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**THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

(War and Peace: The Origin of a Political Concept)

Relatore

*Prof. Andrea Catanzaro*

Candidato

*Lorenzo Mangano*

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## SUMMARY

Il concetto di identità costituisce il fulcro di questa tesi. Quest'identità, come vedremo, assume diverse sfaccettature ed è oggetto di analisi da parte di numerosi sociologi di spicco. Essa si configura come il *deus ex machina* che motiva i leader dei movimenti sociali oggetto di studio a rispondere alle proposte o alle lacune del sistema vigente.

Dalla carismatica figura dei leader nascono, si sviluppano e crescono i movimenti, che guadagnano sempre più consenso e diventano sempre più noti all'opinione pubblica.

Questo lavoro si apre con un capitolo introduttivo, in cui l'identità emerge come tema centrale che rappresenta il punto di partenza dell'analisi e il legame che tiene insieme i membri di ciascun movimento, simili a particelle in una struttura più ampia. Si mette in luce il dualismo tra l'identità e la globalizzazione, che spinge verso un mondo fluido, privo di legami e confini e scoraggia la necessità di distinguere ciò che siamo noi da ciò che sono gli altri.

La globalizzazione, involontariamente, ha riportato in vita un fenomeno che sembrava estinto dopo la seconda metà del Novecento, il nazionalismo, il quale, tramite i suoi esponenti, viene sempre più spesso associato al concetto di identità. L'analisi prosegue esaminando il rapporto con la religione e, successivamente, con il fondamentalismo, quest'ultimo approfondito nel capitolo dedicato ad Al Qaeda. La domanda cruciale rimane se e come l'identità possa agevolare la partecipazione a un gruppo sociale. A tale proposito, le pubblicazioni di Mancur Olson sull'irrazionalità dell'azione collettiva tentano di rispondere a questo interrogativo.

Il secondo capitolo si concentra sul primo movimento sociale analizzato, ossia quello degli Zapatisti. In questo contesto, il concetto di identità si mescola a quello di uguaglianza e trova espressione nell'uso delle maschere come strumento nobile per enfatizzare l'importanza del collettivo a scapito degli interessi personali. Nonostante ciò, emerge come figura di spicco il Subcomandante Marcos, capace di trasmettere attraverso i propri scritti il sentimento di rivalsa ritenuto necessario per il riscatto degli indigeni messicani dopo cinque secoli di oppressione. Questo spirito, evidenziato durante le proteste del 1994 contro

l'ingresso del Messico nel NAFTA, attirò l'attenzione mondiale, costringendo il Presidente Salinas de Gortari a preferire la diplomazia alle armi.

Nel terzo capitolo viene esaminata una vicenda meno conosciuta, ossia la storia della e le dinamiche interne alla setta giapponese Aum Shinrikyo. Il culto della personalità del suo leader e fondatore, Shoko Asahara, rappresenta l'elemento distintivo di questo movimento sociale. La sua autocelebrazione fu la chiave del successo nell'incremento del numero di adesioni alla setta. Infatti, come evidenziato da diversi studiosi, alcuni Giapponesi cercavano nella religione una figura autoritaria in grado di tracciare una via per sopravvivere in un mondo che consideravano in costante declino, specialmente dopo l'evento di Hiroshima. Sorprende la natura dei membri di Aum, poiché Asahara predicava la rinuncia ai beni materiali e incoraggiava le donazioni alla setta, presentandola come l'unica via di salvezza dall'imminente Armageddon. Paradossalmente, i suoi seguaci provenivano dalle classi più abbienti e istruite della società giapponese.

Il quarto capitolo del lavoro si concentra su Al Qaeda, esaminandone rapporto con il fondamentalismo e la territorialità. Il concetto di territorialità è esterno a questo gruppo, anche se i primi passi dell'organizzazione risalgono alla guerra afghana del 1979. Il leader, Osama Bin Laden, reduce di guerra, ha fornito all'organizzazione i principi fondamentali su cui basare la propria ideologia: un'interpretazione aggressiva del jihad, la liberazione dei territori islamici dall'ingerenza occidentale e la sconfitta degli Stati Uniti.

Tra i gruppi analizzati, Al Qaeda è unico nel definire la propria identità non in termini propri, ma attraverso la definizione dei propri nemici, ossia gli occidentali. Il primo passo nella realizzazione di questo progetto è stato compiuto in Afghanistan dopo la guerra del 1979 contro i Sovietici con l'istituzione di un regime islamico basato sulla Sharia. Da questo progetto in Afghanistan, Osama Bin Laden ha selezionato alcuni veterani di guerra come stretti collaboratori. Al Qaeda è stata associata a numerosi attentati, ma il più noto rimane quello al World Trade Center di New York dell'11 settembre 2001.

Questo evento è ancora oggi considerato una svolta nella lotta al terrorismo e nell'attenzione generale alla sicurezza dei cittadini. A differenza di altri gruppi sociali analizzati, Al Qaeda non cerca di promuovere una società ideale o migliorare la vita dei cittadini, ma si concentra piuttosto sulla diffusione di un sentimento di resistenza contro gli occidentali che occupano luoghi sacri.

Nel quinto capitolo, suddiviso in due parti, si analizza il gruppo degli ambientalisti, che a sua volta è suddiviso internamente. Le proteste di Seattle, contro il *meeting* del WTO del 1994, rappresentarono per la prima volta un punto di svolta nell'attenzione dell'opinione pubblica verso le problematiche collaterali legate alla globalizzazione, tra cui la sostenibilità ambientale.

Il primo movimento esaminato nel capitolo è quello dei *Fridays for Future* di Greta Thunberg, la quale, partendo da uno sciopero personale, è riuscita a coinvolgere milioni di studenti e lavoratori in tutto il mondo preoccupati per il futuro del pianeta e a portare le proprie rivendicazioni persino all'ONU.

Il secondo movimento preso in considerazione è *Greenpeace*, spesso considerato l'antesignano dei *Fridays for Future*. Questa organizzazione è nata dalla comune avversione ai test nucleari ed è impegnata da anni nella protezione della biodiversità, nella lotta all'inquinamento e nella promozione della pace.

Il capitolo termina con un accenno ai partiti ecologisti emersi all'inizio degli anni '70, il cui programma politico aveva come obiettivo primario il rispetto per il pianeta. Uno dei successi più significativi fu rappresentato da Die Grünen in Germania, che ottenne oltre l'8% dei voti nelle elezioni del 1987.

La tesi si conclude con una tabella che evidenzia e confronta le caratteristiche del leader, dei seguaci, il rapporto con l'opinione pubblica, eventuali episodi di violenza e l'influenza del concetto di identità nel processo di formazione e aggregazione di ciascun gruppo sociale.



## INTRODUCTION

The question that tackles the interest on this topic, which subsequently brought to the following research work, has been: how deeply the concept of identity can influence the formation and the actions of a social movement?

The decision was to investigate the political, economic and social issues that have led many individuals to identify themselves in a group, creating a collective identity and giving it an organizational structure and a clear program to implement.

After an introductory chapter on the concept of identity and the implications it has on the formation and dynamics of social groups, each movement will be analyzed, with a focus on with its own structure, its own internal ties and its own goals. The order will include the Mexican Zapatistas, the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan, the Al Qaeda terrorist group in the Middle East, and environmentalists and their mission on a global scale.

The conclusive section reorganizes, comparing the various movements, subsequently finding similarities and differences in the way the concept of identity is defined by each group.



## I. THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

The presence of a constant dualism between globalization, which shapes the world, and identity, which tries to survive at changes, seems to create almost an opposition in the contemporary society.

According to Manuel Castells we are living in the so-called *network society* that has different features from the pre-globalized era: economic activities are borderless and job stability is no more granted nor requested.

This term was coined in 1991 by the sociologist George Simmel, who refers to the social, political and cultural changes caused by the breaking into our lives of technologies.

The network society has also led to new problems and challenges, such as the spread of fake news and misinformation, the creation of new forms of technology addiction and the need to protect people's privacy in an increasingly pervasive digital environment.

However, it has also opened up new possibilities and challenges for creativity, collaboration and innovation, creating an increasingly interconnected and global world.

This new society, well-described by the English author Israel Zangwill in his work *The Melting Pot*<sup>1</sup> already a century ago, indirectly incentivized the growing of collective identity, really concerned about the preservation of cultural singularity: “God, family and nation”<sup>2</sup>.

This motto was back in the news during the latest Italian elections, won by Giorgia Meloni<sup>3</sup>; the President of the Council of Ministres repeated it during one of her

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<sup>1</sup> I. ZANGWILL, *The Melting-Pot Drama in Four Acts*, New York, Macmillan, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> G. MAZZINI, *An Essay on the Duties of Man, Addressed to Workingmen, Written in and 1858*. New York, Funk & Wagnalls Co, 1892, pp. 70-71.

<sup>3</sup> Giorgia Meloni triumphed with 26% of the vote in the elections of 25 September and is at the head of the coalition formed by her party, Fratelli d'Italia, Lega and Forza Italia.

speeches and was accused of being strongly linked with a Fascist heritage <sup>4</sup>. She replied that this one was a Mazzinian motto of the 19th century; actually, Meloni removed the word Humanity from the original sentence.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of *identity* has to be defined in order to describe its changes throughout the years and in order to describe the journey.

Identities are sociologically constructed, and it becomes interesting to analyze "how, from what, by whom and for what".<sup>6</sup>

The process is well-described by Manuel Castells

The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations. But individuals, social groups, and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework. [...] who constructs collective identity, largely determines the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it.<sup>7</sup>

It seems useful a quote from Craigh Calhoun, an American sociologist, who in 1994, wrote that:

“We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures [...] Self-knowledge is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others”<sup>8</sup>

Identity is built both through self-identification and through the recognition that others make of the individual; this process has the dual objective of differentiating the

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[https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2022/09/27/elezioni-2022-per-fdi-quasi-59-milioni-di-voti-in-piu-\\_bb6c900c-d1c9-4f1f-bb8f-753465925454.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2022/09/27/elezioni-2022-per-fdi-quasi-59-milioni-di-voti-in-piu-_bb6c900c-d1c9-4f1f-bb8f-753465925454.html). Consulted on 25/8.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Friedman, in 2019, claimed that the motto was by Mussolini, ignoring the Mazzinian origin.

<sup>5</sup> In his work, *Duties of Man* (1898), Mazzini wrote that he wanted to “deal with, as my heart suggest, the holiest things that we know: God, Humanity, Nation and Family”.

<sup>6</sup> M. CASTELLS, *The Power of Identity*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> C. CALHOUN, *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1994, pp. 9-10.

individual from the rest of the world and at the same time making others recognize it as such.<sup>9</sup>

Sometimes this form of mutual recognition does not require common ethnic or religious roots; in this context what the scholar Herbert Gans calls *symbolic ethnicity* develops.<sup>10</sup>

These forms of identification have no foundation in the historic and cultural heritage of a given group but mix together symbols and references deriving from diverse social groups to form a new synthesis.<sup>11</sup>

A suitable example is represented by Rastafarianism, many are mirrored, despite not possessing the cultural roots of this group, because they share ways of thinking.<sup>12</sup>

Models of behavior, objects, and narratives are often merged in specific ritual forms. The ritual component fulfills an important role in movement practice, and above all in the production of identities. In general, rituals represent forms of symbolic expression by which communications concerning social relationships are passed on, in stylized and dramatized ways. These consist, in particular, of procedures which are more or less codified, through which a vision of the world is communicated, a basic historical experience is reproduced, a symbolic code overturned. They contribute to the reinforcement of identity and of collective feelings of belonging; and at the same time, they enable movement actors to give free rein to their emotions.<sup>13</sup>

Recognized that identity is built through a process, we can divide it in three main forms of identity building:

- 1) Legitimizing identity: identity was useful for the dominant class to justify their role in the civil society; these identities are “generated by or in churches, labor unions, political parties, cooperatives and civic associations”.<sup>14</sup> Castells glimpses the possibility of awareness by the oppressed thanks to the advent of global information society.

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<sup>9</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *Social Movements*, New Jersey, Blackwell Publishing, 1999, pp. 105-106.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, pp. 108-111.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>14</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 8-11.

- 2) Resistance identity: created by the part of the society that felt oppressed by a strong power. Castells hasn't got an optimistic view as in the previous case: in fact, they generally lack "the potential to construct new social projects of institution building".<sup>15</sup>
- 3) Project identity: people are linked in a new social group which redefines the structure of society. Unlike the previous cases project identities seek to move beyond relations of exclusion by seeking to transform existing institutions or by constructing new ones.<sup>16</sup>

Owing to this definition, it is crucial to distinguish the concept of identity from the concept of roles, which are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society. Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, constructed through a process of individuation.<sup>17</sup>

From a chronological point of view the concept of identity is strictly connected with religion. More than three thousand years ago men started to assume the presence of something, or someone, who was beyond their power; this was made necessary to explain the mystery of death and natural events that were not understood at the time.<sup>18</sup>

In all the various forms that it has taken over the centuries, religion responds to the "individual's need for a sense of locatedness"<sup>19</sup>. According to the Dutch sociologist Hans Mol, religion represents for the individual an anchor in the constant change of social dynamics.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 8-11.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, pp. 6-7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> R. J. SEUL, *Ours Is the Way of God': Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict*, "Journal of Peace Research", vol. 36, no. 5, 1999, p. 558.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

As a consequence, all these groups of people started to worship their own Gods and this habit became a sort of bond in the communities.

Religion can be a source of inspiration, guidance, and comfort for many people, but it can also be a source of conflict and extremism when it is used to promote narrow, dogmatic beliefs that are intolerant of other viewpoints.

It is relevant to underline the neutral tool that religion is in its essence. Indeed, religion *di per se* is believing in a god or in a multitude thereof and entails the activities that are connected with this belief, such as praying or going to church. In its core there is no connection to a negative connotation, nonetheless it can become so only when exploited by specific ideologies or by politics with interests in controlling the population or modifying their string of thoughts.

It can be seen that, when people become deeply attached to their religious beliefs and see them as absolute truths, they may develop a rigid, uncompromising worldview that is resistant to change or adaptation. This outcome is usually a consequence of the exploitation of religion provided by who weaponize religious beliefs.

The aforementioned pattern can subsequently lead to a form of religious fundamentalism, where individuals or groups seek to impose their beliefs on others and view those who do not share their views as enemies or infidels; it is important to note that, although it is in this millennium become one of the pivots of identity, religious fundamentalism was born at the same time as religion itself.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, when religious issues are politicized or intertwined with power struggles, the potential for fundamentalism increases.

Political leaders may exploit religious sentiments to advance their agendas or rally support, which can polarize society and exacerbate tensions between different religious groups.

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<sup>21</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

Also in the case of political movements the construction of the concept of identity is affected both by the social and political characteristics of the country in which it is formed both by the interactions that the components have with the local authorities<sup>22</sup>:

It has long been noticed how “encounters with unjust authority” may facilitate the consolidation of both motivations to act and hostility towards powerholders and their representatives. For example, accounts of Italian terrorists of the 1970s often mentioned mistreatment by police or by the judiciary as one of the driving forces behind their radicalization.<sup>23</sup>

In some cases, fundamentalism can lead to violent extremism, as individuals or groups may resort to terrorism or other forms of violence to achieve their goals.

This can have serious consequences for individuals and societies, including loss of life, destruction of property, and widespread fear and mistrust.

Overall, while religion can be a force for good, it is important to recognize the potential for fundamentalism and work to promote tolerance, respect, and understanding between different religious groups. This can help to prevent conflict and promote peaceful coexistence.

According to Castells, fundamentalism is:

the construction of collective identity under the identification of individual behaviour and society’s institutions to the norms derived from God’s law, interpreted by a definite authority that intermediates between God and Humanity.<sup>24</sup>

He dealt with Marty’s and Appleby’s essays concerning fundamentalism, in which is stated that “it’s impossible for fundamentalists to argue or settle anything with people who do not share their commitment to an authority [..]”<sup>25</sup>

Even when identity seems to coincide with the historical formation of the group a historical reworking is always present, without it being necessary to “attribute “objective” foundations to identity in order to recognize its continuity over time.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-113.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> R. Scott Appleby and Martin E. Marty, *Foreign Policy n. 128*, 2002 pp. 16-18

<sup>26</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

A suitable example is patriotism, which for example does not belong only to those present during the creation of a nation-state, but has a high degree of adhesion thanks to the fact that lifestyles are handed down for generations.<sup>27</sup>

As discussed previously, the spread of globalization has brought an unexpected collateral effect: the resurgence of nationalism.

Scholars are surprised because nationalistic feeling were supposed to be deleted from three different developments in society: a globalized economy supported by supranational organizations, a global culture delivered by media and growing ideas, especially delivered in schools, that, as Gellner declared, “nationalism are simply those tribalism [...] which through luck, effort or circumstance succeed in becoming an effective force under modern circumstances”<sup>28</sup>.

According to this view, Nationalism was only successful in order to create a feeling of sacrifice towards the state among the citizens.<sup>29</sup>

However, it’s important to note that “contemporary nationalism is more reactive than proactive”<sup>30</sup>, in the sense that nation-state already exists, and the main aim become to defend it.<sup>31</sup>

Hobsbawm shared the idea that nationalism comes from lower classes, which used to share language, religion and habits, but highlighted the fact that this feeling spread out only if a nation-state was present at all; following this reasoning he started to talk about *Proto-Nationalism*<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> E. GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 87.

<sup>29</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> E.J. HOBBSAWM, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

This concept describes a transitional phase in which some of the ideas and feelings that will later form the basis of nationalism begin to develop.

Castells is critic about this point of view, claiming that nationalism and nations “have a life of their own”<sup>33</sup> and so they are not strictly linked; an example of this analysis is given by the current feeling among people worldwide: we are experiencing an era of weakening of nation-states but, at the same time, nationalism is growing up, as the rise of the far right all over the world is testifying.<sup>34</sup>

According to Panarin, the “misunderstanding of the century was the confusion of self-determination of people with the self-determination of the state”<sup>35</sup>.

As globalization has increased the power of humanity as a whole, in almost every field (economy, communication, production), people started to feel an accelerated time which takes off the control that the individuals were used to exercise over their own existences.<sup>36</sup>

Castells theorizes a recurrent pattern: elites against powerlessness, in which the first are represented by the supporters of a New World Order, based on a globalized Earth, and the second by nationalists, in the role of resisters.<sup>37</sup>

Structural interpretations of social movements in industrial society have normally associated them with two fundamental processes. The first relates to the emergence of the market; the second to the creation of the nation-state and of modern citizenship. The advent of the market economy resulted in the centrality of conflicts between capital and labor, but also produced another cleavage, opposing urban and agrarian social sectors.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> A.S. PANARIN, *Rossia v evrazii: geopoliticheskie vyzovy i tsivilizatsionnye otvety*, *Voprosy filosofii*, 12, 1994. 19–31 (read from Russian Social Science Review: A Journal of Translations, May– June 1996: 35–53).

<sup>36</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>37</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>38</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *op. cit.*, p. 36.



It is evident that the very concept of conflict is an incentive to the formation and consolidation of the various identities in social groups.<sup>39</sup>

When we talk about identity, we must not refer to it as a characteristic of social movements or individuals, but to

the process by which social actors recognize themselves – and are recognized by other actors – as part of broader groupings, and develop emotional attachments to them.<sup>40</sup>

Historically, social movements, the center of analysis that will be developed, have fertile ground for their development in times of change, when the institutions are unable to grasp and relate to the dissatisfaction of people the social movement breaks in bringing with it a break from the past.<sup>41</sup>

Dissent must be organized and mobilized, attract the discontented and place them within a network that is attractive to new members and respectable in the eyes of public opinion.<sup>42</sup>

According to the scholar Mario Diani

social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action<sup>43</sup>.

And one of these collective actions is to share a collective identity.<sup>44</sup>

The definition of the boundaries of the social group, that is to say the definition of those who are or are not part of the network, is central in defining the collective action; the admission criteria are constantly evolving and susceptible to mutual recognition between members and potential members.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 91.

<sup>41</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem. p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem. p. 21

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.

The collective identity is the true glue of a social movement, although at first sight we focus more on the specific protest; as the sociologist Alan Touraine claims, it is

strongly associated with recognition and the creation of connectedness. It brings with it a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause, which enables single activists and/or organizations to regard themselves as inextricably linked to other actors, not necessarily identical but surely compatible, in a broader collective mobilization.<sup>46</sup>

Collective identity can be rooted in innate attributes such as social class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, but it can also be determined by values, lifestyles, and ways of thinking in common among members.

Identity can be configured as exclusive, and religious sects are an example of this, when it limits the possibility of identifying with other communities and inclusive when the plurality of collective identities is not a problem.<sup>47</sup>

As Touraine argues, the construction of identity requires two definitions: one positive, useful to indicate who is part of a certain group, and one negative, which defines individuals who are excluded, if not even adverse, to that same group.<sup>48</sup>

The construction of a *We*, based on various and disparate points in common among the members, is a necessary requirement for collective action, as is the identification of the *others*, those responsible for the frustration condition of the group; collective action is directed against them.

Collective action, as the result of a sentiment against the *status quo*, is revolutionary in itself and risky for those who carry it out; the feeling of solidarity and collective identity alleviates the fear in each of the members and makes it more palatable to achieve the goal.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, p. 94.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

The pivotal question is how identity can affect the growth of a social group; specifically, does identity facilitate participation?

It was Mancur Olson, a social scientist, who inflamed the discussion already in the 60s, publishing a thesis on the irrationality of collective action: he in fact, considering social battles as a collective good, argued that it, if won, would also have benefited those who had not actively participated:<sup>50</sup>

the properties of collective goods determine the fundamental irrationality of collective action, if valued on the basis of criteria of instrumental, individualistic rationality.<sup>51</sup>

There is no rational advantage in committing resources to the creation of a collective good, as theorized by the economic theory of the free rider. In fact, a free rider can avoid the costs of a failure and take advantage of any positive results. The problem grows with the size of the group, because the final results is less affected by an individual contribution, so that organizations, to involve new members, have two possibilities: coercion or offering incentives.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> D. DELLA PORTA – M. DIANI, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-103.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem.*

## II. ZAPATISTAS

The first movement analyzed is the Zapatistas' one, that emerged in Mexico in the early 1990s, in a historical context characterized by a deep economic, political, and social crisis.<sup>53</sup>

After decades of neoliberal policies that had led to an increase in economic and social inequality in the country, the Mexican population was increasingly disappointed with the political class in power.<sup>54</sup>

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari was at the head of the government; he was Mexican president from 1988 to 1994 and, during his tenure, he undertook a succession of structural reforms, trying to make Mexico modern and competitive with other major states that were driving economic globalization, opening the country to foreign investment.<sup>55</sup>

Salinas de Gortari was criticized by the Mexican left since the day of his inauguration; they considered him an illegitimate president whose neoliberal policies would lead to an increase in unemployment and expose Mexico to the economic aggression of the United States. Salinas was accused of violating the Mexican constitution by both nationalists and leftist forces; his economic reforms aimed at the free market had damaged the fruits of the Mexican revolution in the countryside.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> D. TUCKER, *Are Mexico's Zapatista still relevant?*, Al Jazeera, 1 January 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2014/1/1/are-mexicos-zapatista-rebels-still-relevant>. Consulted on 25/5/23.

<sup>54</sup> T. OLESEN, *Latin American Social Movements*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p. 187.

<sup>55</sup> D.M. COERVER - S.B. PASZTOR - R. BUFFINGTON, *Mexico: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Culture and History*, Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2004, pp. 459-460.

<sup>56</sup> W. SMITH, *Salinas Prepares Mexican Agriculture for Free Trade*, The Heritage Foundation, Massachusetts, 1 October 1992, p. 7. [http://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/1992/pdf/bg914.pdf](http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/1992/pdf/bg914.pdf). Consulted on 25/5/23.

However, during the same term, Salinas was strongly supported by the right; he was credited with having made Mexico up to date and economically competitive and attractive to foreign investors, mainly involving massive privatisation of public enterprises and a reform of the agricultural sector. Among the structural economic reforms of Salinas to privatization of the state-owned communal farming system was the most radical but also the most necessary.<sup>57</sup>

His main objective was to modernize Mexico without increasing the already significant public deficit and keeping the level of inflation under control, as he stated after his election:

The modernization of Mexico is essential if we are to meet the demands of the 85 million Mexicans of today.... In brief, we need to modernize politics, the economy, and society. The modernization of Mexico is, moreover, an absolute imperative. This is the only way we will be able to affirm our sovereignty in a world undergoing profound transformation.<sup>58</sup>

To make this possible, sacrifices were asked to the population, who was forced to pay higher taxes without seeing their wages grow proportionally.<sup>59</sup>

The number of poor people grew considerably, and this prompted the government to implement PRONASOL (Programa nacional de Solidaridad, better known as Solidaridad) which, financed with proceeds from privatizations, represented the main attempt to implement income redistribution during his tenure.<sup>60</sup>

However, Gortari's main political action was the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, which would have a significant impact on the Mexican economy and people's living conditions; in fact, among the three States

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<sup>57</sup> W. SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>58</sup> J. VARGAS, *Freedom of Religion and Public Worship in Mexico: A Legal Commentary on the 1992 Federal Act on Religious Matters* "BYU Law Review" 1998, pp. 421-481.

<sup>59</sup> V. RONCHI, *Los Otros Welfare: Esperienze storiche e proposte di sicurezza sociale nel Messico contemporaneo (secolo XIX e XX)*, Roma, Feem Press, 2016, p. 183.

<sup>60</sup> G. BARAJAS, *El Pronasol y sus contrastes*, «El Cotidiano», LI, 1992, p. 47.

signing the agreement, Mexico would have been affected by job losses and economic growth reduction not only in the short term but also in the long one.<sup>61</sup>

The NAFTA is a pact that “gradually eliminated most tariffs and other trade barriers on products and services passing between the United States, Canada, and Mexico”.<sup>62</sup> The aim was to develop their economic interdependence, through “a free-trade bloc among the three largest countries of North America”.<sup>63</sup>

Jorge Castañeda, a Mexican journalist and politician, in 1993, wrote that

[...] has been the fact that NAFTA entails itself great risks, no country has ever attempted to develop an export manufacturing base by opening its borders so quickly and indiscriminatory to more efficient and lower -cost producers. [...] Mexico will lose far more jobs in the next few years than it will create. Old industries and agricultural producers will die, be swallowed up or join with foreign ventures, long before the new jobs arrive.<sup>64</sup>

It is crucial to understand that, for Zapatistas, NAFTA was perceived as a threat. In fact, to join the agreement, Mexican government had to end restrictions on the import of corn and eliminate protection on the price of coffee; these acts could have resulted in suffering from hunger for the local population, in that their economy was mainly based on the cultivation of these two products.<sup>65</sup>

The proposal, which arose from the Mexican administration, was immediately accepted by the President of the United States, G.W. Bush, and, after some reticence, also by Canada; the initial doubts of Prime Minister Mulroney were given by the fact that the state was already linked to the USA by another previous pact, Free Trade Agreement, a pact that in the eyes of the public had given rise to an economic recession.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/North-American-Free-Trade-Agreement>. Consulted on 26/5/23.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>64</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *Can NAFTA change Mexico?*, “Foreign Affairs”, vol. 72, num. 4, set-oct 1993, p. 66.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem.

The Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States of America was a bilateral trade agreement signed in 1988, which removed a long list of trade restrictions, entailing an increase in trade between the two states.<sup>67</sup>

The Canadian doubts were overcome by the fact that NAFTA was a substitute for the FTA in which Mexico was included and that the advantages obtained with difficulty by the FTA would not have been nullified. The guarantee that the Canadians obtained was that their Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, could participate in the US-Mexico negotiations clarified this point, the population also softened its position.<sup>68</sup>

The protests, however, also exploded in the United States: the workers, aware of the low cost of living in Mexico and, consequently, the low cost of labor, feared unfair competition and therefore the displacement of industrial plants and factories in Mexico; moreover, the entrepreneurs would have also been facilitated by the almost absent Mexican environmental regulation.<sup>69</sup>

Salinas instead believed this would lead to greater prosperity for Mexico; the deal would have opened up Mexican markets to US and Canadian producers, boosting foreign investment and creating new jobs.<sup>70</sup>

NAFTA was seen as a solution to these economic problems, as it would lead to an increase in Mexican exports to the United States and Canada and create new job opportunities; moreover, Mexican expectations were that NAFTA would encourage

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<sup>66</sup> D. LIAKOPOULOS, *Gli Accordi Di NAFTA e La Tutela Ambientale*, "Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali", vol. 71, no. 4 (284), 2004, pp. 603–605.

<sup>67</sup> "Trump signs USMCA trade deal to replace 'nightmare NAFTA'", NBC News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/economy/trump-signs-usmca-trade-deal-replace-nightmare-nafta-n1125526>. Consulted on 24/5/23.

<sup>68</sup> *Foreign Affairs and International trade Canada: Canada and the World: A History – 1984–1993*, Leap of Faith, October 27, 2007, Wayback Machine.

<sup>69</sup> NAFTA, Treccani. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/north-american-free-trade-agreement\\_res-633b66df-00a4-11e2-b986-d5ce3506d72e\\_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/north-american-free-trade-agreement_res-633b66df-00a4-11e2-b986-d5ce3506d72e_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/). Consulted on 28/5/23.

<sup>70</sup> NAFTA, Treccani. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/north-american-free-trade-agreement\\_res-633b66df-00a4-11e2-b986-d5ce3506d72e\\_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/north-american-free-trade-agreement_res-633b66df-00a4-11e2-b986-d5ce3506d72e_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/). Consulted on 28/5/23.

foreign investment, especially from the US, to exploit the convenience of cheap labor force, stimulating investment in production centers and associated infrastructure.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, Salinas sought to strengthen Mexico's relationship with the United States: the agreement was seen as a way to create greater economic integration between the two countries and strengthen cooperation on a range of political and security issues.<sup>72</sup>

Despite positive initial goals, NAFTA had mixed effects on the Mexican economy. Certainly, the volume of exports has increased considerably, moving from about \$60 billion in 1994, the year NAFTA went into force, to nearly \$400 billion<sup>73</sup>, with exports rising from 8.56 percent of Mexican GDP in 1993 to 36.95 percent in 2013.<sup>74</sup>

However, it must be considered as a trend already on the rise since the ratification of GATT, in which NAFTA has played the role of enzyme but not the driving force of change.<sup>75</sup>

Regarding economic growth, Mexico remained constant between before and after joining NAFTA, registering between 1.2 and 2.5% growth, lower than expected.<sup>76</sup>

These percentage points of growth were not accompanied by growth in wages, which would have been useful, although not sufficient, to reduce inequalities in the country.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> C. JUNG, *The Politics of Indigenous Identity: Neoliberalism, Cultural Rights, and the Mexican Zapatistas*, "Social Research", vol. 70, no. 2, 2003, p. 439.

<sup>72</sup> NAFTA, Treccani. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/north-american-free-trade-agreement\\_res-633b66df-00a4-11e2-b986-d5ce3506d72e\\_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/north-american-free-trade-agreement_res-633b66df-00a4-11e2-b986-d5ce3506d72e_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/). Consulted on 26/5/23.

<sup>73</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *NAFTA's Mixed Record: The View From Mexico*, "Foreign Affairs", vol. 93, no. 1, 2014, pp. 134–136.

<sup>74</sup> J.M. COTA, *Has Mexican Trade in Manufactured Goods Reached Its Limits under NAFTA? Perspectives after 20 Years*, "Norteamérica, Revista Académica del CISAN-UNAM", pp. 69-98.

<sup>75</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *NAFTA's Mixed Record: The View From Mexico*, cit. pp. 134–136

<sup>76</sup>A. AHMED-E. MALKIN, *Mexicans Are the Nafta Winners? It's News to Them*, The New York Times, 4 January 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/04/world/americas/mexico-donald-trump-nafta.html>. Consulted on 30/5/23.

<sup>77</sup> J.M. COTA, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-98.



One of the greatest unintended effects was, thanks to the growing trade, to make cheaper products once inaccessible for the majority; this obviously had a positive effect on the quality of life of Mexicans.<sup>78</sup>

While it has created new job opportunities, it has also led to increased competition with American and Canadian businesses, which have often had a competitive edge over Mexican manufacturers.<sup>79</sup>

An error in predictions was to consider the low-cost labour force as ductile and addressable in other types of industries; farmers who couldn't find employment in the agricultural sector were not able to reinvent themselves.<sup>80</sup>

From a social point of view, NAFTA was useful in modernizing the Mexican way of thinking, the contacts and economic exchanges and also of thought with USA and Canada helped the population to partially remove from its cultural heritage the side victimized and obsessed with the historical events that characterized the previous centuries.<sup>81</sup>

Additionally, many critics have argued that NAFTA has negatively impacted the environment and labor rights in Mexico; exploitations grew up as it was the only way for entrepreneurs to cope with the competitiveness of the other two States.<sup>82</sup>

However, the effects of NAFTA on the Mexican economy and society have been mixed and continue to be a subject of debate and criticism.<sup>83</sup>

From 1994 to 2014 there were five Presidents from both major political groups and the world experienced both moments of economic expansion and recession; in the same period the per capita income of Mexicans has almost doubled but compared with

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<sup>78</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *NAFTA's Mixed Record: The View From Mexico*, cit., pp. 134-136.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>80</sup> C. JUNG, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

<sup>81</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *NAFTA's Mixed Record: The View From Mexico*, cit., pp. 136-137.

<sup>82</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *Can NAFTA Change Mexico?*, cit., p. 66

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem.

other states of the same economic dimension, such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay have greatly improved their per capita GDP without resorting to regional agreements of the NAFTA dimension.<sup>84</sup>

In the first day of 1994 the NAFTA was officially inaugurated and, as a protest, more than 3000 people, united in the name of *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional*, began their military insurrection in the southernmost province of Mexico, Chiapas, in the name of the rights of oppressed indigenous peoples and democracy.<sup>85</sup>

The movement was called after the leader Emiliano Zapata, who had led the Mexican revolution in 1910-1917, and presented itself as a political and military organization that claims the self-determination of indigenous people.<sup>86</sup>

The origins of the EZLN, however, can be traced back to the Tlatelolco massacre. On October 2, 1968, around 10,000 students occupied *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* to protest peacefully to the government's will to host Olympic Games; however, 5000 soldiers, 200 tankettes and trucks surrounded the square.<sup>87</sup>

The exact number of victims is unknown as figures from government sources identify 40-50 deaths, while the most reliable estimates indicate over 300 victims, all among the protesters and none in the government militias.<sup>88</sup>

After this episode, the reactionary group FLN, Fuerzas de liberacion nacional, was formed using Lacandon Jungle as the base. What led FLN to many other revolutionary groups was its own evolution after the defeat with local natives.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> J. CASTANEDA, *NAFTA's Mixed Record: The View From Mexico*, cit., pp. 137-138.

<sup>85</sup> R. STAHLER-SHOLK, *The Zapatista Social Movement: Innovation and Sustainability*, "Alternatives: Global, Local, Political", vol. 35 n. 3, 2010, pp. 269-290.

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emiliano-Zapata>. Consulted on 6/6/2023.

<sup>87</sup> C.G. DE BUSTAMANTE, *1968 Olympic Dreams and Tlatelolco Nightmares: Imagining and Imaging Modernity on Television*, "Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos", vol. 26, no. 1, 2010, pp. 2-4.

<sup>88</sup> *Memories of Massacre in Mexico*, Washington Post. February 14, 2002, p. A21.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*.

Subcomandante Marcos said:

[...] we learned that you can't impose a form of politics on the people because sooner or later you'll end up doing the same things you criticized.  
[...] You can't impose a political system by force. [...]  
We say 'no, the political system can't be the product of the war'<sup>90</sup>

This defeat meant the turning point and the transition to being the EZLN.

The Subcomandante Marcos himself divides the path between the clash with the indigenous and the 1994 guerrilla into seven steps.<sup>91</sup>

The first was the selection of members of the EZLN, selected based on the skills demonstrated in jungle training.<sup>92</sup>

In the second stage, also defined as the actual foundation, the six founders, including three meszitos and three indigenous, began their journey to the mountains of the southeast Mexican.<sup>93</sup>

The third step was survival, learning hunting and military tactics, as well as familiarity with weapons.<sup>94</sup>

In the fourth internship, he began the recruitment phase, going to talk to the local villagers and trying to convince them of the goodness of the Zapatista cause.<sup>95</sup>

The number of active militants increased from 80 to 1300 in 1989; the purchase of arms did not increase proportionately; the Zapatistas, in fact, are increasingly

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<sup>90</sup> Subcomandante Marcos interview with Medea Benjamin, *First world, Ha Ha Ha!: The Zapatista Challenge*, San Francisco, ed. Elaine Katzenberg, 1995, p. 61.

<sup>91</sup> G.M. RAMIREZ, *The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista movement*, San Francisco, City Light Books, pp. 20-29.

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>93</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>94</sup> G.M. RAMIREZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-29.

<sup>95</sup> Ibidem.

numerous thanks to a word-for-word recruitment among the inhabitants of the same families; they managed to build and manufacture their own weapons.<sup>96</sup>

In the fifth phase, the EZLN expanded beyond the jungle of Lacandon to Los Altos.<sup>97</sup>

In the sixth phase the six founders decided, after a democratic consultation, to prepare for war and in the seventh and last phase the group experienced the approach to January 1, 1994.<sup>98</sup>

With their faces covered with bandanas and balaclavas, and armed with sticks and rifles, Zapatistas attacked the town halls of some cities around the Southern Mexican State of Chiapas.<sup>99</sup>

This region, which became known as the beating heart of the Zapatista protest, was economically underpinned by agricultural production; already in 1989 it had suffered a severe blow from the International Coffee Agreement and had seen the world cost of coffee halved, one of the economic pillars of the area<sup>100</sup>; therefore, the area of Chiapas had 70% of the population living below the poverty line.<sup>101</sup>

These people mainly had Indians origins, except for some meszitos, which are person with mixed European and indigenous American origins.

The movement was born with the main aim of protecting this part of population and to obtain social rights after centuries of abusing by colonizers.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> M. MENTINIS, *Zapatistas: The Chiapas revolts and what it means for radical politics*, London, Pluto Press, 2006, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> G.M. RAMIREZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-29.

<sup>98</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>99</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>100</sup> C. JUNG, *op. cit.* vol. 70, no. 2, p. 438.

<sup>101</sup> V.L. FOSTER, *A brief history of Mexico*, New York, Checkmarks books, 2007, p. 50.

<sup>102</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

NAFTA, according to them, was an agreement that went totally in the opposite political direction; a concrete example of this was the removal, dictated by NAFTA, of article 27 section 7 of the Mexican constitution, which guaranteed "land reparations to indigenous groups throughout Mexico through collective land tenure".<sup>103</sup>

The insurgents came into action after ten years of clandestine organization, with the aim of avenging five centuries of oppression.<sup>104</sup>

They declared war to the Mexican federal government and to a spiral of racism, exploiting and violence against their people<sup>105</sup>, which has lasted for more than five centuries.

The famous night of January 1, 1994, in a few hours, the rioters, managed to take control of the municipalities of Huixtan, Ocosingo, Oxchuc, Altamirano, Las Margaritas, Chatal and San Cristobal.<sup>106</sup>

The commanders of the movement, after taking over the municipal halls, started to read a common document, the *First Declaration of Lacandon Jungle*, in which the main topics of the rebellion were highlighted; as evidence of the importance that the movement attributed to the declaration, it was transcribed and reported in a small local magazine.<sup>107</sup>

The first, followed by others, declaration from Lacandon Jungle was read from the balconies of the occupied municipalities; in it it was pointed out that the war would

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<sup>103</sup> A. REYES, *Zapatismo: Other Geographies Circa the "End of the World" – Workshop for Intercommunal Study*, 10 October 2017 <http://intercommunalworkshop.org/alvaro-reyes-zapatismo-other-geographies-circa-the-end-of-the-world/>. Consulted on 3/6/23.

<sup>104</sup> A. KASHNABISH, *Zapatistas: Rebellion from the Grassroots to the Global*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>106</sup> S. BENENATI, *Storia del Chiapas: gli zapatisti e la rete sociale globale*, Torino, Paravia Bruno Mondadori, 2002, p. 20.

<sup>107</sup> A. KASHNABISH, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

not stop unless an acceptable level of services for the indigenous people were reached.<sup>108</sup>

Among the various themes were references to work, the possession of houses and lands, education, food, health, justice, and democracy.<sup>109</sup>

The Guerrilla broke up as the Mexican Army intervened in Chiapas and so Zapatistas withdrew in the forest after a short confrontation resulting in some people losing their lives.<sup>110</sup>

On January 5, 1994, Salinas declared that he would forgive anyone who gave up arms; this statement sparked the anger of the EZLN that responded with a statement entitled *What Will We Be Pardoned For?* in which they asked rhetorically

*[...] What are they going to pardon us for? For not dying of hunger? For not being silent in our misery?"*<sup>111</sup>

Without any commitment, the movement became very popular worldwide, their demand appears to be just in the eyes of the public opinion.<sup>112</sup>

The movement began to attract sympathies from all over the world and above all solidarity with the cause: living conditions had remained unknown to most and only the declaration itself of the Zapatistas finally shed light on their living conditions.<sup>113</sup>

This international echo obliged Salinas to take a step back and, while the Mexican army was shooting against Zapatistas, he dismissed the Minister of the Interior, Patrocinio Gonzalez, and appointed Manuel Camacho Solís as the Commissioner of Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> G.M. RAMIREZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>110</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>111</sup> M. MENTINIS, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> G.M. RAMIREZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-113.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>114</sup> A. KASHNABISH, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

On the twelfth of January Mexican civilians, united in a huge demonstration, obliged the President, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, a unilateral ceasefire and an agreement with Zapatistas.<sup>115</sup>

On January 27<sup>th</sup> the two sides reached an agreement: prisoners were freed, a ceasefire was signed, and the government undertook a process of expansion on Indian's rights.<sup>116</sup>

The Zapatista movement was led and guided by a military and spiritual leader: Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, also known as Subcomandante Marcos.<sup>117</sup>

The Subcomandante published a collection of writings in which the predominant element is certainly politics, its implications for the economy and the feasible solutions to improve the status of Mexico and South Americans in general.<sup>118</sup>

One of the most interesting passages of the publication is a sort of manifesto of the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional*, which is contained in *Our Word is Our Weapon*. The date of these lines, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1994, is the framework that can justify the intensity of the speech:

We are a product of five hundred years of struggle: first, led by insurgents against slavery during the War of Independence with Spain; then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism; then to proclaim our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil; later when the people rebelled against Porfirio Diaz's dictatorship, which denied us the just application of the reform laws, and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us who have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country.

They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food or education, not the right to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor independence from foreigners. There is no peace or justice for ourselves and our children.

But today we say: enough is enough!<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 100.

<sup>117</sup> K. BRUHN, *Antonio Gramsci and the Palabra Verdadera: The Political Discourse of Mexico's Guerrilla Forces*, "Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs", vol. 41, no. 2, 1999, p. 30.

<sup>118</sup> N. HENCK, *Subcomandante Marcos: Global Rebel Icon*, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 2019, pp. 44–45.

<sup>119</sup> R.S.G. VICENTE, *Our word is our weapon*, "The New Yorker", April 2, 2001.

It is important to note that the struggle that is being discussed not only concerns, as intuitive, the Spanish colonization but also the French interference, the imperialism of the United States and, internally, the recent dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz.<sup>120</sup>

The period in which he ruled Mexico from 1876 to 1911, is considered by historians as a period of dictatorship, known as Porfiriato.<sup>121</sup>

The feeling of resentment oozes out of these pages and sums up Mexican history, highlighting its scars and lack of trust in the great States of the world.<sup>122</sup>

NAFTA's existence well-fits this argument, because, at the eye of the demonstrators, the presence of the USA was an assurance of lack of interest in the poorest Mexicans.<sup>123</sup>

Zapatismo poses the question:

“What is it that has excluded me?”

“What is it that has isolated me?”

...In each place the response is different.

Zapatismo simply states the question

and stipulates that the response is plural,

that the response is inclusive ...<sup>124</sup>

And this way of self-determination is made explicit by the cardinal principalities of the Zapatista Movement:

to lead by obeying; to represent, not to replace, to work from below and not to seek to rise, to serve, not self-serve; to convince, not to conquer; to construct, not to destroy; to propose, not to impose<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> C. JUNG, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

<sup>121</sup> M. HERNANDEZ - M. D. PILAR - R. AVILA ORTIZ - H. CASTELLANOS - E. DE JESUS, *Porfirio Díaz y el derecho. Balance crítico*, Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas UNAM, 1 august 2016, pp. 135-137.

<sup>122</sup> C. JUNG, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

<sup>123</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>124</sup> SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS, *Our word is our weapon*, cap VII, 8 august 2002. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/subcomandante-marcos-our-word-is-our-weapon#toc183>. Consulted on 4/6/23.

<sup>125</sup> *Some Zapata principles and practises*, 5 June 2009. <https://www.datacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/ZapatistaPrinciples.pdf>. Consulted on 4/6/23.



The French philosopher Jacques Rancière has also analyzed the concept of identity in the Zapatistas, underlining how their struggle is based on the construction of a new form of political subjectivity in which the decision-making process is made by collectivity and not by an elitarian group of people; the decision-making process, even if the theme is going or not to war, is collective and everyone listen to each other<sup>126</sup>, ensuring that the predominant concept of the assembly is always that of equality among members.<sup>127</sup>

The concept of equality, linked in a double thread with that of identity in the Zapatista experience, has its emblem in the use of the mask; in fact, it is not worn for misrepresentation<sup>128</sup>, being the members recognizable even wearing it, but

The mask is so that there is no protagonism. [...] our leadership is collective, and we have to submit to them. [...] Finally, the one who speaks is a more collective heart, not a caudillo.<sup>129</sup>

The movement “has never claimed to be only an indigenous movement”, they were in struggler for something more important, for being a symbol fort “those without voice, without face, without tomorrow”<sup>130</sup>

Among these masks there is a “unique political anonymity that reject identity-based models of subjectivity in favor of a collective subject of the event itself”.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> J. RANCIERE, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 30.

<sup>127</sup> A. ZUGMAN, *Zapatismo and Urban Political Practice*, “Latin American Perspectives”, vol. 32, no. 4, Chicago, 2005, pp. 138-139.

<sup>128</sup> M. MENTINIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-170.

<sup>129</sup> SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS, *Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution*. New York: Autonomedia, 1994, p. 49.

<sup>130</sup> J. HOLLOWAY, *Dignity's Revolt*, edited by John Holloway in *Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico*, London, Pluto Press, 1998, pp. 166-167.

<sup>131</sup> T. NAIL, *Zapatismo and the Global Origins of Occupy*, “Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory”, 12, n. 3, 2013, p. 36.

### III. AUM SHINRIKYO

The second case of the analysis is the one of Aum Shinrikyo, which is a syncretic-religious organization, viewed as the first major violent non-state actor with “the means, capabilities, intentions and finances to develop and deploy a sophisticated weapon of mass destruction”.<sup>132</sup>

The origin of Aum Shinrikyo are deeply linked with the life of his leader: the movement was founded by Shoko Asahara, who will also be its leader, in 1987<sup>133</sup> ; he “combined elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, fascination with certain scientific matters, Nostradamus, and millennialism”<sup>134</sup>, and, thanks to his ambitious project, transformed a class of followers who meditated together<sup>135</sup> in an organization with an economic power and an impressive number of followers, changing the nature of Aum Shinrikyo, which later will be switching “from a religious group to a terrorist group”.<sup>136</sup>

Asahara was born with the name of Chizuo Matsumoto in 1955 in a poor family with his six brothers and sisters in the city of Yatsushiro in the region of Kyūshū.<sup>137</sup> He had suffered from congenital glaucoma with no sight in one eye and “severe impairment in the other”.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> J. FOREST, *Framework for Analyzing the Future Threat of WMD Terrorism*, “Journal of Strategic Security”, 5, 55, 2012, <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1193&context=jss>. Consulted on 5/6/23.

<sup>133</sup> J. BAKER-K. CRAGIN-J. PARACHINI-H. TRUJILLO-P. CHALK- B. JACKSON, *Aptitude for Destruction: Case Studies of Organizational Learning in Five Terrorist Groups*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica California, 2005, p. 11.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>135</sup> D. SHUPE, *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1998, p. 34.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>137</sup> E. ATKINS, *Encyclopedia of Modern Worldwide Extremists and Extremist Groups*, Westport, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004, p. 27.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibidem*.

He specialized as an acupuncturist and a masseur at a school for the blind in Kumamoto. In 1977 he moved to Tokyo with the will to complete his studies, but he was not admitted to the courses he hoped for.<sup>139</sup>

So, conditioned by the accumulated frustration, he began to practice pharmacy without having a license and therefore, in 1982, he was fined by the Drug Cosmetics and Medical Instruments Act; these events conditioned Asahara's worldview and led him to channel frustration into effort to change society, identifying religion as the best way to achieve it.<sup>140</sup>

Asahara approached the current Agon Shu, whose thought arose from the encounter between the three main Buddhist currents: "Northern Buddhism (Mahayana), Southern Buddhism (Theravada/Hinayana) and Tibetan Buddhism (Vajirayanism)".<sup>141</sup>

Cult of personality was one of the hallmarks of Asahara's message; he, presenting himself as "Buddha, a reincarnation of Shiva and a Christ Messiah", had more credibility in the eyes of his followers, in indicating himself as a model to follow in order to reach Nirvana, the only condition for being immune from earthly evils.<sup>142</sup>

This self-celebration had a perfectly functional role, which is well explained by Yamaori Tetsuo, professor at the International Research Center for Buddhist Studies in Kyoto, who stated that <sup>143</sup>:

For the majority of the Japanese population, religion has lost its authority. That is not to say that there are no Japanese in search of salvation; there are, but they are not always turning to conventional religions for deliverance. Instead, many are placing their faith in "new religions" and in gurus who . . . claim to be prophets.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> R. GURANATNA. *Aum Shinrikyo's Rise, Fall and Revival. "Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses"*, vol. 10, no. 8, 2018, p. 3. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26481827>. Consulted on 12/6/23.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>141</sup> A.D. SUPE, *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998, pp. 33-35.

<sup>142</sup> R. GURANATNA, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> D. METRAUX, *Religious Terrorism in Japan: The Fatal Appeal of Aum Shinrikyo. "Asian Survey"*, vol. 35, no. 12, 1995, p. 1142 *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645835>. Accessed 12 June 2023.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*.

His charisma also affected the process of decision-making of Aum Shinrikyo, because Asahara had the monopoly and dissent, even by his strict collaborators, was not tolerated<sup>145</sup>; the opposition exposed internally by the members of the organization cost the life to some of them.<sup>146</sup>

What intrigues is the composition of Aum Shinrikyo's members; at the head of the organization, some of the men, such as Tomomasa Nakagawa and Yoshihiro Inoue, were already professionals in their field when, persuaded by Ahara, they decided to radically change lifestyle and goals.

The structure of the organization, according to Yamaori Tetsuo, who has a deep knowledge regarding Aum Shinrikyo's features, can be divided in three tiers:

At the top are the leaders-Asahara's closest advisors and friends; next come the upper-level authorities who are extremely knowledgeable about science and highly skilled in the use of advanced technology and information equipment; below them are the true believers who have taken the tonsure and abandoned normal life to seek salvation in their master.<sup>147</sup>

The structure itself raised doubts about the centrality of religion in the purposes of Asahara and his strict collaborators. Tetsuo himself suggests that:

They were political technocrats, tired of a fat, lukewarm society. Possessed of hypertrophied imaginations, convinced they could change people and build a perfect state.<sup>148</sup>

One of the main arguments of Asahara was the salvation from the Armageddon, possible for Aum's members through "final conflict and eradicating the enemy".<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> S. EGAWA, *From the Other Witness Stand: Following the Aum Case – Installment 58*, Shukan Yomiuri Tokyo, 1999, pp. 160-170.

<sup>146</sup> M. RASMUSSEN - M. HAFEZ, *Terrorist Innovations in Weapons of Mass Attack*, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, 2010, p. 17.

<sup>147</sup> T. YAMAORI, *Atheists by Default*, "Look Japan", 41, 3, 1995, pp. 9-12.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>149</sup> S. DALY – J. PARACHINI- W. ROSENAU, *Aum Shinrikyo, Al Qaeda and the Kinshasa Reactor*, Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2005, p. 5.  
[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/documented\\_briefings/2005/RAND\\_DB458.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/documented_briefings/2005/RAND_DB458.pdf).  
Consulted on 4/6/23.

In 1989 he wrote a religious treaty, *The Destruction of the World*, whose main topic was precisely Armageddon, considering it as the World War III capable of reducing, at the eyes of public opinion, the extent of the consequences of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>150</sup>

The prophecy about the Armageddon dealt with a war of extermination resulted by the competition of Japanese corporations and American imperialism, which had the aim of forming a new world order ruled by a unique central government. As a response of this scenario, Aum Shinrikyo aimed to create a new society, in which individuals could focus on meditation and self-improvement and not being distracted by materialistic values imposed by globalization.<sup>151</sup>

The alarm launched by Asahara was inherent in an alleged conflict, which would have erupted in 1997 between the USA and Japan;<sup>152</sup> this scenario was thoroughly described in the following publication, *Shivering Predictions by Shoko Asahara*, in which he claimed:

From now until the year 2000 [...] Japan will turn into waste land as a result of a nuclear... attack. This will occur from 1996 through January 1998. An alliance centering on the United States will attack Japan.<sup>153</sup>

Through this catastrophic experience only the members of Aum, therefore worthy and having "great karma"<sup>154</sup>, would be able to "survive and create a new and transcendent world".<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> G.S. JONES-M. LIBICKI, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida*, Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2008, p. 46.

<sup>151</sup> S. DALY – J. PARACHINI- W. ROSENAU, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>153</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Staff Statement, U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (Minority Staff): *Hearings on Global Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Case Study on the Aum Shinrikyo*, Washington, D.C., 1995.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibidem*.

In August 1989, with religious legalisation, the group's membership rose very quickly from 4'000 members to 10'000 by 1992 and 50'000 by 1995.<sup>156</sup>

It is estimated that another 10'000 were affiliated with the organization between Russia and the United States, granting Aum Shinrikyo influence and transnational power.<sup>157</sup>

“Aum Shinrikyo's net worth doubled from nearly USD \$500 million in 1990 to USD\$1 billion by 1995.”<sup>158</sup>

In order for this to be possible, the use of propaganda to spread his religious doctrine and to create a sense of identity among its members became necessary; the use of videos, publications and interviews of Asahara were useful in promoting this new kind of religion. In this sense the community was really limited in the interactions with the outside: members decided to be cut-off from the society and embraced a different way of being, dressing and eating.<sup>159</sup>

Winston Davis wrote that “Aum Shinrikyo is unique in Japan in that it is above all a criminal religion whose leaders have committed numerous crimes against its members and many other innocent citizens”.<sup>160</sup>

The definition of "criminal religion" is amply justified by the fact that organization had killed directly and indirectly both enemies of the sect and members of it; the production and sale of narcotics and other harmful substances only confirmed Davis' vision.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> S. ALQITHAMI- J. HAEGELE – H. HEXMOOR, *Conceptual Modeling of Networked Organisations: The Case of Aum Shinrikyo*, Biju Isaac - Nauman Israr - Boca Raton, eds. Florida, CRC Press, 2015, pp. 391-406.

<sup>157</sup> D. METRAUX, *op. cit.*, p. 1140.

<sup>158</sup> *Some in Japan Fear Authors of Subway Attack Are Regaining Ground*, The New York Times, October 11, 1998 <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/11/world/some-injapan-fear-authors-of-subway-attack-are-regainingground.html>. Consulted on 12/6/23.

<sup>159</sup> D. METRAUX, *op. cit.*, p. 1142.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibidem*.

The main episode in defining Aum as criminal was the murderer of Tsutsumi Sakamoto and his family.<sup>162</sup>

Tsutsumi presented himself as a representative of the Aum Higaisha no Kai, which was a group whose members were mainly linked with disciples of Aum Shinrikyo, in particular relatives and friends, really concerned about the exploitation of their dears.<sup>163</sup>

It is really strange the relationship between the followers and the leaders:

Asahara's followers were thoroughly fleeced. Many gave \$250 for the privilege of drinking the Master's bath water. Others coughed up as much as \$1 1,000 to drink a potion made with his blood. Helmets used to hook up to the Master's brain waves went for \$100,000; they could be rented for a mere \$10,000 per month. Some gave Asahara their life's savings. With these funds, Asahara set up various businesses (all enjoying tax benefits): cheap restaurants, a computer shop, a fitness club, a dial-a-date service and a baby-sitting organization. Donation and business revenues gave the Supreme Master the funds he needed to buy his chemicals and a multi-million dollar Mil-17 helicopter. On the drawing boards were plans to buy Russian tanks, automatic rifles, lasers, uranium and nuclear technology. The sect even owned a microwave oven for cremating bodies.<sup>164</sup>

From 1990 to 1995 17 attacks, including 10 chemical and 7 biologicals, can be attributed to the group's actions.<sup>165</sup>

Several substances were used: investigations show that four biological attacks used anthrax, three used botulinum, four used Sarin, “four other attacks used VX, one attack used Phosgene and another used Hydrogen Cyanide”.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *Japanese police: Bodies are Sakamotos*, United International Press, 6 September 1995.

<sup>163</sup> I. READER, *Dramatic confrontations: Aum Shinrikyō against the world*, in David G. – BROMLEY - J. Gordon, (eds.), Titoro, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 201-202.

<sup>164</sup> W. DAVIS, *Dealing with Criminal Religions: The Case of Om Supreme Truth*, “Christian Century”, 19-26 July 1995, p. 710.

<sup>165</sup> R. GURANATNA, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>166</sup> T. BALLARD - J. PATE - G. ACKERMAN - D. MCCAULEY - S. LAWSON, *Chronology of Aum Shinrikyo's CBW Activities*, Middlebury Institute of International Studies, 2001, p. 1. [http://www.nonproliferation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/aum\\_chrn.pdf](http://www.nonproliferation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/aum_chrn.pdf). Consulted on 12/6/23.

During this period, Aum Shinrikyo bought nuclear materials, trying to build weapons. However, the construction of these turned out to be more complicated than expected, pushing the organization to commit its efforts on chemical and biological weapons, by far easier to produce and manage.<sup>167</sup>

In 1990, the organization attempted to enter politics. In February, after the establishment of the Shinrito's Party, Asahara and other 24 members ran for the parliamentary elections; however, the results were not as hoped by the leader, who bluntly declared the government guilty of altering the elections, developing a plan of subversion involving the use of nuclear instruments.<sup>168</sup>

Asahara also prophesied a conflict between the US and Japan that would lead to the end of the world. He stated that only Aum Shinrikyo's members would survive the apocalypse.

The switch from non-violent group to violent group was closely linked to the supply of chemical weapons; Stronghold was built near Mount Fuji and about 300 Japanese engineers and scientists were hired and put to work by the organization, Seiichi Endo, an experienced virologist, was in charge of them.<sup>169</sup>

The search for bacteriological weapons was not circumscribed to Japan, and it pushed Aum to go to New York, which was useful "to obtain high technology equipment"<sup>170</sup> and then they even went to Zaire, in October 1992, when it was lead a medical mission by Asahara in order to provide aid during an Ebola outbreak<sup>171</sup>; however, the real reason was that they wanted to obtain the Ebola virus.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> S. DALY – J. PARACHINI - W. ROSENAU, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>168</sup> T. ANTHONY, *Aum Shinrikyo's Chemical and Biological Weapons*, "Archive of Toxicology, Kinetics and Xenobiotic Metabolism", 1999, p. 49.

<sup>169</sup> R. GURANATNA, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>170</sup> R. GURANATNA, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>172</sup> M. LEITENBERG, *Aum Shinrikyo's Efforts to Produce Biological Weapons: A Case Study in the Serial Propagation of Misinformation*, "Terrorism and Political Violence", 1999, pp. 149-158.



The 20<sup>th</sup> March of 1995 became significant in the history of Japan because, almost at the same time, three trains of the subway of Tokyo were theatre of attacks carried out thanks to the use of sarin gas<sup>173</sup>; 12 people lost their lives and more than 5000 were injured.<sup>174</sup>

All the members involved in the attack had a pointed umbrella and held a newspaper in their arms; inside it there was a plastic bag, containing sarin gas, which pierced through the umbrella freed the substance and infected the station.<sup>175</sup>

The success of the attack was facilitated by the scarcity of Japanese intelligence; limited in resources and powers both by the constitution and by governments, which for example did not allow to use means of preventive surveillance against the population:<sup>176</sup>

The main reason was that, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the government did not see any critical issues justifying some kind of interference in the lives of citizens.<sup>177</sup>

Another sign of Japanese Intelligence's weakness was given by the fact that "Aum Shinrikyo also established networks in Australia, Germany, Indonesia Taiwan, and expanded into the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel, Sri Lanka, former Yugoslavia, Belarus, Ukraine, Ghana and Nigeria. However, the security was not able to detect and disrupt Aum Shinrikyo until the group conducted attacks."<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Is an extremely toxic gas, used as chemical weapon and widely considered as a weapon of mass destruction.

<sup>174</sup> S. FUJITA, *The incident of AUM Shirinkyō*, Tokyo, Asahi-Shinbunsha, 1995.

<sup>175</sup> G.S. JONES-M. LIBICKI, *op. cit.*, p.45

<sup>176</sup> R. PANGI, *Consequence management in the 1995 Sarin Attacks on the Japanese Subway System*, "Studies in Conflict and Terrorism", Vol. 25, n. 6, 2002, p. 422.

<sup>177</sup> I. READER, *Spectres and Shadows: Aum Shinrikyo and the Road to Megiddo*, "Terrorism and Political Violence", vol. 14, n. 1, 2002, pp. 145-186.

<sup>178</sup> R. GURANATNA, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Following the attack, the Japanese government placed Aum Shinrikyo under investigation and found that the sect possessed chemical and biological weapons and had planned other terrorist attacks; as a result, in the week following the attack, all of Aum's terrorist plot was discovered.<sup>179</sup>

At the headquarter of Kamikuishiki the police found explosives, chemical weapons, and a Russian military helicopter, in addition to a quantity of chemicals that, it is estimated, could kill 4 million people.<sup>180</sup>

On 16 May Asahara, who was charged with 23 counts of murder, was found in the Kamikuishiki building and was arrested.<sup>181</sup> Asahara was sentenced to death and executed in 2018.<sup>182</sup>

Clearly the governmental response after the events in Tokyo was not long in coming and the philosophy of non-intervention in citizens' privacy ceased<sup>183</sup>; the tracking effort of the members of Aum Shinrikyo was enormous by Japanese intelligence: over a million and a half posters with the faces of suspects were produced, useful to make citizens involved in the collection of information.<sup>184</sup>

After the attack, the Japanese government took stringent measures to combat terrorism and prevent future attacks. The government set up a special task force to coordinate the response to the attack and adopted tougher laws to deal with terrorist organizations.

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<sup>179</sup> A. SMITHESON, *Ataxia: The Chemical and Biological Terrorism Threat and the US Response*, 9/10/2000, p. 77. Consulted on 14/6/23.

<sup>180</sup> C. TOWNSHEND, *Terrorism: a very short introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 116.

<sup>181</sup> *Chronology: Events involving Aum Shinrikyo*, "The Nikkei Weekly", New York: The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 22 May 1995, p. 3.

<sup>182</sup> A. RAMZI, *Japan Executes Cult Leader Behind 1995 Sarin Gas Subway Attack*, The New York Times, 5/7/2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/05/world/asia/japan-cult-execute-sarin.html>. Consulted on 9/6/23.

<sup>183</sup> M. HIDEAKI, *Terrorists, Terrorism and Japan's Counter-Terrorism Policy*, Gaiko Forum, vol. 3, n. 2, 2003, pp. 53-63.

<sup>184</sup> National Police Agency, *1996 Police White Paper*, Tokyo, 1996, p. 20.

For the followers of Aum Shinrikyo, the end of the group represented a drastic change in their lives. Many left the group after the subway bombing, but others remained loyal to Asahara and the group even after his conviction. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, some former members of Aum Shinrikyo have set up support groups to help them reintegrate into Japanese society.

However, many previous followers of Aum Shinrikyo have faced difficulties integrating into Japanese society due to the stigma associated with the group and its involvement in the subway bombing.

Globally, the bombing garnered international media attention and led to negative perceptions of alternative religious movements.

According to an article in “Time Magazine”, the bombing "reinforced the belief that religious sects could pose a threat to public safety and social stability"<sup>185</sup>. However, it is important to note that most alternative religious movements pose no threat to society. As pointed out by a study published in the “Japanese Journal of Religious Studies”, "most of the alternative religious groups in Japan are not engaged in criminal activity and do not present a threat to society".<sup>186</sup>

1996 was the most complicated year for Aum Shinrikyo. After the arrest of Asahara and other prominent members, the donations from the followers collapsed; together with this, the Japanese government blocked the insurance accounts with the aim of using them as compensation for the families of the victims. On March 28 the district court of Tokyo declared bankruptcy.<sup>187</sup>

Thus ended a violent parenthesis in Japanese history with the end, of the terrorist phase of Aum Shinrikyo, also certified by the name change of the organization, which became Aleph.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Time Magazine, 3 April 1995, pp. 27-32. <https://unifiedgoods.com/en-it/products/time-cult-of-doom>. Consulted on 5/6/23.

<sup>186</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>187</sup> G.S. JONES - M. LIBICKI, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>188</sup> Ibidem, pp. 45-46.

At a conference in early 2000, Aum's representatives admitted to the organization's criminal activities, which had been engineered by Asahara, who was denied along with all those precepts who encouraged violence.<sup>189</sup>

Aum was divided into two currents, Aleph and Hikari No Wa, in the first decade of 2000s; today they are considered by some States as terrorist organizations, while others, like the USA, have changed their opinion.<sup>190</sup>

The concept of identity is a central theme in Aum Shinrikyo's analysis, as the organization sought to create a new one for its members through the adoption of a radical religious doctrine.

Aum Shinrikyo fostered a strong sense of community among its members, who saw themselves as part of a spiritual family under the leadership of their leader.

In order to define the identitarian features of Aum Shinrikyo we need to define the two main waves of New Religions of Japan.<sup>191</sup>

Scholars divided the wave emerged from 1950s to 1960s, named *shinshukyo*, and the one belonging to the following decade, the *shinshinshukyo*.<sup>192</sup> The *shinshukyo* religions embodied the values and needs of the less well-off, peasants or small traders, that is to say the social class that historically had always shown more attachment to the faith, in the hope of an improvement in living conditions; "but as Japan grew more prosperous in the 1970s, membership in the newer religions began to include a large number of better educated and wealthier people"<sup>193</sup> and Aum Shinrikyo, a *shinshinshukyo* religion, poses itself as a symbol of the new interest in faith from "financially secure

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<sup>189</sup> Ibidem, p. 58.

<sup>190</sup> "US removes 5 groups from terror blacklist, retains al-Qaida". AP NEWS. 20 May 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/eta-al-qaida-united-states-government-and-politics-middle-east-20a3957d42039f94bf7b9a09b0fae30>. Consulted on 9/6/23.

<sup>191</sup> D. METRAUX, *op. cit.*, p. 1141.

<sup>192</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>193</sup> D. METRAUX, *op. cit.*, p. 1141.

people, who seek new answers to questions on the meaning of life”<sup>194</sup>, having more spiritual and mystical desires to be fulfilled by religion.<sup>195</sup>

The decision to invest time and energy in communication in universities was highly effective, the real source from which the movement drew in those years to create an army of followers, the majority of which belonged to the most educated and in some cases wealthy youth, who, believing in the imminent armageddon, tried to earn eternal salvation.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>195</sup> D. METRAUX, *op. cit.*, p. 1141.

<sup>196</sup> Ibidem, pp. 1142.

## IV. AL QAEDA

Fundamentalism is at the core of Al Qaeda, which is a “militant organization with leadership based in Afghanistan and Pakistan”<sup>197</sup> and has created in the meantime a “network of members and affiliates around the world”<sup>198</sup>.

Starting with a short background about Al Qaeda, it can be defined as a “broad-based militant Islamist organization”<sup>199</sup>, which was founded “by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s”<sup>200</sup>.

The process to the creation of Al Qaeda has its roots in 1979 and in the main events of that year: The Iranian revolution of Khomeini and the Afghan War.

Although the revolution in Iran is a fundamental stage, since it demonstrated the possibility of an Islamic revolution, the Afghan war had greater weight in the development of the organization.<sup>201</sup>

In fact, Al Qaeda began as a “logistical network to support Muslims fighting against the Soviet Union during the Afghan War”<sup>202</sup>, in which members were “recruited throughout the Islamic world”<sup>203</sup>.

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<sup>197</sup> <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-qaeda>. Consulted on 27/5/23.

<sup>198</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>199</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda>. Consulted on 26/5/23.

<sup>200</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>201</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *Quale Islam? Jihadismo, radicalismo, riformismo*, Editrice La Scuola, Milano, 2015, p. 42.

<sup>202</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda>. Consulted on 26/5/23.

<sup>203</sup> Ibidem.

The Afghan War is, in a strict sense, the internal conflict that initiated in “1978 between anticommunist Islamic guerrillas and the Afghan communist government”<sup>204</sup>, which was also aided between 1979 and 1989 by Soviet troops, leading eventually to the overthrow of the government in 1992<sup>205</sup>.

The mujaheddin faction, however, did not have unity or a common final obligation, if not the removal of the invader; so, the various groups remained separated for the duration of the conflict following criteria of ethnicity, nationality of origin and religion practiced.<sup>206</sup>

In addition to Afghan fighters, Arab volunteers came from across the Middle East to support the war; among these there was also Osama Bin Laden; he was a young Saudi from a wealthy family of entrepreneurs, which left him a personal inheritance of over \$25 million<sup>207</sup>.

Born in 1957 and executed in 2011, Osama Bin Laden is considered the founder and leader of Al Qaeda; he contributed materially with weapons and men to the struggle of the Afghan mujaheddin<sup>208</sup>. This term, in its broadest sense, indicates “Muslims who fight on behalf of the faith or the Muslim community”, in other words the *Ummah*.<sup>209</sup>

Despite being recognized in the media as the mastermind of Al Qaeda, Bin Laden was subordinate to Azzam in the conception of the organization and its principles.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Afghan-War>. Consulted on 26/5/23.

<sup>205</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>206</sup> G. BONCI, *Le spade di Allah - I Mujaheddin nel conflitto russo-afghano*, Genova, Liberodiscrivere Edizioni, 2011, p. 45.

<sup>207</sup> THE ECONOMIST, Osama Bin Laden, 7 May 2011, p. 93.

<sup>208</sup> P. BERGEN, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, New York, Simonand Schuster, 2006, pp. 74-88.

<sup>209</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mujahideen-Islam>. Consulted on 24/6/23.

<sup>210</sup> M.CAMPANINI, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

They can be summarized in three points:

- 1) A bellicose interpretation of the concept of Jihad
- 2) The will to establish an Islamic regime in the territories to be freed
- 3) The priority in terms of enemy to beat becomes the USA.<sup>211</sup>

After ten years, the Afghan conflict was won primarily thanks to the blood of Afghan fighters, and only in the second instance thanks to funding from the US and their Saudi allies; during the decade many Muslims became excellent warriors and created networks between them, having in common the dream of giving unity to the Jihad. Gradually, during the conflict,

in slow motion but insistently [...], the entity was already becoming a potentially formidable force", which had the advantage of being formed in the battlefield.<sup>212</sup>

The end of the war saw the Taliban take over and establish a radical Islamic regime where the shari'a was the law of the State. After the war, some of these fighters formed Al Qaeda with the aim of continuing their struggle against the enemies of Islam. After the withdrawal of the Soviets, some mujahideen remained to fight alongside the Taliban against the warlords, while others returned to occupy scattered territories, engaging conflicts in Egypt and Algeria and supporting revolutionary groups in Yemen, Sudan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and other countries.<sup>213</sup>

The peculiarity of Al Qaeda is that it is not a national, ethnic, or economic group; it has its roots in a common religion "but with no specific social attachments, except for the shared experience of the first religious war in Afghanistan"<sup>214</sup>.

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<sup>211</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>212</sup> M. MOHAMEDOU, *Al Qaeda's Matrix. A Theory of ISIS: Political Violence and the Transformation of the Global Order*, London, Pluto Press, 2018, p. 42.

<sup>213</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-122.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 121.



Bin Laden, the founder, returned to Saudi Arabia but was forced to leave because of his integralist anti-west thoughts, so he moved first to Sudan, in the early 1990s, and then the group reestablished its headquarters in Afghanistan around 1996 because the govern of Khartum, under American pressure, obliged Bin Laden to leave the country.<sup>215</sup> This is the beginning of that phase that would lead Al Qaeda to attack US both on American soil and in the Arabian Peninsula itself.<sup>216</sup>

In addition to the experience of war, two concepts were strengthened: the belief that Jihad was the only possible way to defend Islam from external dangers, and secondly, that these same external dangers were mostly represented by the materialist and corruptible values of the West, represented by the United States; in this sense, the development of an organized Islamic response as Al Qaeda has great attractiveness to people.<sup>217</sup>

Al Qaeda members come from different nationalities and ethnicities, which cannot be limited to the Arab states but involve many countries of the world. This characteristic is combined with the definition of the main objective of the organization, that is to defend the holy places that are a pilgrimage destination for Muslims from all over the world.<sup>218</sup>

The self-definition of Al Qaeda is the key reason of the massive participation to it; the movement was at the centre of the global Islamic network and presented a different feature compared to the other encountered so far. Al Qaeda did not find its legitimacy in an identitarian definition of themselves, but in the opposition to the other identities outside their circle; those constitutes their antagonists.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> E. BAKKER – L. BOER, *Al-Qaeda. The Evolution of Al-Qaedaism: Ideology, Terrorists, and Appeal*, Den Haag, Clingendael Institute, 2007, p. 11.

<sup>216</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>217</sup> D. BYMAN, *Al-Qaeda as an Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?*, "World Politics", vol. 56, no. 1, 2003, pp. 146-147.

<sup>218</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 110.

The organizational core of Al Qaeda was composed mostly of brilliant minds, among them, a large part graduated, which presumed a great family wealth especially in Arab countries.<sup>220</sup>

These young people grew up in contact with the West also thanks to technology, and many of them travelled and studied in American and European universities; it was precisely the contact with the capitalist culture that developed in them a rejection of those values.<sup>221</sup>

Among them stood out, by family and personality, the aforementioned Osama Bin Laden, son of Saudi oligarchs and in close contact with the royal family in person. However, relations with the royal family deteriorated due to the ideological rigidity of Osama; the rift can be traced back to 1991 when, after the Gulf War, Americans and their troops occupied Saudi soil.<sup>222</sup>

Bin Laden's idea was clear:

Ignoring the shari'ah law; depriving people of their legitimate rights; allowing the Americans to occupy the land of the two Holy Places; imprisonment, unjustly, of the sincere scholars... Through this course of action the regime has torn off its legitimacy<sup>223</sup>

His citizenship was revoked, and his private funds were frozen. Osama, from Pakistan to Sudan, had consensus and became a symbol of the young Muslims' eager for redemption; from this moment a series of attacks and bombings were carried out while the media tried not to connect them to Bin Laden, aware of the advertising they would have given him. The attempt ceased after the 1998 bombing of embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, from that episode he became "at the same time, public enemy number one for the US and a mythical hero for thousands of disaffected Muslim youth".<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Ibidem, pp. 123-124.

<sup>221</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>222</sup> Ibidem, p. 127.

<sup>223</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>224</sup> Ibidem, p. 128.

The fighters returned to occupy scattered territories, engaging in conflicts in Egypt and Algeria and supporting revolutionary groups in Yemen, Sudan, Indonesia, the Philippines and other countries<sup>225</sup>.

The great attraction of his image was dictated mainly by the courage to oppose the government of his country first and the government of the most powerful country in the world then.<sup>226</sup>

Bin Laden was able to use his charismatic figure, as well as the economic power at his disposal, to gather Afghan veterans around him and, starting from them, to build an army of fighters eager to emulate the veterans themselves, drawing inspiration from their heroic deeds against Soviet Union.<sup>227</sup>

People from all over the Arab World contributed to the formation of the organization's socio-political thinking and, after the conflict ended, many remained fighting for the "liberation of Muslim lands, of all lands."<sup>228</sup>

Globally, the enemies are the Crusaders and specifically they may belong to every category between "Soviets in Afghanistan, the Americans in Saudi Arabia, or, down the line, the Jews in Palestine".<sup>229</sup>

The Palestinian issue has to be considered apart because Al Qaeda, clearly deployed against Israel and the United States, does not even look favorably on the Palestinian project; they enjoy their own military and economic resources and intend to build on them a future nation, concept distant from the concept of Muslim territoriality<sup>230</sup>.

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<sup>225</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>226</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>227</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>228</sup> Ibidem, p. 120.

<sup>229</sup> Ibidem, p. 110.

<sup>230</sup> Ibidem, p. 118.

Evidence is given by the fact that very few Palestinians were invited to take part to Al Qaeda organization; Bin Laden didn't consider Palestinian nationalism as a true Islamic movement.<sup>231</sup>

However, each of the enemies mentioned before is considered subordinate to the Americans, leader of West and Capitalist world, so much that they must be faced everywhere, "from the heights of Moctezuma to the sands of Tripoli".<sup>232</sup>

The group has been responsible for several terrorist attacks, including the 1998 bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2002 bombing of a Bali nightclub, but the most famous of the 11 September 2001 in the United States, which claimed the lives of 2977 people<sup>233</sup>, is still impressed in everyone's mind.<sup>234 235</sup>

Al Qaeda continued to be a significant terrorist organization despite its losses in recent years, and still poses a threat to international security. The group has also inspired other groups and individuals to carry out terrorist attacks in the name of their ideology.<sup>236</sup>

From Bin Laden's speech at Al Jazeera News Network on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001 we could outline the thought of the leader regarding the conflict with the West:

Our duty, which we have fulfilled, is to incite the "umma" to take up a holy war in the name of God against America, Israel, and their allies... [...] I said that there are two sides in the conflict; the international crusade movement allied with Jewish Zionism and led by America, Britain and Israel. And the other side is the muslim world. It is unacceptable in such a conflict that he commits an aggression, enters my land and holy places, and robs the il of the Muslims and then when he is confronted with any form of resistance from the Muslim he says: these are terrorists. This is either sheer stupidity, or assuming that others are stupid. We believe that is our legitimate duty to resist this occupation with all the strength we have got<sup>237</sup>.

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<sup>231</sup> Ibidem, p. 122.

<sup>232</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>233</sup> The Washington Post, *Nine facts about terrorism in the United States since 9/11*, 11 April 2017.

<sup>234</sup> R. LOUGH, *Pursuing al-Qaeda in Horn of Africa*, Al Jazeera English, August 19, 2008.

<sup>235</sup> The Sidney Morning Herald, *Al-Qaeda financed Bali' claims Hambali report*, 6 October 2003.

<sup>236</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>237</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

At the heart of Al Qaeda ideology there is Wahabism, a fundamentalist vision of the world but, at the same time, international in his aim; Wahabism is a movement of religious reform developed in the eighteenth century that is based on a rigid interpretation of the Koran, one of the most conservative within Sunni Muslim world with the main aim of rediscovery of the standards of Islam<sup>238</sup>.

It can be therefore defined the focus of Wahabism as twofold: on the one hand it follows the Salafist line; the Salafi movement aimed to “achieve a renewal of Muslim life and had a major influence on many Muslim thinkers and movements across the Islamic world”<sup>239</sup>, and so Islamic fundamentalism dictates the laws of the ideal state<sup>240</sup>.

On the other hand, the whole world is viewed as an organism to be restructured in which the supremacy of the Shari'a over the *infidels* is seen as the only possibility of divine justice<sup>241</sup>.

However, there is a difference between Salafism and Wahabbism: the first, which heavily affected the two founders of Al Qaeda, Bin Laden and Al- Zhawahiri, dealt with the “multiethnicity and multinational character of Islam”<sup>242</sup>; this view led to a new interpretation of the territory, in which every land where a Muslim lives become a Muslim land.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> J. ESPOSITO, *The Oxford encyclopedia of the modern Islamic world*, vol.3, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 463.

<sup>239</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>240</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>241</sup> A. RABASA - P. CHALK - K. CRAGIN - A. DALI SARA - H. GREGG - T.W. KARASIK - K. O'BRIEN - W. ROSENAU, *Beyond Al-Qaeda. The global jihadist movement*, Santa Monica, California, RAND Corporation, 2006, pp. 9-11.

<sup>242</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>243</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

On this issue Qutb, the most famous Islamic activist of the twentieth century, stated that

The ties of ideology and faith are stronger than the ties of fervent patriotic feelings that relate to a region or a territory. Thus false differentiation between Muslims on a territorial basis is nothing but an expression of the campaigns against the Orient, and an expression of the Zionist imperialism that must be exterminated... the homeland is not the land but the group of believers or the whole Islamic "umma".<sup>244</sup>

The trans-nationality of the theater of war leads Al Qaeda to identify a multitude of sacred places to protect: Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem mainly. Thus, the religious identity of the organization is constituted in the territorial expression of Islam and pushes members to Jihad against the *infidels*.<sup>245</sup>

The main difference between this organization and the other analyzed before lies in the absence of planning; there is in fact no ideal society to pursue, no future improvement of life of the members; what binds the militants together is an identity and an ideal of resistance.<sup>246</sup>

The structure of Al Qaeda is defined through a process that can be summarized in six stages. The first is determined by resistance in the late 1970s to the aforementioned Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The second internship is the indirect consequence of the militants staying in Afghan training camps; in fact, they returned to their countries importing those fundamentalistic ideals, often in contrast to the leaders who ruled in these countries.

The third stage took place at different times in various corners of the world and involved the first direct attacks by Al Qaeda on the American power and the apparatus to which it could be linked: notable was the Mogadishu episode in which the US special forces were killed, and their bodies exposed to the media.

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<sup>244</sup> Ibidem, p. 15.

<sup>245</sup> Ibidem, pp. 111-112.

<sup>246</sup> Ibidem. p. 113.

This show of force, and the subsequent retreat of the American forces of Somalia, led Bin Laden to think he was able to defeat the US.<sup>247</sup>

The fourth stage was the actual creation of a network, the beginning of an attempt at capillarity. Afghanistan and Sudan were the main beneficiaries of this project, undertaken by Al Qaeda to provide economic support in exchange for military bases to use. The fifth phase was the beginning of the real war with the United States, marked by the request of the latter to be delivered Bin Laden and with the attack of Al Qaeda on the twin towers. The sixth and final phase shows the US revenge that wiped out the Taliban from Afghanistan.<sup>248</sup>

Many institutions, including, for example, the European Parliament, have found a link between Al Qaeda and global terrorism, indicating them as dangerous and to be monitored as they give "support and supply of arms to rebel groups around the world"<sup>249</sup>.

Lawrence Wright, historian and journalist, in his book *The Looming Tower*, argues that "Al Qaeda was influenced by the rift between Sunni and Shia Islam, as well as the global jihad theory promoted by Sayyid Qutb"<sup>250</sup>.

Qutb was an Egyptian Islamic intellectual, a writer, poet and thinker after the Second World War he abandoned the nationalist ideas that had characterized his youth by embracing Islam<sup>251</sup>.

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<sup>247</sup> Ibidem, pp. 115-118.

<sup>248</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-118.

<sup>249</sup> <http://www.dawn.com/news/1029713>. Consulted on 14/5/23.

<sup>250</sup> [http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/2015/bulletin\\_e2015\\_6.pdf](http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/2015/bulletin_e2015_6.pdf). Consulted on 12/7/23.

<sup>251</sup> J. CALVERT, *Sayyid Qutb and the Power of Political Myth: Insights from Sorel*, "Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques", vol. 30, no. 3, 2004, p. 515.

His numerous literatures strive to identify the weaknesses of contemporary Islamic society; he is considered the father of political and radical Islam<sup>252</sup>. He developed a theory of political Islam that sought to combine the concept of a pure Islamic society with the goal of creating a global Islamic state ruled by a caliph; Bin Laden often quoted Qutb's works in his speeches and highlighted the importance of his works in conditioning his political thoughts.<sup>253</sup>

In Qutb the *value of struggle*<sup>254</sup> stands as the fulcrum and motor of all political thought. He considers jihad necessary in four cases:

- 1) To defend believers from any infidel who tries to mislead them.
- 2) The defence of the possibility of making religious propaganda in open or closed spaces.
- 3) The establishment of God's power in Islamic lands.
- 4) The practical fulfilment of the concept of justice.<sup>255</sup>

Qutb's most important work is *Milestones*, a short book in which he makes a call to action and lays out a plan to re-create the *extinct* Muslim world on strictly Quranic grounds.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Ibidem. p. 512.

<sup>253</sup> Ibidem, pp. 512-515.

<sup>254</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

<sup>255</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

<sup>256</sup> J. CLAVERT, *op. cit.*, pp. 512-515.



Qutb argues that society should be governed solely by the divine law of Islam and that any secular political system is an offense against the will of Allah, this encouraged the Jihad<sup>257</sup>:

To establish God's authority in the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by God; to abolish all the Satanic forces and Satanic systems of life; to end the lordship of one man over others, since all men are creatures of God and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them. These reasons are sufficient for proclaiming jihad<sup>258</sup>.

It's important to note that Jihad can be both offensive and defensive, and Bin Laden, referring to the writings of Qutb, defines its Jihad as defensive against the invasive American values that attack the Islamic world<sup>259</sup>.

In Qutb's opinion Western values can't provide answers to the question that Capitalism poses:

Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head - this being just a symptom and not the real disease - but because humanity is devoid of those vital values for its healthy development and real progress. Even Western scholars realize that their civilization is unable to present healthy values for the guidance of mankind and does not possess anything to satisfy its own conscience or justify its existence<sup>260</sup>.

However, it is important to note that most Muslims do not share Qutb's extremist interpretation of Islam and reject violence as a means to achieve political goals; in fact, justice and tolerance are supposed to be principles of Islam, as per Koran's teaching.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> L. ALLEN, *The Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb Will Persist as Al Qaeda's Intellectual Heritage*, "Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses", vol. 3, no. 6, 2011, pp. 7–9.

<sup>258</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>259</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>260</sup> S. QUTB, *Milestones*, revised and trans. Ahmad Zaki Hammad, Indianapolis, American Trust, 1990, p. 5.

<sup>261</sup> <https://free-islamic-course.org/articles-on-topical-issues/tolerance-islam.html>. Consulted on 29/6/23.

The target of the messages sent are mainly the United States and the states ideologically close to it, guilty of wanting to annihilate Islam; the vehicles differ between videos, leaflets, mass media such as the famous broadcaster Al-Jazeera, and social networks, even though it is important to note that “the network has never supported violence against the United States. Not once have its correspondents’ praised attacks on coalition forces in Iraq”<sup>262</sup>.

Hasan Al-Banna adopted Qutb as a point of reference and inspiration when, in 1928, he founded in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood, a radical group that will adopt *Milestones* as its manifesto.<sup>263</sup>

Al-Banna managed to gather more than a million members in a few years; during the fifth congress of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was attempted in 1939, he described the cornerstones of the organization:

- 1) The return to the sources, that is, to the direct reading of the Book of God and to the dictates of the Prophet.
- 2) Compliance of behaviour with the Sunnah, which is the Islamic Code of Ethics and Tradition, especially as regards religious behaviour.
- 3) The purity of the soul, useful to build persevering personalities far from material goods.
- 4) The dual essence of the organization, which internally wants to reform power and externally the "review of what is best for the Islamic community".<sup>264</sup>
- 5) Athleticism of members, as some practices, including fasting and pilgrimage, require a healthy and robust body.
- 6) An attitude to culture and research.

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<sup>262</sup> H. MILES, *Al Jazeera*, “Foreign Policy”, no. 155, 2006, pp. 20–21.

<sup>263</sup> A. AL-ABDIN, *The Political Thought of Hasan Al-Banna*, “Islamic Studies”, vol. 28, no. 3, 1989, pp. 219–221.

<sup>264</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *Islam e Politica*, Bologna, il Mulino Saggi, 1999, pp. 195-196.

7) Accuracy in economic management, the accumulation of money is not a sin if it comes from the labor of honest work.

8) Attention to the evils of society, which must be eradicated and replaced with values more suited to Islam and more educational towards society.<sup>265</sup>

In 1953 Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood, a political-religious organization that advocated a return to a fundamentalist interpretation of the Quran as Islamic law.<sup>266</sup>

After two years, having gained a prestigious role within it, he was arrested following the assassination attempt of Egyptian President Al-Nasir along with all the leaders of the movement. This was the period of fruitful writing and marked radicalization, as well as a physical decline.<sup>267</sup>

The organization has changed its characteristics over time, and we can consider September 11 as the great turning point, such as to divide the history of Al Qaeda into pre and post.<sup>268</sup>

The events of September 11, 2001, were a series of attacks on the USA, an offensive that occurred through the crash of four planes on strategic targets. Two planes crashed on the World Trade Center in New York, one on the Pentagon and a fourth plane, whose goal was Capitol Hill, instead crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania; the 4 crashes caused the total death of 2977 people.<sup>269</sup>

That Tuesday, according to the official version of the United States government, 19 people linked to the terrorist organization Al Qaeda carried out attacks by hijacking civilian airliners.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

<sup>266</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Muslim-Brotherhood>. Consulted on 29/6/23.

<sup>267</sup> J. CALVERT, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

<sup>268</sup> M. COX, *Paradigm Shifts And 9/11: International Relations After The Twin Towers*, "Security Dialogue," vol. 33, no. 2, 2002, pp. 247-248.

<sup>269</sup> The Washington Post, *Nine facts about terrorism in the United States since 9/11*, 11 April 2017.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibidem*.

One question that is interesting to ask ourselves is about the objective of this attack: it is unreasonable to think that Al Qaeda wanted to declare war on the USA in their home, it is more credited that the objective was terrorist, namely aimed at sowing uncertainty and concern in the population.<sup>271</sup>

The militants involved in the attack were mainly coming from Saudi Arabia and all young men. This reliable information, among the few available, can help us to hypothesize the average characteristics of Al Qaeda members.<sup>272</sup>

The attack of the Twin Towers became the *casus belli* of the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the American armed forces<sup>273</sup> and, as a result of these events, it has been observed in the web and in the media around the world, the proliferation of a long series of conspiracy theories that tend to give an alternative explanation to the official version<sup>274</sup>.

Matthew Gray, Professor at the School of International Liberal Studies (SILS), Waseda University in Tokyo, wrote:

Conspiracy is an important phenomenon in understanding Arab politics in the Middle East, Its salience in both popular and state discourses in the Arab world is important and derives from a much larger and more complex set of sources that cannot be inferred only through the psychology or pathology of a single region or ethnicity. It is therefore important to understand the inherent nature of conspiracy, both for its origin and for its political, psychological, and social impacts. Conspiratorialism in the Middle East has its origins in the political structures and dynamics associated with them, particularly in the interaction between groups and social forces in relation to state forces. And it draws its origin from the complex relationship between political elites, institutions, and political and economic conditions at local and regional level<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *Quale Islam? Jihadismo, radicalismo, riformismo*, cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>272</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>273</sup> <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/afghanistan-war-how-did-911-lead-to-a-20-year-war>. Consulted on 12/7/23.

<sup>274</sup> M. GRAY, *Conspiracy theories in the Arab world*, Londra, Routledge, 2010, pp. 2-7.

<sup>275</sup> M. GRAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

Many claimed that the US government was involved in the attack, what is certain is that the episode gave George W. Bush a credible pretext to carry out a war campaign that had long been theorized in the rooms of the White House.<sup>276</sup>

*Enduring Freedom*, the operation launched by the USA, has had a double effect: while the core of Al Qaeda has been weakened, on the other hand we have witnessed a widespread of small, affiliated groups, present also outside Afghanistan and therefore more difficult to track and monitor.<sup>277</sup>

Bin Laden and Zawahiri were really able to understand the importance of mass media and the impact that new technologies could have on public opinion. Bin Laden stated that “rhetoric and satellite propaganda can be on equal footing with unmanned bombers and cruise-missiles”<sup>278</sup>.

The importance of the media was emphasized by the absence of territoriality in which the war could be conducted because of decentralization operated by Al Qaeda. However it is incorrect to depict Arab media as direct channel of Al Qaeda; in fact in 1996 Al Jazeera was born under control by the states, but by 2003 there is a growing fragmentation and consequent diversity of opinion which lead at an undiscussed attention on Al Qaeda and the USA as the enemy according to all Arab narratives.<sup>279</sup>

From the beginning of 2000s onwards, especially after September 11, the moderate Arab world began to distance itself from the concept of Jihad; various attacks are described by the Arab media as massacres of innocent people and it is clear that this change of policy is supported by local governments.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> M. CAMPANINI, *Quale Islam? Jihadismo, radicalismo, riformismo*, cit., p. 47.

<sup>277</sup> C. DE STEFANO - L. PIACENTINI - I.S. TRENTO, *I nuovi scenari del terrorismo internazionale di matrice jihadista*, Rubbettino, 2011.

<sup>278</sup> M. LYNCH, *Al-Qaeda's Media Strategies*, “The National Interest”, no. 83, 2006, pp. 50–52.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>280</sup> M. LYNCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

Over the years Al Qaeda has seen an increase in the number of critics who observe it closely, “form of criticism of its theological, jurisprudential, and strategic reasoning”<sup>281</sup>. The attacks in which other Muslims are involved are underlined even more. In particular from Arabia, a country notoriously close to the United States, Saudi Cleric al-Awda wrote a letter asking Bin Laden

How much blood has been spilled? How many innocent children, women, and old people have been killed, maimed, and expelled from their homes in the name of al Qaeda? <sup>282</sup>

In 2009 was Al-Qaradawi, Qatari cleric, who wrote a book in which he defined the concept of Jihad according to Al Qaeda as a “mad declaration of war upon a mad world”.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> E. LARSON ET AL, *Al Qaeda's Propaganda: A Shifting Battlefield*, in edited by B. Michael Jenkins – J. Paul Godges (eds.), *The Long Shadow of 9/11: America's Response to Terrorism*, Santa Monica, California, RAND Corporation, 2011, p. 74.

<sup>282</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>283</sup> Ibidem, p. 75.

## V. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

The Anti-globalization movement shares some points with the Zapatista's revolution that we have already analyzed before; however, the differences are given by the results that these demonstrators could reach through years.

The 30 of November 1999 became famous as the day of the Battle of Seattle.<sup>284</sup>

This, which is considered to be the first major international event, was preceded by what can be considered as general tests, held in the summer of the same year; the G8 was held on June 18 in London and on the occasion of it there was a march of more than 10 thousand people on the English streets, in the same hours the same as in Brazil, Nigeria, Pakistan, Belarus and the USA.<sup>285</sup>

The cause of the protest was the planned meeting and the organizer of the meeting itself, the World Trade Organization, which was founded in 1995.<sup>286</sup>

WTO is an intergovernmental organization that regulates international trade and is currently representing 164 states.<sup>287</sup>

The organization was created to replace a treaty, the GATT, which was established in 1947, between 23 countries, with the aim of implementing the cooperation work begun with the World Bank, founded in 1944.<sup>288</sup>

The WTO organized a meeting at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center but had to face the opposition of over forty thousands of demonstrators, for the first time able to coordinate themselves through the Internet, who opposed any kind of meeting, such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, that would

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<sup>284</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/seattle-wto-protests-of-1999>. Consulted on 22/6/23.

<sup>285</sup> K. AINGER, *Global Carnival Against Capital*, "Z Magazine", 1999. [https://thirdworldtraveler.com/Global\\_Economy/GlobalCarnival.html](https://thirdworldtraveler.com/Global_Economy/GlobalCarnival.html). Consulted on 23/6/23.

<sup>286</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/fact4\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact4_e.htm). Consulted on 22/6/23.

<sup>287</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/org6\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/org6_e.htm). Consulted on 23/6/23.

<sup>288</sup> P. VAN DEN BOSSCHE - W. ZDOUC, *The Law and Policy of the World Trade Organization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 78.

support the project of economic globalization.<sup>289</sup> More than 125 trade union delegates participated at the demonstration; from all over the world environment protesters and human rights activists came to show their disagreement with the policies proposed by the Clinton administration.

Public opinion, stimulated by the huge participation in the protest, wondered if the real power was in the hands of the people or the governments and their lobbies.<sup>290</sup>

This analysis was useful in bringing together and involving all the people who had had the opportunity to hear something about the event; at stake was also the consideration that the powerful of the world had of the world population.

The echo was so loud that the actual agenda of the meeting faded into the background from a global point of view: the eyes of the media, and, as a consequence, the world's eye were keen on demonstrators.<sup>291</sup>

Thanks to the attention created by the protesters, the world began to look with greater critical spirit at the methods and objectives of the WTO, noting that it tended to overcome national powers while not having the right to do so legislatively.

The American government, unprepared for a protest of this magnitude, although peaceful, responded with the use of plastic and rubber bullets, grenades, and mass jailing, all, of course, under the magnifying glass of the media.<sup>292</sup>

Meanwhile all the ports of the Pacific Coast were closed and the representative of the unions of the unloaders of port declared that the power of the CEOs and their multinationals would not have overwhelmed the international interests of the workers.

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<sup>289</sup> Seattle Police Department: *The Seattle Police Department After Action Report: World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference Seattle, Washington November 29 – December 3, 1999*. p. 41.

<sup>290</sup> J. PETRAS, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 50, Dec. 11-17, 1999, p. 3477.

<sup>291</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>292</sup> J. PETRAS, *op. cit.*, p. 3477.



These circumstances gave courage even within the WTO: some delegates from the poorest countries made known their marginality within the committee's decision-making processes and the total indifference of European and American ministers to their needs.<sup>293</sup>

Other European States complained of inefficiency in the management of agri-food trade by the US, excessively permissive towards the latter; in short, external protests gave rise to a greater balance within the debate in the organization. For the first time, globalization in its entirety suffered a setback, stopped by the popular will to still have a say in the fate of trade and, consequently, of world balances.<sup>294</sup>

As a consequence, the US trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky, tried to reduce the damage to the image of the WTO, which otherwise would have been greatly reduced in terms of its authority from the meeting of Seattle, stating that

*It would be best to take a time out, consult with one another and find a creative means to finish the job.*<sup>295</sup>

The protest of Seattle became a model to emulate every time a meeting focused on globalization and economic issues took place; many institutions, like for example the G-8, IMF, World Bank, EU and others had their meetings surrounded by a huge number of demonstrators in the following months.

The ecologist culture and its representatives introduce the existence of a collective identity, the biological identity, which means the human being is seen exclusively as a "component of nature".<sup>296</sup>

The movement, in relation to the others examined before, is different in results, circumstances and reasons but has a similarity: the contraposition to the new globalized world in which we have come across.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> J. PETRAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 3477-3478.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>295</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>296</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>297</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.

The main issue of the identity is well-represented by the dualism between *them*, which are the strong elite, economically interested in the globalization's affairs, and *us*, the poor people who try to survive at the current challenges.

Nowadays, empirical studies, mostly belonging to economic branch, have demonstrated the goodness of the phenomenon of globalization at a world level, over the long term<sup>298</sup>.

However, a new collateral problem has re-emerged worldwide: climate change.

Last summer was the hottest in the history of Europe; in Italy the temperatures were 2.26% over the average registered.<sup>299</sup>

The political world is trying to running for cover through a series of policies aimed above all at slowing down the pollution produced by companies; in this direction is moving also EU Agenda.<sup>300</sup>

In December 2019, EU leaders, agreed with the European Council the willing to reach, by 2050, the so-called climate-neutrality, which means that countries have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through alternative ways and achieve a net-zero emissions balance.<sup>301</sup>

## **1. FRIDAY'S FOR FUTURE**

Although various studies and empirical demonstrations had already highlighted climate change and the need to change our habits, was the figure of a sixteen years old to put on the front page in newspapers, social and television networks an issue of

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<sup>298</sup> David Ricardo and his experiment; <https://policonomics.com/comparative-advantage/> Consulted on 16/6/23.

<sup>299</sup> <http://www.wwf.it/cosa-facciamo/clima/cambiamenti-climatici>. Consulted on 15/6/23.

<sup>300</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/climate-change/#:~:text=Under%20the%20European%20climate%20law,EU%20climate%20neutral%20by%202050>. Consulted on 14/6/23.

<sup>301</sup> Ibidem.

unprecedented importance and urgency. Greta Thunberg, a Swedish student, decided to demonstrate in front of the Parliament with her reciting sign *Skolstrejk För Klimatet*, literally school strike for the climate.<sup>302</sup>

The attention to the climate by the young woman is conditioned by the torrid summer of 2018 in which the forests of Sweden are the scene of a series of fires unprecedented in the history of the country; the link with global warming is therefore evident to experts.<sup>303</sup>

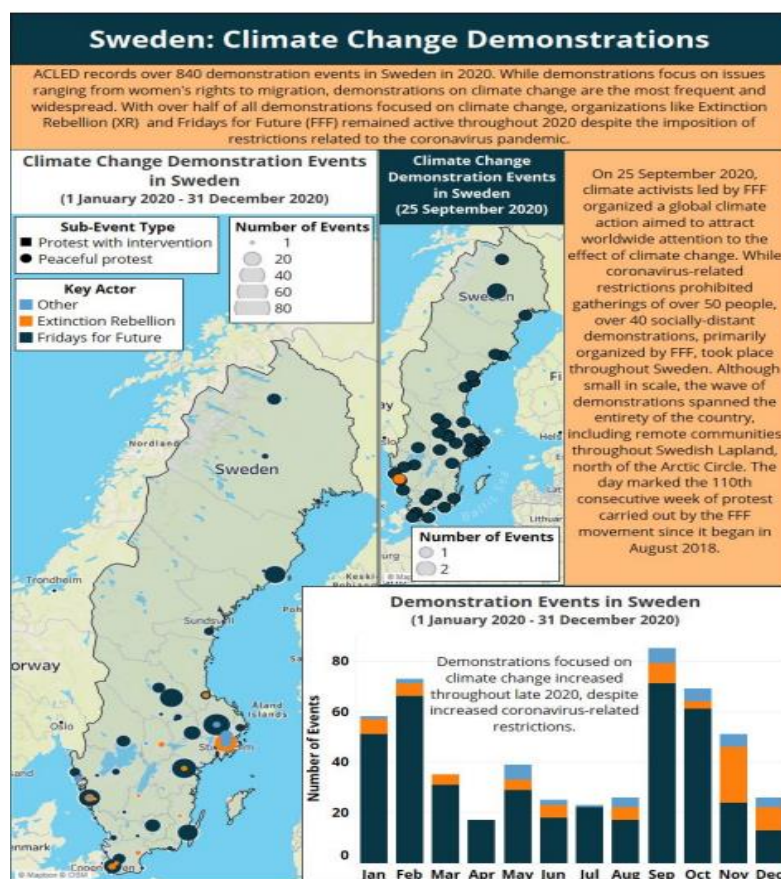


Figure 1 ACLE, 25/1/2021. <https://acleddata.com/2021/01/25/political-disorder-in-europe-10-cases-from-acledd-new-expansion/>. Consulted on 22/6/2023.

<sup>302</sup> A. BELOTTI, *La battaglia di Greta Thunberg per salvare il pianeta*, Zanichelli Editore, Bologna, 2020, pp. 1-3. [https://online.scuola.zanichelli.it/economiaglobale2ed-files/Approfondimenti/Approfondimenti\\_Biennio\\_light/6\\_4\\_Greta\\_Thunberg\\_pianeta\\_42036.pdf](https://online.scuola.zanichelli.it/economiaglobale2ed-files/Approfondimenti/Approfondimenti_Biennio_light/6_4_Greta_Thunberg_pianeta_42036.pdf) Consulted on 19/6/23.

<sup>303</sup> Ibidem.

Greta Thunberg is so considered the creator of Friday For Future, which is an international social movement of students and environmental activists that emerged with the aim to demand action against climate change from political and economic leaders.

Demonstrations were held in more than 30 cities across Sweden and the largest *climate strike* was carried out on 25 September 2019.<sup>304</sup>

It was attended by members of many different environmental groups, in which FFF took a leading role.

As Greta stated

So we can't save the world by playing by the rules. Because the rules have to be changed. Everything needs to change. And it has to start today. So everyone out there: it is now time for civil disobedience. It is time to rebel.<sup>305</sup>

The effectiveness of the protest on Swedish soil is visible, for example, in the municipality of Malmö, which, in January 2020 adopted a *climate emergency* protocol to be respected, having been clearly influenced by the protests and actions of environmental groups.<sup>306</sup>

However this little steps can't be considered enough, because

Countries like Sweden and the UK need to start reducing emissions by at least 15 per cent every year, to stay below a 2°C warming target. Now the IPCC say that we have to aim for 1.5°C. So we can only imagine what that means.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> J. SARTRE et al. "Sweden: Climate Change Demonstrations." *POLITICAL DISORDER IN EUROPE: 10 CASES FROM ACLED'S NEW EXPANSION*, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2021, pp. 24–26.

<sup>305</sup> G. THUNBERG, *No One is too small to make a difference*, Chicago, Penguin Books, 2019, p. 11. file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/9780141991740%20(1).pdf. Consulted on 20/6/23.

<sup>306</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>307</sup> G. THUNBERG, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

The activist was able to take advantage of the moment: in fact, we talk about 20 August 2018, and Sweden was approaching the electoral period; the media resonance was incredibly beyond expectations. A few months after the protests were emulated in Finland, Australia and the Netherlands among others and student organizations began to include climate sustainability in their agendas.<sup>308</sup>

After the elections her protests become weekly and no longer to the extreme; Greta begins to strike only on Friday, thus creating the movement Fridays For Future, which, exploiting the national and international media, make the teenager famous worldwide and symbol of youth struggle. Several climate meetings involve Greta as a guest, the most well-known is surely her intervention in Davos during the congress of the World Economic Forum.<sup>309</sup>

Her most famous speech, however, remains that in New York on the occasion of the UN meeting. During her speech a question, *How dare You?*, is repeated several times against world leaders, who are accused of providing empty words as a solution to a real problem.<sup>310</sup>

Greta's warning is addressed in particular to the development model with which the company is confronted, which puts economic growth first, at the expense of the environment. Greta is mainly criticized for the lack of practical solutions that are compatible with development and economic growth, but she is nevertheless credited with having brought the problem of global warming to public attention.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> M. OJALA, *Eco-Anxiety*, "RSA Journal", Vol. 164, No. 4 (5576) (2018–19), Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, pp. 10-13.

<sup>309</sup> A. BELOTTI, *La battaglia di Greta Thunberg per salvare il pianeta*, Zanichelli Editore, 2020, pp. 2-3. [https://online.scuola.zanichelli.it/economiaglobale2ed-files/Approfondimenti/Approfondimenti\\_Biennio\\_light/6\\_4\\_Greta\\_Thunberg\\_pianeta\\_42036.pdf](https://online.scuola.zanichelli.it/economiaglobale2ed-files/Approfondimenti/Approfondimenti_Biennio_light/6_4_Greta_Thunberg_pianeta_42036.pdf). Consulted on 19/6/23.

<sup>310</sup> BBC, *Greta Thunberg: Who is the climate campaigner and what are her aims?* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49918719>. Consulted on 20/6/23.

<sup>311</sup> A. BELOTTI, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Fridays For Future define themselves and their goals in a sort of manifesto:

FFF, is a youth-led and -organised global climate strike movement that started in August 2018, when 15-year-old Greta Thunberg began a school strike for climate.

[...] To begin with, she was alone, but she was soon joined by others. On the 8th of September, Greta and her fellow school strikers decided to continue their strike until the Swedish policies provided a safe pathway well under 2° C, i.e. in line with the Paris agreement. They created the hashtag #FridaysForFuture, and encouraged other young people all over the world to join them. This marked the beginning of the global school strike for climate.

[...] Along with other groups across the world, Fridays for Future is part of a hopeful new wave of change, inspiring millions of people to take action on the climate crisis.<sup>312</sup>

[...] We, young people, are the next generation of workers, who in the coming years will face the adversities of an increasingly hostile world. Climate scientists indicate that we may not even have the opportunity to put into practice what we are studying today.

[...] In this catastrophic scenario, social inequalities will become even more extreme, as the burden of environmental costs is placed on the last rings of the pyramid: workers, the unemployed, students, migrants.

At the top of that pyramid are governments and about 100 large private and public companies that are causing the global crisis and at the same time minimizing or publicly denying the problem.

[...] But we cannot stand by while "our house is on fire". No one can.

It is for this reason that the Fridays For Future movement, born and led by young people and students, invites everyone to join this struggle: a struggle that does not know age, category, group or individuals. The climate emergency affects us all, without distinction.

Workers: for us you are indispensable interlocutors. What threatens to jeopardize our future, your children and your grandchildren, is a planetary emergency that first of all prejudices your present. The two struggles, that for a livable planet and that for the rights of the workers, are intimately connected, indeed: inseparable.<sup>313</sup>

The necessary conversion to an ecologically sustainable system must go hand in hand with the protection of the rights of workers and the weakest sections of the population.

We call on governments to invest in and encourage ecological transition while respecting the principles of social, environmental and climate justice.

[...] Building a common path of political pressure and social awareness is what Fridays For Future offers to all workers, starting from the squares and events in which to join our forces and our numbers. It's the one, last chance for us and your future<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> <https://fridaysforfuture.org/what-we-do/who-we-are/>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>313</sup> Green Report, <https://greenreport.it/news/clima/lettera-aperta-di-fridays-for-future-a-lavoratori-e-sindacati-sciopero-globale-per-il-clima-il-27-settembre/>. Consulted on 20/6.

<sup>314</sup> Ibidem.

Although climate change affects everyone it is perceived differently depending on the age group; the symbols of this dualism are Greta Thunberg, who has already been mentioned, and the previous president of the United States, Donald Trump.

Unlike the Swedish activist, in fact, Trump has always been wary of the real consequences of climate change, considering them always less impact than economic growth.<sup>315</sup>

The impact of two factors on the average age of those most concerned by climate change is evident: first of all, the fact that they, already on average more educated, are exposed to the problems at school, and even more so, the fact that their life expectancy leads them to think that the consequences will be suffered right on their skin.<sup>316</sup>

## **2. GREEN PEACE**

We tend to link the environmental movement with Greta Thunberg and with the movement *Friday for Future*, however they had their ancestors over the decades.

In fact, the world largest environmental organization, *Greenpeace*, was founded in Vancouver in 1971 by David Mc Targatt and Irving and Dorothy Stowe.<sup>317</sup>

To understand the characteristics and identity links within Greenpeace it is important to consider the historical moment; at the end of the 1960s many Americans emigrated to Canada for the most disparate reasons: some as Quakers, others because they feared being drafted and most of them because they did not share the nuclear policy of the United States.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> D. FARBER, *Climate perspective across the generations*, "Natural Resources Journal", vol. 60, no. 2, 2020, p. 293.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 298.

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<https://web.archive.org/web/20100411091859/http://www.greenpeace.org/international/about/frequently-asked-questions-about-greenpeace-in>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>318</sup> F. ZELKO. *Scaling Greenpeace: From Local Activism to Global Governance*. "Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung" vol. 42, no. 2, 2017, p. 319.

Greenpeace started as an anti-nuclear organization and it became such a structured organization that, in 1994, it had over 6 million members around the world and over a hundred million dollars of annual revenue<sup>319</sup>; one of the secrets of the media impact of Greenpeace lies in the *modus operandi* of one of its leaders, McTaggart, who understood that the theories, although valid, would not bring immediate results towards the planet and that, to attract the attention of public opinion and world leaders, targeted and effective actions would have been necessary.<sup>320</sup>

In the early days the organization was composed mostly "of Americans and Canadians, peaceniks and hippies, World War II veterans and people barely out of high school".<sup>321</sup>

Nevertheless, in about a decade, it became the largest and most influential non-governmental organization.<sup>322</sup>

At the structural level Greenpeace maintains a strong central decision-making structure, consisting of a small executive board and a council of representatives from various countries, but maintains a presence in the various states thanks to over 30 offices around the world, to coordinate the various transnational initiatives.<sup>323</sup>

As Professor Zelko said:

*Greenpeace itself became a multi-level NGO with local, regional, national, and international offices, each with different priorities, strategies, tactics, and degrees of authority.*<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>321</sup> F. ZELKO, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-319.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>323</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p.177.

<sup>324</sup> F. ZELKO, *op. cit.*, p. 320.



In defining its own goals and obstacles towards realization, Greenpeace can only be categorized as an internationalist movement, since the welfare of the planet is put before the development of individual states, which are considered the main architects of environmental issues.<sup>325</sup>

As they define themselves:

We remain true to our mission: to protect the planet in all its diversity and promote peace and non-violence. We remain proudly financially independent of governments and corporations. We value our identity as global and local – taking on formidable opponents and challenges while being rooted in communities and long-term relationships. We hold firm to our radical roots and to speaking truth to power. We seek a green and peaceful world that supports life in all its diversity. We are positive about the future, because people working together can achieve anything. This simplicity and optimism is one of our greatest strengths. We will put people power at the heart of our work – strengthening, amplifying and working with those who share our vision, hope and belief that a better world is possible.<sup>326</sup>

After the World-War II the fear of a nuclear conflict threatened the whole humanity and his effects on the short-period were clear due to the disaster of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The number of direct victims was between 150.000 and 220.000 but the radiation incidence, which was analyzed over the next two decades by groups of American scientists and doctors, was extremely high among survivors.

In November 1969, the United States announced a thermonuclear test with a 5 megaton bomb, *Cannikan*, scheduled for October 1971 on Amchitka Island, 4,000 kilometers northwest of Vancouver.<sup>327</sup>

However, it so happens that the island was a federal wildlife refuge for the United States, where 131 species of seabirds found protection.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> F. ZELKO, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>326</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-international-stateless/2018/12/22cf06f9-framework-summary.pdf>. Consulted on 26/07/2023.

<sup>327</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/italy/storia/14077/le-origini-di-greenpeace/>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibidem*.

An earlier, less powerful test caused tremors measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale and killed wildlife all over the island. The Cannikin test would have been five times more powerful and a tsunami would be caused by the explosion, threatening Canadian population.<sup>329</sup>

In addition to a general adversity regarding nuclear weapons, the main concern that was perceived was that the area of Amchitka, already geologically unstable itself, could become the scene of earthquakes and tsunamis.<sup>330</sup>

From the fear of the tsunami, a new name, suitable for the future organization, arose: The *don't make a wave committee*.<sup>331</sup>

However, the threat of anomalous waves was not the most concrete; in fact, the explosion could easily have created cracks in the surface of Amchitka, causing the release of radioactive materials. A fact that, as told by scientists, was not so rare, since in the 230 tests carried out in Nevada 67 had led to the release of radioactive substances.<sup>332</sup>

In this tense atmosphere there was a meeting between two American activists rooted in Canada, Irving Stowe and Jim Bohlen, who were able to involve student organizations and protest groups, united in hindering Cannikin, the nuclear test scheduled for 1971.<sup>333</sup>

However, the committee, during a reunion was able to find accidentally the name:

*We hope to sail on a boat to Amchitka and face the nuclear bombs, let's make it a green peace.*<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>330</sup> F. ZELKO, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>331</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/italy/storia/14077/le-origini-di-greenpeace/>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>332</sup> F. ZELKO. *op. cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>333</sup> Ibidem, p. 320.

<sup>334</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/italy/storia/14077/le-origini-di-greenpeace/>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

The curious fact was that Greenpeace was also the name of the Canadian boat that they wanted to rent.<sup>335</sup>

Irving Stowe organized a charity concert in Vancouver on October 16, 1970, in which he managed to raise a sum of money to finance Greenpeace's first mission: in fact, with that money The *Don't Make A Wave Committee* was able to charter a ship.<sup>336</sup>

The idea, originally of Bohlen and his wife Marie, had come from emulating what the Quaker activists had tried about twenty years before; in fact they tried to sail to the Marshall Islands, which had been selected as nuclear test areas, but they were arrested.<sup>337</sup>

The ship sailed for Amchitka on September 15, 1971, but was confronted by the U.S. Coast Guard, which forced the activists to turn back; in Canada, however, they realized that their mission had captured the sympathies of public opinion and that all the media were talking about them.<sup>338</sup>

The activists tried several times to return to Amchitka, until the USA detonated the bomb but, given the harsh criticism received from all over the world, they stopped the tests.<sup>339</sup>

In the mid-1970s, Greenpeace's interests became more varied; not only nuclear energy was at the heart of their battle, but also whaling, seal hunting and more attention to toxic waste and its disposal.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> F. ZELKO, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>336</sup> L. DYCK, *Joni nervous at Greenpeace benefit show*, Vancouver Sun. Vol. 84, no. 242. Vancouver, The Sun Publishing Company, 17 October 1970, p. 35. [https://web.archive.org/web/20190320215205/https://www.newspapers.com/clip/29732546/joni\\_nervous\\_at\\_greenpeace\\_benefit/](https://web.archive.org/web/20190320215205/https://www.newspapers.com/clip/29732546/joni_nervous_at_greenpeace_benefit/). Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>337</sup> F. ZELKO, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>338</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/italy/storia/14077/le-origini-di-greenpeace/>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>340</sup> M. HAAS, *International Human Rights: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Routledge, 5 September 2013. [https://books.google.it/books?id=\\_XC\\_AAAAQBAJ&q=ahab&pg=PT936&redir\\_esc=y#v=snippet&q=ahab&f=false](https://books.google.it/books?id=_XC_AAAAQBAJ&q=ahab&pg=PT936&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=ahab&f=false). Consulted on 21/6/23.

Our goal is to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity.

That means we want to:

- protect biodiversity in all its forms
- prevent pollution and abuse of the earth's ocean, land, air and fresh water
- end all nuclear threats
- promote peace, global disarmament and non-violence<sup>341</sup>

Greenpeace in its battles has certainly caused damage to entrepreneurs and companies, so much so that numerous lawsuits have been filed with various charges, such as lost profits and reputation damage<sup>342</sup>.

It had great media coverage was the 2004 scoop that revealed Australian government officials' intent on "offering a subsidy"<sup>343</sup> to Southern Pacific Petroleum, an oil and gas supplier, if they "take legal action against Greenpeace".<sup>344</sup>

### **3. GREEN POLITICAL PARTIES**

During the 70's also in political scenario we had several examples of the consciousness about the importance of our planet.<sup>345</sup>

What we now call the Green Parties were born as the ideological heirs of the climate protests made by students in the 1960s. All those political formations that pursue the

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<sup>341</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/explore/about/values/>. Consulted on 31/7/23.

<sup>342</sup> <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/greenpeace-sued-for-esso-logo-abuse>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>343</sup> *Howard Government Offered Oil Firm Millions to Sue Greenpeace*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100801011211/http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/oct2004/2004-10-04-05.asp>. Consulted on 21/6/23.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>345</sup> [http://www.issm.cnr.it/demetrapdf/boll\\_18\\_2008/Pagine%20da%20demetra\\_imp%2018\\_paolini.pdf](http://www.issm.cnr.it/demetrapdf/boll_18_2008/Pagine%20da%20demetra_imp%2018_paolini.pdf). F. F. PAOLINI, *I partiti politici ecologisti dal "successo" al riflusso (1972-2008). Appunti per una storia dell'ambientalismo politico*, pp. 2-3. Consulted on 15/6/23.

protection of the planet, putting it before the economic interests and development that are at the base of the capitalist system, can thus be defined.<sup>346</sup>

The first political organization that falls under these parameters is the United Tasmania Group, which in 1972 was born from the union of local citizens in trying to protect Lake Pedder in an artificial basin for the production of hydroelectric power.<sup>347</sup>

On its election debut in 1972, the United Tasmania Group won 3.9% of the vote, failing to elect a representative to the Tasmanian Legislative Assembly.<sup>348</sup>

In the American continent, in 1983, the Green Party of Canada was the first Green Party formed; the electoral program focused on the contrast to the installations of nuclear power plants.<sup>349</sup>

Greater political successes were achieved in Europe, aided by the common intentions of ecologists, socialists, and radicals, as well as by the political and social contribution of non-governmental organizations.

The first European political formation was born in 1973 in England and its first name was PEOPLE, then changed several times over the years. The party enjoyed the support of well-known leaders, but was never able to exceed 0.3%.<sup>350</sup>

The party, among the European ecologists, which was able to gather more support was Die Grünen in Germany.

Born on January 13th, 1980, the party was split three years later by the radical wing but won 27 seats, the 5.6%, in the Federal Diet.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>347</sup> <https://www.greens.org.nz/history>. Consulted on 12/6/23.

<sup>348</sup> F. PAOLINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>349</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>350</sup> F. PAOLINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>351</sup> Ibidem.

Up to that time the radical current coexisted, which aimed to reshape capitalist society and the reformist current in which ecology gradually entered the system, conditioning its choices.

Its creation was a process, started ten years before from anti-nuclear and peaceful movements; in three years it was able to enter the parliament despite of the monopoly of the three main parties: Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Liberals.<sup>352</sup>

Green voters were belonging from disaffected citizens and young students and obviously contrasted by industrials and all the workers involved in production and factories.<sup>353</sup>

Their path among German institutions was not so easy: founded in the east Germany, after the reunification they weren't able, in the first election of the new Germany, to reach the 5%.

The reason was that people, finally, had a unique state and the prevalent feeling among electors was a new wave of nationalism, hardly compatible with a cosmopolitan concept such as environmentalism. As David McTaggart stated

“the biggest threat we must address is nationalism. [...] we are going to be faced with issues which simply cannot be addressed on a nation-by-nation basis.”<sup>354</sup>

The reformist breakthrough allowed Die Grünen to win in 1985, in coalition with the Social Democrats, the regional elections in Hesse, where Fischer, one of the leaders, was appointed Minister of the Environment, and to achieve an excellent success in the policies of 1987 in which it was reached 8.3% and 44 seats in the Bundestag.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>354</sup> M. CASTELLS, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

<sup>355</sup> F. PAOLINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

	CONCEPT OF IDENTITY	THE LEADER	THE FOLLOWERS	PUBLIC OPINION	VIOLENT EPISODES
ZAPATISTAS	The decision-making process, everyone listen to each other, ensuring that the predominant concept of the assembly is always that of equality among members. The concept of equality, linked in a double thread with that of identity in the Zapatista experience, has its emblem in the use of the mask; is worn because There is no protagonism. our leadership is collective, Among these masks there is a "unique political anonymity that reject identity-	Subcomandante Marcos is the leader of the EZLN, the voice of a movement born from centuries of struggle. His declaration, 'enough is enough,' ignited the Zapatistas' yearning for justice	The insurgents came into action after ten years of clandestine organization, with the aim of avenging five centuries of oppression. They declared war to the Mexican federal government and to a spiral of racism, exploiting and violence against their people, which has lasted for more than five centuries.	The movement became very popular worldwide, their demand appears to be just in the eyes of the public opinion. This international echo obliged Salinas to take a step back and, while the Mexican army was shooting against Zapatistas, he dismissed the Minister of the Interior.	The famous night of January 1, 1994, in a few hours, the rioters, managed to take control of the municipalities of Huixtan, Ocosingo, Oxchuc, Altamirano, Las Margaritas, Chatal and San Cristobal. The first, followed by others, declaration from Lacandon Jungle was read from the balconies of the occupied municipalities; in it it was pointed out that the war would not stop unless an acceptable level of services

	based models of subjectivity in favor of a collective subject”				for the indigenous people were reached.
AUM SHINRIKYO	In order to define the identitarian features of Aum Shinrikyo we need to define the two main waves of New Religions of Japan. Scholars divided the wave emerged from 1950s to 1960s, named shinshukyo, and the one belonging to the following decade, the shinshinshukyo. The shinshukyo religions embodied the values and needs of peasants or small traders, that is to say the social class that historically had always	Shoko Asahara, thanks to his ambitious project, transformed a class of followers who meditated together in an organization with an economic power and an impressive number of followers, changing the nature of Aum Shinrikyo, which later will be switching "from a religious group to a terrorist group". He specialized as an acupuncturist and a masseur at a school for the blind in Kumamoto.	At the head of the organization, some of the men, such as Nakagawa and Inoue, were already professionals in their field when, persuaded by Ahara, they decided to radically change lifestyle and goals. They were political technocrats, tired of a fat, lukewarm society. Some gave Asahara their life's savings. With these funds, Asahara set up various Donation and business revenues gave the Supreme Master the	However, many previous followers of Aum Shinrikyo have faced difficulties integrating into Japanese society due to the stigma associated with the group and its involvement in the subway bombing. Globally, the bombing garnered international media attention and led to negative perceptions of alternative religious movements. According to an article in "Time Magazine", the	From 1990 to 1995 17 attacks, including 10 chemical and 7 biologicals, can be attributed to the group's actions. Several substances were used: investigations show that four biological attacks used anthrax, three used botulinum, four used Sarin, "four other attacks used VX, one attack used Phosgene and another used Hydrogen Cyanide". The 20th March of 1995 became



	<p>shown more attachment to the faith; “but as Japan grew more prosperous in the 1970s, membership in the newer religions began to include a large number of better educated and wealthier people” and Aum Shinrikyo, a shinshinshu kyo religion, poses itself as a symbol of the new interest in faith from “financially secure people, who seek new answers to questions on the meaning of life” , having more spiritual and mystical desires to</p>	<p>, he began to practice pharmacy without having a license and therefore, in 1982, he was fined by the Drug Cosmetics and Medical Instruments Act; these events conditioned Asahara’s worldview and led him to channel frustration into effort to change society, identifying religion as the best way to achieve it. Cult of personality was one of the hallmarks of Asahara’s message, had more credibility in the eyes of his followers, in indicating himself as a model to follow in order to reach Nirvana, the only</p>	<p>funds he needed to buy his chemicals and a multi-million dollar Mil-17 helicopter. On the drawing boards were plans to buy Russian tanks, automatic rifles, lasers, uranium and nuclear technology. The sect even owned a microwave oven for cremating bodies.</p>	<p>bombing "reinforced the belief that religious sects could pose a threat to public safety and social stability". However, it is important to note that most alternative religious movements pose no threat to society.</p>	<p>significant in the history of Japan because, almost at the same time, three trains of the subway of Tokyo were theatre of attacks carried out thanks to the use of sarin gas ; 12 people lost their lives and more than 5000 were injured</p>
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	<p>be fulfilled by religion. Use of propaganda to spread his religious doctrine and to create a sense of identity among its members became necessary; the use of videos, publications and interviews of Asahara were useful in promoting this new kind of religion. members decided to be cut-off from the society and embraced a different way of being, dressing and eating.</p>	<p>condition for being immune from earthly evils. This self-celebration had a perfectly functional role, For the majority of the Japanese population, religion has lost its authority. That is not to say that there are no Japanese in search of salvation. Instead, many are placing their faith in "new religions" and in gurus who claim to be prophets. His charisma also affected the process of decision-making of Aum Shinrikyo, because Asahara had the monopoly and dissent,</p>			
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		<p>even by his strict collaborators, was not tolerated ; the opposition exposed internally by the members of the organization cost the life to some of them.</p>			
AL QAEDA	<p>The self-definition of Al Qaeda is the key reason of the massive participation to it. Al Qaeda did not find its legitimacy in an identitarian definition of themselves, but in the opposition to the other identities outside their circle; those constitutes their antagonists.</p>	<p>Osama Bin Laden was a young Saudi from a wealthy family of entrepreneurs, which left him a personal inheritance of over \$25 million . contributed materially with weapons and men to the struggle of the Afghan mujaheddin . Despite being recognized in the media as the mastermind of Al Qaeda, Bin Laden was</p>	<p>Al Qaeda members come from different nationalities and ethnicities, which cannot be limited to the Arab states but involve many countries of the world. This characteristic is combined with the definition of the main objective of the organization , that is to defend the holy places that are a pilgrimage destination</p>	<p>From the beginning of 2000s onwards, especially after September 11, the moderate Arab world began to distance itself from the concept of Jihad; various attacks are described by the Arab media as massacres of innocent people and it is clear that this change of policy is supported by local</p>	<p>The group has been responsible for several terrorist attacks, including the 1998 bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2002 bombing of a Bali nightclub, but the most famous of the 11 September 2001 in the United States, which claimed the lives of 2977</p>

		subordinate to Azzam in the conception of the organization and its principles.	for Muslims from all over the world. The organization al core of Al Qaeda was composed mostly of brilliant minds, among them, a large part graduated. These young people grew up in contact with the West also thanks to technology, and many of them travelled and studied in American and European universities; it was precisely the contact with the capitalist culture that developed in them a rejection of those values	governments. Over the years Al Qaeda has seen an increase in the number of critics who observe it closely.	people, is still impressed in everyone's mind
ENVIRONMENTALISTS	The ecologist culture and its representatives introduce	Greta Thunberg, a Swedish student, decided to demonstrate in front of	"The necessary conversion to an ecologically sustainable system must	Public opinion, stimulated by the huge participation in the	No

	<p>the existence of a collective identity, the biological identity, which means the human being is seen exclusively as a "component of nature". The main issue of the identity is well-represented by the dualism between them, which are the strong elite, economically interested in the globalization's affairs, and us, the poor people who try to survive at the current challenges.</p>	<p>the Parliament with her reciting sign Skolstrejk För Klimatet, literally school strike for the climate. The attention to the climate by the young woman is conditioned by the torrid summer of 2018 the link with global warming is therefore evident to experts. Greta Thunberg is so considered the creator of Friday For Future.</p>	<p>go hand in hand with the protection of the rights of workers and the weakest sections of the population. Building a common path of political pressure and social awareness is what Fridays For Future offers to all workers, starting from the squares and events in which to join our forces and our numbers. It's the one, last chance for us and your future" Our goal is to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity. That means we want to: protect biodiversity, prevent pollution and abuse</p>	<p>protest, wondered if the real power was in the hands of the people or the governments and their lobbies. This analysis was useful in bringing together and involving all the people who had had the opportunity to hear something about the event; at stake was also the consideration that the powerful of the world had of the world population . The echo was so loud that the actual agenda of the meeting faded into the background from a</p>	
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			of the earth's ocean, land, air and fresh water, end all nuclear threats And promote peace, global disarmament, and non-violence	global point of view: the eyes of the media, and, as a consequence, the world's eye were keen on demonstrators	
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Thanks to this final table, the differences and similarities of the various social movements in each of the most interesting aspects that have been examined in previous chapters are highlighted.

The leader, in each of these movements, has the essential function of creating attractiveness to the movement; each of the leaders under consideration does so in their own way. Subcomandante Marcos emphasizes the need to react to the centuries-old suppressions suffered by the indigenous people of Chiapas; Asahara used his charismatic figure to make his indications to reach Nirvana more credible to the eyes of his followers; Bin Laden was symbol and image of the armed struggle of the fundamentalists, although Azzam was the mastermind of the organization; finally Greta Thurnberg, whose clean face was more attractive to the new generation to a key issue. The ability to use words, whether they are written or taken from a public speech, is the characteristic that binds these four leaders: the dialectic is in fact a great factor in increasing the credibility of the leader, and, consequently, the movement it represents.

Greater differences are found in the type of followers of movements.

The Zapatistas belong to the same ethnic group and territory and have a common path of exploitation immediately. The followers of Al Qaeda instead converge from more nations and more ethnic groups under the common sign of Islam, because the main objective of the organization is to defend the holy places of pilgrimage for all Muslims in the world. Greta Thurnberg, raising a global problem, collects consensus all over the world and from people

who have nothing in common with the other, except precisely the sharing of the place damaged by pollution: our planet.

Asahara instead persuades different characters of the Japanese society, convincing them to change their lifestyle by showing them the need to embrace Aum Shinrikyo in order to achieve eternal salvation.

Not all the movements examined include violent episodes in their paths.

The Zapatistas, after occupying a number of municipalities in Chiapas, had to confront the Mexican army, which prevailed. Aum Shinrikyo, on the other hand, was the protagonist of seventeen terrorist attacks, although the most remembered is the attack in the Tokyo subway, in which twelve people died at home from the use of sarin gas. The same method of attack, the one of terror, was used by Al Qaeda and also in this case, among the various bombings and attacks, is an episode to make inroads in our memory: the attack of the twin towers of September 11, 2001. As far as environmentalists are concerned, there have been no significant incidents of violence so far.

The last aspect that I would like to stress is that which concerns the main theme of the thesis, namely the concept of identity.

For the Zapatistas it is linked to that of equality and is represented by the mask; it is worn to eliminate individualism and make the community stronger.

Aum Shinrikyo, considered a shinshinshukyo religion, first as a religious sect, began to involve prominent elements socio-economically speaking, able to feel involved, as well as the less wealthy, in the concept of identity created and strongly supported by Asahara, who managed to profoundly change the lifestyle of his followers.

In Al Qaeda the concept of identity is built on the definition of what enemies are and what uses they promote; the aggregation of the fundamentalist followers of Bin Laden is centered mostly on the rejection of Western values.

Environmentalists value the concept of collective identity, as do the Zapatistas, but give it a global meaning because it is the planet on which we all live the focus of their reflections. The *we* is reinforced by the contrast with *them*, made up of those who give greater value to economic development than the health of the planet.

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