EDITORIAL/RESEARCH ARTICLE

ANTI-CORRUPTION FROM BELOW
Social movements against corruption in late neoliberalism[1]

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ABSTRACT: In the last decades, a growing awareness has emerged in progressive social movements about the relevance of corruption as a hidden factor that negatively influences political and economic decision-making processes in both liberal-democratic and authoritarian regimes. Rampant corruption has been denounced by social movements, which have developed specific diagnostic and prognostic frames as well as knowledge and practices for the social accountability of political and economic powers. This contribution maps some of the characteristics of civil society as anti-corruption actors, reflecting on the theoretical challenges they present for social movement theory and for research on corruption and anti-corruption. In order to understand the emergence and outcomes of these mobilizations against corruption, it bridges two bodies of literature which have only very rarely crossed paths: corruption studies and social movement studies. Departing from the traditional visions of anti-corruption from below within corruption studies, the article brings upon social movement studies in order to synthetize some of the main context, organizational forms and framing of (anti-)corruption in today's contentious politics.

KEYWORDS: Corruption, anti-corruption, social movements, civil society, protest

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[1] The first part of this article is developed in della Porta and Vannucci (2014); the second part in della Porta (2013, 2015).

1. Introduction

In the last decades, a growing awareness has emerged in progressive social movements about the relevance of corruption as a hidden factor that negatively influences political and economic decision-making processes in both liberal-democratic and authoritarian regimes. Against the immoral power of the 1%, anti-austerity protests have stigmatized the specific characteristics of corruption in the evolution – rampant years and long crises – of neoliberalism, which has brought about a move towards the free market and away from social protection. Sponsored by international financial organizations such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, policies in various states have been oriented towards privatization, liberalization and deregulation. Notwithstanding promises of a separation of state and market, as well as of the benefits of increased competition, those policies have increased the power of big corporations, which have colluded with the states and distorted the market. Indeed, neoliberalism in the crisis brought about a crisis of political legitimacy, which took the specific form of a crisis of responsibility (della Porta 2015). Rampant corruption has been denounced by social movements, which have developed specific diagnostic and prognostic frames as well as knowledge and practices for the social accountability of political and economic powers. In this special issue, we shall analyse some of the characteristics of civil society as anti-corruption actors, bringing original empirical evidence as well as reflecting on the theoretical challenges they present for social movement theory and for research on corruption and anti-corruption.

In order to understand the emergence and outcomes of these mobilizations against corruption, I look in this introduction at two bodies of literature: corruption studies and social movement studies. Social science research and theorization on social movements and (anti)corruption have only very rarely crossed paths. Even though both have looked at non-institutional ways to affect public decisions, research on corruption has focused on the hidden relations between entrepreneurs and politicians or public administrators, with an exchange of bribes for favours, while research on social movements has looked at the most visible forms of contestation: protest. Only sporadically have researchers analysed, for example, mobilizations from below that oppose corruption, or – especially in the global South – relations between everyday practices of resistance and clientelistic power.

Not only has the focus of attention has been very different in the two fields, but the theories applied also differ: rational choice and game theories have often been used to address corrupt exchanges, while research on social movements has paid more attention to political opportunities and resource mobilization. Further, while the former has

focused on either the micro or the macro levels, the latter has included analysis at a meso-organizational level. With few exceptions, social movements have been seen as a positive side of politics, with altruistic motivations and cosmopolitan framings; corruption has instead been viewed as its dark side, with selfish behaviour and rejection of democratic values.

There is nevertheless some potential overlap between the two fields. In fact, both pay attention to less institutionalized, but not less influent, aspects of politics; both present a sort of theoretical eclecticism, including interdisciplinary approaches as well as methodological pluralism (della Porta and Keating 2008); and both are committed to normative concerns with good politics. Nowadays, the two fields are bound to interact in empirical analyses given the growing importance of an anti-corruption discourse in social movements fighting for collective rights, in the presence of a specific form of neoliberal capitalism and its political consequences.

Attention to contemporary movements against corruption also allows reflection on different anti-corruption paradigms. In fact, anti-corruption until now has been seen as a matter of good governance, with highly technical content spread top-down and implemented from above (judiciary, independent authorities, international organizations). Within a neoliberal paradigm, anti-corruption has often preached a reduction in state spending and regulation. Privatization, deregulation and liberalization have been seen as main cures for the disease of corruption. However, contemporary movements are addressing anti-corruption through a different paradigm. Not only do they present anti-corruption as a matter of social justice, to be addressed through contextual knowledge, but their very existence represents a call for anti-corruption politics 'from below' – horizontal and participatory. Against a neoliberal vision, they target not only the corruption of democracy produced in neoliberalism but also the growing collusion among the 1%. Privatization, deregulation and liberalization are seen – by and large – as part of the problem, favouring rampant forms of collusion between politicians and business.

An emerging anti-corruption paradigm is visible in the wave of protest that developed in 2011, especially in those countries that had been particularly hard hit by the financial crisis of 2008 (della Porta 2015). However, corruption is also rampant in the countries in which the economies seemed to have been advantaged by globalization – as in the so-called BRICS countries. Protests against corruption have been massive in Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa, but also in Turkey, bridged with a criticism of increasing inequalities (della Porta 2017). Anti-corruption frames remained central in countries that had been considered as winners in neoliberal globalization, as well as those that still seemed to be dreaming of growth and development within a neoliberal

consensus. In all these cases, the decline in citizens' rights was reflected in a political crisis, with a dramatic decline of institutional trust. As personalistic forms of political power spread, the corruption of the elites was openly stigmatized.

In what follows, I shall depart from the traditional visions of anti-corruption from below within corruption studies, then looking at social movement studies in order to synthetize some of the main context, organizational forms and framing of (anti-)corruption in today's contentious politics. I will then map the repertoires of action, organizational structures and framing of (anti)corruption in three different types of civil society initiatives.

2. Anti-corruption within corruption studies

Heavily influenced by the rational choice paradigm and economic visions of politics, social science literature on political corruption has not paid much attention to the role of changes in capitalism and democracy in the spreading and modelling of new patterns of corruption. What is more, it has often suggested explanations that considered corruption as a natural by-product of state intervention on the market, in terms of both public spending and regulation, invoking the free market – in particular, privatization, liberalization and deregulation – as (part of) the solution.

The mainstream *rational choice* approach considers corruption as produced by individual choices. As with other deviant behaviours, the individual decision to participate in corrupt exchanges is related to the expected risk of being reported and punished, the severity of the potential penalties, and the expected rewards as compared with available alternatives (e.g. Rose-Ackerman 1978, 5). Corruption is considered as 'a crime of calculation, not passion. True, there are both saints who resist all temptations and honest officials who resist most. But when bribes are large, the chances of being caught small, and the penalties if caught meagre, many officials will succumb' (Klitgaard 1998, 4). Within a principal-agent theoretical framework, the assumption is that in the transaction between the agent and the corruptor, property rights on resources created and allocated as a consequence of the public agent's activity and influence are shared between the two.

In a different vein, *culturalist* approaches have looked at the differences in cultural traditions, social norms and internalized values that shape individuals' moral preferences and consideration of their social and institutional role. Individuals belonging to different societies and organizations can be pushed towards corruption by the nature of their internalized values, and by social pressures. The spread of civic values defines

the normative barriers against corruption (Pizzorno 1992). The analysis of such factors requires in-depth research on the mechanisms that allow actors to enter and operate within networks of corrupt exchanges, through a selection and socialization process that – besides transmitting 'routines' and informal norms – also shapes their norms and values.

Finally, a *neo-institutional* perspective has pointed at the mechanisms that allow for the internal regulation of social interactions within corrupt networks (della Porta and Vannucci 1999, 2012; Lambsdorff 2007). Once a certain system of corruption has developed, informal governance structures enforce internal stability, establishing hidden codes and reducing the uncertainty among potential partners. Economic incentives and cultural values thus develop path-dependently, as corruption reproduces itself through the spreading of informal norms, specialized skills, invisible networks of protection against both external intrusion by the state and internal frictions among corrupt actors (della Porta and Vannucci 2012, 219-22).

Combining the three approaches to the analysis of corruption, anti-corruption studies have singled out enforcement mechanisms that affect the relations of trust between the principal (as the sovereign citizens) and the public agent, on the one hand, and between the public agent and the corruptor, on the other (della Porta and Vannucci 2012). Three sources of trust have been singled out, with different enforcement mechanisms being activated in cases of betrayal of trust: first-party, second-party, and third-party (Ellickson 1991). In *first-party mechanisms*, an actor self-enforces rules by imposing potential sanctions on him- or herself. Internalized values (or moral codes) are at the basis of a system of self-control, which is implemented through the personal feeling of discomfort that would accompany the participation in corrupt activities. In *second-party mechanisms*, one partner can impose compliance through the management of potential sanctions – so, 'the *person acted upon* administers rewards and punishments depending on whether the promisor adheres to the promised course of behaviour' (Ellickson 1991, 126). In *third-party mechanisms*, we see instead the intervention of actors external to the contracting parties, such as social institutions, which practise diffuse control through ostracism or stigmatization; nongovernmental organizations that can invest resources for detecting and sanctioning cheaters; or governmental organizations, such as courts, which apply coercive sanctions (ibid.).

In particular, *non-governmental* actors can operate through internal controls in their own organizations (for instance, by excluding corrupt members), monitoring of public activities, or scandalization through the naming and shaming of corrupt individuals. Non-governmental actors, which operate through non-legal sanctions, are then expected to interact with public institutions that have the power to sanction the in-

fringement of *formal rule*s (Panther 2000). The nature of rules enforced, the sanctions applied and the sanctioning agents in first-, second- and third-party control mechanisms of corruption are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Enforcement mechanisms against corrupt exchanges

Enforcement mechanism			*Rules enforced*	*Sanctions*	*Sanctioning agent*
First-party control		*Normative barriers*	Interiorized ethical values and beliefs	Psychological suffering and guilt	Corrupt agent on him- or her-self
Second-party control		*Societal accountability*	Informal codes of conduct regulating public service and political representation	Ostracism, termination of the formal relationship (forced dismissal, non re-election, etc.)	Partners in social and political exchanges (also within public organizations)
Third-party control	*Social control*	*Societal accountability*	Public service values/ethics and obligations	Scandal, reputational damage, public blame.	Media, social groups, citizens
	Organizational enforcement	*State accountability*	Legal norms against corruption	Penal, disciplinary, administrative, pecuniary sanctions	Specialized public supervisors/ enforcers

Cit. from della Porta and Vannucci 2014, 241.

Societal accountability is implemented by various individual and collective actors, among them citizens, electors, bureaucrats, journalists, politicians, entrepreneurs, associations active within different arenas. Whistle-blowers are particularly relevant in collecting information about specific acts of corruption. Trust in public institutions is most needed in order to facilitate these mechanisms of surveillance and denunciation, to make whistle-blowers confident that their action will be effective and that they will be protected from revenge by those they denounce.

Collective action problems have been singled out in these activities of surveillance as

> Any improvement within their organization following their successful anti-corruption monitoring will in fact benefit all those who belong to it, as well as the public. On the contrary, control, accusation and sanctioning (through both formal and informal means) are costly activities. They require time, effort, sometimes also psychological suffering,

and may expose whistleblowers to both legal – if the indicted agent is finally judged innocent, or pay a bribe to buy his way out of the judicial proceeding – and extra-legal reprisal from corrupt agents, those denounced and those still operating 'under the table'. In the individual evaluation of the relative costs and advantages of denounce/sanctioning, passive coexistence or personal involvement within the network of corrupt agents, the collective action dilemma may end in discouraging the first strategy, making collusive strategies against the public interests increasingly attractive (della Porta and Vannucci 2014, 256).

In sum, within this type of approach, the more widespread the corruption, the more difficult it would be to implement societal accountability. Anti-corruption policies should create conditions favourable to the development of trust and reciprocity among citizens, public agents and clients who have the capability to associate and mobilize in a collective action aimed at encouraging whistle-blowing, exposing and enforcing anti-corruption rules. At the same time, policies should dismantle the 'bad social capital' that forms the connective tissue of corruption networks (della Porta 2000). Under certain conditions, values, norms and enforcement mechanisms will develop that make individual and collective action, aimed at controlling and sanctioning corruption, more likely and rewarding.

A main problem is that the conditions that facilitate the rise and functioning of civil society organizations mobilizing against corruption are less present the more they are needed. In particular,

> When mutual expectations of all relevant agents converge towards the shared belief that corruption is the commonly recognized, unavoidable practice, then the *institutions of corruption* rule, largely dismantling both state and societal accountability. As the practice of corruption become rampant, what is severely punished by non-legal enforcers is integrity and whistle blowing, i.e. those activities that could create uncertainty on rights at stake in the corrupt exchanges. In other words, the stronger the *hidden* accountability of actors involved in corruption, the weaker the mechanisms of state and societal accountability (della Porta and Vannucci 2014, 258).

While useful for research on anti-corruption from below, at the individual or specialized level, these reflections must be combined with those in social movement studies in order to explain the emerging focus on corruption by social movements that spread under conditions of deep-rooted corruption – defying the assumption of individual rationality and free-riderism.

3. Social movement studies and anti-corruption from below

Social movement studies have developed a quite different approach to mobilization against corruption. The discussion of collective action problems was addressed here with a focus on collective incentives and, more recently, on a relational approach that focuses on mechanisms of mobilization. The conceptual tool-kit of social movement studies pointed in particular at the importance of appropriation of opportunities, mobilization of resources and framing processes. In addition, in recent times, structural conditions related with the specific types of interactions between the state and the market have been added to the analyses. In what follows, I will detail the specific contributions that this approach could provide to research on 'anti-corruption from below'.

A first assumption in social movement studies is that actors mobilize when they see some possibility of success. The presence of mobilizable resources as well as the opening of political opportunities explain collective mobilizations and their forms, as activists tend to invest in collective action when their effort seems worthwhile. Broadly tested in cross-national (e.g., Kriesi et al. 1995; della Porta 1995) and cross-time (e.g. Tarrow 1989) analysis, the political opportunity approach suggests that protest is, by and large, more frequent and less radical when stable and/or contingent channels of access to institutions by outsiders are open. Some of the hypotheses developed within social movement studies have been criticized as too structuralist, however, and therefore unable to explain agency. Moving from a deterministic to a more processual approach, it is not political opportunities as exogenous structure, but rather the *attribution* of opportunities by activists that affects the propensity to mobilize (McAdam et al. 2001). In addition, not only opportunities but also *threats* can push towards mobilization (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). In fact, movements are not passively awaiting opportunities to open up, but rather actively creating them with their action (della Porta 2015).

Opportunities do not automatically produce mobilization. As social movement theory has argued, collective action needs organizational resources. In contrast to views of structures as directly producing reactions, social movement studies stress the role of the specific material as well as cultural resources mobilizable in contentious politics (della Porta and Diani 2006). Protest is not an individual act; rather, it requires planning, coordination, and collective choices. In this perspective, research has focused especially on the strategic dimension of organizing: social movement activists, like other collective actors, have long debates (and often controversies) about the best strategies for recruiting members, keeping commitments, influencing public opinion, and reach-

ing out to decision-makers. Addressing the 'free rider' paradox, social movement studies have considered solidarity, moral and ideological rewards as particularly important. Protests require, but also trigger, relational dynamics among social and political groups (della Porta 2015). The resource mobilization approach has long stressed the need for mobilizing structures that can transform grievances into collective action. Social movement organizational structures are in fact complex, connecting, within networks of different shapes, various types of groups: formalized associations and informal groupings, cooperatives and squats, media outlets and unions, or even movement parties.

Repertoires, however, are not chosen only on the basis of strategic consideration: they must also fit criteria of appropriateness as well as embedded traditions. Social movement studies have pointed at the importance of an issue's framing, with a moral appeal often linked with a political one. A movement's collective identity – consisting of 'perceptions of group distinctiveness, boundaries and interests for something closer to a community than a category' (Jasper 1997, 86) – carries moral obligations, based on moral aspirations such as ontological or economic security, professional ethics, religious beliefs, community allegiances and political ideologies (Jasper 1997, 140). Action comes 'in fear and moral indignation, not in calculated efforts at personal gain' (Jasper 1997, 3): it is 'their ability to provide a moral voice that makes protest activities so satisfying' (Jasper 1997, 5). Injustice frames produce moral shocks that mobilize into collective action (Gamson 2013; also Gamson, Fireman and Rytina 1982). In fact, injustice frames are extremely important for mobilization, but they require an attribution of responsibility to concrete targets, successfully bridging the abstract and the concrete (Snow and Lessor 2013), as the responsibility for the unpleasant situation needs to be attributed to a deliberate producer (Klandermans 2013). As Gamson observed, 'injustice focuses on the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul' (2013, 607).

In what follows, after mentioning the opportunities and constraints for action against corruption from below, I will look at the characteristics of some different types of civil society organizations. Starting with the more traditional lobbying approach of public interest groups such as Transparency International, I will then move to analyse anti-corruption in anti-austerity protests in general, and then into some emerging organizations specializing in issues of transparency such as WikiLeaks and Anonymous.

4. Civil society lobbying against corruption

Especially since the end of the 'cold war' (de Sousa et al. 2009), Non-Governmental Organizations have been involved in what has been defined as a 'global anti-corruption industry', which manages hundreds of millions of dollars in anti-corruption assistance projects in more than 100 countries (Sampson 2009). It has been noted that 'The anti-corruption industry intersects with movements for global ethics, corporate governance, public administration accountability and transparent management, as well as more established projects of democracy promotion, economic development, and state-building' (Sampson 2009, 170). Anti-corruption packages might be seen as the latest innovation in global capitalism: 'anticorruption seems to be both: a platform for a new global morality and a channel for yet another readjustment of global capitalism, where ethics and reputation are a valuable asset and where "reputation management" is now a corporate priority on a par with cost accounting' (Sampson 2014, 437). As noted about Transparency International (TI), these types of activities are at risk of collusion and conflicts of interest. So, 'the predominance of the coalition-building strategy over all other traditional forms of civil society engagement – such as confrontation, protest, watchdog – opens the way to a series of comfortable compromises and conflicts of interest which put at risk TI's credibility and serious aims' (De Sousa 2009, 196). Promiscuous relationships between NGO chapters and domestic politics have been pointed at, together with the proximity of the influential US Chapter to large American corporate interests (De Sousa 2009). Financial reporting and auditing procedures are also a source of concern.

Repertoires of action
In this form of mobilization, action is mainly oriented towards lobbying. Thus, Sampson (2009, 172) described the chain of organizations involved in the anti-corruption 'industry':

> Professional anti-corruption fighters know how to lobby for new conventions; they know how to conduct training programmes for officials, how to carry out awareness-raising activities, how to assess corruption problems, and how to obtain grants and aid contracts from Western governments and foundations. At local levels, we find the hundreds of programmes and projects run by local NGOs or by hastily assembled project management units (PMUs) within the 'partner' government. The projects carried out by NGOs and PMUs are continually monitored through various meetings, reports, and donor visits. Further down the landscape, 'off the road' from these central policy actors and donors, are the various contracting NGOs and consulting companies. They search out signals or submit tender proposals for 'good governance' or 'public administration reform'. These groups commute between the summits where policies are

formed and the local enclaves where anti-corruption projects are implemented. Finally, in the local enclaves are the ministries in the aid-receiving countries (now called 'partners'), the local counterpart organizations (NGOs, anti-corruption agencies). Partners and counterparts select suitable 'target groups' who are the subject of campaigns (e.g. police, judges, the business community, health institutions, the general public, youth, etc.).

At the local level, where anti-corruption policies have to be implemented, the main activities consist in collecting information about donors and their priorities as well as on anti-corruption tools and events. Activists are trained in developing projects and fund-raising, while also collecting information on the cases of corruption at the local level (ibid.).

At the central level, the activities resemble those of a firm. To remain with TI as an example, life in its Secretariat is described as typical of an office:

> TI staff come into the office each day around 8.30 a.m., sit down at their computers, and peruse their incoming emails. Those with the same geographic responsibility – Latin America, Africa, or Europe, for example – share offices. During the day, staff examine their messages or review documents sent from outside, from their co-workers and superiors, or communicate with relevant national chapters. An inordinate number of these messages and documents have nothing to do with what informants call 'the anti-corruption movement' as might be envisioned. Rather they have to do with project management: reports, budgets, applications, grant proposals, lists, agendas, meetings, etc. Besides document processing and cooperation with national chapters, the other activity during the day is occasional meetings. Secretariat staff take a meeting, usually in one of the larger offices or meeting rooms, in order to make a decision about a policy move, document, or project, arranging a conference, or deciding to undertake an international mission. Meetings would last 10–30 minutes, and people would then go back to their computer again. Much of the meeting activity concerns planning and reporting on international trips. These trips include monitoring visits to national chapters, participation at international conferences, or fundraising trips to meet with donors (Sampson 2009, 175).

Differently from a social movement organization, TI operates through negotiation and cooperation, refusing open confrontation. TI chapters 'must follow two important rules of conduct: 1) they will not investigate and expose individual cases of corruption as such activity would undermine efforts to build coalitions which promote professional and technical improvements of anti-corruption systems; and 2) they must avoid par-

ty politics as partisan activity would damage TI's credibility' (TI Sourcebook 2000, Ch. 15, in De Sousa 2009, 206).

Energies are invested especially in the development of tight links with elites, in particular through the organization of International Anti-Corruption Conferences, held every second year, that gather a thousand governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, national chapters present different balances of activism and professionalism:

> In Latin America and Africa, courageous anti-corruption activists risk violence and imprisonment in their struggle to reform corrupt political systems. Anti-corruption in these countries is part of a political movement led by high profile lawyers, journalists, and academics. Anti-corruption takes the form of political activism. In Western Europe, TI chapters consist of smaller groups of volunteers who work in business, law, or as foreign aid consultants. There is often only one paid staff member. These chapters usually have a small number of members (20–50) and may meet only once or twice a year. The directors make statements, often connected to local scandals, to the press, or perhaps they lobby for whistle-blowing legislation or hold conferences; in some cases they may partner with another TI group in a developing country (Sampson 2009, 177).

In particular, TI has lobbied for international conventions against corruption (at the OECD and the UN). Some TI chapters have, moreover, developed monitoring mechanisms. So, 'TI has played a major role in bringing corruption and anti-corruption onto the agenda of multilateral organizations and national governments' (de Sousa 2009, 186). While initially aiming especially at promoting transparency and curbing corruption in international business transactions, it then extended its interest to corruption as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain' at various territorial levels (http://www.transparency.org/about_us). In addition, TI aims at building anti-corruption capacity by engaging 'groups that are expressly non-partisan and non-confrontational' (TI Sourcebook 2000, Ch. 15, cit. in De Sousa 2009, 195).

Mobilizing resources

Organizational activities are oriented towards mobilizing resources, with particular attention to fundraising. Within the anti-corruption industry, Transparency International is a main node, with a budget of about £6,000,000, a secretariat with about 45 members and about 90 national chapters (Sampson 2009). Like other international NGOs involved in anti-corruption, TI is a very professionalized civil society organization, with a membership made up of professionals rather than activists. In particular, those

working at the TI Secretariat in Berlin comprise 'project officers, programme directors, legal specialists, financial officers, database specialists, webmasters, and interns' (ibid., 176).

Founded in 1993 by former World Bank functionaries, TI has a secretariat in Berlin that coordinates the activities of chapters, as well as organizing research and publishing (e.g., the Corruption Perception Index and Global Corruption Report) (Sampson 2009). With a mission-based accountability, TI 'responds to affiliate expectations rather than the interests of constituents or a broader movement' (Brown et al. 2012, 1101). It has been noted that 'Mission-based IANGOs gain legitimacy from high quality work (technical or performance legitimacy), commitment to societal values (normative legitimacy) and association with widely respected actors (associational legitimacy)' (ibid., 1101). In these types of NGOs, which tend to be large and visible, 'international boards are often composed of representatives of national affiliates are selected for professional expertize or for their commitment to IANGO goals rather than to speak for member values or constituent interests' (ibid., 1101). TI is supported by a board of ex-heads of state and corporate CEOs. As a federation, it has 'strong central units that set strategic contexts for affiliates and protect their shared brand' (ibid., 1102). Funds are collected through grants (e.g. by the EU, USAID or the Soros Foundation) and donations, but also through the selling of services, such as surveys on corrupt behaviours or the training of civil servants.

Quite centralized, TI has been defined as an international NGO, with occasional links with social movements at the domestic level (De Sousa 2009, 186-7). As De Sousa (2009, 189) noted,

> The centrifugal drive for franchising was dictated both by the need to search for a constituency (legitimization and representation factors) and the need to consolidate the brand (the marketing factor). Once the organization became relatively solid (in terms of its membership, structure, governance, and funding) and its brand became well known worldwide – particularly through the CPI and the passing of the OECD anti-bribery convention – the franchising became inevitably centripetal as TI tried to maintain the reputation of its brand.

However, the franchising systems have created tensions between the Secretariat and the national chapters, with increasing demands for transparency and internal accountability.

Framing anti-corruption

NGOs tend to develop a pragmatic discourse that is often oriented towards negotiation with various stakeholders. In particular, TI frames the struggle against corruption as oriented to forming a coalition involving private corporations and public governments. So,

> The anti-corruption scene around TI has no virulent debates, no factional disputes, no struggles over dogma, no urge to go out and demonstrate, no urge to proselytize, no effort to link anti-corruption with even moderate anti-globalization movements. The only 'marching' in TI are the sojourns to international conferences and to donors' offices in European capitals and in Washington. These donors are the furthest thing from global social movements. Instead of manifestos, TI produces interminable project applications and evaluation reports. … While TI policy priorities may change – more emphasis on fighting poverty or on private sector corruption – TI's general strategy remains that of founder Peter Eigen: to 'build coalitions' with the broadest range of international policy actors so as to stay on the inside (Sampson 2009, 183).

TI has framed the issue of anti-corruption in an inclusive way, invoking a coalition of government, business, and civil society to a generic fight against 'evil corruption' in order to free the world from corruption (de Sousa 2009). Concerns about corporate crime and political corruption are, in fact, considered as less central than public sector corruption. So, 'Private sector anti-corruption initiatives do not go much further than the adoption of international conventions while political corruption is something that a large number of NCs find hard to address, often due to the incapacity of their senior officials to keep at arm's length from the business and political sectors' (De Sousa 2009, 202). Never using confrontational action, TI 'prefers to sit at the "high table" with World Economic Forum (WEF) institutions instead of being "out on the streets" standing in opposition to the promoters of neo-liberalism and globalization (world governing and financial institutions, corporations, governments of powerful/developed countries). This is also evidence that, intentionally or inadvertently, TI's anti-corruption discourse has conveniently married the neo-liberal discourse promoted by those international agencies whose action TI claims to have contested' (De Sousa 2009, 205).

5. Anti-austerity protests and anti-corruption from below

Recent anti-corruption protests have developed within and addressed social and political crises: not just contingent opportunities and threats, but what one could call, with Habermas (1976), a 'crisis of legitimacy'. In contrast to those addressed by Ha-

bermas, this legitimacy crisis develops in a new social formation, very different from the organized, state regulated, Fordist, mature capitalism to which he referred. It is a legitimacy crisis of/in a late neoliberal system that takes the form of a crisis of responsibility of the state, which is perceived as having failed to protect deeply rooted citizenship rights at the social, political and civic levels. This has an effect on some of the specific characteristics of anti-corruption protests, especially on their political claims, frames and organizational models, as the forms of corruption are influenced by the type of relations between the state and the market that is typical for each capitalist formation. Anti-corruption movements react in fact to a perceived threat, linking corruption to social inequality and the delegitimation of the political class. In this sense, protesters react to perceived threats to the very survival of society and, through their action, create opportunities, as the corrupt system is more and more exposed as very fragile, as indicated by the drop in support for mainstream parties.

Action repertoires

The power of the powerful octopus, made up of bankers and political elites, had already been denounced in Iceland by the indignant citizens who in 2008 and 2009 protested the bank crisis as well as the political proposal to solve it. The Arab Spring linked demands for democracy and freedom with the denunciation of the corruption of the elites in power. Calls for dignity were bridged with stigmatization of the kleptocracy of the dictators. Inspired by the Arab Spring, the Indignados in Spain and Greece contested the increasing inequalities face to the corruption of their elected representatives.

Corruption has been denounced forcefully at protest *acampadas* in places as distant and different as Tahrir Square, Placa de Catalonia, Syntagma Square, Zuccotti Park or Taksim Square. In all these cases, new technologies were used within a logic of crowd sourcing, producing mass aggregation of individuals (Bennet and Segenberg 2013). Campaigns of protest against corruption, with street demonstrations and protest camps, developed not only in the economies in crisis but also in those considered as most dynamic – for example, the 2013 protests in Brazil, Russia, China or Turkey against increasing authoritarian and personalistic regimes, which combined appeal to conservative values with kleptocracy and patrimonialism. In Turkey, authoritarian personalization of power assumed the characteristics of Erdogan's imitation of the absolute power of the sultanat, targeted by the Gezi protest of 2013 (della Porta and Atak 2017). In the same year, in Ukraine, the camps at Maidan Square addressed an increasingly authoritarian regime that combined centralization of decisional power and wealth – including the enrichment of a few protected oligarchs, especially in the circles more loyal to the president, Victor Yanukovivych (Ritter 2017). In South Africa, the co-

optation and betrayal of former social movements by a party brought to power thanks to their mobilization have been denounced by activists. A crisis of legitimacy of the former movement-party now long in government was triggered by a mix of neoliberalism and corruption that affected the post-apartheid regime (O'Connor 2017). In Brazil, the protests – including massive marches – around the soccer World Cup were a reaction to a growing separation between the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores, Workers' Party) – which had once developed as a movement party – and its former base of reference. They targeted neoliberal policies, based on increasingly tighter relations between the party oligarchy and business elites (Mendes 2017).

Mobilizing resources

Research on the recent wave of anti-austerity protests in the northern part of the globe points at the role of organizations, looking at the genealogy of these movements in previous protest waves taking place at the national and transnational levels. Anti-corruption organizations are often embedded in networks of social movements with various types of traditions and identities. Within the anti-austerity protests, many groups addressed the corruption of the elites within a critique of social inequalities. When looking at today's protests against corruption, we must indeed locate them within multi-issue networks of various types of organizations. While some of them are well-established organizations and groupings, others are informal, often growing along with the mobilization itself. Ideological as well as generational diversity often characterize the nets, with shifting balance along the protest waves. The forms of anti-corruption protest – more or less massive, more or less peaceful, more or less innovative – are expected to be influenced by both opportunities and resources (material as well as symbolic).

The stigmatization of the corruption of the 1% developed in fact within social movements that were characterized by horizontal forms of organization and disruptive repertoires of collective action. For instance, in Gezi Park, protesters experienced 'everyday chance encounters and have the chance to experience a different kind of knowledge going beyond the mere experience of effects' (Karakayalí and Yaka 2014, 132). In Ukraine, as well – at least in the beginning of the protests – Maidan was described as an open space welcoming plurality of religion but also ethnicity within a sort of independent Republic (Phillips 2014), praising horizontality against a corrupt political class – including the oppositional parties – as 92 per cent of interviewed protesters proclaimed that they did not belong to parties or organizations (Onuch 2014; 2015). In Bosnia, protests also developed in a horizontal and participatory format, horizontality being praised against the vertical collusion of the economic and political elites, with the

squatting of public spaces aiming at nurturing new repertoires of action but also at promoting new collective identities.

Framing anti-corruption

Within the anti-austerity protests, corruption has been defined as outrageous, given the extreme levels of enrichment of the '1%' in front of the suffering of the '99%'. So, in Iceland (a country that, before the crisis, had most encouraging levels of transparency in government), the citizens mobilized against the power of criminal bankers and colluding politicians. Inspired by the Arab Spring, the Indignados in Spain and Greece denounced the corruption of the political class, with convergence of centre-right and centre-left into a 'PPSOE' (a hybrid of the two main parties, PP and PSOE). The connivances of politicians of both parties with greedy big corporations – with generous contributions protected by the right of expression – have been stigmatized by Occupy Wall Street (della Porta et al. 2017). Claims in Puerta del Sol included the fight against corruption through the development of norms aiming at establishing political transparency, and also the creation of a mechanism of control by the citizens, with effective separation of powers (Nez 2011). In OWS, demands also focus on greater political transparency, getting corporate money out of politics (Blumenkranz et al. 2011). The drastically decreasing trust in parties is reflected in slogans such as 'No les votas' and 'No nos representan', widespread among the Spanish protests and translated in the Greek and Portuguese. Anti-corruption frames – such as those against the 'casta' – have been resonant with a diverse base of support, also appealing to personal experiences with perceived injustice. The corruption of the '1%' signals the breaking of a moral pact.

The immorality of the system is denounced, with a sense of injustice related to greedy politicians and businessmen. Exchanges of bribes for favours, but also the development of collusive elites of politicians and businessmen, were considered as immoral and unjust. Occupy Wall Street imported these frames into the United States, expressing them in the slogan of the 99% against the 1%. The 1% is accused of having 'taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process' (van Gelder et al. 2012, 37). The narrative of the anti-austerity protests points at the convergence of business and politicians, so that 'banks got bailed out, we got sold out'. Institutional democracy is in particular seen as not representative of people, but of banks and financial power. The main target of Occupy Wall Street is the symbol of 'opportunity-making and opportunity breaking where anything that can be marketed is marketed' (Gitlin 2012, 7). On 29 September, the New York general assembly of the OWS stated, 'We come to you at a time when corporations, which places power over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our government' (van Gelder et al. 2012, 111).

The target of blame is mainly the corruption of representative institutions in neoliberalism, 'through revolving doors, practiced deregulation and administrative collusion, organized themselves into combinations in the name of competition' (Gitlin 2012, 11). In Spain, the slogan is 'We are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers.' Against the corruption of representative democracy, there is a call for accountability of public affairs and prosecution of political corruption (Perugorría and Tejerina 2013, 436). The struggle against the corrupt 1% is conducted in the name of the citizens suffering from the corruption of democracy. In Spain, Democracia Real Ya called on the 'common people' to mobilize against the corruption of the system, stating 'Some of us have clearly defined ideologies, others are apolitical, but we are all concerned and angry about the political, economic, and social outlook which we see around us: corruption among politicians, businessmen, bankers, leaving us helpless, without a voice' (in Gerbaudo 2012, 13).

Similar frames spread in the protests that followed. In Brazil, where about half of the protesters had never participated in contentious politics before, protests spread the impression that 'something was happening deep inside the Brazilian society' (Singer 2013). While the claims of the Free Fare Movement were clearly resonant in a left-wing narrative stressing citizens' rights and public services, opposition to a centre-left party, long in power, was framed through attempts to rise above the definition of a right and a left, promoting participation from below against the corruption of those in power. In South Africa, the police killing of 34 striking platinum miners on 16 August 2012 in Marikana became a watershed moment, 'a rupture that led to a sequence of further occurrences, notably a massive wave of strikes, which are changing structures that shape people's lives' (Alexander 2013, 605).

Similarly, in Bulgaria, daily protests were organized in the main square in Sophia to denounce the oligarchic development of economic and political power in an elitist system. Not by chance, the main claim was for the resignation of the prime minister, considered as the incarnation of a system dominated by the monopoly in the energy sector, with strong collusive support on the part of political elites. The protestors grew increasingly critical of those in power, refusing parties as either allies or interlocutors and demanding clean politics, denouncing the widespread patronage as well as rampant corruption.

The contention against the privatization of the energy sector paved the way for further mobilization around a narrative that established a dichotomy between the oligarchs and the people:

> Let's not allow political preferences to blind us! The oligarchy and the mafia are what we protest against. It is not important which party we support. Now we are Citizens against the mafia! […] We are the people who are not represented in the National Assembly. […] We are not the rich against the poor, the intelligent against the stupid, the beautiful against the ugly, the young against the old, the citizens against the peasants, the right against the left. […] We are the angry ones [...] even though we smile. Because we follow the rules and we protest against those who ignore them (cit. in della Porta 2017, 231).

The strong stigmatization of the political class proved very strong in Bosnia, where demonstrators often targeted the interests and privileges of politicians and their friends in the business sector (Milan 2017).

In sum, in all these protests the morality of the protesters (and the fellow citizens in general) is opposed to the immorality of those in power. The struggle against corruption (the corruption of the elite) allowed for the transcendence of ideological counter-positions.

6. Direct action for transparency: WikiLeaks and Anonymous

The two types of civil society actors we have described above resemble public interest groups (the first) and social movements (the second). A third, more hybrid model takes from the first a focus on transparency, and from the second the use of contentious forms of direct action as well as a radical framing bridging the issue of corruption with broader claims. Anonymous and WikiLeaks are the most visible examples of this third type.

Action Repertoire

Action repertoires by Anonymous and WikiLeaks are certainly disruptive, as both practice direct action oriented towards free information. While WikiLeaks operates as an intermediary between those who have information and the public, Anonymous hacks listservs and other databases to acquire information (McCarthy 2015). WikiLeaks is an organization that publishes whistle-blowers' information, using advanced technologies to protect the providers of information. It allows files to move across the Internet anonymously, routing the materials through countries with strong protections for freedom of the press, using mirroring technologies so that content cannot be removed. Anonymous represents an evolution in digital activist tactics (Ravetto-Biagioli 2013), operating at the intersection of trolling and political reaction against institution-

al practices perceived as limiting free speech – 'I came for the lulz but stayed for the outrage', stated an Anon (Coleman 2011a, 3).

Distributed denial of service attacks is a main tool used by Anonymous to spread a political message (Barnard-Wills 2011). Digital sit-ins (DoS – denial of service attacks) are 'the cyberspace equivalent of a protest march that blocks access to a factory. … Much like a sit-in at a lunch counter or government office, a DoS attack disrupts the public face of a target to draw attention to its actions and provoke a response' (Jarvis 2014, 338).

Anonymous targets machines that limit access to information (Deseriis 2013, 34). Actions are often addressed against the websites and communication infrastructure of organizations that are accused of limiting access to information and information technologies:

> While the Luddites destroyed the hardware of wide knitting frames, shearing frames, gig mills, and power looms, the hackers and activists affiliated with Anonymous hack passwords and firewalls, protected databases, and Internet filtering software. … Such operations have both a political and an economic function. On a political level, they express an organized response of Internet users against all forms of restriction on the free circulation of information. Furthermore, by taking off-line symbolic targets such as the official websites of state institutions and hacking security firms, they expose the vulnerability of the corporate and state apparatus of control. On an economic level, such actions have the effect of devaluing classified information, proprietary data, and technologies (Deseriis 2013, 34).

Through this type of action, Anonymous took revenge on the repression of Julian Assange, who founded WikiLeaks in 2006, as well as on such whistle-blowers as Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning) and Edward Snowden (Coleman 2011a). After operation Chanology (against the scientology church), actions against dictators' censorship – such as Operation Tunisia or Operation Syria – hacking governmental and corporations' websites was oriented to show the force of the civil society in challenging governments' capacity to censor access to information (Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014).

Anonymous also participates in street demonstrations. In fact, a video includes practical information for street actions such as:

> (#1) 'stay cool;' (#8) 'no violence;' (#16) 'know the dress code (forming a loose yet reasonable dress code for protest members will help to maintain cohesion and get the public to take you seriously);' (#17) 'cover your face (this will prevent your identifica-

> tion from videos taken by hostiles, other protesters or security);' (#22) 'document the demonstration (videos and pictures of the event may be used to corroborate your side of the story if law enforcement get involved; furthermore, posting images and videos of your heroic actions all over the internet is bound to generate win, exhorting other Anonymous to follow your glorious example)' (Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014, 243).

The communicative style of Anonymous has been characterized by artistic creativity, with transgression of conventions and taboos (Goode 2015). Anons act 'For freedom […] and of course, for the lulz' (http://anonnews.org/press/item/2111/, accessed August 30, 2013). Threats tend to be communicated with a sense of humour.

In terms of their logic of action, both groups have been defined as 'E-bandits' reacting to informational asymmetry. So,

> Both of them rely heavily on the notion of anonymity in their work, whether in how it goes about soliciting information (WikiLeaks) or as its primary activism tactic (Anonymous). They are both also promulgators of the idea that citizens deserve more access to information that the powers that be hold in secret, thus their raisons d'être hinge on a Robin Hood ethic of empowering the disempowered. Both groups have been able to attack governments and corporations in ways that have much more wide-ranging implications than many other global social movements before them, from economic to security threats.

Additionally, 'By taking information, defacing websites, or otherwise using digital means to act against the powers that be, e-bandits effectively take from the rich through disabling commercial and government websites, and try at times to give back to the community, either in terms of revelation (releasing videos, previously unavailable materials), reporting, or providing previously unavailable tools (DDoS attacks)' (Wong and Brown 2013, 1018).

Mobilizing resources

In their organizational structures, both organizations aim at building participatory structures, through the development of horizontal and decentralized models (McCarthy 2015). Both groups have been presented as organizational hybrids, with different characteristics.

WikiLeaks is defined as 'a nonprofit, whistleblowing organization and website that publishes materials provided by anonymous sources' (Beyer 2014b, 143). While the site is run through the work of many volunteers, Julian Assange is a central figure with important organizational power. WikiLeaks is a platform for whistle-blowers, disseminat-

ing the information they provide to other media as well as directly to the public. Differently from journalists, WikiLeaks 'does release material through traditional media outlets but also emulates new media by self-publishing releases on its website' (McCarthy 2015, 443). The aim of the organization is making those in power accountable through the leaking of sensitive information as, as Assange explained,

> The more secretive or unjust an organization is, the more leaks induce fear and paranoia in its leadership and planning coterie. This must result in minimization of efficient internal communications mechanisms (an increase in cognitive 'secrecy tax') and consequent system-wide cognitive decline resulting in decreased ability to hold onto power as the environment demands adaption. Hence in a world where leaking is easy, secretive or unjust systems are nonlinearly hit relative to open, just systems. Since unjust systems, by their nature, induce opponents, and in many places barely have the upper hand, mass leaking leaves them exquisitely vulnerable to those who seek to replace them with more open forms of governance (Assange 2006, in Bodò 2014, 5).

While WikiLeaks rotates around Assange, Anonymous stresses its refusal of leadership, as anonymity is also aimed at promoting anti-celebrity discourse (Coleman 2011b). While activities are open to the participation of all those who want to contribute, Anonymous defines itself as open idea:

> Now first and foremost, it is important to realize that ANONYMOUS – in fact – does not exist. It is just an idea – an internet meme – that can be appropriated by anyone, anytime to rally for a common cause that's in the benefit of humankind. […] This means anyone can launch a new ideological message or campaign under the banner of ANONYMOUS. Anyone can take up a leading role in the spreading of the ANON-consciousness. […] ANYONE anywhere can initiate an Anonymous operation, action, or group – and so long as they adhere to these 3 basic principles they are as much Anonymous as anyone. EVERYONE is Anonymous (cited in Fuchs 2013, 348).

The organizational structure of Anonymous has been described as a fluid (Dobusch and Schoeneborn 2015), rhizomatic network of distributed activists (Coleman 2011a), a swarm that 'attacks from all directions, and intermittently but consistently – it has no "front", no battle line, no central point of vulnerability. It is dispersed, distributed, and yet in constant communication' (Galloway and Thacker 2007, 66). Made up of a series of networks and networked actors that share a complex of memes (Jarvis 2014), Anonymous has an amorphous and changing structure, with an emphasis on participation. This is reflected in the group's self-representation:

> You cannot join Anonymous. Nobody can join Anonymous. Anonymous is not an organization. It is not a club, a party or even a movement. There is no charter, no manifest, no membership fees. Anonymous has no leaders, no gurus, no ideologists. In fact, it does not even have a fixed ideology. All we are is people who travel a short distance together – much like commuters who meet in a bus or tram: for a brief period of time we have the same route, share a common goal, purpose or dislike. And on this journey together, we may well change the world. Nobody can speak for Anonymous. Nobody could say: you are in, or you are out. Do you still want to join Anonymous? Well, you are in if you want to (Online statement cited in Potter 2015, 6).

The decision-making process is multi-layered as well as unrefined (Halupka and Star 2011), not without internal conflicts and power structures. According to their self-description:

> Anonymous is not a person, nor is it a group, movement or cause: Anonymous is a collective of people with too much time on their hands, a commune of human thought and useless imagery. A gathering of sheep and fools, assholes and trolls, and normal everyday netizens. An anonymous collective, left to its own devices, quickly builds its own society out of rage and hate. […] They have no leader, no pretentious douchebag president or group thereof to set in stone what Anonymous is and is not about. This makes them impossible to control or organize. Not really a collective at all – more like a stampede of coked-up lemmings. […] Anonymous is not a single person, but rather, represents the collective whole of the internet. As individuals, they can be intelligent, rational, emotional and empathetic. As a mass, a group, they are devoid of humanity and mercy (Encyclopedia Dramatica 2011, in Bodò 2014, 2).

In terms of organizational identity, anonymity also plays an important symbolic role in both. While for WikiLeaks, anonymity is an important part of the way of operating – like Ludd for the Luddists – Anonymous functions as collective pseudonyms that anyone can use in order to claim individual and collective actions, bringing 'seemingly un-related struggles within a common discursive space' (Deseriis 2013, 35). In Anonymous, 'Each participant is encouraged to communicate within any given community utilising the name "Anonymous". This serves to strip away identity and allow for an exchange of ideas free from pre-constructed opinions. This concept of anonymity in posting suggests that an author should be judged on the merit of their argument rather than the prominence of their persona' (Halupka and Star 2011, 3).

Framing anti-corruption

The shared interest by both organizations is 'to break open structures that distort or block the flow of information' (McCarthy 2015, 440). In fact, the diagnostic framing singles out the negative effects of censorship as suppression of information and diffusion of fake news. For both organizations, censorship impinges upon human rights, which are considered as central for democracy, as 'to threaten to cut people off from the global consciousness as you have is criminal and abhorrent. To move to censor content on the Internet based on your own prejudice is morally reprehensible' (Anonymous 2012, in McCarthy 2015, 449).

In both cases, transparency is of utmost importance in the fight against corruption. If for WikiLeaks the disclosure of information about the corruption of the elites was at the very core of the whistle-blowing activities, for Anonymous corruption became important especially when the organization campaigned in favour of Julian Assange, defined as a symbol of 'everything we hold dear. He despises and fights censorship constantly, is possibly the most successful international troll of all time, and doesn't afraid of fucking anything (not even the US government)... Anonymous has a chance to kick back for Julian. We have a chance to fight the oppressive future which looms ahead. We have a chance to fight in the first infowar ever fought' (Letter from Anon 2010, in Beyer 2014b, 145). Corruption was also important as Anonymous participated in the Occupy Wall Street protests. In a YouTube video, the group stated that 'Occupy protests continue to grow despite the puppet media, who is bought and controlled by politicians and corporations […] Fight greed, corruption and corporate control of our democracy. […] We will not stand for your atrocities and injustices any longer. We are Bradley Manning, we are Scott Olsen. […] We are people. We are free. We are one. We are Anonymous' (Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014, 255).

The perceived prognosis is the building of a transparent society which – differently from TI but resonant with the anti-austerity discourse – is bridged with claims of social justice. So, the text 'Principles: An Anonymous Manifesto' points at an 'open, fair, transparent, accountable and just society', in which information is 'unrestricted and uncensored', the upholding of citizens' 'rights and liberties' (such as the right to privacy against surveillance). Cyber-libertarianism is often bridged with claims for social justice, stigmatizing the 'abuse and corruption of corporations, banks, and governments', as 'The time has come to say: Enough! The abuse and corruption of corporations, banks, and governments can no longer be tolerated' (in Fuchs 2013, 367).

For both groups, motivation to action is framed as a moral imperative, as 'By establishing that they speak for the good of the people and by constructing discourses around common human rights, WikiLeaks and Anonymous are able to take a moral

high ground as upholders of what is right, allowing them to castigate those who would seemingly perpetrate injustice' (McCarthy 2015, 454).

7. This special issue

In short, to the solutions suggested by corruption studies – based on assumptions about individual choices – social movement studies add a perspective focused on the analysis of collective processes. As mentioned, in recent times, social movements have focused on corruption, putting forward some alternative narratives of its causes and solutions. A sort of new anti-corruption paradigm has emerged against the dominance of the free market, on neoliberalism and the declining qualities of democracy, face to powerful oligarchies. These movements praised a horizontal, networked organizational structure, framing corruption as a blatant example of and cause for inequality.

Anti-corruption from below is based upon a different narrative from the one that had driven institutional but also associational attempts at increasing accountability. Corruption is stigmatized as a consequence of the retrenchment of the state and of the dominance of the free market rather than simply the result of too much state. Rather than generic good governance, based on depoliticized visions of state tasks, the mentioned movements asked for a return to a 'politics' based on normative concerns and choices. Against privatization, liberalization and deregulation – accused of facilitating corruption – they call for a return to the public as well as to rules.

Scandals like the Panama Papers fuelled the condemnation of collusive spaces and revolving doors. Rather than delegating the fight for transparency to big repressive apparatuses, it is promoted as a task of civil society (Vannucci 2012). The degeneration of democracy is stigmatized, and innovative forms of political participation are seen as (part of) the solution, with a return to politics as public good (della Porta 2013; della Porta, Font and Sintomer 2014). The return of regulation (such as the Glass-Steagall law) as well as increased ability to denounce malpractice (thorough class action) are suggested (Marcon and Pianta 2013). Accountability is located within civil society organizations such as Wikileaks or Anonymous, which increase the surveillance capacity of the civil society. So, in neoliberalism, it is the system itself that is considered as corrupt, through conflicts of interest and revolving doors.

The contributions that are collected in this special issue look at these developments in anti-corruption from below in different countries (even in different continents), addressing collective actions that took diverse forms, by groups with heterogeneous organizational models and frames.

As Andrea Pirro's chapter on Bulgaria and Hungary indicates, diagnostic frames of state capture are accompanied by growing anti-establishment sentiments so that the fight against corruption has the potential to trigger a broad coalition, against what is perceived as unjust. Comparing various campaigns against the construction of large infrastructures, Piazza and Sorci also single out the claims for transparency as a secondary, but important, component of a discourse constructed around the defence of the environment and peace within increasingly anti-system and anti-establishment narratives.

Both chapters point at the role of brokers – such as journalists – in the anti-corruption struggle. Similarly, in Chiara Milan's chapter, brokers and triggering events are singled out in the anti-corruption campaigns in Bosnia Herzegovina, Romania and Macedonia, with an important role for civil society especially in the first case, as well as for the judicial branch. In all three cases, she points at the vicious circles between increasingly visible corruption and declining trust in the political class. The chapter on Romania, comparing four waves of protests with corruption as a central mobilizing issue, also points at the vicious circle of corruption and inefficiency, with the gradual building of cognitive liberation among the citizens.

Comparing Senegal and Burkina Faso, Wienkoop and Prause analyse the framing of anti-corruption as broadly resonant with conceptions of citizenship (and the empowerment of 'citizens' broom'), linking claims for social justice and democracy. Here as well, journalists and artists play an important role, with a particularly large influence by young people. Loris Caruso also points at claims for popular sovereignty in the historical comparison of anti-corruption discourses.

In her comparison of the Italian and Spanish cases of data activism against corruption, Alice Mattoni singles out the various strategies of data creation, usage and transformation in groups bridging anti-corruption with calls for justice and transparency. Besides some commonalities, while the Italian campaign is centralized, targeting mainly politicians and oriented to changes in laws, the Spanish one is instead networked, addressing the citizens with the collection and distribution of information on corrupt behaviour.

Acknowledgements

Trends and European Responses to the Challenge of Corruption (Grant agreement no: 290529).

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