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### **From Environmentalism to NIMBYism: Life in Tuscany 1986-2008**

#### **Introduction**

Between 1946 and the second half of the 1960s, the environmental problems caused by economic development remained ignored in a general climate of laissez-faire since legislation was entirely inadequate to confront the new issues raised by such a rapid economic growth. The only measures available to protect urban environment and natural resources were the Act no. 2258 of 20 March 1865 (on public works), the Ministerial instructions of 20 June 1896 (local regulations on public health), the Consolidation Act on hydraulic works of 25 July 1904, the Ministerial Decree of 26 February 1927 (update of the list of unhealthy industries published in the Official Journal of 27 February 1912), articles 217 and 227 of the Consolidated Health Act (Royal Decree of 27 July 1934 no. 1265), Act no. 366 of 20 March 1941 (household waste) and article 650 of the Criminal Code (breach of orders of the Authority).

Moreover, ecological issues enjoyed very little support among the Italian population which was excited at the prospect of abandoning a state of mere subsistence and the possibility of achieving consumption levels hitherto reserved only for the more affluent classes. Enthusiasm for industrialization was almost universal and any argument questioning economic development was strongly opposed. Therefore, despite a deteriorating urban environment, organized protests were only sporadic. Much more often, cases of deterioration of the environment were reported by citizen to the Provincial Health Officer, the sole authority who dealt with ongoing environmental issues, as the medical officer in charge of protecting public health. Objects of complaint were water and air pollution, and the difficult conditions of life in the new suburbs. As for water bodies, complaints came from angry residents due to bad smells emanating from rivers and streams (many streams, receiving direct sewage and industrial and household effluents, had become open sewers) and from sports associations of fishermen, alarmed by the continuing deterioration of fish fauna. There were also reports from health monitoring officers, who pointed out that river banks had become tips where waste of all kinds (often industrial waste) was dumped.

The presence of factories within densely populated neighbourhoods caused many protests from local residents. During inspections, requested by the Provincial Health Officer, it often happened that the police had to quell squabbles arising between citizens annoyed by fumes, and industrial workers resenting sanitary inspections for fear that these may lead to the closure of plants. Finally, numerous complaints concerned the living conditions of residents (often in cramped and unsanitary dwellings) of the newly

built suburbs, which lacked basic sanitary infrastructure (waterworks, sewerage systems...), open spaces and places of socialization.

In the late 1960s, the environmental movement began to take its earliest faltering steps. The main associations – Italia Nostra, Pro-natura and WWF<sup>1</sup> –, still favoured a conservationist approach: at the core of their action there was, in fact, the defence of the landscape (including forest and mountain areas), the protection of wildlife, the battle of opinions for the establishment of new protected areas.

For those years we cannot yet speak of environmental movements capable of influencing policies, since the various organizations were unable to mobilize a significant number of people willing to engage in “environmental protection”. Public interest was still very marginally addressed to environmental issues which seemed of secondary importance as compared to problems of an economic nature.

### **The discovery of environmental problems and development of environmental organizations (1973-1987)**

In Italy, the mainsprings of environmental change were the rapid process of urbanization (the urban population rose from 54.1 per cent in 1950 to 66.8 per cent in 1985) and the disorderly economic development, which gave rise to serious pollution incidents and hydrogeological upheaval (suffices reminding the 1951 flood of Polesine and the flooding of Venice and Florence in 1966).

The first report on the state of the environment (Prima relazione sullo stato dell’ambiente), published in 1973, brought home the fact that 42 per cent of the population lived in “high epidemic-risk areas from air pollution” and emphasized the deterioration of inland waters quality, contaminated as it was by industrial effluents and from household sewage (sewage disposal plants served only 21 per cent of connections to sewers)<sup>2</sup>. A further problem concerned the lowering of the water table and the resulting phenomena of subsidence that plagued nearly all large metropolitan areas (involving 8.3 per cent of the country where 49.4 per cent of the population resided). A further emergency was represented by a steady increase in the production of household waste (7,844,521 tonnes/year in the four-year period 1976-1979) since a regular collection service and disposal was only available to 56 per cent of the population.

Concerning pollution there are at least four episodes worth remembering. Between 1956 and 1987, the Bormida Valley was the scene of a fierce clash between local communities and the chemical company Acna, which had a plant in Cengio for processing, among others, explosive derivatives such as benzol and naphthalene, carbolic acids, butyl phthalate and aniline. At the heart of the controversy was the pollution of the Bormida river basin: already in 1909, the magistrate of Mondovi had prohibited the pumping of water from wells in some communities of the valley and, in 1922, the Cortemilia aqueduct was closed. In 1969 drinking water supply to the town of Strevi was suspended and, in 1970, the municipal administration of Acqui Terme filed a complaint against unknown persons for the crime of negligent poisoning. However, only in 1987 it was definitely established that the river Bormida was

contaminated by chemicals from industrial sources, and its basin was declared “area at high risk of environmental crisis”.

In 1976, in Seveso, an accident at a chemical factory (the Icmesa, owned by Givaudan, Group Hoffman-La Roche) released a cloud of dioxin, which fell over an area 18 km<sup>2</sup>, the consequences were numerous cases of chloracne among children, a significant increase in abortions and a high pollution of the soil, so that in order to clear all that, the surface layer of the soil had to be removed. After Seveso, the European Community passed a directive (“Seveso directive” 96/82/EC) relating to the “control of major accident hazards related to dangerous substances”.

In the late 1970s, early eutrophic phenomena began to manifest themselves on a stretch of the Adriatic Sea coast involving the Lagoon of Venice and the coast of Emilia-Romagna: eutrophication became evident in the period 1988-1989 when the waters were infested by mucilage (a floating agglomerations of organic matter of high molecular weight).

Finally, by the mid 1980s, the surface water table of the Po river basin, was found to contain significant traces of atrazine (between 1984 and 1986 about 112,00 quintals of this substance were employed there)<sup>3</sup>.

In this context, conservation groups began to deviate from their prevailing conservationist attitude extending their interests to matters such as criticism of the ongoing industrial development pattern, the energy and natural resources crisis, the damage caused by the pollution to the environment, and opposed the use of nuclear energy for the production of electricity.

The worsening of pollution phenomena, the fear of a nuclear catastrophe, environmental problems in urban areas where an increasing number of people lived in precarious conditions, and the growing exploitation of natural resources, persuaded an ever growing number of people to support environmental organizations<sup>4</sup>: in 1983, the four major associations (WWF, Lega per l’Ambiente, Lipu and Italia Nostra) combined 76,000 members<sup>5</sup>.

Moreover, in 1985, the first environmentalist candidates presented themselves to the local elections obtaining about 2 per cent of the votes nationally. In 1987, the Federation of the Green lists participated in a general election winning 13 seats in the Chamber of Deputies<sup>6</sup>. In Tuscany, this nascent environmental awareness led to a series of mobilizations of an environmentalist character, joined by environmental organizations and by some spontaneous committees of citizens.

One of the most important protests concerned a plant for the production of titanium dioxide which Montedison (a major industrial group active mainly in the chemicals sector) had built near Scarlino, a small town on the Tyrrhenian coast<sup>7</sup>. The population had welcomed the chemical plant which was to give work to about 400 people. However, industrial production was blocked at the start by local authorities and by the ministry of Merchant marine who regarded the discharge into the sea of tailings (approximately 3,000 tons/day of iron sulfate) as extremely harmful to the ecosystem. This situation fuelled a bitter conflict that gave rise to confrontation between the

company and the workers in fear of losing their jobs on one side, and the local authorities supported by some environmental groups on the other.

Between 1972 and early 1974, Montedison continued to dump iron sulfate into the sea, thanks to provisional authorizations granted by the Harbour Office of Livorno. In 1973 the situation became very tense: there was an attack on the cargos used by Montedison to dump iron sulfate in the high seas, and violent riots broke out even in Corsica when dumped copperas reached the coasts of France. Moreover, the Regional Council of Tuscany<sup>8</sup> came to deal with this issue, urged by some Christian Democrat councillors, concerned about the “economic collapse” of the area of Scarlino in case Montedison decided to close the plant<sup>9</sup>. The problem ended in April 1974 when the District Court of Livorno condemned the leaders of the Scarlino chemical plant for causing an ecological disaster in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

A second mobilization of an environmental character was the one aimed at the incinerator opened in 1973 in San Donnino near Florence: the area of Florence was one of the first urban districts to decide to incinerate its own waste<sup>10</sup>. The plant emitted dark ashes which immediately worried local residents: the protest grew out of proportion in 1976, after the notorious incident concerning the toxic cloud of dioxin in Seveso. During 1982, following the results of a number of tests which detected traces of dioxin in the ash produced by the plant, a broad popular mobilization took place, which in November 1984, culminated in the occupation of the Provincial Administration offices. Popular protests led to the closure of the plant in 1986. Halting the incinerator (which dealt with 44 per cent of municipal waste produced in Florence) made it de facto impossible any disposal within the province of Florence thus forcing the municipality-owned company to transport waste wherever in Italy another facility was willing to accept it<sup>11</sup>.

Other environmental protests concerned the hypothesis of building a nuclear energy plant in the Brasimone valley (an area in the Apennines between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, where a reservoir existed), the construction of a dam in the Maremma<sup>12</sup>, and a serious pollution of the Arno caused by dumping of industrial waste from tanneries in the district of Santa Croce sull'Arno, between Florence and Pisa.

### **From the emergence of environmental groups to NIMBYism (1988-2008)**

As for the environmental movement, the last twenty years have been characterized by two phenomena: the gradual institutionalization of environmental organizations and the emergence of several protest movements at a local level, which have gradually assumed an increasingly particularistic and local-policy character.

Between the late 1980s and late 1990s of the last century, the members of environmental associations increased significantly: the WWF went from 30,000 members in 1983 to 281,000 in 1999 (+837%); Legambiente from 15,000 in 1983 to 115,000 in 1999 (+667%), Friends of the Earth-Italy from 9,204 in 1988 to 25,680 in 1997 (+179%)<sup>13</sup>.

According to a vast literature, the expansion of the environmental movement has coincided, and not only in Italy, with the emergence of “formal, professional and

basically centralized” environmental organizations or, in other words, of organizations operated by large bureaucracies with high professional levels<sup>14</sup>. This has resulted in a transformation of the nature of environmental associations: the relationship between ordinary members and the elites has become weaker, and a growing proportion of annual budgets has been destined to marketing activities aimed at convincing members to confirm their membership from year to year. The mass character of the organizations and their relationships with the institutions have tended to emphasize their willingness to compromise and have pushed environmentalists to taking increasingly more moderate stands. The moderation of the major environmental organizations has become a prerequisite for continuing the reaping of financial institutions and not diverting the majority of members, reluctant to support not only those classified as radical forms of protest (non-violent actions such as hunger strikes), but also those having a demonstrative effect (marches, mass meetings...) <sup>15</sup>.

The gradual institutionalization of environmental organizations – their having become non-governmental organizations with a very similar structure to that of traditional political parties – has caused a growing number of people to drift away from organizations that make the environmental movement too formalized<sup>16</sup> and seek alternative forms of protest<sup>17</sup>.

These alternative forms of protest, usually carried out by citizens’ associations have been interpreted as basic experiences of participation, similar to the current of Environmental Justice, or regarded as conservative attitudes – generally qualified by the acronyms LULU (Locally Unwanted Land Uses, neutral in terms of evaluation) and NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard, which is characterized in the negative sense) – suggested by individualistic and selfish reasons<sup>18</sup>. Acronyms such as LULU and NIMBY usually indicate popular protests against the construction of environmental infrastructure of public interest such as motorways, high speed railways, power plants, dumps, waste-to-energy plants, regasification terminals...

Citizens’ committees – usually backed by radical environmental groups, but viewed with suspicion and distrust by moderate organizations that regard them as mere expressions of local self-interest – have begun to spread from the second half of the 1960s reaching their peak between the 1990s of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first<sup>19</sup>. Often we refer to these basic movements with the term “NIMBY syndrome”, since their dissent did not deny the social utility of the plants in dispute, but calls for them to be built elsewhere (hence the definition of “Not In My Back Yard”). Furthermore, increasingly more often, protests involve structures unanimously deemed essential to sustainable development, such as purification plants, wind farms, photovoltaic power plants, waste processing plants. Among the best known cases are, for example, the construction of two wind farms in Nantucket Sound (Massachusetts) and in St. Lucie County (Florida).

In recent years, phenomena of local opposition to the construction of infrastructure have involved several European countries and they have assumed significant proportions especially in Italy where, according to the Centre of the Nimby Forum, they are focused on (in order of frequency) the waste-to-energy plants, thermoelectric power plants,

transport infrastructure, dumps, waste processing plants, biomass power plants and regasification terminals.

In Italy, the main reasons for this explosion of nimbyism (172 recent episodes, 53 per cent concentrated in Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany) are attributed, as well as to the fear of harmful consequences to health and environment, to concern for the unequal distribution between costs and benefits (the first would be borne primarily by local communities), to inadequate involvement of citizens in decision-making (in France, for example, there is an independent commissioner, while in the U.S. public inquiries are used) and to distrust in political parties and the representative system.

According Alessandro Beulcke, director of the Nimby Forum, nimbyism has become a typically Italian phenomenon because, in an atmosphere of permanent electoral campaign, which has characterized Italy in the early part of twenty-first century, political parties organise NIMBY protests of their own to gain consensus. Conflicts, therefore, are no longer restricted to a confrontation between groups of citizens and promoters of works, but are rather focused on local majorities and oppositions, or local authorities and central government thus ending up with fuelling protracted disputes such as is the case of the Turin-Lyon high-speed railway line<sup>20</sup>.

Coming to Tuscany, between the mid 1990s of the last century and the early part of this century, environmental protests have been marked by the birth of numerous citizens' associations directing their actions against the construction of 8 waste-to-energy plants, 4 waste processing plants, 3 facilities for the production of energy, 3 transport infrastructure and 2 wind farms.

Here we restrict ourselves to investigating three of the twenty protests mentioned above. The first case concerns the construction of the new high speed railway system which, in Tuscany, provides, among other works, a new Bologna to Florence railway line for an extent of 78.5 km of which 73.8 km underground<sup>21</sup>. As soon as the Italian Railways have made public the High Speed Project (1992), in all areas of Tuscany involved (Mugello, the valley of Terzolle and the city of Florence)<sup>22</sup>, citizens' associations opposed the construction of the new railway infrastructure for the following reasons: the high cost of infrastructure, the possible cuts of funds hitherto devoted to commuter trains, the disfigurement of the landscape, a likely damage to the hydrogeological system and threats to the flora and fauna of the areas concerned.

The protest has grown in 3 phases<sup>23</sup>. In the first (1992-1996), the committees have directed their activities against the construction of the entire railway line supported by environmental organizations and local authorities. Since 1995, however, local elections have led to an alliance between local bodies and the Region in favor of the new high-speed line<sup>24</sup>; in addition, relations between the citizens' association and environmental organizations have begun to deteriorate since the committees have accused environmental groups of acting too independently. In the second phase (1997-2000), protests were fuelled by actual damage caused by construction sites (especially during the excavation of the Vaglia and Firenzuola tunnels) to the hydrogeological system of the Mugello (drying up and depletion of 81 water courses, 37 springs, 30 wells and 5 waterworks). While the committees have continued in their opposition to the whole project, environmental groups – involved by the regions and local authorities in

decision-making – have centred their action on the request for intervention to minimize the impact on the environment. In the third phase (ongoing), the protests have shifted from the Mugello to Florence, where several citizens' associations came together to oppose the completion of the terminal stretch of the Bologna-Florence railway line consisting of an urban tunnel and a new station reserved for high speed trains<sup>25</sup>.

The second case considered concerns the construction of two waste-to-energy plants: the first situated in the immediate vicinity of Florence (at Case Passerini in the municipality of Sesto Fiorentino), the second at Testi, in the municipality of Greve in Chianti<sup>26</sup>. The citizens' association opposed to the two systems were formed in 2000, immediately after approval of the Provincial plan for waste management: many of the members had already attended, 15 years ago, the protests against the incinerator of San Donnino. Their position – supported by WWF, which has posed a staunch opposition to the incineration of waste also at a national level<sup>27</sup> – has always been unabashedly opposed to the two waste -to-energy plants.

In the case of the first plant (Florence), the committees held a consultative referendum, but failed to involve the local population significantly: only 30 per cent of the electorate turned up at the polls (84 per cent of voters were against the plant). In this context, the involvement of residents and local associations was restricted to cases of maximum conflict, since the decision-making process developed almost exclusively at the institutional/political level: four institutions were in favour of the project (the Tuscany Region, the Province of Florence, the Municipalities of Sesto Fiorentino and of Florence), two were opposed (the Municipalities of Campi Bisenzio and Greve in Chianti).

As for the two opposing municipalities, the town of Campi Bisenzio opposed the plant for electoral reasons (many participants to the committees lived, and voted, in its territory); the town of Greve in Chianti decided to object in order to obtain permission to incinerate waste not in the new waste-to-energy plant, but in a cement works which was going into liquidation (the main reason, then, was to safeguard jobs).

At the time of writing, the institutions involved in the decision confirmed the construction of the plant in Florence (works, however, have not yet started) and the technological retrofitting of the cement works of Greve in Chianti.

Finally, the third case examined concerns the construction of wind farms. In the early part of twenty-first century, protests have concerned a small plant located in Secchieta in the municipality of Montemignai, Arezzo (three 0.6 MW aerogenerators) and the site of Poggi Alti in an area adjacent the town of Scansano in the province of Grosseto (10 aerogenerators for a power of 20 MW). Opposition to wind farms conducted by citizens' associations led by the wine growers of the area (where one of the most famous wines of Tuscany, Morellino, is produced) and Italia Nostra, whereas Legambiente, WWF and Greenpeace have expressed a substantially favourable opinion. The press too had joined the committee of citizens and an important writer for the daily newspaper "La Repubblica" (the main newspaper close to the center-left political coalition) called the story "a lunatic Don Quixote script, with the monstrous windmills assault to the castle of Dulcinea" (i.e. Montepò castle, owned by the family of winemaker Biondi-Santi, located near the wind farm)<sup>28</sup>. Protests against the two wind

farms have been fuelled by concerns about the occupation of the territory, the alteration of prevailing winds, noise generation, the emanation of electromagnetic waves, the visual impact of windmills on the landscape, and interference with avifauna. Such concerns about the environmental impact of wind farms have transformed wind energy from an indispensable resource for reducing greenhouse gases emissions to an environmental problem. As regards Tuscany, this is explicitly argued by the Plan for Regional Energy Policy (PIER) where it declares that “wind farms have been affected by a climate of prejudice and hostility which has turned against the big wind turbines, and in particular a concern about an excessive impact on the landscape”. The widespread dissent towards the installation of windmills is not an insignificant problem, considering that the Regione Toscana regards wind power as a strategic resource envisaging a capacity of 330 MW for 2012<sup>29</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The study of the Tuscan case is therefore useful since it helps to understand the evolution of the environmental movement in Italy and, especially, the proliferation of local opposition to unwanted works which increasingly include works regarded as necessary to make the development of a territory sustainable: just think of the waste-to-energy plants or wind farms.

The study of the Tuscan case illustrates that the reasons for the birth of citizens' associations opposed to infrastructure of public interest are many and complex.

One such reason rests in the fact that, generally speaking, the population is not involved in decision-making which at a political institutional level is entirely managed by the central government first and then by the regions together with local authorities. The lack of involvement of the citizens in decision-making negatively affects the perception of the risk associated with a new plant: very often, in fact, protests are fuelled by ignorance deriving from a lack of transparency and a lack of adequate information campaigns from the part of institutions.

A further cause for discontent rests in the unequal distribution of costs and benefits: very often people are opposed to a facility or a plant since they regard the possible benefits considerably inferior to the drawbacks (environmental impacts, health risks, reduced quality of life...). Lastly, another reason for the proliferation of citizens' associations is that they are perceived by the population as meeting places where grassroots democracy finds its expression, while environmental organizations (just like the Italian Green Party) are regarded as too bureaucratic, excessively prone to compromise and not quite locally based. In short, citizens' associations seem to be the product of the ever-widening rift which has developed between environmental organizations (increasingly formal and similar to a political party in their organizational structures) and a new model of environmentalism, very attentive to bottom-up participation and to issues of social justice.

Analysing the case of Tuscany, we can say that citizens' associations seem to be very articulate and complex structures since they possess various souls, distinct among them, and sometimes potentially conflicting.



For this reason, it is impossible to equate all committees by indiscriminately tagging them as NIMBY. Some of them are undoubtedly motivated by NIMBY reasons (such as, for example, the committees opposed to the two wind farms). Others are moved, at one time, both by NIMBY reasons, and by more general reasons such as, for example, the proposal of an alternative model (Mechanical Biological Treatment) for the disposal of waste (this is the case of the protests against the waste-to-energy plant in Florence). Finally, still more, are the bearers of positions aspiring to propose an alternative model of development (such as in the case of some of the committees which have opposed the Bologna- Florence railway line because strongly opposed to this type of rail infrastructure, regardless of where they are constructed<sup>30</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Pro-natura was created in 1959 and in 1970 it assumed the name of “Federazione nazionale Pro natura”; Italia nostra – an association for the conservation of historical, artistic and natural heritage – was founded in 1955; the Italian office of the WWF was instituted in 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Tecneco, *Prima relazione sulla situazione ambientale del paese* (Roma: C. Colombo, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> Atrazine is an herbicide widely used in agriculture, and it can persist in soil for 10-17 months.

<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s, the following environmental organizations were active: Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura; Italia Nostra; WWF; Lega per l’ambiente (founded in 1980 upon an initiative by the Associazione ricreativa culturale italiana/Italian Recreational and Cultural Association, close to the Italian Communist Party); Lega italiana protezione uccelli/LIPU (founded in 1965, which was - and still is – the chief Italian association for the protection of birds), Amici della Terra (Italian branch of Friends of the Earth, founded in 1977 by some representatives of the Radical Party with a specific aim to contrast the building of nuclear power plant in Italy); Lega per l’abolizione della caccia/LAC (founded in 1977, to promote the abolition of hunting, in defence of the fauna and for the conservation and restoration of the environment); Lega anti vivisezione/LAV (founded in 1977, it fights against vivisection and for animals rights); Arcipelago verde (a coalition of groups of ecologists, non-violent and antinuclearist, instituted in 1981); Kronos 1991 (active between 1967 and 1995, it organised a series of campaigns specifically aimed at reforestation, the protection of small birds, the recycling of urban waste and alternative energy sources). Cf. *Arcipelago verde. La prima guida completa per chi ama la natura* (Milano: Mondadori, 1983), 23-65.

<sup>5</sup> The 76.000 members were thus divided: 30,000 WWF; 17,000 LIPU; 15,000 Lega per l’ambiente; 14,000 Italia Nostra.

<sup>6</sup> Roberto Biorcio and Giovanni Lodi, *La sfida verde: il movimento ecologista in Italia* (Padova: Liviana, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> See Fabrizio Fuga, *L’industria del biossido di titanio: la tioxide di Scarlino, un case study* (Ospedaletto, Pisa: Pacini, 1996); Saverio Luzzi, *Il virus del benessere. Ambiente, salute, sviluppo nell’Italia repubblicana* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1996), 129-130.

<sup>8</sup> The Regione is a self-governing body through which the Constitution enforces the decentralization of political power in Italy. The organs of the Regional Government are: the Regional Council (legislative body), the Administrative Board (executive body) and the President of the Administrative Board (directly elected by the citizens).

<sup>9</sup> “Non chiude la Montedison di Scarlino”, *Toscana Consiglio regionale* (January 1973): 68.

<sup>10</sup> The Florentine area includes the municipalities of Bagno a Ripoli, Calenzano, Campi Bisenzio, Fiesole, Firenze, Impruneta, Lastra a Signa, Scandicci, Sesto Fiorentino and Signa.

<sup>11</sup> See Andrea Giuntini, *Cinquant’anni puliti puliti. I rifiuti a Firenze dall’Ottocento alla Società Quadrifoglio* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2006), 138-142, 159-170; “A Piazza Signoria tra sacchi di rifiuti”, *La Repubblica* (12 December 1986); “Firenze da ieri è sommersa dall’immondizia”, *La Repubblica* (17 April 1988).

<sup>12</sup> The Maremma is a vast area in Italy bordering the Tyrrhenian Sea, consisting of part of south-western Tuscany and part of northern Lazio.

<sup>13</sup> Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, *Movimenti senza protesta? L’ambientalismo in Italia* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2004), 81-83. The authors also provide data relative to the Lega anti vivisezione/ LAV (Anti-Vivisection League: 13,500 members in 1997) and to Greenpeace-Italia (40,000 members by the end of the 1990s).

<sup>14</sup> Della Porta and Diani, *Movimenti senza protesta?*, 79-80. Cf. also Grant Jordan and William A. Maloney, *The Protest Business? Mobilizing campaign groups* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Hein Anton Van der Heijden, “Political Opportunity Structure and the Institutionalization of the Environmental Movement”, *Environmental Politics*, 6 (1997): 25-50.

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<sup>15</sup> Della Porta and Diani, *Movimenti senza protesta?*, 87-94. See also Christopher Rootes (ed.), *Environmental Movements: Local, National and Global* (London: Frank Cass, 1999); Christopher Rootes, "The Transformation of Environmental Activism: Activists, Organizations and Policy-Making", *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, 12 (1999): 153-173; Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> At present the most important environmental organizations are: Legambiente, WWF, Greenpeace, Amici della Terra, Lega protezione uccelli-LIPU, Federazione nazionale Pro Natura, Italia Nostra, Fondo per l'Ambiente italiano-FAI, Lega anti vivisezione-LAV, Lega anticaccia-LAC, Mare Vivo, Verdi Ambiente e Società-VAS, Ambiente e Lavoro, Agenzia nazionale protezione animali-ENPA, Istituto nazionale di urbanistica.

<sup>17</sup> At present the WWF-Italia does not provide on its web site the number of its members. It is however possible to work it out approximately utilizing the final balance of 2008 where the association declares an income derived from "membership fees" amounting to 3,691,233.96 euro. Assuming an average fee of 30 euro (membership fees span from a 20 euro for "panda explorer" to 300 euro for "millennium club memberships") we deduce that member number to a little over 123,000: considerably fewer than the 281,000 members of 1999. Legambiente, who describes itself as "the most widespread environmental organization in Italy" boasts, on its web site, "more than 115.000 between members and supporters" (their number remains therefore unchanged since 1999).

<sup>18</sup> See William R. Freudenberg and Susan K. Pastor, "Nimbys and Lulus. Stalking the syndromes", *Journal of social issues*, 48 (1992): 39-61; Carissa Schively, "Understanding the NIMBY and LULU Phenomena: Reassessing Our Knowledge Base and Informing Future Research", *Journal of Planning Literature*, 21 (2007): 255-266. About citizens' association and the environmental justice movement see Andrew Szasz, *Eco-populism: Toxic Waste and Movements for Environmental Justice* (London: UCL Press, 1994); Paul Lichtermann, *The Search for Political Community: American Activists Reinventing Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Donatella della Porta, "La democrazia partecipativa e i movimenti sociali. Micro e macro dinamiche", *Le nuove forme della partecipazione*, ed. Bianca R. Gelli (Roma: Carocci, 2007). About NIMBYism as individualistic and selfish attitude see Charles Piller, *The fail-safe society. Community defiance at the end of American technological optimism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Michael Dear, "Understanding and overcoming the Nimby syndrome", *Journal of the American planning association*, 58 (1992): 288-301; Eric Smith and Marisela Marquez, "The other side of the Nimby syndrome", *Society and natural resources*, 13 (2000): 273-280; Phil Hubbard "Accommodating otherness. Anti-asylum centre protest and the maintenance of white privilege", *Transactions of the institute of the British geographers*, 30 (2005): 52-65.

<sup>19</sup> In recent years local protests against plants and infrastructure of various kinds has spread even as far as India, China and Latin America where entire communities have been induced to leave their place of origin in order to allow the building of gigantic infrastructural works (such as in the case of the Three Gorges Dam in the province of Hubei in China).

<sup>20</sup> Emilia Blanchetti, Silvia Capotorto and Emilio Conti "Fenomenologia della sindrome NIMBY", on line supplement of *Limes. Rivista italiana di geopolitica*, 6 (2007), see <http://limes.espresso.repubblica.it/2007/11/22/il-clima-dellenergia-20/?p=359>; Giorgio Osti, "Come inquadrare i conflitti ambientali", *Ambiente Italia 2007. Rapporto annuale di Legambiente*, eds Duccio Bianchi and Giuseppe Gamba (Milano: Edizioni Ambiente, 2007), 15-31.

<sup>21</sup> In Tuscany, the main works on the railway line are: the Vaglia tunnel (18,5 km), the Firenzuola tunnel (15,3 km) and Sieve River viaduct (641 m). At the moment, the Italian High Speed/High Capacity network has more 1,000 km of track along the most saturated national rail line: the Turin-Milan-Rome-Naples-Salerno north-south corridor. The project is being described thus by the Italian Railway (brochure *Alta velocità/High Speed*, October 2009): "The High Speed/High Capacity system is the biggest engineering work in all respects in post-war Italy. The new high speed lines are a triumph over adversity, on account of the elevation and particular hydro-geological features of the land, and the densely populated urban areas crossed, in which more than 65% of the population live and work. The new lines are also of extremely low impact on the environment".

<sup>22</sup> The Mugello is an internal basin within Tuscany (570 km<sup>2</sup>), corresponding to the higher section of the Sieve river basin (a tributary of the Arno). The Valley of Terzolle corresponds to the basin of the torrent by the same name, a small stream with its springs at a few dozen km from the city Florence.

<sup>23</sup> See Porta and Diani, *Movimenti senza protesta?*, 158-191; Mauro Tebaldi, "Governo locale e reti transnazionali: il caso alta velocità a Firenze", *Amministrare*, 1 (2001): 47-81; Massimo Morisi and Mauro Tebaldi, *Tra interessi e istituzioni locali. La tratta appenninica dell'alta velocità in Toscana. Un'analisi politica* (Torino: Giappichelli, 2001).

<sup>24</sup> The high speed railway line has been accepted in exchange for a sum of 45 billion lire for the construction of a great dam north of Florence (the Bilancino Dam) for improving the railway line

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connecting Florence with Emilia Romagna and for the realization of a number of roads, requested by the municipalities of Mugello.

<sup>25</sup> The station is thus described by the Italian Railways (brochure *Alta velocità/High Speed*, October 2009): “The new Florence Belfiore station will rise in the area where the old 19th century stockyards once stood. The project will be characterized by a vertical distribution: the inside space is open along the entire height, allowing trains to be seen even from the surface. It will be the main urban and regional interchange node, connected to the Santa Maria Novella station and to the historical downtown area of Florence by a new tram line and surface metro trains”.

<sup>26</sup> See Silvia Givone, “L’inceneritore della Piana fiorentina: una decisione senza partecipazione”, *Il bisogno di decidere. Termovalorizzatori: dalla politica dei rifiuti al rifiuto della politica*, eds Adrea Paci and Massimo Morisi (Bologna: il Mulino, 2009), 189-205; Della Porta and Diani, *Movimenti senza protesta?*, 121-153.

<sup>27</sup> Legambiente (along with WWF, the most important environmental organization in Florence and, more generally, in Tuscany) has taken stand which all in all is in favour declaring that a waste-to-energy plant is less polluting than a dump.

<sup>28</sup> Mario Pirani, “All’assalto della Toscana i don Chisciotte dell’Anev”, *La Repubblica* (26 May 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Regione Toscana, *Piano di indirizzo energetico regionale (PIER). Proposta della Giunta Regionale*, (Firenze, 2008), 62-68. The wind farm of Montemignaio, according to official data provided by the management, enables to avoid the emission of 47,816 Kg/year of CO<sub>2</sub>. The wind farm of Scansano enables to avoid the emission of 38,000 tonnes/year of carbon dioxide and of 150,000 barrels/year of oil.

<sup>30</sup> In such cases some scholars speak of Niaby (Not in Any Backyard) or of Notpe (Not on the Planet Earth). See Gregory E. McAvoy, “Partisan probing and democratic decision making. Rethinking the Nimby syndrome”, *Policy studies journal*, 26 (1998): 274-292; Maarten Wolsink, “Wind power and the Nimby-myth. Institutional capacity and the limited significance of public support”, *Renewable energy*, 21 (2000): 49-64.