Quaderni di Teoria Sociale

QUADERNI DI TEORIA SOCIALE

n. 1 | 2019

I Quaderni di Teoria Sociale utilizzano i criteri del processo di referaggio indicati dal Coordinamento delle riviste italiane di sociologia (CRIS).

Nota per i collaboratori

I Quaderni di Teoria Sociale sono pubblicati con periodicità semestrale. I contributi devono essere inviati a: redazioneQTS@gmail.com; ambrogio.santambrogio@unipg.it.

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Rossella Ghigi, Roberta Sassatelli, *Corpo, genere e società*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2018, 243 pp.   289

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The *possible* in the real: infrastructures of experience, cosmopolitanism from below and sociology

Introduction

This paper focuses on the complex relationship between experience, knowledge and information as well as on the ways in which sociology can enhance efforts of emancipation concerning that relationship. More precisely, we define the latter as a relationship between the *infrastructures of experience*, an interpretive category we detail later, and what Amartya Sen defines as the *informational basis* "for judgment and justice". This processual relationship, in our view, is particularly crucial as it configures the range of the possible embedded in the real, combining and conditioning in this way both the cognitive and normative dimension. The process analysed here has always been particularly relevant, in terms of "trajectorism" and "scalability", for framing the (Western) idea of modernity. However, it has been more and more subsumed in the real core of the contemporary modes of value extraction, in forms that the article summarises. Social research – through the representations it produces and legitimises – contributes itself (among much powerful actors) to this process, and this should result in a reflexive awareness of its own role. According to the perspective proposed here, a critical appraisal of these transformations requires that, beyond focusing on the real (which is what it normally does), social research should also deal with the *possible*, which is much more rarely considered part of the research field. In order to deepen the emancipatory potential of sociology, the paper (I)

resumes some of the most significant features of the relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis; (II) explores the meaning of these analytical (and epistemological) keys and the way they help us to grasp the contemporary transformations of the focused relationship; and finally, (III) tentatively outlines the way social research should interpret cosmopolitanism from below for contrasting the worst consequences of that transformation and for enlarging the possible embedded into the real[1].

1. Epistemological roots of modernity: the trap of trajectorism and the project of scalability

We will explore the concept of *infrastructures of experience* along the whole article, as its complexity advises against any attempts to give a close definition of it. In general, perhaps, we can say that it works as a road sign, indicating the direction we should look for inquiring the material and immaterial conditions of relationship between culture and society, renewing – as we will stress later – the way *Kulturkritick* can be exercised in contemporary societies. This article deals with the relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis essentially as it concerns the problem of knowledge and how it is mobilised in terms of world-making. A relationship that has to be contextualised in the long history of modernity and in the way the space of possibilities opened in this history (concerning individualisation, freedom, self-determination, etc.) was and is "translated" by capitalism. We are here referring to the perspective according to which the continuous process of "establishment of market relations where hitherto there were none" [Streeck 2012, 6] is always a process of translation "of diverse life-worlds and conceptual horizons about being human" [Chakrabarty

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1. I presented some of the arguments of this paper in a somewhat different manner at the International Social Theory Consortium 16th Annual Conference (Innsbruck, May 24-26, 2017), *The Future between Progress and Regression: From Philosophy to Critical Social Science and Back* and in Borghi (forthcoming). I warmly thank the anonymous referees for their very helpful and effective comments. Of course, the responsibility for the final result is mine.

2000, 71] in the dominant material and immaterial interpretation of that horizon of possibility.

Modernity has indeed to be assumed as a term referring "to a situation, self-created by human beings committed to the modern ideas of autonomy and mastery, in which a certain interpretation of these ideas prevails over others" [Wagner 2001, 24]. Modernity and capitalism draws a field of tension [Borghi, Mezzadra 2011] in which our common life is constitutively submerged. In such a field, the "trap of trajectorism" [Appadurai 2013], is a potential ambush. Trajectorism is strictly interwoven with the Western way of thinking, being and doing. It works as a deep "epistemological and ontological habit" according to which the world's becoming has always a direction and it goes from here to there according to a cumulative evolution. "Trajectorism is the idea that time's arrow inevitably has a telos, and in that telos are to be found all the significant patterns of change, process, and history. Modern social science inherits this telos and turns it into a method for the study of humanity" [ivi, 223]. This evolutionary perspective takes the form of the post-Renaissance European idea of modernity, "which requires *complete global expansion for its own inner logic to be revealed and justified*" [ivi, 225]. The destination of this trajectory is clearly fixed from the beginning, written in the image with which the European and Western world is self-portrayed.

Trajectorism does significantly affect also the relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis, discussed later in the paper, on the basis of what Anna Tsing [2012] defines as a representation of progressive expansion and naturalisation of *scalability*, as the historically dominant conceiving of the interaction among experience, knowledge and world-making. The key aspect of the scalability's mode of interpreting this interaction is "the ability to expand – and expand, and expand – without rethinking basic elements" [ivi, 505]: scalable projects "are those that can expand without changing [...]. Scalability projects banish meaningful diversity, which is to say, diversity that might change things" [ivi, 507; Mukerji 1983].

On the contrary, a sociology aiming at including this "meaningful diversity" should look for ways to give space to the *possible* embedded in the real in its research field [Tarantino, Pizzo 2015]. Our idea of the possible as something always embedded in the real rests on different sources, combining for instance

the perspective of capability for voice, of capacity to aspire, to the Benjamin's "opening-up of history" and to the "contre-fatalité" always surviving even in the darkest times [Appadurai 2013; Borghi 2012, 2018; Bifulco 2013; Lowy 2005; Didi-Huberman 2016, 2018]. Possibilism, in this sense, leads to approach the social world stressing "the unique rather than the general, the unexpected rather than the expected, and the possible rather than the probable", widening "the limits of what is or what is perceived to be possible, be it at the cost of lowering our ability, real or imaginary, to discern the probable" [Hirschman 1971, 28]. We can see an effective interpretation of looking for the possible in the real, for instance, in the approach to the historical reality. As the work of Chakrabarty [2000] convincingly argued, next to and woven into the linear, universal and homogenous historical space, on which trajectorism is based, there always exist other histories ("History 2"). These latter "inhere in capital and yet interrupt and punctuate the run of capital's own logic" [ivi, 64]. Such a representation of the historical process "gives us a ground on which to situate our thoughts about multiple ways of being human and their relationship to the global logic of capital" [ivi, 67][2]. Recognising the constitutive plurality of modernity, it enables us to conceive this latter as a field of struggle about the meaning of being modern and "to understand modernity not that much as an 'unfinished project', but rather [...] as a contested field" [Mezzadra 2010, 3]. In particular, as far as our main issue is concerned, this perspective points out a *space of possibilities* [Santos 2007] that changes throughout the time, but that is always and everywhere present. Considered together, the real (as it results from capital's translation; History 1) and the possible (the conditional meaningful diversity embedded in the real; History 2) "destroy the usual topological distinction of the outside and the inside that marks debates about whether or not the whole world can be properly said to have fallen under the sway of capital. Nor is it something subsumed into capital. It lives in intimate and plural relationships to capital, ranging from opposition to neutrality" [Chakrabarty 2000, 65-6].

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2. Beyond the social sciences, some narratives give us an even more vivid idea of the concrete tension and violence characterised in the structural relationship between History 1 and 2; see, e.g., Ghosh 2008. Exchanges between these different cultural fields are shown in Ghosh-Chakrabarty's epistolary [2002].

This effort for rethinking social research beyond trajectorism, then, goes in a twofold direction. The first one, is about a path of de-colonising the analytical tools [Connell 2006; Rodriguez et al. 2010], which can largely be based on the effective postcolonial critical archive [Kerner 2018]. The second one consists in pointing out critical potentialities lost inside Western modernity: many of the problems we are dealing with today "result not only from the waste of experience that the West imposed upon the world by force, but also from the waste of experience that it imposed upon itself to sustain its own imposing upon the others" [Santos 2009, 106]. In this perspective, a renewed sociological gaze must abandon the characteristically Northern[3] idea that "theory must be monological, declaring the one truth in one voice" and explore a direction according to which social research must be "more like a conversation among many voices" [Connell 2006, 262]. In order to be more precise, we need to better qualify the kind of conversation we are contemplating.

2. Cosmopolitanism from below: emancipation, in times of capitalist realism

The direction in which a (global) sociology as a "conversation among many voices" should be looked for, in order to escape the trap of trajectorism and the imperialistic epistemology of scalability, is then what we can define as *cosmopolitanism*. Our interpretation of this concept shares with the more conventional and privileged form of it "the urge to expand one's current horizons of self and cultural identity" and a universalistic inspiration [Appadurai 2013, 198]. However, we follow the theoretical efforts trying to strengthen its critical potentialities, stressing "the mutual implication of centre and periphery and local and global levels as a transformative process" [Delanty 2006, 38]. Moreover, as already stressed, any definition of the relationship among experience, knowledge and world-making has to be situated in the socio-historical field of tension produced by the continuous translation of modernity into a capitalist form of life.

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3. Of course, Northern/Southern or metropole/periphery are simple dichotomies for very complex categories, in which epistemological issues complicatedly cross geographical dimensions [Connell 2006].

In this context, cosmopolitanism is based on a critical appraisal that resumes and revises Polanyi's concept of "countermovement", assuming as a key dimension of this revision a third social move (beyond the first one, disembedding as marketization, and the second one, embedding as reaction in terms of social protection), that is *emancipation*. Identifying exploitation caused by disembedded markets and commodification, without ignoring forms of domination produced in non-market social practices (that is, embedded) – patriarchalism, for instance – emancipation introduces more complexity into a dualistic interpretation of (negative) movement (due to the market dynamic) and (positive) countermovement (social protection). "Avoiding both wholesale condemnation of disembedding and wholesale approbation of reembedding" – Fraser writes [2011, 145] – "we must open both marketization and social protection to critical scrutiny. Exposing the normative deficits of society, as well as those of economy, we must validate struggles against domination *wherever* it roots"; in this sense, struggles for emancipation challenge "oppressive forms of social protection, while neither wholly condemning nor simply celebrating marketization" [Ibidem]. Emancipation as a key feature for a critical appraisal of social reality enables us to introduce a specific realm, otherwise indistinctly conflated with society in a dualistic market/social protection scheme. This realm is the *public sphere*, in which both society's *doxa* and the market's claims of efficient modernisation can be scrutinised, discussed, criticised and revised. It is in the public sphere that *cosmopolitanism from below* must be developed and exercised, assuming it as a form of "deep democracy" directed to transform the "constitutional bourgeois ideals into daily forms of consciousness and behaviour, in which debate can be respectfully conducted; in which the voices of the weak, the very poor, and particularly women are accorded full regard" and in which these voices can fully take part to the social production of knowledge and information framing the policy making mechanisms [Appadurai 2013, 212]. This is the terrain for social research as a "conversation among many voices", the terrain in which the relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis is shaped.

However, the contemporary social landscape goes in a very different direction from the emancipatory one, while the concept of infrastructures of experience can help us to better grasp it. We can introduce this latter concept as a contri-

bution to the attempt for reinterpreting *Kulturkritik* [Adorno 1967] in times of supply chain capitalism [Neilson 2014]. Contemporary society is characterised [Borghi, Dorigatti, Greco 2017; Mezzadra, Neilson 2017; Ong, Collier 2005; Sassen 2006; Tsing 2009] by operations of capital and processes of value extraction – based on value chains running all over the world, their synchronisation via logistics and the resulting new assemblages of territory, power and rights – with which culture is structurally combined[4]. Mark Fisher [2009] has offered a fundamental help to this attempt, focusing on the concept of "capitalist realism", which plays a key role in what we identify as infrastructures of experience. His analysis clearly shows how "capitalist realism" modifies our forms of life, both in daily life and in our thinking, redesigning health, education, labour and other. Hardly to be synthetised in a closed definition, capitalist realism "cannot be confined to art or to the quasi-propagandistic way in which advertising functions. It is more like a pervasive *atmosphere*, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action" [ivi, p.16]. 21st century capitalism consists in fact in a further step in the capitalist transformation of moral economy, in which "capitalist realism" reaches a very high capacity of extracting individuals' cooperation [Borghi 2014]: we are increasingly invited, also through the injunctions of an overwhelming neoliberal bureaucracy [Hibou 2015], "to view ourselves as longitudinal databases constantly accruing new content" [Schüll 2016, 9]; markets "have learned to 'see' in a new way, and are teaching us to see ourselves in that way, too" [Fourcade, Healey 2017, 10]; experiences, culture and social practices are formatted into "classification situations", through "sorting and slotting people into categories and ranks for the purpose of extracting some form of material or symbolic profit" [ivi, 14]; and, more in general, "[k]nowledge and calculability have been brought to bear on increasingly intima-

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4. The idea that the "closer we look at the commodity chain, the more every step – including transportation – can be seen as an area of cultural production" [Tsing 2005, 51] and that contemporary capitalism is structurally based on cultural, aesthetic and symbolic dimensions emerges by now in large, even if heterogeneous, literature. See, for instance, Boltanski, Esquerre 2017; Bhöme 2016; Balicco 2017. At the same time, a specific cultural industry can be analysed for its contribution to contemporary capitalism and the social injustices it implies [Banks 2017].

te areas of the self, straitening its moral fiber and accountability to generate new sources of revenues" [Fourcade 2017, 672].

As Fisher emphasises [2009, 15], what "needs to be kept in mind is *both* that capitalism is a hyper-abstract impersonal structure *and* that it would be nothing without our co-operation". The concept of infrastructures of experience tries *both* to grasp the "fatality" of the real, inquiring its meaning and its deep effects, *and* to catch the "counter-fatality", the "fireflies" of the possible always surviving in the folds of the real[5]. It is an analytical tool for inquiring (at the daily, street-level of life) how our cooperation is reproduced in the capitalist realism *and* how breaches are opened, co-operation is interrupted, infrastructures of experience can be differently interpreted. Through this category we can take into consideration the moment in which the "sensemaking" [Weick 1995], that enacts the worlds of which we become adequate actors, is captured by "capitalist realism" and, at the same time, the possibility of being otherwise which is embedded in sensemaking. In this sense, it is a tentative theoretical move for breaking new ground (also) in order to push social research beyond the trap of trajectorism and its scalability framework. It can be applied to many different research objects (education, labour, cultural industry, social policies, etc.): more than a specific field of research, it is in fact a transversal epistemological approach, emphasising the relational nature of every act of knowledge. It is a concept worth spending some words on.

3. Where should emancipation be looked for? The relationship between infrastructures of experience and the informational basis

The choice to adopt infrastructures of experience as an analytical tool is based on some cognitive advantages that it seems to have, as well as for its ability to connect aspects and phenomena otherwise treated separately. In extremely schematic terms, the main reasons for experimenting this concept can be summarised as follows.

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5. Didi-Huberman and Giannari [2017] explore *fatality* and *counter-fatality* for discussing the role of the witness as far as migrants' conditions are concerned. The reinterpretation of Pasolini's metaphor of the "fireflies" is employed by Didi-Huberman [2018] for overcoming representations of the contemporary forms of domination as an inevitable fate.

We have already mentioned the epistemological value (the epistemology of complexity; the ecology of thought) that reverberates in the term "infrastructure", which puts in the foreground the relationship between the observer and the field of observation. In this perspective, the observer "must be included within the focus of observation, and what can be studied is always a relationship or an infinite regress of relationships. Never a «thing»" [Bateson 1987, 182]. The relationship between the inquired phenomenon and us is therefore placed at the centre: for instance, studying the Holocaust at the heart of European modernity, "the real point at issue is not; 'What can we, the sociologists, say about the Holocaust?' but, rather, 'What has the Holocaust to say about us, the sociologists, and our practice?'" [Bauman 1989, 6]; or, inquiring the "encapement du monde" [Agier 2014], we should question what form of life and way of thinking does lead us to retain that, anyway, "there is no alternative" to it?

Secondly, infrastructures are both tangible and intangible (from roads to ITC networks, from railways to international quality standards) devices that configure the space we inhabit, establishing constraints and possibilities [Easterling 2014; Ben-Joseph 2005]. Our use of the concept inherits and keeps the attention on the twofold (material and immaterial; indirect and direct) power of organising social life. This is particularly appropriate for a time in which, mainly abandoning the old fashioned "command-and-control techniques of governance", power is exercised according to a "nudge" style and remains "concealed, working on the actor from within and without his explicit acknowledgement" [Fourcade 2017, 672].

Moreover, the infrastructures through which we experience are something in which we are thrown, a sort of "second nature"; but they are also the product of human activity, the result of the work of individuals who, with different responsibilities, perform tasks, develop projects, use techniques and technologies. This perspective opens the black box of expertise, of the transformation of normative issues in techno-bureaucratic matter and exposes to critical scrutiny the evaluation criteria embodied in the apparently neutral devices and routines our activities are based on. In other words, this concept emphasises the issue of the social meaning of work, activities, goods and services constructing those infrastructures [Banks 2017], opening to the public sphere a responsibility too often dissolved in the abstract authority of know-how. Finally, we consider that this

perspective allows us to include in the analysis an important topic, i.e. temporality. The relationship between "space of experience" and "horizon of expectations" [Koselleck 2004] significantly frames infrastructures of experience. Inquiring these latter means (also) trying to point out the "regimes of historicity" [Hartog 2015] through which every age can, for instance, resign itself to the dominant representation of how things went or "strive anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it" [Benjamin (1940) 2006, 391].

As we stated above, infrastructures of experience has to be assumed as an epistemological approach that can be applied to every different object or field of research. However, we consider that, in a context in which a rethought *Kulturkritik* becomes a crucial terrain for critically inquiring supply chain capitalism and its operations of value extraction, a particular attention should be paid to the cognitive dimension of our social organisation. This moment is the relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis. This latter concept comes from Amartya Sen's theory of capability, that despite its very promising potential [Borghi 2018] "has remained largely unnoticed by sociologists" [Kremakova 2013, 394]. Every collectively relevant decision and action is based on what Sen defines the "informational basis of judgement for justice". More precisely, the informational basis "determines the factual territory over which considerations of justice would directly apply" and for this reason "the real 'bite' of a theory of justice can, to a great extent, be understood from its informational base: what information is – or is not – taken to be directly relevant" [Sen 1999, 56-7]. Any "convention" [Borghi, Vitale 2006; Diaz-Bone, Thévenot 2010; Diaz-Bone 2017], through which the world outside is categorised in order to be addressed, is rooted in an "evaluative structure" establishing that "some types of factual matters are taken to be important in themselves" [Sen 1991, 16], whereas "the truth or falsehood of any other type of information cannot directly influence the correctness of the judgement" [Sen 1990, 111]. So, the definition of what and whose knowledge is taken into account as "informational basis" and the decision about what kind of cognitive holes and ignorance can be assumed (usually through technical devices) as legitimated areas of social indifference, have crucial effects. Informational basis is in fact particularly relevant as it embodies "definitions of problems and targets,

categorisations of individuals and social groups, as well as complex systems for assessing actions against objectives" [de Leonardis, Negrelli 2012, 17].

However, the concept of informational basis, as for the infrastructures of experience, must be placed in space and time. Being extremely schematic in this case too, three key processes can be underlined. The first one is a process of growing *quantification*. Our contemporary daily life and horizon of possibility is increasingly mediated through the "mechanical objectivity" [Espeland, Stevens 2008] of quantified information in administration, management, education and finance, so that "we cannot understand the basic terms of justice if we do not understand quantification". This has important consequences: in a context characterised by a passage from the "government through the law" to the "governance through the numbers" [Supiot 2010, 77-8; 2015], expertise and technical vocabularies are the only ones admitted for setting and addressing issues in the public sphere. Devices based on a quantified informational basis, turning normative issues into technical ones (which become thereby depoliticised), can avail of a deep performative power. The ranking and scores they deploy, produce "an effect of reflexive feedback, in accordance with a logic that approximates to the self-fulfilling prophecy [...]. The contours of reality are gradually transformed. Once modes of qualification and test formats have been recognised and established, consolidated by definitions, regulations and procedures – often stored, in Western democracies, in the form of what is called law – it becomes possible for actors in a position of power locally to base themselves on these systems to alter reality in its most ordinary and quotidian dimensions" [Boltanski 2011, 133]. A second process is about *privatisation*. This is part of a broader metamorphosis of the mechanisms of social coordination, that is evident in the spreading of private modes of governing and organising social relationships, a diffusion of contractual and private consensus-based forms of coordination [Hibou 2015; Perulli 2012; Supiot 2015] in order to meet the pressures toward a "capitalist synchronisation" [Sheuerman, 2004]. In this sense, privatisation "supplies a major component of managed democracy" [Wolin 2008, 136]. As far as the processual relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis, more in particular, is concerned, privatisation has to do with the multiple ways of "private appropriation" [Fourcade, Healey 2017, 17] our lifes are (voluntarily or involun-

tarily) exposed when browsing internet, using credit cards, etc. In the "extensive 'datafication' of everyday activity", a dramatic problem "is the factual asymmetry regarding access *to*, and processing capabilities *of*, such data" [Adolf, Stehr 2018, 8-10], beyond the perhaps deeper asymmetry regarding the participation to the upstream knowledge-making process which data is based on.

Finally, there is a process of *radicalised abstraction* that, even if it is a direct consequence of the first process we underlined (quantification), it is worth circumscribing it better as it is particularly significant for our topic. As we already stressed, contemporary capitalism is characterised, beyond the already existing real abstractions such as money and the commodity form, by a growing number of devices and instruments for governing at distance based on quantified, formalised and standardised – i.e. abstract – knowledge and information. The format resulting from this way of transforming infrastructures of experience in this (quantified, radically abstracted) informational basis, deletes subjective experiences. The "concrete, factual reality of the problems and situations that public policies address – at the level of employment, living conditions, health, and so forth – is drained of the element of subjective experience. Subjective experience, in turn, loses its voice as a relevant source of knowledge of those problems and situations. This reality, with this consistency, is lost from the field of public visibility and becomes irrelevant: these – scientifically validated – quantities measuring the reality are ready, then, to take its place in performing this task" [de Leonardis, Negrelli 2012, 21]. Such a radicalised abstraction, which market and bureaucratic devices are impregnated of, leads to lose the sense of our own activities, both at the individual and at the collective level. The "reduction of the political and the government of human beings to indicators, economic and financial imbalances, targets, objectives, balances and graphs leads to a loss in the interest as well as the meaning of actions and strategies, fostering – with its apparent depoliticisation – incomprehension, disorientation, and thus indifference" [Hibou 2015, 99; Ogien 2008].

4. Experience, information and democratising research

A concrete example can help to understand the terrain we have to focus on. The example regards the relationship between experience and informational basis in the field of health and safety at work [Borghi 2018]. We studied an Italian factory that, as usual on the international markets, adopts the international standard "W.C.M." (World Class Manufacturing), in which are integrated different managerial devices. Among the ten technical Pillars of W.C.M., there is the "Safety" one, based (as are the other Pillars) on a scoring system of evaluation that addresses workers' performance. The general logics is that any detected and recorded negative event (accident) pushes the factory down in the scoring system. The whole system seems to be apparently an effective instrument for reducing risks and dangers at work. However, as we have seen in the discussion above, these devices, far from merely measuring it, produce and enact their own reality: when an accident happens, the worker responsible for the prevention and protection (appointed by employers) makes all possible efforts in order to avoid a downward slide in the scoring system. Negotiations about the definition of the accident take shape, aiming at convincing the worker(s) involved to reduce the size of the accident, the days of rest to be consequently assigned and further possible effects. At the same time, workers are aware that frequent accidents registration can have negative effects on their position, exposing them to the risk, in case of being involved in more accidents, of downgrading or demansiong. The whole logics of this Standard is based on knowledge and information – about work, work organisation, pace and time saturation, safety, effort, etc. – that completely excludes workers' experience and *voice* [Bifulco 2013] and their role in a possible deliberative inquiry [Salais 2009] for more fairly constructing them.

Next to this one, another picture must be put, regarding the same context (health and safety at work) but in a different period. In the sixties, occupational health in Italy witnessed a turning point, on which later the foundation of the whole public health system was to be based. Ivar Oddone, an occupational doctor, significantly contributed to this. He founded and coordinated a heterogeneous group of workers, students, activists, trade unionists, and so on, and produced a documentation through a deep process of inquiry and "mutual edu-

cation" [Burawoy 2005] between experts, workers and other participants, which strongly reframed the politics of safety at work. The Guide to safety at work realised by this group obtained an enormous diffusion, playing a key role in workers' struggles on health issues inside and, subsequently, outside working places. Oddone, also thanks to his anti-rhetorical experience of intense exchange and collaboration with people from popular classes matured in the partisan struggle[6], came to the belief that (also) safety at work had to be based on the knowledge and experience of workers. For this reason, he promoted the concept (and practice) of the *Enlarged Scientific Community*, in which different informational bases about health and work (coming from different experts, academics, workers, activists, and social researchers) interact and mutually influence each other, through inquiring and (intervening on) working conditions [Re 2014]. We can see here a possible way for conceiving the processual relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis which is opposite to the previous one, a possibility of a pragmatist social inquiry that "tends on the one hand to improve factual knowledge and on the other to redefine political values" [Zimmermann 2006, 481]. The need to profoundly reframe what we identify here in terms of relationship beween infrastructures of experience and informational basis, moving towards approaches inspired to "deliberative inquiry" and "a conversation among many voices", can be revealed, according to our interpretation, in many contexts. For instance, in the request for revising EU policies of work and employment through workers' and citizens' participation [Salais 2015]; in the mobilisation of statistics in order to improve social movements' action [Bruno, Didier, Vitale 2014]; in the mobilising of young people "capacity to aspire" to deal with urban issues [Appadurai 2013, 381-403]; in a research about the (social, institutional and political) issues after an earthquake [Emidio da Treviri 2018]; or in the more general project of a "public organic sociology" [Burawoy 2005].

The critical point we emphasise is that changing the informational basis requires emphasising the possible embedded in the real and to strengthen the cri-

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6. For a deep understanding of his historical feature, in the context of the partisans' Resistance against Nazi occupation and in the following years, in addition to scientific and cultural documentation, two novels are very important: Italo Calvino's book [1947], in which Oddone is narrated in the character of Commander Kim and the wonderful and more recent novel by Davide Orecchio [2017; see Chapter on "Partisan Kim"].

tical, "counter-fatality" power contained in the infrastructures of experience. In other words, it requires to enhance the "capacity to aspire" of people in a context in which the contemporary "managerial mode of domination" [Boltanski 2011, 127] aims at conforming those infrastructures themselves to its own logics. Here lies the importance of focussing on the relationship between infrastructures of experience and informational basis through a sociological gaze that is cosmopolitan from below, in order to inquire (and take care of) the conditions of emancipation that our contemporary societies express, the surviving "fireflies". This relationship is increasingly reframed in order to fulfill systemic prerequisites, transforming "just in time" the infrastructures of experience into an informational basis conforming to the "attentional capitalism" [Citton 2017], the "experience economy" [Pine, Gilmore 1999] or what Boltanski and Esquerre [2017] define the "enrichment economy". The whole complex articulation of the infrastructures of experience – as Banks [2017, 4] writes about culture – is in fact "increasingly decoupled from its potential to offer meaningful non-commercial experiences, including progressive elements of social or political *critique*" and its changeover with the processes of value extraction is more and more solid.

In general, the "efficiency of the capitalistic process [...] presupposes capitalizing on, intervening in, or meticulously planning, certain kinds of moral orders, including imaginaries and hierarchies of worth" [Fourcade 2017, 668] and, also thanks to a more and more advanced connection between technologies and algorithms, experience and knowledge are structurally engaged in this. A cosmopolitan-from-below approach to this condition implies to contrast the project of a "social physics" that this dominant mode of capturing experience renews [Adolf, Stehr 2018] for extracting conform information, coherently with "trajectorism" and "scalability" frameworks. While this project is strongly focused on the control value of the relationship experience/information, our perspective is centred on the transformative value of it. A matter of human rights, the *human right to research* [Appadurai 2013], is at stake here. This right pertains *both to researchers and their publics*, as *a shared, collective and public responsibility*. At stake is the right to access research redesigned as "not only the production of original ideas and new knowledge (as it is normally defined in academia and other knowledge based institutions)", but also as "the capacity to systematically increase the horizons of

one's current knowledge, in relation to some task, goal, or aspiration" [Appadurai 2013, 282]. Since without aspiration "there is no pressure to know more", as well as "without systematic tools for gaining relevant new knowledge, aspiration degenerates into fantasy or despair" [ivi, 283], the importance of an approach "from below" to the knowledge-making process results evident. More than re-proposing an updated role of the "engaged intellectual", it is a perspective aiming at a "reflexive practitioner" [Shön 1983], who refuses to be limited to a technical problem-solution based, sociological expertise and who participates in a "process of mutual education" between the sociologist and his/her public, in which both are transformed and co-evolve. The duty this perspective gives to social research(ers) is particularly relevant (even if shared, as we said), as it contributes both to the "regime of representation" [Forgacs 2014] which the public sphere works with, and to the process of reconstituting the public itself. However, despite the huge responsibility deriving from it, this perspective opens a construction site for social research that is just as challenging as it is exciting.

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