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degli Studi
di Palermo**

CENTRO DI STUDI AVANZATI "A.S.CENT."

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDIES "A.S.CENT."

The Director: Prof. Avv. Antonello MIRANDA

Full prof. of Comparative and European Law



To kind attention of Prof. **ANTONELLO MIRANDA**
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FINAL REPORT

During my stay at the Center for Advanced Studies of Unipa, I developed my work following two directions. The first one is devoted to climate change, as mentioned in my initial proposal. The second opens a new chapter in my research: can the Sicilian example help analyze new forms of organized crime in Corsica?

1. Sociology and climate change: Is reason powerless?

I have been working in the sociology of environment since the mid-seventies. Now, it is the major issue, a matter of survival in the short term. The situation of the earth is continuously worsening, and there seems to be no way of improvement, particularly since the reelection of Donald Trump. Revisiting my previous work (mainly, on hunting practices in France and anti-hunting movements and on projects devoted to "recreating" homeostatic functioning of natural processes), I would like to write a book-length manuscript that offers a synthesis of debates and a tentative answer to the question opened by Jens Beckert's seminal book: *How we sold our future. The failure to fight climate change* (2024).

I have four ideas in mind. The first one is deliberately provocative. It's never too late to be a rationalist, if we consider that reason does not belong to a province of the world, namely Europe, but must be constructed as a universal tool: the situation of the planet forces us to be universal. Capitalism is not the consequence of a rational plan: it largely developed in a contingent way-see Kenneth Pomeranz on the Great Divergence (2001)-, and is based on the foolish idea of a natural cornucopia. In his famous comment on Kant's *Was ist Aufklärung?*, Foucault considers that the debate 'for' or 'against' the Enlightenment has no meaning as such, and calls for a new space of inquiry that would take into account our own determination, as subjects, by the Enlightenment, making it the object of a new history, still to be written. This is still a sort of empty programme that does not overcome the antinomies of modern rationality. I would like to draw on one of Foucault's most suggestive remarks, albeit in some ways enigmatic: 'many things in our experience convince us that the historical event of the Enlightenment did not make us mature adults, and we have not reached that stage yet ». The climate crisis is an occasion to become adults.

Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000) is a seminal text in postcolonial studies, which seeks to examine

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how Western intellectual history continues to shape the agendas and expectations of the whole world. Chakrabarty argued that Western theories are both "indispensable and inadequate". Europe is much more than a geographical region: it's a "body of knowledge that defines how we should see the world". We can accept this claim. However, in his more recent work about climate change, Chakrabarty does not seem quite different from Bruno Latour, a thinker who situates himself in the legacy of a non-rationalist but strongly European type of epistemology. The Indian historian even quotes Carl Schmitt's *Nomos of the Earth* positively, an unlikely decolonial reference. In the same vein, Heidegger's debunking of "planetary imperialism" should not be assimilated with a form of ecological thinking emerging from the Global South.

My second idea aims to account for the burden of a middle-class self-promotion in mainstream ecological thinking. Injunctive forms that call for new practices are part of the long history of the domestication of the working classes. Bad practices must be abandoned in favor of behaviors governed by moral requirements and a sense of responsibility that is lacking in populations unfamiliar with this type of discourse. Getting rid of the middle-class centrism on environment is a categorical imperative. My third idea stems from the critical take I developed thirty years ago with respect to Bruno Latour's Gaïa hypothesis. In *An Inquiry in the Modes of Existence*, Bruno Latour seeks to close what he calls the "modernist parenthesis". The environmental crisis provides an opportunity for this shift in that it reveals, perhaps for the first time, the dead ends of modernity. In their determination to distinguish themselves from nature at all costs, to make emancipation a political project, modern people are undoubtedly guilty of hubris. However, if we agree to give more space to actors and networks, if we can recognize ourselves in some of his ethnographic proposals, must we therefore renounce the reflective ambition that characterizes the project of social science and which, by definition, prohibits any form of prophecy?

My fourth idea concerns the necessary reassessment of the huge refusal to acknowledge climate change. Here, I will use as a starting point Karen Norgaard's useful definition of apathy and denial in her book *Living in Denial* (2011). Nothing is hidden to us, as the phenomenon is so spectacular. The first explanation is the following: there is a huge gap between the causes of catastrophes and their effects; it can take many Centuries for damage to appear. The first stages of environmental damage are characterized by their invisibility. The second is the multifactor dimension of these phenomena. The Ostrich politics imply that we are we choose to ignore the problem, as mobilizing resources to solve it would be too costly (in negotiations with others, in personal renunciations, in the tranquility of life). Denial is consubstantial to social life. There are, of course, other explanations to apathy and denial: as in the voting process, the change of attitude of any individual is too minimal to have any significant effect.

The question is now: how can we resurrect the idea of the commons at a planetary level? The long history of capitalism has erased the most of the non-propertyed pieces of land on the globe. A few exceptions remain. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro considers, as an anthropologist, that the big stake now is the access by non-modern collectives to ontological self-determination at the end of a process of decolonization of thought. The self-determination leads to the dignification of animism (or perspectivism). However, Viveiros de Castro ignores whether or not the emancipation of animism will guarantee social concord and he adds that we

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can't wait a possible conversion to animism to answer the ecological imperative, as the countdown has started for a long time. I must conclude that the idea is extremely interesting, as it allows us to reconnect with nature as a process, as an ecosystem, but we ignore its feasibility.

Apparently more oriented toward mobilization, the Memo published by Bruno Latour and Nikolaj Schulz is an encouragement to envisage a more efficient form of political action which means an agenda and a horizon. Against Latour's previous theologico-political statements, the very short book is driven by the need for efficiency. Surprisingly enough, the concept of class is revisited, but not in the Marxian sense. The authors want to "simplify and unify mobilizations" in order to scale up the frame of social movements. But what exactly an "ecological class" if it is not based on the relations of production but what seems to be a common awareness of the upcoming disaster? The memo is too short to give an answer. Previous environmental mobilizations, albeit very spectacular, have changed things only at the local level, and a planetary answer is hard to imagine. Nevertheless, it gives us a political horizon that implies a consensus, at least among the ecological class. How would it be produced? By a common rejection of productivism, it seems. I see some Polanyists overtones in the memo. The common goal is a partial decommodification of the world by returning to a common Earth where all the 4people who suffer, as workers or consumers, from productivism unite. In many ways, we can consider that Latour's move is a move to a more standard progressive agenda, as we are forced to take action as it is only condition for our own survival. If we take seriously the idea of ecological class, should the postcolonial distinction between lumpers and splitters survive? Chakrabarty himself, who has been a great splitter, acknowledges that the Anthropocene forces us to put the global histories of capital in conversation with the history of human beings as a species, one species. This conversation must lead us to probe the limits of historical understanding. This undoubtedly implies a revision of human ambition in the form of a Copernican revolution: we are no longer at the center of nature. Modern capitalism has generalized a probabilistic vision of the natural and the social world: risk can be measured and assessed. This is the origin of the insurance system, of statistics and more generally the social sciences. We may leave a part of the risk aside, if it does not threaten the outcome. Omelets are not made without breaking eggs. The French Revolution has represented a turn in the management of risks, as Jarrige and Leroux show in *La contamination du monde* (2017). The new men said: the interest of the national industry is worth the sacrifice of some individuals. Now, a huge level of uncertainty makes the management of risks as we considered it since the 19th Century impossible. We need reason more than in the past, Chakrabarty says. This is true. The task now is to reconcile the imperative of reason with Viveiros de Castro's ontological perspectivism, which implies a form of *Aufhebung*.

2. An Island Beyond the Law? Corsica and the Justice System. A Sociological Approach.

5"Corsica," said philosopher Jean-Toussaint Desanti more than half a century ago, "has been forgotten by science." This observation is particularly true for the social sciences, although the founding of the University of Corsica has significantly changed the situation.

The subject at hand is particularly challenging for a social scientist: it is difficult to

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imagine the possibility of what is known as participant observation to study organized crime from a sociological perspective.

In the absence of genuine sociological knowledge on organized crime in Corsica, I have drawn on numerous journalistic sources, which are not without merit, as these professionals are generally well-informed (precise analysis of court transcripts, for example) and, for the most part, honest. I began, like everyone else, by reading the excellent book by James Sarazin, who wrote the legal column for **Le Monde** in 1978, *M... comme milieu*, in which Corsica was well represented—a pioneering work if ever there was one (Sarazin 1978). The book drew protests from certain protagonists: "Messrs. Alain Moreau and James Sarazin, publisher and author of the book *Dossier M... as Milieu*, were each fined 5,000 francs on July 13 by the Nice Criminal Court for defamation against Mr. Jean-Dominique Fraton, chairman and CEO of the Ruhl Casino (*Le Monde*, June 15). The court also ordered the seizure of the book to allow for the removal of passages deemed defamatory, which account for five pages of the work" (*Le Monde*, July 14, 1977).

More recent sources can also be found in the books by Jacques Follorou, Hélène Constanty, and Sampiero Sanguinetti, who has the merit of being the most "reflective" of the three, as he is capable of grasping the unintended consequences of narrating organized crime (turning conjectures into certainties), but who closes off certain avenues by excluding, on principle, possible links between certain aspects of nationalism and organized crime.

Knowledge remains incomplete and prone to overinterpretation or misinterpretation, but I would like to conclude by proposing a few analytical frameworks to be tested and questioned. The realm of organized crime is constituted and perpetuated by a number of factors:

- The state's intermittent presence and the delegation of authority to forms of local regulation (the clan)
- The normalization of criminal culture
- The elevation of thugs to the status of local notables
- The family structure of criminal enterprises
- The power of toxic masculinity
- The primitive accumulation of capital and its reconversions- Competition with other ethnic groups over reconfigured territories.
- The end of the (partly artificial) opposition between a protected insular interior and an exterior that is the scene of large-scale crime: the advent of tourism ("tourism as destiny") has multiplied opportunities, if not to "live and rob at home," then at least to develop criminal activities linked to land issues, commercial activities, and the demand for illicit substances, of which France (and increasingly Corsica) is a major consumer.
- These factors interact to maintain conditions favorable to the flourishing of organized crime on the island.

During my stay, I benefited from excellent working conditions. The outstanding seminar on mafia and anti-mafia offered an extraordinary amount of food for thought. My colleague, Professor Antonello Miranda was a wonderful host. I am immensely grateful to him. I want to thank the AsCenter team, particularly Ms. Francesca Schiavo. During my stay, I was able to review the proofs of my new book, *Sociology of Corsica*, which will come in France on July 2nd, present three lectures

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at the Hecas Institute for Advanced Studies in Istanbul and write a presentation on
"Mauss, Lefort, Bourdieu. Sociologie et philosophie politique" (conference in
Sorbonne Paris-Cité, June 25-26th).

Palermo, June 15th, 2026

Signature

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