

assume a negative connotation, contributing to the criminalization of protest. This phenomenon fits within the broader process of polarization in contentious politics, wherein symbolic objects become vehicles of both consensus and opposition.

Moreover, the research has shown that symbolic objects can act as catalysts of emotions and affect, influencing the effectiveness of collective actions. The ability to evoke indignation, empathy, or fear is a key element in constructing political visibility and strengthening collective identities (Castells 2013; 2014; della Porta & Diani 2006; Flam & King 2005; Jasper 2011; Melucci 1989). In this sense, the use of the body as a medium of protest, whether in road blockades or performative actions involving red paint, has made the climate crisis not only an environmental issue, but also a social and human one, reinforcing the link between the symbolic and the material.

Finally, this study has confirmed that symbolic objects are not fixed or immutable entities, but rather fluid and contextual elements that adapt and transform according to political strategies and social dynamics. Their polysemy and ability to transcend conventional uses make them essential tools for understanding how social movements construct meaning, mobilize support, and challenge institutions.

Looking ahead, the analysis of symbolic objects in contentious politics could be expanded through comparative studies of other social movements, exploring how different political and cultural contexts influence the role and function of these artifacts in collective mobilization. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach that brings together sociology, semiotics, and communication studies could offer an even deeper understanding of the relationship between materiality, symbolism, and political action.

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