**The precarization effect**

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*Precarization as contestable concept*

What's in the name 'precarization'? Such a question can be always asked when we are dealing with a highly contestable concept (Gallie 1956) or a family of concepts – as is definitely the case here, where it is also customary to speak about 'precariousness', 'precarity' and even 'precariat'. This is a family of concepts or terms that have been defined in so many different and often incompatible ways that the answer to the question seems to greatly depend on the perspective or approach adopted. This is not as big a problem in the case of 'precariousness', which can be used to describe a variety of situations and events quite generally; but it makes all the difference when one refers to 'precariat' as a particular group or class of people (Standing, 2011). However, even if we prefer using the term 'precarization' and 'precarity', here, this problem does not disappear. In fact, this struggle over the concepts 'precarization' and 'precarity' is an expression of the discursive, and often ideological, controversies taking place between different schools of thought and their different theories, methods, motives, interests, and desires. There are, for example, those who emphasize the significance of 'precarization' as the historical sign of the transformation of capitalism (Marazzi, 2010; Fumagalli & Mezzadra, 2010; Holmes, 2010); and there are those who want to challenge the self-evidence of the notion of 'precarization' (Doogan, 2009) or its unwarranted generalization (Munck, 2013).

The notion of *precarity* and *precarization* has a complex, decades-long European history (Cincolani, 1986; Barbier, 2005). Even if this term has been variously used in different national and cultural contexts, it has typically been connected with insecure, volatile, or vulnerable human situations that are socioeconomically linked to the labour-market dynamics. Not only temporary, fixed-term work

or unemployment, but also untypical, flexible, cognitive work has been defined as representing precarity. Processes of precarization start in the labour markets due to ongoing economic, social, political, and even cultural transformations of capitalism. Precarization is not, though, limited to the labour market but can penetrate entire life-worlds of individuals and groups of people (Lazzarato, 2004; Butler, 2004; Ross, 2010; Morini & Fumagalli, 2010). Processes of precarization can overturn existing habits of behaviour and conventions of human interaction. These structural transformations are sometimes sudden and rapid, as was the case after the collapse of the 'socialist system of states' and as is currently the case due to the global financial crisis and the crisis of the European monetary system followed by austerity measures. Sometimes they are, instead, much more gradual. This has been the case in European agriculture, where precarization has been a permanent process and has been 'naturalized' as a kind of side effect of development and progress. Recent events of the present crisis in Europe, especially when connected to migration, have made this kind of long-term precarization strikingly evident.

Precarization as a process is both virtual and actual. It involves highly complex and constantly evolving processes, the common denominator of which cannot be easily captured. As a process, precarization is also influenced by expectations and anticipations of its possible outcomes. Due to this aleatory effect, outcomes of precarization are often contingent, though not random. This makes it easier to understand why the meaning and significance of precarization cannot be directly deduced from the ends, means, and reasons of the relevant governmental policies in question, since precarization is momentarily and situationally influenced in terms of anticipatory reactions to ongoing events. The aleatory nature of precarization has given its analysts endless possibilities of interpretation, of which they have also taken keen advantage. It is no wonder, then, that *precarization, precarity,* and *precariat* are concepts or terms that have been defined and described in multiple ways that are not at all congruent with each other. *Precarization* is a truly contestable

concept in motion, which is constantly undergoing changes of meaning.

*Precarization as modality*

The emphasis on precarization as a process, like approaching precariousness and precarity as a characteristic pattern of particular situations and events, makes it easier to understand why and how we are, here, dealing with circumstantial differences in the material and immaterial conditions under which people master their lives and manage their conduct. It is more often the structured quality of particular situations and events lived by people, rather than their personal characteristics, that determine what kind of risks and challenges they face and how they cope with them. Precarious situations and events are like rugged terrains: every step must be carefully preconceived and decisively taken and, even then, one can never be certain that s/he has firm ground under his or her feet. Precarious situations and events never open out to smooth avenues or easygoing pathways but are folded (Deleuze 1993), transfixed, and knotted in such a way that the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line. In this kind of precarious situation, one just cannot follow Descartes's advice that if one is lost in the forest, the best thing to do is simply to go straight ahead. Since precarization does not follow some uniform rational pattern but can be quite singular and even arbitrary – even if still structurally determined – the experiences of precariousness can also be complex, variable, fragmentary, and always quite particular.

Precarization expresses the environmental dynamics of the human condition and conduct, which can be approached in terms of the mode in which something takes place in the particular environment or neighbourhood. In these terms, we can speak of necessities, fatalities, opportunities, possibilities, occasions, fortuities, fortunes, contingencies, and so on. Precarization tells much more about the particular environment of the human condition and conduct than does any static representation of

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such an environment, in terms of propositional or hypothetical truth-claims about (the background of) the object under examination.

Precarization takes place in a dynamic field of forces in which situations are intricately constituted and assembled and where actions, reactions, interactions, and transactions in the field must be understood as strategic and tactical moves in the ongoing games, the rules of which are constantly renegotiated among the strongest players. People in precarious situations often enter into their games with lousy cards in their hands, often without even knowing the rules, which have not been properly made clear to them or are constantly changing. In order to improve their odds and manage better than previously, people in such precarious circumstances have to be unusually clever in outsmarting their adversaries, making tactically imaginative moves that catch the ruling power-holders by surprise.

*Making and unmaking precariousness*

In a traditional Marxist sense, the question about precarization would address the transformation of a class *in se* into a class *per se*, through reference to concepts such as grievances, cleavages, and historicity. In our book we have not, however, followed such a single-minded trajectory but have instead attempted to approach and analyse precarization as a multi-dimensionally complex process being shaped not only by the nonlinear dynamics of capitalism, but also by the actions, activities, and resistance of people living in precarious situations themselves – without forgetting how these two spheres are institutionally mediated in the specific circumstances under study. Approaching and analysing precarization in different dimensions and from different perspectives makes it easier to understand that precarization always leaves some freedom for positive action for its subjects. This is also why we have named our book 'Making and unmaking precariousness'.

Since the precariat as a definite socioeconomic category presents more questions than answers, we think that it is more appropriate to use the notions of *precariousness* and *precarity* associated with the process of *precarization*, and, thereby, we speak about precarious human situations. Along these lines it is possible to speak about precarious events, decisions, experiences, movements, and even subjects without necessarily clinging to the term 'precariat' at the outset. This does not, however, mean that it would not be worthwhile to try to think and define more carefully what could be meant by precariat, even as a class category (Savage et al., 2013). The notion of 'precariat' must be, in any case, understood as an outcome of the process of precarization that is also subjectively structured by precarious experiences. For this reason, we can speak of the precarization effect. The possible formation of 'precariat' is, thus, made dependent on particular economic, political, cultural, gender, regional, ethnic and other discourses, which are often connected with particular social movements, associations, networks, and Internet-based communities.

*Is precariat a class?*

The first part of the book analyses how the ongoing structuration of opportunities aggregated in particular opportunity structures can or cannot influence, accelerate, and even result in the formation of precariat as a class, as has been claimed, implied, and challenged in previous research. The articles in this section range from quantitative class analyses to more circumstantially focused studies.

The precariat phenomenon, or the precarization effect, is a kind of prism reflecting the whole restructuration of the capitalist class structure from one angle. Present European class structures combine old classes, such as the elite (or bourgeoisie), the traditional working class, and the established middle class with new class groups, such as (technical) experts and 'emerging service workers' and the precariat (see Crompton, 2008; Savage et al., 2013; Melin and Blom, Chapter 2 in

this volume). The study of precarization makes it possible to reveal differentiations between and among distinct classes. Precarization has been studied especially among the working class and the middle class(es), but it has also addressed certain sections of the peasantry that are absent in most of the recent class analyses. Alleged core groups of the precariat, such as students or those who have never worked, have posed a large, often neglected problem in standard class theorizations. For example, students have often been classified as middle class based on their expected future occupational class position. This kind of theoretical blindness is no longer possible in the case of precarious groups. New theoretical approaches must overcome the limitations of simple profession-based classifications and conceptions of class as economic category, in favour of multi-dimensional class concepts covering economic, cultural, and social dimensions (capitals) of inequality (see Crompton, 2008). In older class theorizing, it was common to draw a distinction between economic class position, on the one hand, and (class) experience, cultural and life-world profile, civic and collective action, on the other (or *Klasse an sich - Klasse für sich*). This holds true for both Marxist and non-Marxist approaches (Weber, 1976; Geiger, 1949). This division has tended to lead to more or less harmful juxtapositions between structurally oriented and culturally motivated approaches.

In explorations of ongoing structuration processes such as precarization, it is especially important to apply multi-dimensional class and stratification theories. Classes combine economic, cultural, and social resources, but their causal class power always develops in a space crisscrossed by political, cultural, symbolic, ethnic, gendered, regional, and other discourses and struggles. Class formation is a dynamic process whose nodal points and borders are a question of political and symbolic dispute and conflict.

The complex snarl of relations producing precariousness has generated different classifications for different groupings of precariousness. A great majority of researchers seem to regard precarization as

a combination of multifaceted processes consisting of various groups under threat of being marginalized, excluded, subjugated under new forms of deprivation, including poor people. On the other hand, there are researchers who see the precariat as a class-in-the-making. Standing (2011; 2014) argues that globalization has produced a 'class structure, superimposed on earlier structurations, comprising an elite, a salariat, proficians, an old "core" working class (proletariat), a precariat, the unemployed and a lumpenproletariat (or "underclass")' (Standing 2014, p.13). The proletarian relation to labour was normally 'habituation to stable labour', whereas 'the precariat is being habituated to unstable labour' (op. cit. 17).

One of the most interesting quantitative survey analyses of late-modern capitalist class structure was conducted in the beginning of the 2010s in the United Kingdom by Savage et al. (2013). Drawing on Bourdieu's distinction between economic, cultural, and social capital, it takes distance from class theorizations based on the classification of occupations (Goldthorpe) or people's positions in the relations of production and work autonomy (E.O. Wright). Applying latent class analysis, the respondents of two huge surveys could be grouped in a parsimonious way to seven classes, from elite through mediating classes to the precariat. The elite consists of people with very high economic (especially savings) capital, high social (capitalizable social networks and contacts) capital, and very high 'highbrow cultural capital'. Members of the precariat form on all measures 'clearly the most deprived of the classes'. They have the lowest status of all groups (low household incomes and savings, small social range of contacts, low likelihood of having attended university) (Savage et al., 2013, pp.25, 12–15). In this class picture drawn by Savage et al., some groups that have elsewhere been (at least partly) counted among precarious groups, who seem to have identified themselves as such and who also act publicly under the banner of the precariat (such as ethnic minorities, the young, graduates owning 'emerging cultural capital'), are included in the category of the emergent service workers' class (Savage, 2013, pp.22–4).

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The definition of the precariat based on its economically, culturally, and socially distinctive features is just the first step towards the identification of real, acting groups of precarious people. This can be attempted by, for example, applying Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, which helps to conceptualize how implicit class differences can be transformed into explicit social groups or classes (see Bourdieu, 1985; Siisiäinen, 1987). The precariat thus constructed 'objectively' by researchers' survey analysis is a precariat 'on paper' (for example, Savage et al., 2013; c.f. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 in this volume). These 'objective' categories can be made more meaningful and effective through symbolic discourses and struggles. This is the field in which the relevance of classes 'on paper' for class action is tested and decided. Therefore, it is necessary, as is done in this volume, to analyse comprehensively all the components of the precariat/precariousness, that is, 'objective' class characteristics (class on paper) (Part I of the book), precarious experiences (Part II), and precarious collective actions (struggles) (Part III).

*Struggle about the precariat*

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there was no 'pure proletariat' as a self-conscious class but instead various groups of working people with no real understanding of being a class on its own. The proletariat was the result of an influential and intensive political, theoretical, cultural, and symbolic work from Marx's *Kapital* as a self-fulfilling prophesy to the early workers' movements (Stedman Jones, 1983; Bourdieu, 1996). Before classes can act, struggle, and be represented by various agents, they have to be made to exist: 'classes-in-struggles are a result of struggles about class…. (I)n each concrete conjuncture, struggles to organize, disorganize, or reorganize classes are not limited to struggles between or among classes' (Przeworski, 1985, pp.79–80). Thus, present actions of various precarious groups (demonstrations, movements, Internet communities) can be

interpreted as a search for possible nodal points of future class or group formation. 'Objectively'

definable and measurable economic–cultural–social structures, however, create different

probabilities for divergent class or group developments, but these exert influence in an environment

dynamicized by civic, ethnic, gendered, regional, educational, demographic, religious, and other

relations. Groups defined based on their objective qualities remain only 'classes on paper' unless

they become transformed into actual, acting groups (or classes) by various agents. In this respect

sociological or political theoreticians, state apparatuses, international companies and organizations

are not outside observers – just like social movements, associations, and Internet communities are

potentially involved in the self-production of classes (see Bourdieu, 1985; 1996; Touraine, 1981).

This is also the case in the struggle about the precariat, conceived as a class both in theory and in

political practice; and that is why it is important to complement classificatory analysis of

quantitatively measurable inequalities through the investigation of precarious experiences, collective

actions, and political relations.


Kevin Doogan (Chapter 3) seeks to explore the form and distribution of precarity and discusses its

future conceptual development. Doogan asks whether precarity should be understood as minority

condition or majority experience. His thesis is that in the discussion of precarity, a gap prevails

between the real, statistically verifiable phenomenon and the publicly perceived likelihood of job

loss. Doogan bases his analyses on European Labour Force Survey data for the period 1995 to 2013.

Specific indicators concern the relative prevalence of job loss, average job tenure, and employment

change of the male and female labour force in different age groups. Based on his statistical analysis,

Doogan discusses the impact of ideologically constructed sets of precarious beliefs on the bargaining

capacity and institutional resistance of the working classes in a conjuncture of welfare and benefit

cuts, wage suppression, pension reforms, and labour intensification.

Two chapters in the first part of this volume analyse quantitatively measurable inequalities using survey data. In Chapter 2, Harri Melin and Raimo Blom's general intention is to figure out what the precariat and precarity mean in terms of classes, and how empirical class analysis can assist in the understanding of precariousness. Their chapter examines the precariat, as defined by them, in selected European class societies, Russia included. They hypothesize that processes of precarization tend to differentiate according to 'class regimes'. They draw on Erik. O. Wright's class typology, supplemented with the category of precariat (that is, unemployed and employed with fixed-term labour contract or part-time employed) and by etacratic theorization concerning the Russian case. Melin and Blom make use of European Social Survey data from 2010. Based on this data, it is possible to measure both the proportion of those who experience their position as (un)safe and the share of people without permanent-type employment in distinct class categories within each country. What remains, however, beyond the range of their analysis are differences in the general level of welfare and standard of living among different countries. Thus, being 'precarious' in the Nordic welfare states or in Russia means totally different things for the people involved.

Erling Solheim and Håkon Leiulfsrud's Chapter 4 purports to describe recent socioeconomically constituted insecure human situations, including experiences and consequences of poverty in different parts of Europe. They make a distinction between two aspects of precarization, that is, 'subsistence precarization' (connected to the exclusion from the labour market and occupational class) and 'precarious risk' (risk of poverty or social exclusion). The influence of such factors as longstanding illness, education, partnership, or professional position on subsistence precarization and on the risk of precarization is analysed in this chapter. Solheim and Leiulfsrud use data from 27 European countries taking part in an EU-SILC cross-sectional survey (Eurostat, 2010). They also examine how the situation has changed from 2007 to 2013. The authors analyse how the precarization and the risk of being precarized have hit vulnerable groups even in the richest of the

countries under study. These results also raise the question of country-wise mechanisms of precariousness and well-being. The statistical analysis is a necessary but not yet a sufficient starting point for the encompassing exploration of dimension of precariousness.

Klaus Dörre (Chapter 5) analyses a central political component of the struggle over classes in contemporary Germany, that is, the question of who is granted access to the respectable segments of society and who is recognized in the endless sequence of competitive situations. In his chapter, Dörre first reviews the sociological debate on 'the underclass', followed by an empirical examination of a series of tests to which the unemployed have to submit only to become classified as A-, B-, or C-clients. On the basis of his empirical analyses (case studies on four geographical regions, expert interviews, and interviews of receivers of unemployment benefits), he describes the effects of the assessment of the institutionalized activating labour market programs and policies (Hartz I to IV laws) on the lives and opportunities of the unemployed and defines the birth mechanisms of a new underclass. Dörre approaches the precarity phenomenon through the German discussion of the 'underclass', which has been accused of choosing to refuse work. He seeks to explain, from the angle of unemployed people, how and at what cost the present high employment rate and the declining unemployment in Germany have been achieved. The activation program is a central political mechanism contributing to the emergence of a society of precarious full-time employment.

One of the contributions of the Neo-Weberian class theorization was the differentiation among primary, secondary, and tertiary (and so on) forms of social closure (see Murphy, 1984; 1988). Weber's original idea was that privileged classes are born on the market through the exclusion of competitors outside the monopoly of capital ownership (see Weber, 1976). However, the process of social closure continues among the formed classes, as 'classmates' compete with each other over the less valuable but achievable stakes. This is what happened in Florence between the 'common

unemployed' and jobless war veterans after the Second World War; in Naples with the long term unemployed since the 1970s; and in the most recent EuroMayDay mobilization of the 'cognitive precariat' but also of the 'chain-workers' (della Porta, Baglioni, & Reiter, Chapter 12 in this volume).

Mechanisms of secondary closure are also addressed in the research of Charalambos Kasimis, Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, and Stavros Zografakis on the precarious position and status of migrant labour in rural regions of Southern Greece (Chapter 6). The chapter presents results from an empirical study dealing with the differentiation of working and living conditions among three migrant groups: Albanians, Bangladeshi, and Bulgarians. The authors present evidence about the development of the precarious position of the migrant population in Greece before and after the crisis. They base their accurate analysis on the unemployment, living conditions, and wage levels of various nationality groups on data from a Hellenic Labour Force Study. They are also able to show how the despair of households of employees increased from 2009 to 2014 as confirmed by the Labour Force Survey (ELSTAT). The main empirical material on migrant rural workers in a Southern municipality of 11,204 inhabitants was collected between 2006–08. The criteria for differentiation among nationality groups include the time of residence, quality and pay level of jobs, housing conditions and general standard of living, isolation versus social integration of the group, frequency of experiences of worst exploitation, racist attacks, violence, and labour trafficking.

The chapters in the first part of the book, based on research by their authors, reflect more or less the variety of groups called precarious. Some of the articles in the book deal with classes on paper, some address experiences of precariousness, and others deal with ways of coping with or resisting precariousness by collective action. The articles set off from quite different starting points; furthermore, some of them are not only mutually incompatible but actually contest one another. This

was the intention of the editors in selecting the articles and planning the complex ensemble of the book.

*Precarity experience*

The argument that 'precarization' and 'precarity' cannot be unquestionably grounded in factual evidence means that we have to be critically aware of the conceptual assumptions and frames in which the evidence is, each time, made available and intelligible. A number of discursive strategies and conceptual tactics are available to manage and manipulate the sense-making and meaning-giving of these terms. In this way, the terms 'precarization' and 'precarity' can be defined more or less broadly, more or less negatively, more or less unequivocally, more or less independently, operationally, or dynamically. Without going into any detail here, it is possible to argue that the way in which 'precarization' and 'precarity' have been defined can be positioned on a scale in which one end is represented by attempts to define these notions in terms of strictly selected labour market indicators (e.g Puig-Barachina et al., 2014), while the other end is represented by attempts to understand these as expressing a fundamental existential transformation of the whole life-world of individuals.

Kasimis, Papadopoulos, and Zografakis remind us, at the very beginning of their article, that there is a tension between a political concept(ion) of precarity emerging from the autonomist and post-workerist tradition and a more sociologically-empirically focused notion of precarity. Even if the often ideologically rooted controversies within the social sciences about the meaning and extent of precarity seem passionate, these academically and institutionally anchored debates are quite docile in comparison to the intellectual and political struggles taking place between autonomist critics of precarization and precarity and their opponents, who may even try to explain away precarization,

understood by autonomists as systemic effect of present-day global capitalism as finance capitalism. When taking up this crucial point, Kasimis, Papadopoulos, and Zografakis refer to Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter's article, 'Precarity as a political concept, or, Fordism as exception', where these two authors (2008, p.63) want to emphasize 'precarity' as a political concept.

In fact, in the second part of the book, we have quite a similar starting point to that which Neilson and Rossiter make right after their political postulate of precarity:

> We might as well say that precarity cannot be grounded. In other words, precarity is not an empirical object that can be presupposed as stable and contained. It might better be understood as an experience, since unearthing the tonalities of experience requires an approach that does not place an either/or between conceptual and empirical approaches to the world. Rather it requires a constant movement or transposition between the two. …Insofar as we are precarious, we are always on the move. (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008, p.63)

It is exactly the aim of the second part of our book to unearth some of the tonalities of experience that are voiced by people on the move due to events of precarization. What is at stake in these events, which are ultimately generated by economic processes of globally integral capitalism and mediated by locally specific governmental practices, is not just the particular form, mode, and degree of using labour power in the market, but actually the fate of living labour, social co-operation, and (form of) life itself. Without necessarily looking at precarization from the biopolitical perspective, the approaches of the articles in the second section of our book proceed in quite parallel action, if not fashion, with the autonomist understanding of precarity as a capture of all the potentialities of living labour in the form of labour power (Lazzarato, 2004; Trott, 2007; Wright, 2007) or in the entrepreneurial form to be judged, assessed, and measured in and by the market forces. In other

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words, precarity and precarization, above all, mean the colonization of life by market forces – be these in the form of commodity markets, financial markets, labour markets, real estate markets, agricultural markets, law markets, or academic markets. However, it must be remembered that it makes all the difference to precarization what is and what kind is the role of counterforces, such as social state and civil and political society models, in contesting the might of markets in these events and situations studied.

The articles in the second part of our book, which specifically analyse precarization in light of the life experiences of people confronting it, are not dictated by pre-given theoretical commitments, even though these are conceptually framed. These studies also seek to elucidate what the analysis of empirical data on a given event tells us about why and how people must and often can actually cope with their personally experienced precarious situation. These are qualitative analyses, either ethnographic or biographical studies, of primary data describing and analysing how people living in or being thrown into precarious labour market positions and life courses of precarity themselves make sense of their situations. In other words, these articles do not approach precarity and precarization as a pre-given fact or object, or as necessarily confined to a labour market frame. Instead, they make an effort to understand what people's own experiences and insights tell us about the vulnerabilities and obstacles in their situations, but also about the opportunities and possibilities for managing their lives and taking advantage of the opportunities open to them. On this basis, the authors shed light on some of the ways in which precarization can proceed and be coped with (Carls, 2007; 2011), if one wants to call it by that name.

In her article 'Precariousness in academia: prospects of employing oneself in university', Kirsti Lempiäinen (Chapter 7) discusses the prospects of women academics in employing themselves and managing their careers in universities, which are now rapidly reorganizing their structures to better

govern their activities according to an entrepreneurial ethos that praises productivity and valourization of impacts. In this context, Kirsti Lempiäinen understands precariousness as stemming from these structures of university (employment). The focus of this study is on academic agency, which covers work, expertise, parenthood, one's own time and intimate life. The study is based on ethnographical sociology, a combination of auto-ethnography and interviews conducted at the University of Liverpool, University of Milan-Bicocca, and University of Tampere in 2009–12, in order to get a picture of gender and agency in academia. It is asked and analysed what sort of differences and similarities exist in the precarious positions of women in the three universities. In comparing these three settings in light of analysed case studies based on interviews and auto-ethnographic diagnoses, an intersectional reading of gender, class, age, and academic capital (Skeggs, 2004) is applied to better understand the precariousness of these life situations in focus.

In her article 'On the Roma precarious experience facing Free Christianism', Ildikó Asztalos Morell (Chapter 8) focusses on the consequences of the post-socialist transition followed by the emerging neo-liberally and neo-conservatively motivated restructuration of welfare policies in Hungary, which have had a dramatic effect on the already in many ways vulnerable position of the Roma people. This transition resulted in mass exclusion from the labour market, so that the Roma constitute the majority of those who were, in this way, totally marginalized and left unemployed to manage by themselves, practically forgotten in their peripheral rural communities. While their truly precarious position has drawn research attention (e.g. Thornton, 2014), the role of the stratifying forces such as gender, ethnicity, and religion on the development of precarity has done so much less. In addition, less attention has been given to the ways and means that can counteract their precarization in these circumstances. This article asks and analyses to what extent Roma Pentecostal and free-religious churches have been able to relieve the precariousness of these marginalized Roma communities in Hungary. This qualitative analysis is based on interviews, media appearances of church members, as

well as the analysis of biographic materials, which are read from the perspective of intersectional otherness.

In their article 'Giving up farming as a precarious decision' (Chapter 9), Tiina Silvasti and Sakari Hänninen examine the deep-going socioeconomic consequences of the structural change in Finnish agriculture after the mid-1990s, when Finland joined the EU. A great number of farmers were compelled to give up their livelihoods and ways of life, so that many soon found themselves and their families to be in insecure and uncertain situations, not only economically but often existentially. This article is based on a qualitative analysis of interviews, organized biographically against the background of the life histories in which these former farmers explain the motives, reasons, observations, experiences, and conclusions concerning the difficult decision to give up, and what happened afterwards. In this article, three cases are selected and narrated in more detail to highlight a specific critical dimension: the process of giving up acquires a characteristic pattern that can inform us on what makes a human life situation precarious. The authors further analyse the particular kind of experience that characterizes precarity when it is met with hostility when expressed as public protest, or with political indifference – even among those people, communities, and political associations that had previously been close partners and allies. This article also addresses the ways and means which, in these cases, help to avoid or overcome precarization.

These three qualitative analyses – covering precariously employed academic women in universities, Roma people in peripheral rural communities seeking escape from their deep precarity via religion, and farmers and their families who had to give up their livelihood with a high risk of precarity – make perfectly clear that these people seem to be only connected by the neo-liberally organized market networks that reproduce the particular uncertainties and insecurities of their life-worlds. So what kind of an aggregate or set can they compose, in spite of this extreme disintegration and

fragmentation? A class-in-the-making? The autonomists have proposed that they instead compose a 'multitude', which is definitely something other than a class, just as precariat is definitely something other than proletariat (Virno, 2004; Hardt & Negri, 2004). In fact, the appearance of a 'multitude' on the political stage can be understood to inform us about the displacement of 'class'. The 'old Left' has been so troubled by this suggestion and about the notion and discussion of precarity in general that the existence of this phenomenon has sometimes been denied or quite totally neglected – or the diagnoses and analyses of precarity have been criticized, sometimes with good reason (see Chapter 3).

In taking up the notion of 'multitude' – which is not, however, addressed in the previous three articles – we come back to the question about what it means to argue that 'precarity' is a political concept. It does not just mean that we have to approach and analyse 'precarization' and 'precarity' from the political point of view. Instead, we have to think about politics altogether anew in circumstances of globally integral finance capitalism (Marazzi, 2010; Fumagalli & Mezzadra, 2010) and in circumstances of precarization, since the old modes of making politics and of collective action no longer work that well. This is also the autonomist argument, which implies that politics should also be thought anew experimentally in practice; this is why traces of this kind of rethinking can be found in online journals supporting and supported by the anti-precarization struggles. These journals represent 'minor literature', which might even be understood paradoxically to contribute so that the voice of the 'multitude' can be heard in public, perhaps like in a spectacle. But is the multitude heard? and how are the precarious experiences understood in public? These questions are addressed in the last two chapters of the second part of our book.

In his article (Chapter 10) 'Precarious Experience denied?', Mikko Jakonen takes up the issue of how the precarious figure, whose work is untypical, insecure, unsure, is recognized in public. The author

asks what has been the reception of the demands and analyses of the precariat movement, more specifically in those quarters that could and should be expected to struggle to end the precarization of work and stop the wild 'flexibilization' of especially the younger generations. In his article, he sheds light on and analyses the reasons for the denial of the precarious experience with the qualitative case study concerning the Finnish reception of this experience, especially in the discourses of trade unions and leftist political parties. The data used in the article is collected from the major Finnish newspapers and journals at the height of the precarity debate in 2006 and 2007.

Even though the precarious experiences have sometimes been generalized as linked to the expression of anger, anomaly, ambivalence, alienation, and anxiety (Standing, 2011), this pattern of behaviour need not be a common characteristic of those people living through precarization. Precarious experiences could be, as well, characterized by sentiments of anger and personal aptitude for action, leading to consistent political judgments encouraged by innovative insights. Precarization should, therefore, be conceptualized by focusing on the inter-zone between structural events of societal transformation and their effects on personal and interpersonal experiences by paying attention to the ways and means with which people, in this inter-zone, have to make existentially radical decisions when facing the challenge of precarization. However, the decisions they make and the actions they take can be thoroughly unconventional and may seem exceedingly bizarre, especially to the eyes and ears of those who are keen to emphasize their social responsibilities. Lauri Siisiäinen examines in Chapter 11 why and how this can be possible.

In his article 'Precarious voice or precarious noise?', Siisiäinen problematizes and challenges the two deep-seated and interrelated presuppositions about what the precariat is lacking: a voice and a solid collective identity. Taking the precarious experience as the starting point, he leads us to consider the meaning of the noisy soundscapes of precarious action and spectacles. We could affirm the

precarious 'noisiness' rather than trying to transform this 'noise' of the precariat into a meaningful voice of a subject. If this is the urgent political task, as suggested by the author, one can only test its effectiveness in practice. What conclusions should one make, then, about Mikko Jakonen's observation that in 2014 the Precariat movement still exists, although it is no longer as visible or as important a social movement in Europe as it was a decade ago?

*Precarious struggles*

That aggrieved people do not always mobilize is no puzzle for social movement studies. Indeed, this field boomed in the 1970s and 1980s based on a critique of the assumption that grievances are (more or less) automatically transformed in protest. While some approaches had expected a mobilization of the most exploited workers, analysis of labour and other movements stressed instead the many obstacles that aggrieved people encounter when they choose to mobilize (for a review, see della Porta, 2015). In addition, a large part of the analysis focused on new social movements (NSMs), which were indeed overpopulated by the middle class (Kriesi et al., 1995) and  mobilized  on post-materialist and expressive values (Inglehart, 1977), while marginalized groups (for example, unemployed, undocumented migrants, homeless people) encountered the most obstacles when trying to mobilize. Similarly, while studies on grievances had pointed at the role of relative deprivation in explaining turmoil (Gurr, 1970), social movement studies criticized this 'breakdown' perspective, stressing instead the importance of resources.

Whereas theories of mass societies had looked at anomy and disintegration as producing political contestation, research on the mobilizing role of networks pointed at the fact that protestors are rather well-embedded in their social environments (e.g. Oberschall, 1978). Finally, while rebellion had been considered as a reaction to the lack of alternative channels to express political grievances, the

so-called political opportunity approach (Tarrow, 1995; della Porta, 1995) instead pointed out that protest happens when people see some chance of success through access to institutional decision making.

Precarity certainly weakens (some) capacities to mobilize. Research on a specific category of precarity – unemployment or risk thereof – has indeed confirmed how difficult mobilization can be for jobless people. Firstly, the unemployed are seen as having low self-esteem, and therefore to be less inclined to build a collective identity around a condition perceived as stigmatized. As Olivier Fillieule (1993, p.128) wrote long ago, 'most research converges in indicating that the loss of a job is translated into a perception of a personal identity considered as shameful, and this jeopardizes the possibility of a collective identification with unemployment (individualizing strategy) as well as the political representation of unemployment (fatalism, sense of guilt, sense of being powerless).' As the status of the unemployed is stigmatized and stigmatizing, they lack that positive self-definition of the 'us' that facilitates the development of a collective identity (Galland & Louis, 1981, p.177). Secondly, the lack of a work environment deprives the unemployed of opportunities to develop a collective awareness about a common status that could be organized and thus gain public visibility and political identity (Baglioni et al., 2008). Similarly, for precarious workers, precarity implies difficulties on a wide range of working but also social life, with a constant tension between apathy and search for recognition (Mattoni, 2014; Chabanet, Dufour, & Royall, 2011).

Although precarious workers and unemployed are considered politically apathetic – with few of those resources useful for mobilization such as education, relationships, and material resources as well as the belonging to social organizations – still, they sometimes do mobilize. In fact, the unemployed have mobilized in Italy since the 1970s (Baglioni, 2012; Remondino, 1998), they have been very active in France since the early 1990s (Maurer & Pierru, 2001; Maurer, 2001; Demazière

& Pignoni, 1998), and they have engaged in collective forms of action in Germany throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (Baumgarten and Lahusen, 2012). More recently, groups of unemployed people have even mobilized at the European level (Chabanet, 2008). Notwithstanding the potential for blackmailing by their employers, precarious workers have also mobilized out of indignation and the feeling of having nothing to lose (Bouchareb, 2011).

The third part of the book suggests that the mobilization of the precariat is possible under specific circumstances: when precarious people are able to overcome the stigmatization of their status and to generate a new individual and collective identity; when their collective action becomes publicly visible through a planned and organized dramatization of their activities; when they are able to create organizations; and finally, when through their actions and organizations they succeed in seizing opportunities opening at the political institutional level. The struggles of unemployed in Italy and Finland, as well as of precarious workers in Italy or Greece, show at the same time the ways in which some of the mentioned challenges were overcome, but also the permanent strategic dilemmas that the unemployed had to address on the framing of their protest, their repertoire of action, as well as their organizational structures.

Social movement studies have singled out some resources that can support the mobilization of even weak groups. The mobilization of the unemployed first requires the development of a collective identity that 'is based exclusively on the symbolic and cognitive work developed during the mobilization, lacking previously existing schemes' (Maurer, 2001, p.39). Such a process of identity-building is developed throughout the mobilization itself, as each protest action or mobilization event bolsters people's morale and pushes them to further action in a process of identity self-strengthening (Melucci, 1995; Piven & Cloward, 1980). As observed with reference to the precarious movements, consciousness rarely precedes action (Mathieu, 2011).

Furthermore, to mobilize, an injustice frame has to be created, and responsibility for unjust employment conditions has to be assigned to a political authority. Mobilization then transforms desperation into outrage. In this sense, activism offers an occasion not only for occupying the 'empty' time, but also for giving a sense to it: participation has indeed been defined as more social than political (Maurer, 2001). For the precarious workers as well, it is an occasion to develop positive visions of the self (Pauchadom, 2011).

Furthermore, the potential for the mobilization of the precariat is strengthened by the capacity of the various groups to generate or be part of societal networks, something that is eased during cycles of protest (Tarrow, 1989). Cycles in fact allow the bridging of different issues – an operation facilitated by specific brokers emanating from the movements themselves but also from unions and political leaders – which then generates common frames of interpretation of the reality. Such 'connecting frames' bind together diverse groups and issues, creating a single, consistent body of protest capable of challenging established rules, practices, and social roles. Often through the previous militancy of the mobilized precarious workers, whether as social movement organizers or as unionists, the fight on employment conditions is bridged with other broader issues in various campaigns (Cohen, 2011; Dunezal, 2011).

Many and various organizations bring to the mobilization their own 'culture of collective action and … knowledge of the militant rituals and practices' (Maurer, 2001) to mobilize resources for action. More than from single organizations, the protest on unemployment in France in the 1990s or in Italy in 2002 arose from the networking of different, heterogeneous groups (see Hannigton, 1973; Maurer & Pierru, 2001; Agrikoliansky, Fillieule, & Mayer, 2005; Baglioni et al., 2008; Baglioni, 2012; Remondino, 1998; Petras, 2003, p.133).

Protests of precarious people tend to be successful when they are disruptive, materially or symbolically. The Italian protestors in 2002 blocked railways and highways and occupied harbours and airports, imitating the *piqueteros* of Argentina where, in August 2001, 100,000 unemployed shut down 300 highways (Petras, 2003). In addition, mobilization of the unemployed often followed the tradition of direct-action unionism (Chopart et al., 1998, p.72): protestors chain themselves to the gates of major institutions, conduct flash interventions against eviction, hold demonstrations, and occupy public buildings. It has been noted that 'the main form in which unemployed actors enter the debate compared to other actors is via protest' (Zorn, 2004, p.6). All of these forms tend to break with the tradition of modern industrial action by bringing the conflicts outside the factory and involving the community in solidarity strikes and boycotts (Piven and Cloward, 2000). The more symbolic forms of protest are also innovative, in order to capture the attention of a distracted mass media, but also to build upon a long past tradition, through self-creation of jobs or processions that walked long distances, symbolically representing the hardships of the unemployed and at the same time sensitizing people at the local level. Innovation also works at the symbolic level, including persiflage, but also scandalization of the desperate condition of life of the precarious people.

The support of the community (and public opinion) has been noted in the evolution of the Argentine *piqueteros* 'from passive sufferers of poverty and social disorganization and clientelistic manipulation [into] activists in a powerful solidarity movement, engaged in autonomous grassroots social organization and independent politics' (Petras, 2003, p.130). Media coverage also helps in 'synchronizing local actions, changing the multitudes of initiatives in a movement with national amplitude' (Maurer & Pierru, 2001, p.388). The tensions exist here between the radical character of collective action that aims at dramatizing an unbearable condition, the need for bargaining, as well as the need for immediate relief in terms of material conditions or legal support.

Dilemmas also address the organizational structures. Social movement organizations are often formed by committed activists who take up the concerns of social constituencies to which they do not belong (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), but for which they act out of a sense of solidarity (Giugni & Passy, 2001). Given the lack of material and symbolic resources of the precarious constituency, protests on related issues often need the support of broad networks of different social movement organizations. Unions have often been mentioned in previous research as the most important promoters of protest on issues of employment and unemployment. However, different collective actors (voluntary associations, social movement organizations, and so on) might support different types of mobilization on unemployment. A cross-national research project based on claims analysis singled out a broad range of actors mobilized against unemployment (from workers against dismissals to the long-term unemployed, from mayors to the bishop), making use of a variety of forms of action (from traditional union strikes to boycotts, from moderate vigils to roadblocks) to put forward the cause of different categories of the unemployed (from the long-term unemployed to those at risk of dismissal).

The unfavourable conditions experienced by unemployed and precarious workers in their mode of collective action accounts for the important role played by potential allies. In a comparison of protests in the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1930s, the very existence of those protests has been explained by the willingness of the unions to mobilize (Richards, 2002). Usually, however, unions have an ambivalent attitude toward the unemployed, who are perceived as an element of weakness in the occupied labour force, if not as potential strikebreakers; they also have difficulties in recruiting among the most precarious ones (Brugnot & Le Naour, 2013). Unions, therefore, are potentially more available to mobilize against mass dismissals and factory closings than in favour of the long-term unemployed, who have a low propensity to join them. It is usually in

periods of sudden massive unemployment that they appear more active on the issue (e.g.,

Tartakowsky, 1997); conversely, the mobilization of the unemployed in Europe has occurred in

periods of de-unionization or in conjunction with processes of union fragmentation along ideological

or professional lines (Baglioni et al., 2008). In addition, unions tend to be more prone to at least

attempt to mobilize precarious workers when they have traditionally substituted broad ideological

appeals for weak institutional recognition (as in Southern Europe). Other important organizers of

protest against unemployment are non-state welfare organizations and groups. Third-sector

organizations, NGOs, and charities are often involved in the support of marginal groups: immigrants,

the poor, single mothers, and others. Squeezed between the needs of their constituency and the

frustration of budget cuts, these organizations have increasingly resorted to advocacy, even in the

vocal forms of protest (Baglioni et al., 2014). Yet another type of actor on unemployment issues is

civil society organizations mobilized by left-wing social movement organizers (Baglioni & Giugni,

2014).

The chapters included in this part build upon the existing literature, also introducing some

innovation. First of all, in comparing the framing of precarity in five different campaigns in the last

few years in Italy, Alice Mattoni (Chapter 13) stresses the common quest for recognition of

precarious individuals. At the same time, however, she points at the different meanings given to

precarity, with the ensuing choice of broader or narrower claims as well as of specific forms of

mobilization. In this sense, she stresses the rich innovative cognitive potential of the campaigns

against precarity, but also considers the challenges that these plural, or even divergent, visions

present for the development of a common collective identity.

The importance of framing processes is also stressed by Markos Vogiatzoglou (Chapter 15) in his

comparison of precarious workers' struggles in Italy and Greece. Linking the structural conditions of

the mobilized workers with their own mobilizing strategies, he points at the ways in which labour law provisions define the constituency of the precariat. As he convincingly argues, the initial divergence between the two countries results from the Italian precarious people reacting to production-based flexibility (defined as driven by changes in the productive procedures), while the Greek protests responded especially to contract-based flexibility (linked to the abusive use of flexible contracts in order to diminish labour costs). While the former brings about social movement-type mobilizations, based outside of the workplace, the latter are contrasted by union-type strategies. A later reconvergence in the characteristics of the Greek and Italian struggles of precarious people is then related with the multiplication of the forms of precarity in both countries.

Cross-time evolution of unemployed struggles is addressed by the next two chapters. Devoted to the Italian case, the chapter by della Porta, Baglioni, and Reiter (Chapter 12) compares three campaigns against unemployment in the immediate post-war period, during the oil crisis in the 1970s, and at the beginning of the new millennium. Notwithstanding obvious differences in the contexts of these mobilizations, all of them had to address some common strategic dilemmas. From the point of view of the framing of the self, the focus on specific categories of precariat is contrasted with a broader view of the oppressed. In terms of strategy of action, the tradeoff is between radical forms and more conventional ones. At the organizational level, the choice lies between particular campaigns based on autonomous structures and participation in larger coalitions.

Chapter 14 also looks at transformation of the struggles of unemployed, this time in Finland, linking them to changes in the political system as well as in the social movement organizations. Martti Siisiäinen, Eeva Luhtakallio, and Tomi Kankainen look at the origins of the contemporary movement of the unemployed in two waves of mass unemployment, one at the beginning of the 1990s, the other at the end of the 2000s. They focus in particular on the ways in which the first wave of collective

action fostered the creation of jobless people's associations, during mass mobilization that was instead absent in the second wave. The authors explain these differences on the basis of changing opportunities and the difficulties of the generations of activists that had emerged in the 1990s to adapt to contextual transformations in the experience of precarity.

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