



Victims and protest in a social space: Revisiting the sociology of emotions



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ABSTRACT

This article explores how activism and protest shaped cultural renewal through a march organised against the Italian mafia. Drawing on ethnographic insights, employing a reflexive method, taking research notes, using photos and recording the social protest, I introduce 'static agency' and 'dynamic agency' concepts to analyse the perplexing relationship modes among the activists and wider society. I argue that sociocultural codes are the pillars of static and dynamic agency through which the progressive actors strive for a change in the social space of activism. I claim that the fight against the public trouble -the mafia- has the capacity to sustain itself as a persistent cultural movement among the activists through emotional solidarity. However, this does not guarantee the defeat of public trouble in traumatic social geographies where the public culture dominates social behaviours and social memory. Yet the progressive social movements can attain cultural transformation through persistence in their struggle.

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1. Introduction

"Progress is not an illusion; it happens but it is slow and invariably disappointing" George Orwell (1961: 47).

The mafia¹ strengthens its grip over the public through socio-cultural damages ranging from violence and oppression to social degeneration and political-criminal nexus. The outcome of these injuries creates trajectories of cultural trauma within the lives of numerous victims in the public sphere. Is there any method to heal those dispirited victims and their relatives? It is hard to respond to this question. However, the social protest organized every year to commemorate mafia victims in Italy provides a vital account to conceive cultural trauma and resistance. The antimafia marches in different Italian cities provide a social space to frame the concerns and emotions of the activists. The mafia's emergence shortly after the unification of Italy in the late 19th century, and its role in public problems, cannot be excluded from Italy's perplexing

modernisation and development process. The antimafia march brings public attention to their struggle since the mid-1990s.

Cultural renewal is dependent on time, place and people, because the efforts to transform culture are premised on appropriate time to take initiatives, social and political dissent in a geography, and the eagerness of people to strive for change. That is, the dissent of people and their hopes about the future resonate through cultural renewal. Transforming a culture, as a result, is predicated on a set of dynamics in which a new cultural form emerges through situated conflicts and struggles. This study aims to explore the implications of antimafia resistance in Florence, emphasising emotional solidarity and cultural renewal processes in the social space where activism occurs. This paper analyses such social protest in Florence through depicting the role of static and dynamic agency.

The concepts of static agency and dynamic agency enable us to explore the emotional solidarity of activists while marching in the streets of Florence to protest the mafia and commemorate the mafia victims, extending our understanding about the symbols and actors in a social movement. Gamson (1992, p. 7) defines agency as a state of consciousness that "alters conditions or policies through collective action". Moving from this paradigm, I suggest that *static agency* consists of objects and motions that are used by people to attain a goal, and resonates through a number of symbols and actions used by activists in a social space, which can be an event, a march or a social protest. *Dynamic agency* is comprised of actors

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¹ "The Mafia refers to the Sicilian Cosa Nostra historically. The other three main organised crime syndicates are 'Ndrangheta from Calabria region, Camorra from Naples and its surrounding area, and finally Sacra Corona Unita from Apulia. There are different hierarchical structures among these groups. Keeping these small but important nuances in mind, the mafia in this paper is used as an inclusive term to refer to the Italian organized crime groups."

who aim to realise a goal by using static agency. In this research, dynamic agency consists of activists and organisers who participated in a march to realise their own goals in a social space. Therefore, static agency is under the control of dynamic agency during this ephemeral intervention. What makes those symbols and motions *static* lie in their inability to change the social, political or cultural sphere without activists, with dynamic agency. Therefore, dynamic agency signifies an initiative taken by activists who control the symbols and actions, through developing strategic methods to attain their particular goals.

I principally argue that static and dynamic agencies are conflated patterns that empower emotional solidarity among activists. I further claim that the goals of activists need to be attained through wider participation of the public, to fight for the same goal. In this context, the transfer of emotional solidarity to broader publics plays a crucial role in challenging public trouble, which is mafia in our case. Thus, social protests offer a way to reconsider the “sociology of emotions”, and better understand dissent and its sociological importance in terms of transferrable emotions and actions at the macro-level. First, I introduce the theoretical intervention and research methods. Next, I analyse the march in Florence through five landmark steps. Finally, I present my theoretical contribution to underscore the role of static and dynamic agency in the course of cultural renewal process, and its influence in the sociology of emotions discipline.

1.1. *Emotions, protest and solidarity in a social space*

The studies of German sociologist Henner Hess (1973), Dutch anthropologist Anton Blok (1974) and the two important American anthropologists, Jane and Peter Schneider and Schneider (1976), shaped the discourse of mafia studies through ethnographic insights since the second half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the mafia is truly an interdisciplinary subject that lured social scientists from different fields to explore this subject. The mafia studies have also fostered antimafia studies in the last few decades (Jamieson, 1999; Schneider and Schneider, 2003; Cayli, 2013; Dalla Chiesa, 2014; Santino, 2015). The antimafia movement in Italy has a peculiar space in both cultural and sociological studies, as it perceives organized crime not only as a criminal activity, but a prevailing symbol of cultural erosion and political incapacity in the country. What is more, the civil society initiatives in other countries, which are crippled by organized crime syndicates, could not consolidate a persistent mobilisation movement as the Italian civil society managed –even if its achievements and future goals include some limitations as well-. The engagement of actors “with other people in real world and real-time contexts” opens up new ways to test the role of social psychological agencies on emotions (Parkinson and Manstead, 2015, p. 371). The social protest, therefore, in Florence is a significant case study to elaborate the role of commemoration in the sociology of emotions and its further implications over the activists and wider society.

Thoits (1989, 338) highlighted the role of qualitative research and micro level perspectives to detect the gap between the culture of emotion and socialisation process. Even though, emotions are used to understand the individual context by psychologists, emotions play the role of a bridge by connecting the individual with the wider society and all its ambiguities regarding that social setting (Leach and Tiedens, 2004, 2). If the rationality is influential to shape our emotions, a similar influence can be developed by our emotions to determine our decisions, set our plans and produce strategies to attain our goals. This mutual interaction between our emotions and goals prevail in social movements that have a particular aim for a group of people. Emotions and rationality may seem to be contradictory in some occasions. However, this contradiction brings also

its complimentary role to the fore when our emotions are shaped by a rational motive (Williams, 1998). Marching against the Italian mafia in the streets of Florence renders emotional landscape of this performance a central constituent to conceive the relationship between the participants/organisers of this event and the onlookers.

Fisher and Koo Chon (1989) and later Shilling (1997) argued that it is important to revisit the perspectives of Durkheim to understand the role of emotions in building social solidarity. Indeed, the social constructionist perspectives widen the scope of our knowledge not only in emotional studies but also in our reactionary modes in social spaces. Jasper (2014) puts forth this deftly, claiming that anger is a fundamental emotional dynamic in social protests to reveal the discontent in a social space. The intensity of emotions is predicated on its sharing (Rimé, 2009, p. 68). This sharing process is not limited to taking action against antagonist because “regardless of the venue or stage, social movement actors seek to affect audiences’ understanding of social reality” (Benford, 2013, p. 139). In this context, “emotion-generating interaction ritual chains” can be a key element in the restoration of social order (Srblijinović and Božić, 2014).

As Collins (2004) argued, the successful rituals empower the collective action through positive energy. Similarly, Lawler et al. (2000) put forth the importance of positive emotions and uncertainty reduction for the sustainability of productive exchange setting and making the group more cohesive. The leading antimafia organisers have achieved to create positive emotions about transforming the society and defeating the mafia through a number of principles and strategic methods. Von Scheve and Ismer (2013) aptly elaborated that collective emotion elicitation transforms “shared appraisal structures” into “I-mode collectivity” and “group identification” into “We-mode” through expressive behaviours and social practices. In this regard, ephemeral dynamics play an important role in expressive behaviours and social practices in a collective action. As a result, I will present the static and dynamic agency in the next sections as the two main facets of ephemeral dynamics. The ephemeral intervention comes to the fore in the public spaces through events when people use “ephemeral elements such as images, texts, sounds, dance, chants, massed bodies in order to effect political change through revisualization of that space” (Murphy and O’Driscoll, 2015, p. 328). These ephemeral elements constitute the fabrics of static agency. In this context, the dynamic agency is consisted of people who come together as a social group for a particular aim and deploy static agency and interacts with it to achieve their goals. Yet, the theoretical intervention of this study in the sociology of emotions appears with questioning the attainability of ultimate goal of a social group. The challenges of the antimafia movement indicate the gap between the functionality of static agency over the masses. The meso-level realm of social reality determines the destiny of antimafia movement by identifying the micro dynamics and the challenges when the group targets the macro environmental actors, the masses, to transfer the values of the social group to the masses and stimulate them to take action for it.

2. Methods

I have been a regular participant of antimafia protests since 2010. As an academic-activist, my research in the antimafia movement premises on the development of mobilisation from the remote areas of the country to the most populated urban regions to create a mass mobilisation. The urban social protest offers an intriguing venue to engage with multiple facets of objects that reflect the concerns, emotions, ideals and grievances of the activists and the fundamental dynamics of a performance employed by the

same activists. These are the necessary patterns of any activist-centric and participant-oriented research to observe the socio-psychological interactions in the public sphere.

I took notes in my notebook, consulted the video that I recorded and used the photos to explore the march as a moderate participant observer. Visual ethnographers and sociocultural anthropologists use diverse methods through taking notes, recording video and using photos to materialize a social context. Nonetheless, I will endeavour to extend this approach by deploying reflexive lenses and perceiving the members of resisting community as the leading performers to elaborate the power of tragedy and its impact in a social space through framing static and dynamic agency. Harper (2003) convincingly showed that the framing process can be practised through using photograph as an instrument. In addition to the notes and the video, the photography, which I use in this study, aims to conceive the imaginative meaning of the symbolic agency and its control by the dynamic agency in a social space. In doing so, I attempt to analyse the focus and goals of march while scrutinizing how this resisting community expressed their dissent and hopes to defeat the mafia and challenge the difficult past in a traumatic cultural geography. Additionally, it is noteworthy to understand the social and cultural patterns of such a civic resistance performed by the antimafia activists. These patterns provide fundamental accounts in the sociology of emotions to understand the opportunities and challenges of this resisting community. For this reason, this article attempts to explore the relationship between culture, social space and the activist through analysing a social protest, which was organized in Florence to commemorate the mafia victims.

The reason why I conducted this research in Florence, but not in another city where antimafia protest occurred, lies in the urban dynamics of Florence and the goals of antimafia movement. Florence is a city where the mafia infiltration into the state and municipality institutions is not as common as other regions of Italy. However, the city became a tragic target by the members of Cosa Nostra, the Sicilian mafia, that killed 5 people and dozens were wounded on May 27, 1993 (Cowell, 1993). The traumatic attack of Cosa Nostra in Florence became another symbol when Luigi Ciotti, the founder of Libera, which is the leading organiser of the march, mentioned this tragedy in his speech in the stadium. What is more, the antimafia movement has a mission of making the protest a national concern rather than a regional reaction. The protests never occur in the southern part of the country consecutively. From this perspective, the annual protest in Florence was a benchmark to test the nationalisation goal of the antimafia movement and the reaction of people in the northern part of Italy where the mafia is traditionally perceived as a problem of the south.

The march occurred in Florence, the capital city of Toscana region, on Saturday, 16 March 2013. I left my hotel room at 8:00 a.m. and arrived in the meeting area in half an hour at the same time with the thousands of people who gathered in the square on Via Valfondò Street, next to the Viafondò Park, which is in close proximity to the central train station of Florence. Libera, the largest antimafia organisation, announced that approximately 150,000 people marched at the end of the day. Nevertheless, the mainstream media and police reported that around 100,000 people protested the mafia and commemorated the mafia victims. Even according to the police reports, the march in Florence was recorded as the most crowded march in the last eighteen years (Libera, 2013; Adinolfi, 2013). However, this symbolic and important success of the antimafia campaign is debatable in terms of the heterogeneity of the participants' age range because the majority of the participants in the square were students and young people who attend the secondary school, high school or the university.

The first message in the stadium came from Giorgio Napolitano,

the President of Italy. He stated: "The initiative in Florence represents the signal of hope and determination, which is renewed every year." His letter underscored the necessary and indispensable importance of civil society to fight against the mafia. Next, the families of victims and prominent supporters of the antimafia campaign read the name of each victim who lost their lives starting from the last decade of the nineteenth century. The remarkable point was the increasing tension and deep grief among the participants while the names of more than eight hundred victims were read. Each victim's name brought silence and sorrow that painted the landscape of tragedy and social exploitation of the mafia spanning more than a hundred years of cultural and moral decadence. The relatives of victims were the only group who sat down in their reserved chairs in front of the stage while thousands of people were standing behind them on the pitch of the stadium. A majority of the families cried while the names of victims were being read. The social reality of that scene was manifested through the tears of families that were shed while remembering their tragic loss. This was the moment that illustrated the power of tragedy in a social space. Fiorella Mannoia, a popular Italian pop singer, gave a concert in the stadium after the names of victims were read. Renzi Matteo, who is currently Prime Minister of Italy, was the mayor of Florence at that time. He walked behind me to take his place next to the relatives of the victims while I was recording the speech of organisation's leaders. The participation of the political class and a prominent name from the Italian music scene demonstrated the limited but important public elite support for the march.

The next section explores the march through five framing clusters, which inductively determine the strengths and weaknesses of this march through presenting different occasions and interactions that I detected. These five steps characterised the reciprocal relationship between the static and dynamic agency.

2.1. *Marching against the Italian mafia in the streets of Florence*

Students and teachers began an extensive campaigning process in schools in the early 1980s when the mafia groups in the country had an unchallengeable political and social power. These activities are consisted of active participation to enhance the concepts of democracy and civil society, establish study groups, increase knowledge and motivation, and raise people's voices against the corruption of the politicians (Dalla Chiesa, 1983). For example, after these tragic events, the "Committee of the Sheets" was established in Sicily. This society protested and showed their anger at the mafia by hanging bed sheets from their windows. Leoluca Orlando, the ex-mayor of Palermo, reported that locals overwhelmingly appropriated the protest to the extent that if people could not see a bed sheet hanging over a building, they should suspect that a Mafioso lived in that building (Schneider, 1998; Weissman, 1999). The political and legal initiatives against the mafia started to be intensified in the mid-1980s with the Maxiprocesso trial that put many prominent mafia figures behind the bars. The assassination of the two antimafia prosecutors. Undoubtedly, the most dramatic assassinations in Italy in the last two decades were the murders of two famous prosecutors, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, two months apart in 1992. These severe offenses fostered significant, antimafia movements. Libera was established in 1995 as a civil society organisation to fight the mafia when the country was in a dispiriting socio-political atmosphere. Libera has been one of the prominent NGOs that took the main initiative to organise the marches to commemorate the mafia victims starting from 1995. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and activists, the number of antimafia organisation in the country has been gradually increased since the mid-1990s. Marching against the mafia in Florence both to resist against it and commemorate the victims is a landmark en

route to change the mafiosi culture in which the mafia groups have developed their opportunities.²

Tota (2004, p. 139–140) argued that “the creation of a specific genre of remembrance implies the establishment of a series of social conventions which fix what is appropriate and what is not when representing a given past.” The event to commemorate the victims of the mafia created its own social conventions in which similar symbols were used by the activists in the spaces where the march occurred. Taking photos, writing small pieces swiftly in my field research notebook and recording the protest, I detected five critical steps that shaped the very fabrics of this commemoration.

First, there were clowns, colourful objects such as balloons, rainbow coloured items such as balls and ropes before the start of march. These constituents of symbolic agency motivated the participants and became a source of hope concerning the persistence of their antimafia struggle. The girl that was standing next to me told her friend: “Look at those clowns, there couldn’t be a better response to show that our future is bright ... I must go and thank him!” Afterwards, she ran towards one of the clowns. The goal of these marches is to create a new culture in which the mafia has no power. This goal invokes hope at the same time about the future. The colourful objects are the representative symbols of hope so these objects implicitly addressed to the goals of the march and spurred the idea that why the participants need to be hopeful about the future as long as this struggle is persisted.

Second, the participants demonstrated their reactions and resistance mostly by giving their messages via a placard or flag. This was an effort to verbalize and disseminate the message. What is more, they chanted slogans zealously from time to time. The reference to the assassinations, the name of victims, and important dates in the struggle against the mafia drew attention through their messages on the placards and flags. For instance, one of the phrases aimed to remember Giovanni Falcone, the antimafia prosecutor, who was assassinated by the Sicilian mafia on 23 May 1992. The phrase on the flag was: “*Mafiosi voi come arma del terrore, noi il coraggio come Falcone*”.- The mafiosi you are the weapon of terror; we are the courage like Falcone.” The phrase compared the mafia with the activists through the rhetorical context of historical events. This comparison reflects the power of allegory and the need of motivation. Hence, these phrases and placards represent the

static agency of resistance that influenced the performance of march and rendered it more affective in that social space.

Third, there was a wide spectrum for the representation of *dynamic agency*, in other words the people who organized the commemoration and marched in the streets of Florence. The places, where the activists come from and work, were manifestly illustrated by referring to their towns and institutions on the flags and placards that they carried. Some of the participants raised their flags and placards to show where they came from when the last line of the cortege started marching at around 9:00 a.m. This identical adherence to the locations and institutions, which they are affiliated with, is a method of essentializing their social networks and local identities. The social networks that the organisers established gain a powerful common ground in the local communities that gather for an idealist purpose, which is influenced by the unbearable tragedy of the past. Salvini (2010) highlighted the commonalities between social network analysis and symbolic interaction through the challenges of such convergence. In this context, a group of people from the branch of Libera in Fasano carried a flag on which it was written the name of their towns (Fig. 1 here). Additionally, the representatives of the local and regional communes and municipalities carried the official flags of their institutions. The sense of belonging to a place came to the fore by their performance through symbolic references to their home towns and professional organizations.

Fourth, the relatives of victims carried the photos of their sons, daughters, parents and other acquaintances. This was one of the most remarkable performances that abridged tragedy and commemoration. One of the relatives carried the smiling photo of a victim, Dario Scherillo. He was killed by Camorra on 6 December 2004 when he was twenty-six years old (Fig. 2 here). A middle-aged woman appeared on the screen of my camera all of a sudden while I was recording the video of a chanting group consisted of young men and women. Her face was familiar to me as she did interviews with the local and national media when she lost her daughter. This was Daniele Rombi. Similar to the relative of Dario Scherillo, Daniele Rombi carried the smiling photo of her daughter, Emanuela, who lost her life in the tragic train derailment in Viareggio in 2009 when she was twenty-one years old. I stopped recording at that moment and I tried to catch her eye. We were



Fig. 1. The cortege starts marching. (Source: Cayli).



Fig. 2. The relative of Dario Scherillo is carrying his photo. (Source: Cayli).

about a few steps away from each other. She looked straight in my eyes while I was showing my camera to ask for taking her photo. She nodded her head for approval and immediately turned her head to the right while I was taking her photo. That short moment, which was shared between a mother and a researcher, brought the same state of grief at the same time in the same social space for both of us. (Fig. 3 here). Carrying the photos of victims' smiling face unveils the tragedy that the relatives had to bear after their loss. The dynamic agency reverberated the dram of their social reality through using the static agency in the streets of Florence.

Finally, the activists also targeted the residents of Florence who watched the activists from their balconies by showing a flag towards them: "*Il silenzio uccide*" –the silence kills–. This was not a type of conflict, but the flag functioned as an instrument to increase the motivation of the silenced people or the ones who were reluctant to take an active role in the march. Furthermore, the same flag demonstrated why speaking about the mafia and breaking its sociocultural codes in the public spaces are important practices (Fig. 4 here). Standing against the mafia challenges the submissive behaviour expected from the local people to obey the codes of mafia and underscored the significance of changing the very dynamics of that conventional silence. The applied philosophy in the same flag stems from the action-oriented perspective that values the performance to resist against the mafia. Indeed, marching against the mafia and chanting against its power in the streets of Florence aimed at breaking *omertà*, code of silence, which has subjugated the local people for many years. *Omertà* is a crucial notion to provide solidarity in the name of honour of the closed community while providing an idealized self of the mafioso in the public space under the inclusive coverage of honour (Triolo, 1993). It is argued that "honor has to do with the aggressive presentation of an idealized self" (Herzfeld, 1987, p. 64). The concept of *omertà* has provided the mafioso necessary social ambiance to present his idealized character by controlling socioeconomic and cultural spheres.

The people watching the march from their balconies and the zealous support of the activists brought an alarming fragmentation—or perhaps it is better to name it a diversification—in the structural orientation of the antimafia movement. This diversification was

more discernible while the young people in the march were chanting against the mafia and raising a flag on which it was written: "*No Alla Mafia*"—No to the Mafia— (Fig. 5 here). On the other hand, the participation of the teenagers with their parents was a remarkable point that shows the promising future of the movement to realise its goals. The prideful posing of the teenager while holding the flag of *Libera* in the photo fosters our hopes about the future of antimafia campaign (Fig. 6 here).

The mafia members in Sicily used nicknames as the symbols of their power, ferociousness, and deterrence (Blok, 1974). Similarly, the activists defined the mafia through different symbols. They described the mafia as "the weapon of terror" as I delineated above and they glorified their stance by calling themselves "the courage" of this movement. The power of symbols did not only aim to mobilise more people who watched the march from their balconies in Florence, but it also achieved to bring their struggle to the spotlight when the local and national media reported the same social protest in the news by showing the images, placards, and flags of the protesters. Thus, those symbols in the march played a transitive role to get nationwide attention and to provide an opportunity to the people who would like to leave their passive zones and participate in the antimafia movement. Schneider and Schneider (2003, p. 101) argued that "viewed from the 'inside,' the mafia is a secretive fraternal order whose norms and ritual practices situate its members 'outside' normal society and, in their mind 'above' it." From this vantage point, the antimafia movement strives to demolish the cultural hegemony of the mafia and to degrade the public 'virtues' that the mafia hinges on. Eventually, organising this march every year in a different Italian city stirs up the influence of static and dynamic agency for the success of the movement. Similar to the previous antimafia social protests, the activists used some of the same symbols in Florence such as the phrases of antimafia prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino (Cayli, 2012).

The impact of cultural trauma is mostly enduring; however, the strength of emotional resilience of victims against the antagonist may lessen the influence of cultural trauma while increasing the mobilisation to resist the source of the same cultural trauma. This is the expected outcome of the surge of mobilisation because "when



Fig. 3. Daniela Rombi is holding the smiling photo of her daughter who died in 2009. (Source: Cayli).

repression is seen as grossly unjust, indignation is more likely to broaden protest, but it has to overcome fear to do so. Mediating factors probably include the attribution of blame; constructions of heroism, villainy, and victimhood; sheer hatred, fury, and revenge, alongside expectations about the costs and benefits of repression" (Goodwin and Jasper, 2006, pp. 630). Von Scheve (2014) put this similarly; arguing that emotions and social order are interconnected so neatly that emotions are determinative constituents between social action and social interaction. I assert that the static agency prevails in the times of conflict through the symbols of resistance. The dynamic agency, in other words the participants, uses the symbolic agency to redefine and led the social change. More to the point, the emotional spectrum and its management has a formative force both over the symbols and the resisting process. The march in the streets of Florence opens a new gate to construe symbolism and the structures of power. From this broad perspective, symbolism is germane and central to the political and social power.

The symbolic agency elucidates the power dynamics of social life and the dynamic agency strives to change the failed polity through the performance of activists in the social space. The messages and slogans in the streets of Florence, as a result, resonated as the metanarratives of a fragile society, which aims to consolidate a

culture of lawfulness by eliminating the mafiosi culture. The strong interaction, between the symbolic and dynamic agency, was evident in Florence. Yet we may expect this strong interaction between the symbolic and dynamic agency also in other social movements, which are organized regularly because the same regularity brings the people who strive for similar ideals and use similar constituents of symbolic agency. However, the critical context arises when we ask that this strong interaction between the static and dynamic agency, more importantly the transfer of it to the bystanders and masses, can occur during or aftermath of the social movement, protest, march or event. Our case in Florence, at least, shows that there is still a long path to mobilise masses to take action against the mafia because the static and dynamic agencies could not influence the bystanders and masses to march in the streets of Florence. However, this does not signify that the on-lookers will never be part of such an antimafia march in the future. Maffesoli (1996) argued that the rise of individualism may conceal the impact of collectivity forms in the public sphere through small group formations, however, this concealment may also create new zones of emotional solidarity among the members of small community because the modernity paves the path of neoliberalism at the same time. The strong emotional solidarity among the activists legitimise the argument of Maffesoli. Yet, the ideals of activists



Fig. 4. The young people are holding a flag, which utters that “il silenzio uccide”-the silence kills-. (Source: Cayli).



Fig. 5. A big flag makes clear the desire of the protesters: “No Alla Mafia” –No to the Mafia”. (Source: Cayli).



Fig. 6. A teenager and antimafia activist is posing to his family while showing the flag of the anti-Mafia organisation, 'Libera, contre le mafie'. (Source: Cayli).

could not resonate at least in the social space of bystanders and masses in the time of marching. On the other hand, the increasing number of activists in each march every year convey the message that the antimafia campaign has been expanding gradually.

2.2. *The static and dynamic agency within the context of sociology of emotions and activism*

The set of systematic relations in a social setting brings the significance of frames to the fore to form the meaning of our lives, which are prioritized by our “beliefs” and “cosmology” (Goffman, 1974, pp. 27). These beliefs and cosmology constitute the durability of collective memory. Haye (2012, pp. 23) suggested a three-fold model to conceive the act of memory: “One analytical component is the generation of a knowledge structure about the past object. A second component is the construction of an attitude toward the theme. The third is the understanding of the ideological dimension within which the knowledge structure and the attitude under production are contextualized.” These three dimensions of collective memory are influential among the antimafia activists who generated knowledge about the mafia through their own experiences in the past, constructed an attitude and reacted against the mafia by marching in the streets. This particular case study in Florence, therefore, demonstrates that the static and dynamic agencies in a collective action and social protest play a foundational role to understand the structure and goal of a social group through emotional solidarity and the capacity to transfer it to the bystanders and masses.

Jasper (2011) claims that the true value of culture and emotions can be grasped through the experience of the self and communities. Accordingly, “emotions can be means, they can be ends, and sometimes they can fuse the two” (Jasper, 2011, p. 286). The networks of the people during the performance increase solidarity and emotional capacity of the activists who are part of a collective

movement (Lacey, 2005). This transformative power of emotions demonstrated itself both as means and ends in Florence. By the same token, deciphering the socio-psychological codes of the mafia and antimafia movement is attainable through exploring the role of static and dynamic agency in the streets of Florence. The symbolic interaction among the activists excels the power of each motion, voice, visual and sight while shaping the modes of rational behaviours embraced by those activists. More importantly, the symbols of static agency –the balloons, flags, placards, songs, prayers and the names of victims–demonstrate the explicit character of rationality as these symbols were primarily used to convey a public message, to give a cultural struggle and attain a political goal. On the other hand, the dynamic agency –first and foremost the victims and activists, organisers and the politicians in the march–show an implicit character of rationality because the dynamic agency primarily aims to commemorate the victims at the first instance. Yet the ultimate goal is transforming the mafiosi culture, which is the source of public agony and victimisation.

The antimafia movement appears as a unified and solid resistance that fights for its own ideals through the symbolic agency with a peaceful and lawful manner. Yet, the interaction between the static and dynamic agency could not foster the majority of residents to take action against the mafia by marching shoulder to shoulder in the streets of Florence. In this juncture, it bears emphasis that the streets became the hot spots of emotional reaction because the marchers aimed to draw attention of the onlookers while chanting against the mafia. However, the emotional reaction in the streets was transformed into grief and agony when the names of victims were read in the stadium. The marching community came together in the stadium so there was no interaction with the onlookers. The loss of interaction between the two groups demonstrate the spatial context of static and dynamic agency depends on the interaction between the groups and the level of emotional reaction.

Both clinical and non-clinical cases proved that the

transformative power of grief and mourning is unchallengeable so much so that it creates remarkable changes in our emotions, identities, narratives and ideals either for a better opportunity or a worse damage (Berzoff, 2011). From this standpoint, both the static and dynamic agency are the pillars of this transformative power. The static agency was used by the performers/activists, that is to say the dynamic agency, through placards, photographs, slogans, concerts\ dances and films in Florence. The dynamic agency used the emotional capacity and the ruling force in our case because the dynamic agency -the subject-is the determining authority to shape the static agency -the object-. This interaction and the remarkable opportunity to mobilise the masses pave the path of victory. Hochschild (1983) is one of the first scholars who marked feelings as the rulers of our lives. Hochschild (1983) argued that the management of feelings has a critical locus to determine the outcomes of our relationships in social spaces. We cannot expect diminishing the mobilisation power of the antimafia march and eradication of it when we take in account strong emotional solidarity and political activism among the participants. The formidable symbolic interactions among these resilient activists -the dynamic agency- and the static agency-used by the activists predicted the long durability of this political and cultural activism. This is another reason that there the antimafia participants in the annually organized social protests have been increasing since its first organisation in 1995.

The leading power of emotions manifests itself within political activism and cultural struggle in our case. This multi-dynamic character of social protest in Florence demonstrates that sociological understanding of emotions need a systematic analysis. The static and dynamic agencies are the two main instruments of this systematisation in the present study. On the other hand, the emotional solidarity between the activists is an essential pillar that increase the social solidarity of the movement among the activists and organisers. Nevertheless, the position of onlookers and the disinterest of the ordinary citizens of Florence appear as a gap about the ultimate goal of the social movement, which is the eradication of the mafia and Mafiosi culture. The symbolic and dynamic agency were not embraced by the majority of city residents and so it could not foster them to participate in the antimafia march. The increasing number of protests yields more power for the activists. Yet, despite this, imbining a strong civic consciousness depends on the cooperation between political power of the state forces and civic resistance of the non-state forces through transforming the dynamic agency into a mass movement and widening the impact and scope of static agency.

3. Concluding remarks

This study introduced the role of static and dynamic agency through exploring a community, which has strategies to defy the mafia and transform the Italian society. The strong relationship between the static and dynamic agency during the social protest presents a powerful performance of resistance against the public trouble, which is the mafia and mafiosi culture in our case study. Considering the prevalent silence of previous generations and the modest visibility of antimafia resistance, the Italian antimafia movement has developed strategic policies through deploying diverse symbols and performing their rituals for the aim of redefining and restoring public culture. The expansion of antimafia movement and its deployment in the social spaces across all regions of the country have played a major role to empower civic consciousness.

A set of multidimensional practices of dynamic agency, the activists and organisers, identified their ideals to transform the present dominant culture of which the mafiosi culture makes a large part. This multidimensional approach is ruled by the static agency

and fortified by each practice of the antimafia activist. Yet such a struggle has parallel motives with the subalterns of the Global South from the perspective of a resistance-oppression dichotomy. Escobar (1992) suggests that social movements are the arenas through which the claims of the subalterns are echoed so it is a significant performance to raise the concerns of these communities in a local region. Even though there are many similarities between the Italian antimafia movement and other social movement models, each social movement is composed of particular constituents because the static and dynamic agencies are dependable variables of micro social dynamics of the social space where those symbols are used and rituals are performed by each activist to attain that specific ultimate goal.

The static and dynamic agency concepts in our case endeavour to throw new light to the sociology of emotions by exploring the objects, which are the symbols represented by the static agency and the subjects who are the activists represented by the dynamic agency. However, the aporia lies in the centre of transferring all these antimafia symbols and values to the wider society because such an idealized model of civic action against the mafia has not activated the majority of Italian citizens to show the same public stance against the mafia in the streets of Florence. It is discernible that symbolic interactions among the activists are strong and sustainable; however, if these strong symbolic interactions influence other people to be part of the antimafia movement, it may bring a definite failure to the mafia.

The values defended by the antimafia movement do not challenge only the mafia because these are the values that aim at bringing a progressive change into the social structure and cultural norms of Italian society. For this aim, the struggle of the activists and organisers of the antimafia movement need to be persistent because values and norms of society can be transformed in the long term through strategic policies and sustainability of the movement. Yet the experience in the last eighteen years chalked up a vital victory by breaking the code of silence and marching every year to commemorate the victims in a different Italian city. The public visualization of this performance gives the signal that individual resistance attempts against the mafia, which were started in the 1970s, have been institutionalized not only at the organisational level but also at the cultural level in the public sphere among the activists. The essential question is that how the onlookers do not only perceive such a march with positive emotions, but also they show an incentive to be part of the march.

The present field research demonstrates that symbols and actors perpetuated the articulation of dissents and hopes at the same time. The commemoration in Florence was a vital instrument to resist against the mafia with the help of both explicit and implicit rational dimensions of the static and dynamic agencies in the social space. As a result, the march transformed into an unyielding ritual experience through its organisation every year by a group of zealous activists. On the other hand, the symbols of the antimafia movement have not been entrenched into the core principles of public culture as much as the mafiosi culture did. The failure of transferring ideals employed by the static and dynamic agency to the entire society poses serious challenges to the ultimate goal of the antimafia movement. However, considering the importance of process and value change in society, these challenges can be overcome by the persistency and unyielding efforts of activists.

Commemorating the mafia victims is not only an attempt to overcome the tragedy. More importantly, the commemoration in a social space is one of the most effective methods to fight the very dynamics of tragedy by drawing attention of the masses and bringing relief to the relatives of mafia victims. However, I claimed throughout this paper that the well-functioning relationship between the static and dynamic agency during the march in the

streets of Florence was not able to restore the current public culture dominated by the mafiosi culture immediately. We cannot expect such a swift value change from any social movement, which is an outcome of historical and social injustice. The inability to rule the everyday life by the antimafia values pose serious challenges to shape the public culture radically by eliminating the dominating mafiosi culture. On the other hand, the static agency in Florence was successfully functioned as the modes of expression to resonate the ideals of dynamic agency. In other words, the static agency provided and strengthened emotional solidarity between the members of marching community. The emotional solidarity in Florence, therefore, helped the consolidation of a culture of lawfulness in the social spaces of cultural trauma when they marched in the streets of Florence. Nevertheless, the intense of emotional solidarity during the march among the activists had a temporary influence as it diminished rapidly in the same social space, where the march occurred, with the end of the march.

The activation of the massive public reaction and practising the values of such reaction in the everyday life will be a determinative force to relegate the mafiosi culture. In this respect, it remains an enigma that how emotional solidarity among social groups can create radical social, political and cultural change in diverse traumatic geographies. The future research focusing on the dimensions of interaction between the activists in the march and other segments of society may help discern the risks and opportunities in the fight against the public trouble. The emotional solidarity, as a result, needs to be explored not only among the activists but also among the bystanders and masses who do not take part in such protests while remaining under the influence of the same public trouble. In this context, the relationship between static and dynamic agency and the embracement of values raised by these two agencies are the key factors to understand both the social transformation of the masses and the opportunities to defeat the public trouble.

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