

SEMINAR

Nonviolence as Democratic Innovation

Monday, 12 February 2024

10.00 AM to 6.00 PM

LOGISTICAL DETAILS

Palazzo Buontalenti,
Via Cavour 65, 50129 (Florence, Italy)

BTC104 – Elinor Ostrom room

CONTACTS

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ORGANISERS

European Nonviolent Network | UACES
Transnational Democracy in 21st Century Cluster | EUI
Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence

Event information

The workshop is organised with a networking grant provided by UACES – University Association for Contemporary European Studies. The event is Supported by Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence and the Transnational Democracy in 21st Century Cluster of the European University Institute.

Nonviolence is often studied from a social movement's perspective, looking at organized mobilization against unfair laws or authoritarian regimes. Recently, movements concerned with the planetary climate crisis have also evoked nonviolence when committing acts like traffic blockages, hunger strikes or throwing paint at art. At the same time, often outside the dimension of organized social movements, individuals are using their bodies and 'the power of one', leveraging nonviolence to challenge existing public policies, often facing legal consequences.

The analysis of these practices – centered around the protection of fundamental rights - raises new questions about what nonviolence is and what it is for, re-opening the classic discussion between principled and pragmatic nonviolence. It also raises the question of how we go from 'the power of one' to informal mobilization to organized movements, and further to democratic choice in complex societies. But this is a two-way street, since collective, society-wide democratic representation and public decisions taken by parliaments and governments reverberate on individual choices, reinvigorating or stifling individual and small-group / informal nonviolent struggle as democratic innovation.

Fundamentally, nonviolent praxis means enacting a form of politics that takes the democratic ideal to its radical and innovative conclusions. To understand how these connections manifest in the practices is one goal of this workshop. Another goal is to examine nonviolence beyond the stereotype of input for - or complement to - democratic representation. Instead, we put the lens on nonviolence as democratic innovation, and explore the quality, dimensions, and value of this innovation.

The workshop will revolve around a set of conversations between university researchers and individuals engaged in nonviolent struggle, conflict, and, more generally, practice. We will assess if, how and when exactly nonviolence can be framed as democratic innovation. If yes, when can we talk of nonviolence and how can we grasp its innovative quality? If not, what does nonviolence need to transform into, to become democratic innovation? The final question motivating our workshop revolves around the following: if nonviolence is, under certain conditions, democratic innovation, how do we connect it with democratic participation and representative democracy?

PROGRAMME

(All timings below are in CEST)

Monday, 12 February 2024

Elinor Ostrom meeting room (BTC 104)

10.00 – 10.45 Opening Remarks

Professor Claudio Radaelli | Full-time Professor EUI, STG

Virginia Fiume | STG Policy Leader Fellow and Nonviolent Activists

10.45 – 12.00

Session 1: Between direct action and nonviolence: research papers

15 minutes each

Virginia Fiume | STG Policy Leader Fellow and Nonviolent Activists

From the power of one to the power of all: practices of Nonviolence as democratic innovation between individual and collective strategies.

Ophelia Nicole-Berva | PhD researcher, SPS Department, EUI

Can civil disobedience be silent? The case of solidarity crimes in border areas

Carla Vitantonio | EUI Alumna, Humanitarian and Activist for Social Justice

Democratic innovations through grassroot organizations in Cuba

Amy Delis | MA Student at STG

Nonviolent Narratives in the speeches of the Members of the European Parliament

Paulina Pospieszna | Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland

Democratic Innovations by Polish NGOs in Ukraine Amid Conflict

12.00 – 14.15 Lunch Break and Knowledge Sharing

Lunch bags will be delivered in Leonardo da Vinci room (BTC 105) to all participants to the event.

Practices of nonviolence and direct action “take over” the School of Transnational Governance

Giulia Ursini | Activist Extinction Rebellion

Lucrezia Fortuna | Xenia - Per una legge dell'ospite, initiative coordinated by Natura Comune

Xavi Ferrer | Activist in the Housing Rights Movements in Barcelona and Berlin, municipalist, co-founder of Barcelona En Comú

Vittorio Parpaglion Barbieri | Civil Disobedient in the context of the initiatives for end-of-life decisions carried on by Associazione Soccorso Civile and Associazione Luca Coscioni

Marco Di Salvo | Journalist and Writer

This session invites the Participants to an itinerant tour of Palazzo Buontalenti.

Activists will display visual materials (posters, pictures, etc.) to describe their campaigns/actions about how nonviolence brings about democratic innovation.

14.15 – 16.00 Session 2: Workshop Mode**Reflection, Learning, Exchanges between the world of practice and the world of research****Moderator**

Virginia Fiume | STG Policy Leader Fellow and Nonviolent Activist

Participants will discuss the key takeaways from the morning sessions and will explore the potential and the limits of the framework “*Nonviolence as democratic innovation*”. The activists will have the chance to challenge the papers that they have heard in the morning and the researchers will be able to deep dive into the experience of the ground presented by activists.

16.00 – 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 – 18.00 **Session 3: From democratic innovation to multi-level governance and democratic representation**

Moderator

Claudio Radaelli | Full-time Professor EUI, STG

Speakers

Alexandre Christoyannopoulos | Loughborough University and Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence

An anarcho-pacifist critique of the European Union

Kalypso Nicolaidis | Chair of Global Politics School of Transnational Governance, EUI

Direct Nonviolent Action, Participation and Democratic Representation

18.00 **End of Event**