first question. The

student identifies herself as part of a group that had organized a *sala studio* at the university

named after Giulio Regeni. She briefly recounts the history of the space, highlighting actions

taken by the students to denounce the role that Angelo Panebianco, a professor in the Faculty

of Political and Social Sciences, where I had been a visiting student, had played in agitating for

military intervention. In an editorial for the *Corriere della Sera* published one month ago, the

professor explained his views on Italy's "dependence" on the United States for "our security,"

writing that that: "The disadvantage is that we have not been able to develop an adequate

'culture of safety': We are like those kids who, having had parents who were too protective, are

not able to get by on their own."[2] Panebianco has also publicly speculated on Regeni's murder,

arguing that, regardless of the outcome of ongoing––and, thusfar, inconclusive––

investigations regarding culpability for the murder, "Islamic extremists" were the surest

beneficiaries of the incident.[3] He has no evidence.

With rage and urgency, the student asking the question points to the fact that, in

response to their campaign to draw attention to the professor's war mongering and

instrumentalization of Regeni's murder, the University had invoked anti-terrorist police to

shut down the *sala studio.* She describes the University administration's action as not only as

tantamount to a criminalization of the student movement, but also as responsible for exposing

longstanding tensions between "conformist individual subjectivities" and those who invoke

the power of collective refusal of warmongering and security-obsessed rhetoric on the part of

the professoriate. After accusing the university of "blackwashing" its recent actions through

their invitation to Davis––who is being hosted by a different department––the student poses

her question: What is the role of university teachers in such a situation? Davis takes two more

questions before responding.

[2] Angelo Panebianco, "Noi in Libia Saremo Mai Pronti?," *Corriere Della Sera*, February 14, 2016, https://www.corriere.it/opinioni/16_febbraio_15/noi-libia-saremo-mai-pronti-1ff3c7ce-d364-11e5-9081-3e79e8e2f15c.shtml.
[3] "Chi La Sapeva Lunga Su Regeni," *Leonardo Longform Non Dant Panem*, March 28, 2016, https://leonardo.blogspot.com/2016/03/chi-la-sapeva-lunga-su-regeni.html.

When she does, Davis not only seeks to gather further information about the political

strategy of the student organizing staged in response to this event, she recalls an episode from

her own past. She speaks about the efforts of a small group of students at University of

California San Diego in the 1960s to establish a newly announced college––Third College––as

the Lumumba-Zapata College.[4] Ferguson identifies how various groups emphasized different

strategies, including separatism on the part of Black and Chicano nationalists and mutualism

on the part of Black and Chicano internationalists. For her part, Davis highlights the

internationalist strategy of alliance and mutualism and speaks about the importance of spatial

occupation to the Lumumba-Zapata movement itself. She points to the involvement of her

mentor, Herbert Marcuse, in the campaign. She explains that students who had been

planning to occupy an administration building in support of their campaign had approached

Marcuse to support them. He agreed to be the first person through the doors of the building,

knowing that his status as a high-profile tenured professor would immunize him from

retributive action (or would, at least, mitigate its impact). He further understood that his

support would lend a recognizable form legitimacy to the movement agitating for new spaces

and new knowledges with the potential to transform entrenched regimes of knowledge

production in the university.

This episode was among the earliest and most important passages leading to the

reorganization of wide swathes of the North American academy in the 1960s. Without such

efforts, it is certain that interdisciplinary programs that derive their praxes from social

movements––including gender, feminist, women's and queer studies––would have never

existed in the academy. We hear this story having been informed in Violi's introduction that

[4] As Ferguson affirms in his account of this pivotal moment for the institutionalization of epistemologies, pedagogies, and subjectivities marked by difference: "At this campus that sat way up on a hill were competing ideals of minority difference among students of color." *The Reorder of Things*, 43.

Theodore Adorno, with whom Davis had also worked, had once maligned her activism,

likening Davis's participation in social movements to the ostensibly inexplicable desire of a

media studies scholar to become a radio technician. Since the 70s, Bologna has been a city

where pirate radio stations and alternative media have made a powerful presence. Davis

responds as if she knows this.

After more than an hour of discussion on a number of topics––including evictions of

both politicized spaces within the university and housing occupations in the city––time is

running short. Davis says she'll take one more round of questions. After a question regarding

the possibilities of translating Du Bois's notion of abolition democracy into the Italian context,

Babs Mazzotti stands to address Davis:

> I am part of another space that has been evicted but, evidently [...] I mean, it is
> becoming even boring how many evictions take place in a very small city, like
> Bologna. So, I was part of Atlantide, which was a transfeminist and queer space
> that has been evicted in October.

As they identify themselves as being from Atlantide, the entire lecture hall erupts into the

loudest applause since Davis herself was introduced. Babs, who is clearly moved by the

response, turns to the crowd and raises a fist. I am inundated with love. As the applause and

cheers fade, they turn back to Davis:

> Yeah, a quite sad story, anyway. [...] #AtlantideOvunque, there's also an
> hashtag and, evidently, it's here. I would like to give you the petition that we
> created for academics because Atlantide is a place that has been engaged in this
> specific question about the relation––the power relation, also––between
> academia and activism. Because, there is a lot of research on activism. Actually,
> activism is *the* fieldwork, par excellence, I would say, nowadays. There's really a
> lot of research and there are a lot of activists who are academics and
> researchers.
>
> [...]
>
> One of the many projects that are now being developed all around, everywhere
> ––Atlantide everywhere––one of the questions is the relationship between
> these two. And, what are the tools for these activist-academics to research
> activism––so, their own lives, also, and the lives of their comrades––within an

ethical framework that is shared by the activist community. And, at the same time, what are the tools for activists not to be subsumed by the neoliberal and capitalist production of knowledge that is promoted by academia, in general? In the end, it's knowledge production and, so, wherever there is production there is labor and capitalism in this world. So, okay.[5]

Mazzotti's question is followed by a questioner who identifies herself as a Kurdish woman studying Kurdish women's emancipation in the Middle East. Articulating her question with Mazzotti's, the questioner asks about the appropriate tools for activist researchers to use in communities where they find themselves as "outsider within or insiders without." She speaks about the blurring of these identities and the difficulty that ensues in this space of blurring. After taking two final questions, including one regarding the "need for safer spaces" for queer people, gender non-conforming people, Black people, or people "not inside the heterosexual and hegemonic cis-gender privilege," Davis responds. She says:

> I'm so glad that you [gesturing to Mazzotti] raised the issue of feminism because that's a term that has thus far been absent from our discussions [...] And, you see, I wrote down "feminism" here [holds up her notes] because I was wondering why it's only emerging at the very *end* of the conversation when it should have emerged at the very *beginning* of the conversation that we've been having. And, so, I was going to point out that abolition is deeply feminist in that it calls for an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness and the intersectionalities of issues, analyses, and struggles and requires us to think not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of the way that issues are deeply interconnected.
>
> [...]
>
> Sometimes, I think we pose the question as if the spheres [of academic research and activism] were absolutely separate and absolutely disconnected. And this is why we have a hard time thinking about ways to bring them together because we disarticulate them in ways that do not actually reflect the extent to which the space of academia is *supposed* to be an active space, it is *supposed* to be a space to produce knowledge that is going to change the world, whatever discipline you are working in.
>
> And so, I always find it really interesting that people have to work so hard to figure out what the connections are [and] they don't even realize that they have created two separate spheres analytically and cannot find the strategies to make

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[5] Davis, "Academic Research."

them connect and relate again. But, if knowledge is important, then it has to have some effect on the world. And it seems to me that the knowledge that is produced in institutions such as this, particularly in the era of neoliberalism, is represented as if it is abstract, and disconnected, and unrelated to real life. And this, as a consequence, causes us to devalue knowledge that is produced in other spaces, knowledge that is produced in collectives such as Atlantide. In these professionalized spaces for the production of knowledge, we are urged to imagine ourselves as more learned and more conscious than [...] people in other spaces.[6]

Throughout Davis's response, the audience repeatedly expresses its approval and enthusiasm, particularly when she speaks about the necessity for academic spaces to be spaces for creating knowledges that seek to "change the world" and to "have some effect on the world." Davis goes on to define the problem of translating activism into an academic field, using the example of Critical Prison Studies. In so doing, she points to a raft of other formations––from Black Studies to Feminist Studies––to draw attention to their activist roots. Critically, she also identifies the bureaucratic stasis that can result from the institutionalization of these formations. She closes her response to these first two questions by urging caution in the formation of new, presumably critical and radical, fields. Drawing on her deep connections to the abolitionist movement, which has informed Critical Prison Studies, Davis poses a crucial question:

What happens in an academic field when you are, as an activist, struggling to abolish what is the object of your study? [...] What does it mean to identify with a field which aspires to abolish its object and thus, also, [to] abolish itself? It helps us to cultivate a very different relationship to the production of knowledge.[7]

As she stands at the front of a lecture hall at the oldest university in the so-called western world, speaking about the power of abolition thinking and meditating on the complexities of non-attachment––of compassionate detachment––Davis says, in a self-consciously American

[6] Davis, "Academic Research."
[7] Davis, "Academic Research."

way, that it is inconceivable for her to imagine an institutional history as long as the University of Bologna's. Is she aware that no universities in Italy have ever had a program in gender, feminist, or women's studies? I'm not sure. But, I do know that, in Bologna, that role had been played by Atlantide, one part of Bologna, school of activism. And now that its home has not so much been abolished as destroyed, it has declared itself to be "everywhere." Davis signs the petition.

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Reflecting on Davis's visit to Bologna leads me to consider both the unfinished work that began in the wake of the eviction, namely the #AtlantideOvunque and #CheGenerediCittà campaigns, and the unfinished work of this dissertation. As I commit the lessons and reflections drawn from my initial "trip" to Bologna to the institutional archive, I am also preparing myself to return to Bologna and Laboratorio Smaschieramenti in December 2019 in order to present this work to my comrades and colleagues there. Planning a return trip stirs a deep sense of vulnerability, not least on account of the fact that I have been away from the collective for so long. The prospect of presenting this work so many years after the fact heightens my concerns about its relevance to the everyday struggles that have taken shape during my absence. So much has changed: Simone is older, many comrades have moved on to other projects, new networks and movements have grown, and other autonomous spaces, including the stalwart XM24, have succumbed to the bulldozers. As so many differently positioned autonomous spaces, collectivities, and individual activists find themselves confronting the relentless antipathy of the state for self-organization and self-management, I cannot help but wonder how my emphasis on ecologies of praxis and the intersectionality of struggles may contribute to the ongoing work of the Laboratorio and the networks of which it is a part. At the same time, the spirit of generosity and the ethos of

collective learning that characterized my time with the comrades in 2015 reminds me that this vulnerability is a strength. I am hopeful that the ideas proffered and the questions raised in the course of my extended scholarly analysis and personal reflections on what turned out to be the final months of Atlantide's life will occasion a deeper mutual engagement with lingering threads of organizing related to the overall situation of autonomous praxis, self-organization, and self-management in Bologna and beyond. I am hopeful that we can still find Atlantide everywhere. I am hopeful that we will continue to plot and to scheme to build a different kind of city.

As I envision my return to Bologna, I am also eager to develop several aspects of the dissertation following the completion of my doctoral studies. First, I am keen to deepen my understanding of the implications of transfeministqueer praxis through more sustained engagement with the core literatures that have positioned autonomous Marxism in the Anglo-American economy of citations. Second, I am intent on finding meaningful ways to weave the notion of queer urban ecologies together with collective efforts to sustain and to grow abolitionist approaches to urban political ecologies. Third, I am intent on bringing a transfeministqueer autonomous sensibility to bear on the continued elaboration of queer geographies, not least by way of further developing my critique of the distinctions between subjectlessness as scholarly mode and as an everyday political practice. Fourth, I am searching for ethically and politically sound ways to enfold richer depictions of the everyday lives of my comrades into future scholarly work, which is something that has been neither easy nor obvious throughout the writing of the dissertation. As a matter of repairing my relationship with myself, with Babs, and with Simone, I was consumed by my need to reflect on the radical transformation of my own everyday life over the course of this work. I am grateful that the path is once again cleared for my return; we have so much left to do together.

427

The stories that we are told and that we then learn to tell ourselves and others about our separation alienate us from the mutual vulnerability of relatedness. This is where we are susceptible, where intuition reigns, where we are most likely to evolve because we are most likely to come face-to-face with our mistakes and our failures. As I faced my mistakes, my failures, I found myself more attached than ever to something I wanted desperately to abolish: Gender. As my relationship with Babs began to unravel and I began to unravel my relationship to gender, I found a gift at the center: Non-binary reality. We are not just two. Not anymore. Our struggles are separated, not separate. Our work is to discern the nature of their connection. We may not know which kind of city we are building now, but we have the power of myth on our side. We have lived its memory and become its premonition. As the waters rise, we surface one more time for a breath of the otherwise.

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Appendix A

The text which follows is the first of two fliers announcing the opening of Atlantide. The document is a part of the Eccentric Archive and is used with permission.

Navigando verso Atlantide.

Atlantide, città sommersa, ricca e misteriosa, ha sempre colpito il sangue e l'immaginario di coloro che sono disposti a sognare. Perché non "Atlantide", dunque, come nome plausibile per questo spazio che già proviamo ad immaginare, e che comincia a delinearsi nei suoi contorni, dopo ogni riunione a cui partecipiamo. Uno spazio ricco, come era ricca quella città e ricca la moltitudine che dovrebbe attraversarlo, sommerso, perché le soggettività che potrebbero costituirlo non trovano cittadinanza all'interno del modello di società in cui siamo costretti, e che sentiamo il bisogno di cambiare, misterioso, perché potrebbe essere il primo esperimento di questo tipo in Italia.

Atlantide si presenta come uno spazio pubblico, non statale, non occupato, ma offerto ed aperto per essere attraversato da una moltitudine bisognosa di cooperazione politica. Non il punto d'arrivo di un percorso antagonista, ma laboratorio politico, rete di soggettività molteplici disposta per essere attivata dagli impulsi di conflitto, che nella dimensione biopolitica si innescano a livello di corpi, di piaceri, di saperi, ancor prima che di poteri, reticolarmente distribuiti nella metropoli capitalistica.

Spazio pubblico non statale, perché a partire dalla consapevolezza di una inadeguatezza delle forme associative riconosciute e dei meccanismi di riconoscimento pubblico-statali, è necessario ricostituire un concetto di pubblico antagonista, tutt'altro che estraneo alla storia del movimento operaio fin dalle sue origini, in cui al partecipare si sostituisca il fare e il costruire. Perché le forme della rappresentanza statuale , costruite a misura del maschio, bianco, lavoratore a tempo indeterminato, già denunciate nella loro parzialità ed inadeguatezza dalla critica femminista, sono oggi totalmente messe in crisi dalla transizione post-fordista, dalla fine della misurabilità del valore in termini di tempo di lavoro, e dalla moltitudine di nuovi soggetti ibridi che essa genera,

Una moltitudine di soggettività differenti: gli immigrati e le immigrate, corpi sradicati e messi al lavoro nelle forme di sfruttamento vecchie (ultime braccia del lavoro vivo), e nuove (lavori di cura e servili), nel pressochè totale disconoscimento dei più elementari diritti di cittadinanza; gli studenti e le studentesse, i cui saperi sono direttamente produttivi e sfruttati, la cui formazione continua ad essere a pagamento, e il cui valore continua ad essere misurato rispetto alle esigenze e ai bisogni del mercato; i precari e le precarie, che sperimentano le nuove forme di flessibilità dei tempi di lavoro e lo smantellamento delle vecchie garanzie welfaristiche; i disoccupati e le disoccupate, che vivono sulla loro pelle il paradosso di una idea di cittadinanza fondata sul lavoro, in una fase in cui di lavoro vivo c'è sempre meno bisogno; le donne, costrette a subire ancora oggi la brutalità di una cultura maschile che mercifica i loro corpi e violenta la loro specificità; le soggettività gay e lesbiche, identità e piaceri già esclusi dalla vecchia cittadinanza….

Moltitudine di soggetti differenti, accomunati dalle diverse forme dello sfruttamento, del disconoscimento, dell'esclusione dalla cittadinanza.

Per questa moltitudine, Atlantide dovrà offrirsi come *laboratorio politico* di elaborazione e organizzazione di progettualità politica e produzione di soggettività autonome, a partire dalla messa in rete di conoscenze, competenze, attitudini e saperi sottratti alla sussunzione capitalistica, in una logica di cooperazione sociale e politica volta all'ottenimento di nuovi diritti ed al ripensamento di una nuova idea di cittadinanza.

Al tempo stesso, però, dovrà essere un luogo che ne prefiguri i contenuti , nelle forme del riconoscimento politico e della cooperazione in rete di soggettività ricche della loro parzialità. Una parzialità che è direttamente frutto del ridislocamento dei conflitti a livello di tutto il corpo sociale e politico.

In un contesto biopolitico in cui la posta in gioco è il controllo e la messa in produzione di tutta l'esistenza, è ovvio che sia la vita intera, a tutti i suoi livelli, a ribellarsi contro la violenza del dominio. I punti di resistenza e attrito saranno però diffusi, localizzati e percepiti come separati, non comunicanti, nella misura in cui individue e individui interiorizzano le distinzioni nominalistiche propagandate dalla società del controllo (studenti/lavoratori; lavoratori/disoccupati; normali/diversi…).

La sfida di Atlantide è di farsi luogo e tempo della messa in comunicazione e in rete di queste parzialità, perché solo il loro reciproco riconoscimento ed attraversamento potrebbe produrre una loro ricomposizione in una soggettività molteplice.

Comitato di gestione.

Dalle premesse teoriche derivano le nostre scelte organizzative, improntate alla massima valorizzazione dell'autonomia dei soggetti individuali e collettivi aderenti e alla massima apertura alle soggettività che vorranno successivamente attraversare Atlantide (nella prospettiva del suo progetto, quindi implicitamente anticapitalista, antifascista, antirazzista, antisessista…)

Una struttura leggera, un comitato tecnico di gestione composto da un membro di ogni collettivo, scelto da quest'ultimo nelle forme organizzative che intende darsi. Un comitato che si occupi dei problemi tecnici e di gestione, mentre, qualora su questioni politiche dovesse esprimersi l'intera comunità, sarebbe più rispondente alla filosofia del progetto, scegliere in modo assembleare e con maggioranze che rasentino l'unanimità.

Appendix B

The text which follows is the second of two fliers announcing the opening of Atlantide. The document is a part of the Eccentric Archive and is used with permission.

Navigando verso Atlantide

Atlantide, continente sommerso come il sogno di un altro luogo costruito collettivamente, dove i bisogni e le idee non siano imposti da altri ma illuminati dalla politica come relazione tra produttori, in cui i nessi che legano gli uomini e le donne e gli uomini/donne alle cose siano finalmente liberati dalla metafisica del Grande Equivoco, il Capitale, e i suoi dei minori, il Mercato, la Competitività, la Pace Sociale. Non un luogo, dunque, che può esistere qui ed ora, nel contesto di questi rapporti sociali, ma il suo ricordo e la sua premonizione. E, più prosaicamente, spazio aperto all'opposizione non rassegnata, piccola goccia tolta dal mare per far riemergere Atlantide, legame attivo tra il sogno di un reale futuro e la realtà di un presente oppressivo, da operare attraverso la politica e l'iniziativa sociale.

L'esigenza di aprire uno spazio pubblico all'interno del tessuto metropolitano bolognese, nasce dalla consapevolezza dell'esistenza di una domanda sociale insoddisfatta. Si tratta di una domanda che riteniamo essere comune a molte realtà collettive che già da tempo operano all'interno dello spazio sociale cittadino, ma che non riescono a dispiegare interamente le loro potenzialità e la pretica politica e culturale che conducono, per la mancanza di un luogo fisico, aperto e liberamente attraversabile.

Nasce, così, il bisogno di *restituire* alla città di Bologna uno spazio che garantisca piena cittadinanza alle esperienze disperse e atomizzate all'interno del tessuto sociale, ed affiora, a un tempo, l'esigenza di rispondere alle contraddizioni che i processi di ristrutturazione e precarizzazione dei rapporti sociali continuano ad approfondire, riaffermando la necessità di una prassi politica e culturale capace di metterle in evidenza, vagliarle criticamente ed intervenire su di esse.

Non uno sforzo volontaristico di *reductio ad unum*, nè un'improbabile ricomposizione per decreto a soggetto politico omogeneo, bensì una pluralità di voci, dotate ciascuna di massima autonomia di intervento, pronte a fare delle differenze la loro ricchezza tanto nell'analisi di una realtà complessa e multiversa, quanto nei progetto concreto di trasformazione.

Spazio e tempo *differente*, spazio e tempo delle differenze che al crocevia di molteplici saperi e di una pluralità di esperienze, possa prefigurare una modalità *altra* nella pratica delle relazioni, della cooperazione politica e sociale, della costruzione di percorsi di lotta capaci di restituire la possibilità e la pensabilità stessa dell'alternativa.

Luogo non dell'agire, ma *per l'agire*, che vuole vivere non di vita propria, bensì a partire dalle iniziative che i soggetti collettivi e le singolarità cooperanti avranno intenzione di costruire.

Associazione "In Marcia", Circolo Universitario, Collettivo Banlieues, Collettivo di Giurisprudenza, Collettivo di Ingegneria, Collettivo Il Maggio, Collettivo di Scienze della Formazione, Giovani Comunisti, Tute Bianche di Bologna.

Appendix C

This is the revised interview schedule for interviews with members of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti.

Interview questions for Smaschieramenti Comrades

- How did you arrive to Smaschieramenti/Atlantide?

  - Did you have other political and/or collective experiences before you became a member of Smaschi?

    - What led you to join Smaschi? What keeps you there?

  - Do you currently have other political and/or collective affiliations?

    - How do you maintain them in light of your work with Smaschi?

  - Have you ever or do you currently participate in academia?

    - In what way/s?

    - How does this relate to the work that you do with Smaschi?

- Do you know how Atlantide started?

  - Is Atlantide a social center? A squat?

  - If not, what makes it distinct from those kinds of spaces?

- What are some of the events/con/texts that influenced the emergence of Smaschi?

  - Relationship to Antagonismo Gay

  - Relationship to the Demo of 24 November 2007

  - Other important events or con/texts

- Is Smaschi attached specific set of "goals" [l'obiettivi]?

  - A laboratorio

  - Transfeminist

  - Queer/Frocia

  - Can you talk a little bit about the "Manifesto Per Un'Insurrezione PutaLesboNeroTransFemminista" and its relationship to the praxis [la prassi] of Smaschi/Atlantide?

- What are the practices/theories that make Smaschi's approach distinct from other approaches to politics? To queer theory?

  - Other intimacies

    - Relationship between the personal and the political

- Mutualism
  - It's origins, referents, and aims
- Self-inquiry [*auto-inchiesta*]
  - How does *auto-inchiesta* differ from *auto-coscienza*?
- Gender strike
- Tactical frivolity
- Is the praxis of Smaschi distinct from the production of queer theory as it unfolds in academic contexts? How?
  - What are the relationship/s between the two?
  - What does or would a trans-feminist-queer theory look like?
- How can we connect the practices and theories in which Smaschi is involved to various levels of action and thought?
  - Subjectivity/Collective subjectivity
- Corporeality
- Atlantide as a space
  - Can you tell me a bit about the relationship between Smaschieramenti and Atlantide (as a space overall and/or in relation to other collectives past/present in the space)
  - Clitoristrix/Quelle che non ci stanno
  - Nulla Osta
  - Antagonismo Gay
  - Other collectives
- Bologna as a city
  - Other political groups
  - The current creation of the coalition
- Situating the work of Atlantide/Smaschi historically
  - Autonomous
  - Disobbedienti
  - Workerist
  - Feminist
  - Anarchism
  - Communism

- Separatist

- The SomMovimento network

  - Can we talk a bit about the events and context that led to the creation of the SomMovimento network?

Let's shift a bit to talking about the space and spatial context of Atlantide/Smaschi itself and the recent eviction process...

- Does it make a difference/what difference does it make that Atlantide is located in Bologna?

  - What makes Bologna special/distinct from other places?

- Does it make a difference *where* in Bologna Atlantide it is located?

- Can you tell me a bit about the eviction proceedings?

  - In what ways would you consider yourself involved?

  - How do you think that the eviction process has changed Atlantide? Smaschi?

  - How do you think that the eviction has and/or will affect Smaschi/Atlantide's relationship to other political groups and spaces internally and externally in Bologna? Beyond?

  - How do you think that the new location will change Atlantide/Smaschi?

    - Can you talk a bit about the *centro di documentazione*?

    - Consultoria

Lastly, a few questions regarding collaboration and connection with this research

- What would you like to see included in this research? What would make it useful for you? For the collective?

- Are there any things that you think should be excluded from this research?

Appendix D

What follows are: (1) the 2008 and 2012 *linee guida* (guidelines); and (2) the 2012 *bando pubblico* (call for proposals) issued by the municipal government of Bologna for the space at Porto Santo Stefano 6a, also known as Atlantide.

Atto di Consiglio di Quartiere Quartiere Santo Stefano

P.G. N.: 8314/2008
N. O.d.G.: 1/2008
Data Seduta: 17/01/2008

Adottato

Oggetto: LINEE GUIDA IN MERITO ALL'UTILIZZO DEL CASSERO DI PIAZZA DI PORTA SANTO STEFANO 6.

Il Presidente del Consiglio di Quartiere Santo Stefano propone la seguente deliberazione

PREMESSO CHE

- con OdG 9/2007 (P.G. 32688/1007) approvato nella seduta del 14 febbraio 2007 il Consiglio del Quartiere Santo Stefano propose alla Giunta comunale di assegnare al Quartiere l'immobile denominato Cassero di Porta Santo Stefano sito in Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano al numero civico 6, immobile a due piani di proprietà del Comune di Bologna i cui locali risultavano assegnati al Settore Cultura;

- la Giunta comunale nella seduta dell'8 maggio 2007, con atto di indirizzo P.G. n. 109633, ha deliberato di assegnare detto immobile al Quartiere Santo Stefano;

- tutti i locali di tale immobile risultano ad oggi liberi da assegnazioni formali;

- tutti i locali di tale immobile sono stati nella pratica utilizzati fin dal 1997 da gruppi impegnati su tematiche legate alla sessualità e alle politiche di genere;

- tra le molte attività svolte in via continuativa con ampia diffusione ed informazione pubblica nel corso di un decennio spiccano un laboratorio di lettura, un gruppo teatrale, eventi musicali ed incontri di vario genere;

- dal 1997 ad oggi non risultano essere state rivolte a detti gruppi richieste formali di allontanamento né da parte delle Amministrazioni comunali e di Quartiere nel tempo succedutesi né da parte di altre Autorità;

- con deliberazione OdG 32/2001 (P.G. 129532/2001) approvato nella seduta del 10 settembre 2001 il Consiglio del Quartiere Santo Stefano propose alla Giunta comunale di assegnare al Quartiere entrambi i Casseri di Porta Santo Stefano sulla base di un progetto concordato;

- tale richiesta non risulta essere stata accolta dalla Giunta, l'Amministrazione di Quartiere precedente non ha ritenuto opportuno reiterarla e nessun progetto di utilizzo dei locali alternativo a quello descritto è stato formalizzato;

- ad oggi le Associazioni che svolgono attività all'interno dei due locali del Cassero risultano essere:

  1) Associazione "Lo Spazio ", iscritta nell'elenco comunale delle Libere Forme Associative (protocollo 182341/2007) nella sezione tematica "Impegno civile - Tutela e promozione dei diritti umani" avente come finalità la promozione e la valorizzazione delle autoproduzioni musicali;
  2) Associazione "Donne di Mondo", iscritta nell'elenco comunale delle Libere Forme

Associative (protocollo 180120/2007) nella sezione tematica "Impegno civile - Tutela e promozione dei diritti umani" avente come finalità la lotta ad ogni forma di discriminazione nei confronti delle donne;

3) Associazione "Eccentrica", iscritta nell'elenco comunale delle Libere Forme Associative (protocollo 182342/2007) nella sezione tematica "Impegno civile - Tutela e promozione dei diritti umani" avente come finalità la promozione della cultura e dei diritti delle persone gay, lesbiche e transqueer;

RITENUTO NECESSARIO

dopo più di un decennio di utilizzo informale e non regolamentato degli spazi del Cassero procedere ad una formale regolamentazione;

Visti:

- gli artt.37 e 38 dello Statuto del Comune di Bologna;
- l' art.12 del Regolamento sul Decentramento;

tutto ciò premesso e ritenuto necessario, il Consiglio del Quartiere Santo Stefano

PROPONE

1) di assegnare i locali siti al piano terra dell'immobile, raggiungibili attraverso entrata autonoma, alle Associazioni "Lo Spazio", "Donne di Mondo " e "Eccentrica", in considerazione dell'utilizzo dei locali continuativo nel tempo e nell'intenzione di favorire un'inclusione positiva e formale delle Associazioni già presenti nell'ambito di attività con rilevanza pubblica,

2) di assegnare i locali siti al primo piano dell'immobile, raggiungibili attraverso entrata autonoma, attraverso futuri atti formali, in considerazione di oggettive esigenze di nuovi spazi legate alle progettualità in corso o in via di definizione;

A tal primo fine, il Consiglio del Quartiere Santo Stefano

DA' MANDATO

al Direttore di Quartiere di stipulare con le Associazioni "Lo Spazio", "Donne di Mondo " e "Eccentrica" una convenzione che rispetti le seguenti linee di indirizzo:

1) la durata della convenzione dovrà essere compresa fra un minimo di tre e un massimo di cinque anni;

2) fra gli scopi della convenzione dovrà essere presente l'effettuazione di servizi gratuiti rivolti a tutti i cittadini interessati riguardanti le specifiche finalità delle tre Associazioni;

3) la convenzione dovrà prevedere il pagamento di un canone quantificato in relazione ai servizi gratuiti di cui sopra e delle spese inerenti i consumi;

4) la convenzione dovrà specificare che le attività dovranno svolgersi entro limiti compatibili con le caratteristiche interne dei locali e con l'ambiente esterno circostante;

5) la responsabilità relativa alle attività svolte, ai servizi offerti e alla conduzione dei locali e, in generale, a tutti gli obblighi derivanti dalla convenzione dovrà intendersi costituita "in solido" in capo alle Associazioni firmatarie.

Esito della votazione: adottato

Presenti: n. 17
Votanti: n. 17
Favorevoli: n. 10
Contrari: n. 7 Gruppo Centro Sinistra: Camasta, Gruppo Casa delle Libertà: Malossi e Bevilacqua Ariosti, Gruppo A.N.: Lo Surdo, De Lorenzi, Pescatore, Saggini
Astenuti: n. 0

IL CONSIGLIO DI QUARTIERE SANTO STEFANO

PREMESSO CHE
l'immobile di Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano 6 denominato Cassero è stato assegnato dal Settore Patrimonio al Quartiere Santo Stefano e destinato ad associazioni iscritte all'elenco delle Libere Forme del Comune di Bologna come indicato nell'atto di indirizzo della Giunta Comunale P.G. n. 109633 dell'08.05.2007;

RILEVATO CHE
- con determinazione dirigenziale P,G, n. 60091 dell'11.03.2008, a seguito di avviso pubblico, è stato assegnato al raggruppamento temporaneo di associazioni Eccentrica, Donne di Mondo e Lo Spazio;
- successivamente è stata sottoscritta la convenzione con validità fino al 28.02.2011;

RICHIAMATO
l'atto del Commissario P.G. n. 48503 del 30.03.2011 con il quale sono state approvate le linee di indirizzo per l'emanazione di un avviso pubblico, rivolto a Libere Forme Associative, per l'assegnazione dell'immobile di Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano n. 6 denominato "Cassero", a cui si fa rinvio;

DATO ATTO CHE
la procedura di selezione ha avuto esito negativo e si è pertanto conclusa senza assegnazione dell'immobile;

RITENUTO DI
procedere all'individuazione delle linee di indirizzo sulla base delle quali emanare un ulteriore avviso al fine di individuare i soggetti a cui assegnare gli spazi dell'immobile denominato Cassero di Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano n. 6;

VALUTATO CHE
gli ambiti di attività, che si intendono individuare e verso i quali si intende indirizzare l'avviso pubblico per la riassegnazione dell' immobile, sono così riassunti:

- Attività di tutela e di promozione del territorio, con particolare riguardo ai progetti di valorizzazione della educazione civica e del rispetto del patrimonio artistico-culturale del Quartiere e della Città;

- Attività culturali che attirino nuovo pubblico e favoriscano il turismo culturale e la tutela del patrimonio pubblico; progetti ed attività culturali che prevedano sinergie con altre

realtà non solo cittadine; la promozione di forme di rivitalizzazione di alcune aree del Quartiere Santo Stefano, nonché la promozione della storia, della cultura e delle arti e letteratura italiana;

- Attività di formazione e di promozione dell'occupazione lavorativa, in particolar modo dei giovani al di sotto dei 35 anni di età; progetti di sostegno della riqualificazione professionale, tenendo in considerazione la riscoperta delle arti e mestieri, nonché delle esperienze e delle eccellenze delle professioni tipiche bolognesi;

- Attività culturali che operano nell'ambito dell'impegno civile, tutela e promozione di diritti umani, con particolare riguardo alle tematiche legate alla sessualità di genere;

- Attività di tutela e promozione dell'ambiente attraverso la cultura del rispetto della biodiversità e della flora e fauna locali; progetti di sensibilizzazione per la tutela e la salvaguardia del verde, di educazione e di informazione ambientale;

RITENUTO INOLTRE
di dare le seguenti indicazioni al fine della predisposizione dell'avviso:

a) concedere la gestione dell' immobile per un periodo biennale, rinnovabile solamente di ulteriori due anni, in forma espressa;

b) prevedere una percentuale di abbattimento dei costi di locazione in considerazione delle tipologie delle attività svolte, prediligendo i progetti che coinvolgano più associazioni nel rispetto dei principi della sussidiarietà e della collaborazione con il Quartiere, nonché nel rispetto della pubblica quiete e della tutela del territorio;

c) dare priorità alle associazioni che intendono accollarsi l'onere degli interventi di manutenzione straordinaria individuati dal Settore Lavori Pubblici (depositata in atti), prevedendo un ulteriore abbattimento del costo di canone, fino alla copertura dei costi degli interventi effettivamente realizzati e pagati, e la possibilità di concessione quadriennale prorogabili, in forma espressa, per una sola volta, di ulteriori 4 anni;

d) mantenere separata l'assegnazione degli spazi al piano terra da quelli al piano primo;

e) privilegiare le associazioni che prevedano lo svolgimento delle proprie attività in orario diurno;

f) porre il vincolo sugli orari di utilizzo degli immobili, tale per cui le attività con apertura al pubblico, svolte dalle associazioni assegnatarie, dovranno concludersi entro le ore 24:00;

g) a maggiore garanzia dell' effettivo adempimento delle obbligazioni con il Quartiere, consentire la partecipazione al bando solamente alle LFA che non abbiano pagamenti arretrati e non corrisposti nella gestione di immobili del Quartiere/Comune, ovvero che provvedano al saldo degli insoluti al momento della presentazione della domanda di ammissione al bando, nonché estendere la garanzia personale di tutti i membri del consiglio direttivo delle LFA partecipanti al bando relativamente al pagamento dei canoni di locazione;

RILEVATA INOLTRE
la necessità di procedere al recupero del canone di locazione dell'immobile durante il periodo eccedente la scadenza della convenzione (28.02.2011);

DATO ATTO CHE
ai sensi dell'art. 49 del D. Lgs. n. 267/2000, sono stati richiesti e formalmente acquisiti agli atti i pareri espressi dal Direttore del Quartiere Santo Stefano in ordine alla regolarità tecnica del presente atto;

VISTO
il Regolamento che disciplina i rapporti con le Libere Forme Associative;

DELIBERA

1. Di approvare, al fine dell'emanazione di un avviso pubblico rivolto a Libere Forme Associative, per l'assegnazione dei locali di Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano 6, le linee di indirizzo di seguito elencate:

- Attività di tutela e di promozione del territorio, con particolare riguardo ai progetti di valorizzazione della educazione civica e del rispetto del patrimonio artistico-culturale del Quartiere e della Città;

- Attività culturali che attirino nuovo pubblico e favoriscano il turismo culturale e la tutela del patrimonio pubblico; progetti ed attività culturali che prevedano sinergie con altre realtà non solo cittadine; la promozione di forme di rivitalizzazione di alcune aree del Quartiere Santo Stefano, nonché la promozione della storia, della cultura e delle arti e letteratura italiana;

- Attività di formazione e di promozione dell' occupazione lavorativa, in particolar modo dei giovani al di sotto dei 35 anni di età; progetti di sostegno della riqualificazione professionale, tenendo in considerazione la riscoperta delle arti e mestieri, nonché delle esperienze e delle eccellenze delle professioni tipiche bolognesi;

- Attività culturali che operano nell'ambito dell'impegno civile, tutela e promozione di diritti umani, con particolare riguardo alle tematiche legate alla sessualità di genere;

- Attività di tutela e promozione dell'ambiente attraverso la cultura del rispetto della biodiversità e della flora e fauna locali; progetti di sensibilizzazione per la tutela e la salvaguardia del verde, di educazione e di informazione ambientale;

2. Di approvare le seguenti indicazioni al fine della predisposizione dell'avviso:

a) concedere la gestione dell' immobile per un periodo biennale, rinnovabile solamente di ulteriori due anni, in forma espressa;

b) prevedere una percentuale di abbattimento dei costi in considerazione delle tipologie delle attività svolte, prediligendo i progetti che coinvolgano più associazioni nel rispetto dei principi della sussidiarietà e della collaborazione con il Quartiere, nonché nel rispetto della pubblica quiete e della tutela del territorio;

461

c) dare priorità alle associazioni che intendono accollarsi l'onere degli interventi di manutenzione straordinaria individuati dal Settore Lavori Pubblici (depositata in atti), prevedendo un ulteriore abbattimento del costo di canone, fino alla copertura dei costi degli interventi effettivamente realizzati e pagati, e la possibilità di concessione quadriennale prorogabili, in forma espressa, per una sola volta, di ulteriori 4 anni;

d) mantenere separata l'assegnazione degli spazi al piano terra da quelli al piano primo;

e) privilegiare le associazioni che prevedano lo svolgimento delle proprie attività in orario diurno;

f) porre il vincolo sugli orari di utilizzo degli immobili, tale per cui le attività con apertura al pubblico, svolte dalle associazioni assegnatarie, dovranno concludersi entro le ore 24:00;

g) a maggiore garanzia dell' effettivo adempimento delle obbligazioni con il Quartiere, consentire la partecipazione al bando solamente alle LFA che non abbiano pagamenti arretrati e non corrisposti nella gestione di immobili del Quartiere, ovvero che provvedano al saldo degli insoluti al momento della presentazione della domanda di ammissione al bando; nonché estendere la garanzia personale di tutti i membri del consiglio direttivo delle LFA partecipanti al bando relativamente al pagamento dei canoni di locazione;

3. Di dare mandato al Direttore di procedere all'emanazione degli atti conseguenti ed al recupero delle somme inerenti il canone di locazione nel periodo eccedente la data di scadenza della convenzione (28.02.2011).
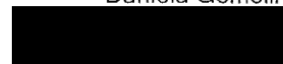
ESITO DELLA VOTAZIONE EMENDAMENTO ABROGATIVO: APPROVATO

Presenti	n. 17
Votanti	n. 17
Favorevoli	n. 16
Contrari	n. //
Astenuti	n. 1 (Gruppo PDL-Lega Nord: Mioni)

ESITO DELLA VOTAZIONE O.D.G. EMENDATO: APPROVATO ALL'UNANIMITA'

Presenti	n. 17
Votanti	n. 17
Favorevoli	n. 17
Contrari	n. //
Astenuti	n. //

La Direttrice del Quartiere
Daniela Gemelli

AVVISO PUBBLICO
**PER L'ASSEGNAZIONE IN USO DEI LOCALI DI PROPRIETA' COMUNALE SITI
IN PIAZZA DI PORTA SANTO STEFANO 6 (denominati Cassero)**

1 - OGGETTO

Oggetto del presente avviso è l'assegnazione dei locali di proprietà del Comune di Bologna Quartiere Santo Stefano ubicati in Bologna, Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano 6 (denominati Cassero) individuati nelle planimetrie allegate, parte integrante del presente avviso, per lo svolgimento di attività negli ambiti indicati nel successivo punto 3.

I locali (piano terra e piano primo) verranno assegnati a due distinte associazioni.

Nel caso di assegnazione parziale, il piano restante può essere assegnato d'ufficio.

2 - SOGGETTI DESTINATARI

L'avviso è rivolto ad associazioni iscritte all'Elenco delle Libere Forme del Comune di Bologna.

Le Associazioni interessate possono presentare domanda singolarmente o in rete di Associazioni.

Sono escluse dalla assegnazione le associazioni che al momento della conclusione del procedimento presentano situazioni debitorie nei confronti del Quartiere con riferimento alla gestione di immobili assegnati.

3 - AMBITI DI ATTIVITA'

Le Associazioni di cui al punto 2 devono svolgere prioritariamente le proprie attività nei seguenti ambiti:

- ✓ Attività di tutela e di promozione del territorio, con particolare riguardo ai progetti di valorizzazione dell' educazione civica e del rispetto del patrimonio artistico-culturale del Quartiere e della Città;

- ✓ Attività culturali che attirino nuovo pubblico e favoriscano il turismo culturale e la tutela del patrimonio pubblico; progetti ed attività culturali che prevedano sinergie con altre realtà non solo cittadine; la promozione di forme di rivitalizzazione di alcune aree del Quartiere Santo Stefano, nonché la promozione della storia, della cultura e delle arti e letteratura italiana;

- ✓ Attività di formazione e di promozione dell'occupazione lavorativa, in particolar modo dei giovani al di sotto dei 35 anni di età; progetti di sostegno della riqualificazione professionale, tenendo in considerazione la riscoperta delle arti e mestieri, nonché delle esperienze e delle eccellenze delle professioni tipiche bolognesi;

- ✓ Attività culturali che operano nell'ambito dell'impegno civile, tutela e promozione di diritti umani, con particolare riguardo alle tematiche legate alla sessualità di genere;

✓ Attività di tutela e promozione dell'ambiente attraverso la cultura del rispetto della biodiversità e della flora e fauna locali; progetti di sensibilizzazione per la tutela e la salvaguardia del verde, di educazione e di informazione ambientale.

Sulla base delle linee di indirizzo approvate dal Consiglio di Quartiere verrà data priorità alle associazioni che intendono accollarsi l'onere di eseguire gli interventi di manutenzione straordinaria individuati dal Settore Opere Pubbliche e saranno privilegiate le associazioni che prevedano lo svolgimento delle proprie attività in orari diurno.
Le attività con apertura al pubblico, svolte dalle associazioni assegnatarie, dovranno concludersi entro le ore 24,00.

4 - STATO DI CONSERVAZIONE DELL'IMMOBILE
L'immobile può essere assegnato nello stato di fatto, manutenzione e conservazione in cui si trova.
Esso può essere oggetto di interventi di manutenzione straordinaria (totale o parziale), in tali casi il costo delle opere è anticipato dall'Associazione e portato in compensazione del canone di locazione.
Per visionare il progetto di ristrutturazione ed il relativo preventivo si possono contattare i numeri 051-301282, 051- 301294.
La consegna dell'immobile avverrà contestualmente alla sottoscrizione della convenzione. All'atto della consegna sarà redatto il verbale relativo.

5 - CANONE DI LOCAZIONE
Il canone annuo per i locali, nello stato di fatto in cui si trovano, è quantificato in Euro 18.243,50 O.F.I. di cui Euro 9.240,00 per il piano terra ed Euro 9.003,50 per il piano primo.
Ai sensi degli articoli 10 comma 4 ed 11 comma 3 del Regolamento sui rapporti con le Libere Forme Associative il canone può essere abbattuto in tutto o in parte in relazione all'utilità generale del progetto.
In base alle linee guida approvate dal Consiglio di Quartiere Santo Stefano l'abbattimento sarà applicato in misura maggiore se il progetto risponde ai principi di sussidiarietà e di collaborazione con il Quartiere, al rispetto della quiete pubblica e di tutela del territorio.
I membri del Consiglio Direttivo sono tenuti in solido al pagamento del canone di locazione.

6 - DURATA
La convenzione (uso dei locali per lo svolgimento delle attività presentate) decorre dal giorno della firma della convenzione, di durata di due anni, rinnovabile, in forma espressa, di ulteriori due.
La durata della convenzione è elevata a quattro anni con possibilità di rinnovo in forma espressa di eguale periodo in caso realizzazione degli interventi di manutenzione straordinaria.
Alla scadenza della presente convenzione l'Associazione dovrà riconsegnare i locali liberi da persone e da cose.

7 - TERMINE DI PRESENTAZIONE DELLE DOMANDE
Le Associazioni interessate devono far pervenire l'istanza di partecipazione entro le ore **12.00 del giorno 05 Ottobre 2012** alla Segreteria del Quartiere Santo Stefano Via Santo Stefano 119, 40125 Bologna.

Il plico dovrà pervenire entro i termini sopra indicati a pena di esclusione. Non fa fede il timbro postale dell'ufficio accettante. Il plico dovrà contenere la dicitura: **"Domanda di assegnazione dei locali di P.zza di P.ta S. Stefano."**

8 - MODALITÀ DI FORMULAZIONE DELLA DOMANDA
Ogni plico dovrà contenere la seguente documentazione:

1) Istanza di partecipazione secondo il modello "Allegato 1". L'istanza dovrà essere sottoscritta dal Presidente o Legale Rappresentante dell'Associazione ed essere corredata dalla fotocopia di un documento di identità del sottoscrittore in corso di validità. (D.P.R. 445/2000).

2) Dichiarazione sostitutiva, redatta secondo il modello "Allegato 2", attestante i requisiti di partecipazione di cui al punto 2. La dichiarazione sostitutiva dovrà essere firmata dal Presidente o Legale Rappresentante dell'Associazione ed essere corredata dalla fotocopia del documento di identità del sottoscrittore in corso di validità (D.P.R. n. 445/2000).

Nel caso in cui l'istanza di partecipazione e la dichiarazione sostitutiva vengano sottoscritte dal medesimo legale rappresentante sarà sufficiente allegare una sola fotocopia del documento.

3) Schema di convenzione firmato in ogni sua pagina dal Presidente o Legale Rappresentante dell'Associazione, quale presa visione ed accettazione delle disposizioni in esso contenute. (Allegato 3).

Nel caso di presentazione dell'istanza da parte di Associazioni in rete l'istanza di partecipazione e lo schema di convenzione dovranno essere sottoscritti da tutti i legali rappresentanti delle Associazioni che formano la rete, mentre la dichiarazione sostitutiva deve essere compilata e presentata da ciascuna Associazione.

4) Relazione, nella cui esposizione dovrà essere dettagliata l'attività che l'Associazione/i intende/dono svolgere nei locali assegnati e le modalità di svolgimento delle iniziative proposte. La relazione può indicare anche la disponibilità o necessità a svolgere attività anche in altri spazi o dell'associazione stessa o in altri locali. La relazione dovrà essere firmata dal Presidente o dal Legale Rappresentante.

9 - MODALITA' DI VALUTAZIONE DELLE ATTIVITA'
La valutazione delle domande sarà effettuata dal Direttore del Quartiere affiancato eventualmente da apposita Commissione Tecnica ai sensi dell'art. 11 comma 1 del Regolamento sui rapporti con le Libere Forme Associative.
Saranno privilegiate le associazioni che prevedono lo svolgimento delle proprie attività in orario diurno.
Al termine delle operazioni verrà individuato il soggetto/i a cui assegnare i locali e redatto il verbale.
L'Amministrazione si riserva, motivatamente la facoltà di non procedere all'assegnazione o di procedere all'assegnazione anche nel caso di una sola domanda pervenuta.

10 - CRITERI DI ASSEGNAZIONE E RELATIVI PUNTEGGI
I locali di cui al presente avviso verranno assegnati sulla base della valutazione dei criteri di seguito elencati:

Tipologia di attività presentate con riferimento agli ambiti stabiliti con atto di indirizzo	Punti	40
Dichiarazione di impegno ad eseguire gli interventi di manutenzione straordinaria	Punti	30
Svolgimento delle attività proposte in orario diurno	Punti	20
Esperienza maturata nelle attività proposte	Punti	10
Totale	**Punti**	**100**

11 - SOPRALLUOGO

La presentazione della domanda è subordinata all'esecuzione di un sopralluogo da concordare previo appuntamento telefonico ai numeri 051-301282 – 94.

12 - RICHIESTA DI CHIARIMENTI

Eventuali richieste di chiarimenti dovranno pervenire per iscritto al seguente indirizzo di posta elettronica segreteriaquartieresantostefano@comune.bologna.it. oppure via fax al numero 051-391334.

13 – RESPONSABILE DEL PROCEDIMENTO

Il Responsabile del procedimento ai sensi dell'art. 5 comma 1 della L.241/90 è l'Avv. Daniela Gemelli Direttore del Quartiere Santo Stefano.
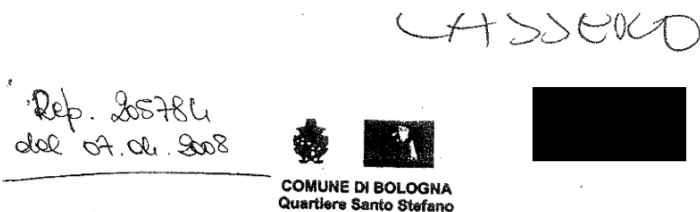
Bologna, lì 06.09.2012

Il Direttore del Quartiere Santo Stefano e
Avv. Daniela Gemelli

This is the 2008 *convenzione* (convention/agreement) between the "avatar associations" of Atlantide and the District Council of Santo Stefano.

CASSERO

Rep. 25784
del 07.04.2008

COMUNE DI BOLOGNA
Quartiere Santo Stefano

CONVENZIONE PER L'USO DELL'IMMOBILE SITO IN PIAZZA DI P.TA SANTO STEFANO 6.

In attuazione della determinazione dirigenziale PGN 60091dell' 11.03.2008,

TRA

Il Comune di Bologna Quartiere Santo Stefano di seguito denominato "Quartiere ", C.F. 01232710374, legalmente rappresentato dal Direttore dr. Chiara Perale, che interviene nel presente atto ai sensi dell' art. 107, comma 3, del D.Lgs. 267/2000, domiciliata per la carica in Bologna Via Santo Stefano 119

Ed

Il raggruppamento temporaneo di Associazioni: Libera Associazione Eccentrica con sede in Bologna Via Santo Stefano 6, Associazione Donne di Mondo con sede in Bologna Via Santo Stefano 6, e Associazione Lo Spazio con sede in Bologna Via del Cardo 10, per il quale interviene la Capogruppo individuata nell'Associazione Libera Associazione Eccentrica di seguito denominata "Associazione", C.F.91285350376, rappresentata da Renato Busarello nella sua qualità di Presidente nato a Borgo Valsugana TN il 15.06.1972, domiciliato per la carica in Bologna Via Santo Stefano 6;

SI CONVIENE E STIPULA QUANTO SEGUE

ART. 1 – OGGETTO

Oggetto della presente convenzione è l'utilizzo dei locali di proprietà del Comune di Bologna assegnati al Quartiere Santo Stefano ubicati in Bologna, Piazza di Porta Santo Stefano 6 (piano terra) individuati nella planimetria allegata, parte integrante del presente atto, per lo svolgimento delle attività di cui all'art. 2.
L'immobile è dato ed accettato nello stato di fatto, manutenzione e conservazione in cui si trova.
Sono in corso lavori di consolidamento delle facciate esterne ed altri lavori (di manutenzione dello stabile e messa a norma degli impianti) verranno eseguiti ed ultimati entro il 2008.
La consegna dell'immobile consterà da apposito verbale.

ART. 2 – FINALITA'

Scopo della presente convenzione è la realizzazione di servizi di promozione sociale e culturale all'affermazione di politiche e pratiche anti discriminatorie, alla valorizzazione dell'espressione culturale auto prodotta ed indipendente.
In particolare le attività comprendono:
- Servizi di supporto nel contrasto alle dinamiche di marginalizzazione, discriminazione, oppressione e violenza.
- Promozione e valorizzazione delle auto produzioni, con particolare riferimento all'espressione corporea, artistica e musicale, all'accrescimento personale e sociale, allo sviluppo dell'autonomia degli individui e dello spirito di comunità.

Il programma e l'esplicitazione dei servizi è dettagliatamente descritta nella relazione di presentazione dell'offerta progettuale allegata alla presente

Tutte le attività dovranno essere rivolte gratuitamente a tutti i cittadini interessati ed il loro svolgimento dovrà avvenire nel rispetto delle vigenti leggi.

1

COMUNE DI BOLOGNA
Quartiere Santo Stefano

ART. 3 – DURATA

La presente convenzione decorre dal giorno 01 Marzo 2008 e scade il 28 Febbraio 2011.
Alla scadenza della presente convenzione l'Associazione dovrà riconsegnare i locali nelle stesse condizioni in cui le sono stati consegnati, liberi da persone e da cose.

ART. 4 – ONERI A CARICO DELL'ASSEGNATARIO

L'Associazione utilizzerà l'immobile di cui al precedente art. 1 in modo adeguato, nel rispetto delle norme vigenti.
In particolare, l'Associazione si impegna a:

- Utilizzare gli spazi assegnati esclusivamente per le finalità di cui all'art. 2.
- Conservare e custodire l'immobile nelle medesime condizioni in cui è stato consegnato, comprese le pareti esterne all'edificio che devono rimanere pulite ed integre da scritte e manifesti di qualsiasi genere;
- Individuare i momenti da dedicare al servizio di prima informazione ai cittadini (di cui al punto 2) nell'arco della settimana per un totale complessivo di 8 ore;
- Svolgere tutte le attività entro limiti compatibili con l'ambiente circostante, la quiete pubblica, avuto riguardo al numero dei partecipanti, alla collocazione oraria, all'impatto acustico;
- Comunicare preventivamente al Quartiere, con adeguato anticipo, tutte le attività rivolte al pubblico che si intendono svolgere all'interno;
- Non accedere agli altri spazi adiacenti di proprietà del Quartiere;
- Lasciare liberi i locali per tutto il periodo di svolgimento dei lavori di adeguamento degli impianti.

Fanno carico all'Associazione:

- Il pagamento del canone, da corrispondere in rate trimestrali posticipate, quantificato dal Settore Patrimonio in Euro 10.584,00 annui e ridotto ad Euro 5.292,00, a seguito dell' abbattimento in relazione al servizio di informazione svolto a titolo gratuito e specificato al punto 2. Per l'anno 2008 il canone ammonta ad Euro 4.410,00.
- Tutte le spese per gli allacciamenti delle utenze, qualora non già esistenti, e le conseguenti spese inerenti i consumi;
- La pulizia dell'immobile;
- La custodia dell'immobile;
- Il rispetto del decoro dell'immobile nelle pareti esterne che dovranno essere libere da scritte, manifesti, striscioni ed altre forme di pubblicità in ossequio a quanto previsto dal regolamento di Polizia Urbana;
- L'acquisizione, a propria cura ed onere, di ogni e qualsiasi autorizzazione, licenza, nulla osta, permesso o altra forma di assenso necessario per lo svolgimento delle attività;
- Presentazione di una relazione annuale sui servizi svolti e sul numero degli utenti che hanno beneficiato di questi servizi;
- Garantire l'accesso di personale dell'Amministrazione per le verifiche periodiche effettuate previa congrua comunicazione;
- Le opere di tinteggiatura e gli eventuali interventi agli infissi interni ad ultimazione degli interventi ad opera di LL.PP.

ART. 5 – ONERI A CARICO DEL QUARTIERE

Consegnare l'immobile nello stato in cui si trova.
Consegnare copia delle chiavi per l'accesso ai locali ed al portone principale.
Effettuare controlli periodici sull'attività svolta gratuitamente a servizio dei cittadini.
Sono previsti entro il 2008 i lavori di adeguamento degli impianti elettrico e termo-idraulico oltre al rifacimento dei servizi igienici ed infissi esterni da eseguirsi a cura di LL.PP.
Per tutta la durata dei lavori si provvederà alla messa in sicurezza del cantiere vietando l'accesso ai soci dell'associazione. Sarà comunicato con congruo anticipo la data di inizio lavori e la previsione di durata.

2

COMUNE DI BOLOGNA
Quartiere Santo Stefano

ART. 6 - DIVIETI

E' fatto divieto all'Associazione la cessione temporaneo dell'immobile sia a titolo gratuito che oneroso nel rispetto delle finalità della presente convenzione.
E' fatto divieto di organizzare manifestazioni non compatibili con le caratteristiche interne dei locali e con l'ambiente esterno ed in particolare di svolgere attività di intrattenimento musicale.

ART. 7 - RESPONSABILITA' PER DANNI E VERSO TERZI

Per tutto il periodo di durata della presente convenzione l'Associazione esonera il Quartiere da qualsiasi responsabilità diretta o indiretta per danni che si dovessero verificare a persone o a cose.
L'Associazione esonera altresì il Quartiere da qualsiasi responsabilità per tutti gli eventuali rapporti di natura contrattuale che l'Associazione medesima dovesse instaurare per quanto previsto dalla presente convenzione.

ART. 8 – VERIFICHE

L'Amministrazione Comunale potrà, in qualsiasi momento e previ accordi, eseguire sopraliuoghi ed effettuare interventi che si rendano necessari durante il periodo di validità della presente convenzione, a mezzo di persone, società o enti all'uopo incaricati.

ART. 9 – INADEMPIENZE

In caso di inadempienze da parte dell'Associazione agli impegni assunti con la sottoscrizione del presente atto, il Quartiere potrà, previa diffida, dichiarare la decadenza della convenzione con effetto immediato, fatte salve le eventuali azioni nei confronti dell'Associazione per il risarcimento di eventuali danni.
In caso di decadenza della convenzione nessun onere, rimborso o indennizzo graverà sul Quartiere.

ART. 10 – CONTROVERSIE- FORO COMPETENTE

In caso di controversie tra le parti relative alla presente convenzione, il Foro competente è quello di Bologna.
La registrazione della presente convenzione avviene solo in caso d'uso.

Bologna, li 07.04.2008

Il Direttore del Quartiere
Santo Stefano
Dr. Chiara Perale

Il Presidente della Capogruppo
Libera Associazione Eccentrica
DR. Renato Busarello

3

This is a letter that I sent to the comrades of Laboratorio Smaschieramenti the day that Atlantide was evicted.

A T L A N T I D E
I INSISTE I RESISTE I ESISTE I
O V U N Q U E
(Anche Kanata)

9 Ottobre 2015

Carinissim* Compagn* Smaschie –

I was never going to be a man anyway. I never wanted to be. Who would want to be *that kind of man* that we all know too well. Well, because, you know men. I was given the gift of failure. This gift could not be realized alone. The gift is called: Demasculinization (*smaschieramenti*).

I was, on the other hand destined to be a faggot of whatever gender. Fey and soft, but not only for that. Feels too much too often. Never good at sport. Talks like she's sitting under the hair dryer in the beauty shop. Wants to be a witch. Maybe is. So many reasons…

And it's not that I have the 'wrong body.' Nobody is wrong. (Except those men.) I have always known that my apparent masculine fragility is just a corporeal extension of my actual feminine strength. But without women friends, without trans* friends, without feminist separatists, without butches, without non-conformists, without those precious few so-called straight men (if they really exist), without the invitation to witness the beginning of a most joyful life, the first breath, without the collective/laboratorio that puts us all together and makes comrades out of us so we can work. it. out…I would have never met this faggot fate as (a more than) livable life.

I was evicted from a gender that I didn't have any claim to, that I never fully inhabited, even if it was my legal obligation. This eviction—long awaited, long resisted—was a death. Like all deaths, it is never comprehensible, believable until it is actually happening. And then it happens and it is immediately clear that the work which you have already done to survive *is* **the work**.

The work is a struggle that sustains you in the moments where you are again confused, wondering if it really happened, if it is really gone. When you stop in the street and you see it there even if it is not there. You breathed parts of it into you. It contaminated you and crawled over you in the night while you slept on a dirty mattress. It made a fool out of you. And, like every fool, you started over, again, from zero, from nothing.

I was never going to be a man anyway. Because when it comes to measuring that—and those men do love to measure—I have, and will always, at least, be a failed man.

Grazie alla Dea. Evvia Laboratorio Smaschieramenti!

Con gratitudine enorme,

dp