

**A journey through a collective environmental conscience
metanarrative:
The Case of Goletta Verde**

Marianne Corriveau

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uOttawa

University of Ottawa
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents some articulations of environmentalism in Italy. Using the Italian environmental association Legambiente as entry point, it explores how the vision of a collective environmental conscience is constructed, represented, claimed and contested in the 2013 edition of the association's principal campaign, Goletta Verde. The integration of theoretical tools [narrative-networks (Lejano et al. 2013), matters of concern (Latour 2008), imagined audiences (Litt 2012) and performance and impression management (Goffman 1959)], and research methods [fieldwork, interviews, participant observation, and the use of extensive literature], reveals analytical findings divided in three parts - how the campaign narrative is constructed, what are some of the discontinuities encountered, and what are implications of the associative vision for environmentalism and its study by anthropologists.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Topic and Research Questions

The present research looks at articulations of environmentalism in Italy via the exploration of how coastal issues affect human interactions with their environments. Italy being a peninsula, with large portions of the population concentrated on coasts, or making significant seasonal use - at least - of the coastline, it is also a country facing significant unsolved environmental coastal problems. Among the different environmental groups that work on the territory to improve different aspects of its environmental development, there is a major Italian environmentalist association called *Legambiente*. As part of its initiatives and awareness-raising strategies, the association conducts many activities and campaigns to address problems around the country. Its most significant campaign, however, occurs on a yearly basis, in the summer months, and works on solving coastal issues. This campaign is called *Goletta Verde*.

Legambiente works within an overarching environmentalist framework that guides its action. It is a human-centered environmentalism that has, as guiding vision, the project of creating what *Legambiente* members call a ‘collective environmental conscience’ in Italy. This vision is operationalized through the association’s activities and campaigns, and *Goletta Verde* is a big driver of the vision, having carried it forth for the past 28 years. This vision of a collective environmental conscience is something that appears to be firmly established and accepted as a foundational claim within the association. Once operationalized into activities and campaigns, however, various forms of contestation, often emerging outside

Legambiente, challenge this claim.

In *Anthropological Engagements with Environmentalism*, Brosius, defining a mission for the then emerging field of environmental anthropology, tasked the discipline with examining how the “environment is constructed, represented, claimed, and contested.” (Brosius 1999: 277) My thesis is embedded in this approach, seeking to explore those very questions through the lens of Goletta Verde’s campaign, to propose some insight into some of the challenges encountered by Legambiente’s project of forming a collective environmental conscience in Italy. My main research question, therefore, is the following:

How is the vision of a collective environmental conscience constructed, represented, claimed and contested in the 2013 edition of the Goletta Verde campaign?

My investigation can be broken down into three subquestions that will constitute the directing thread of my analysis:

1. Where does this notion of a collective environmental conscience fit within a broader anthropological discussion on environmentalism?
2. How is the notion of a collective environmental conscience constructed, represented and claimed by Legambiente?
3. What are forms of contestation of this vision, both inherent to Legambiente and outside Legambiente?

I would like to accompany my research question with a few preliminary remarks that

will be expanded upon in the theoretical section.

1. Firstly, I must stress that the phrase ‘collective environmental conscience’ is derived from the field. The phrase “collective environmental conscience” does not have a precise definition. It comes inductively from my fieldwork, as an important phrase used by several participants to describe the larger vision at the heart of the association, the *ethos* of its activity (Yearley 1993). For instance, when I interviewed the head of the scientific office, a key figure at Legambiente, he summarized the Goletta Verde campaign objective in a sentence: “one of our principal objectives is to educate or to create a collective environmental conscience to live well in the environment” (130726_002) It is important to point out that my participants did not formally define it. However, the phrase reflects an emic understanding of the vision. Its recurrent use by different participants and particularly the fact that it carried such a common, unstated, yet implicit meaning for various people incited me to hold on to it as an analytical tool. It captures much of the participants’ vision, but also many of the paradoxes such a vision entails (which I will explore in this thesis). It has implications about the place of that vision within environmentalism (refer to subquestion 1), some of which I will address shortly.

2. Secondly, from a researcher’s perspective, I would like to make it clear that the claim of a collective environmental conscience is *socially constructed* and thus constitutes the subject of discussion in this thesis (refer to subquestion 2). This must be distinguished from the fieldwork-derived impression that for most Legambiente participants, this same claim is a *fact*. The implication here is that the construction and representation of the claim is perceived as a *social artefact* from a research standpoint, whereas it is constitutive of the participants’ operational framework, and in that sense *essential* to their activity. That is not

to say that the vision is *essentialized*, but that rather that it appears to be, for participants, a *necessary precondition* to give sense to Legambiente's action. I am going to try to show this, with the help of my collected data and selected theoretical tools, in particular Latour's distinction between matters of concern and matters of fact (Latour 2004, 2005, 2008).

3. Thirdly, while this vision has a necessary and foundational character for Legambiente, it became apparent through fieldwork that this vision is confronted with interferences that raise questions about its actual factuality (refer to subquestion 3). This allows me to analytically regard the claim and its contestations or interferences as two distinct – sometimes-opposing – camps. This in turn enables me to create a somewhat artificial, but conceptually useful 'inside/outside' dichotomy. On the *inside*, there are actors who share the vision as a factual, taken-for-granted truth on which to base their action, for instance through campaigns like Goletta Verde. The vision of a collective environmental conscience, seen as fact, is therefore not Legambiente's exclusive territory, but the association makes itself its advocate (and this research explores how it constructs this claim for the 'outside' camp). Paradoxically, the *outside* is where a series of interferences bounce, intrude, or conflict with the vision. Interferences with the vision can emerge outside the Legambiente, but can also originate within the association. It is the case, for instance, when a given course of action by the association does not optimize the potential for actualizing the vision (as will be exemplified in some of the collected data). This is therefore not so much a dichotomy indicating a positioning inside versus outside *Legambiente*, as it is an inside/outside dichotomy about the *vision* as uncontested driving fact.

Relevance for the anthropological study of environmentalism

A while back, I read a 2005 *New York Times* article quoting Joseph R. Foy, the campaign director of the conservation group Western Canada Wilderness Committee, about his views on David Suzuki. Foy reportedly said, about Suzuki: "He is the environmental conscience of the people." (Dean 2005)

I found the parallel with Legambiente's vision particularly fascinating. The article, and the labelling of Suzuki as a being that is, himself, the conscience of others, prompted me to ask a series of questions. What does a collective environmental conscience actually mean? The ideas of collectivity and conscience are closely interlinked in Legambiente's vision. As I progressed in my analysis, I realized I was not interested in finding definitive definitions of the words themselves or their subsequent measurability, particularly because these weren't explicitly defined by participants in the field. I did, however, develop a strong interest for exploring some of the implications of Legambiente's choices of representations of nature for the study of environmentalism.

These generated more questions. What does it mean to *be* the environmental conscience of other people? Can a person, or in Legambiente's case, an association, serve as proxy for the public's collective environmental conscience? And what are the repercussions on other people's choice to embrace, or not, this vision as fact? Does the collective refer to something that is collectively shared and appropriated, or more as something that is collectively *available*? Is conscience awareness? Does conscience have to be conscientious? The latter carries a key component that the former doesn't automatically: the idea of *vigilance*. This creates a nuance between two states of being: *conscious* (aware) individuals forming the collectivity, versus *conscientious* (active, involved) individuals forming the collectivity. And what does collective mean when it is incorporated into a discussion about

environmentalism? How does it speak to a discussion on conceptions and representations of nature?

These questions do not all find answers in this mostly exploratory and partly descriptive thesis, however they show the spirit with which it was written, and of the contribution it hopes to make.

If we look at some of the literature available, several authors have studied the origins of nature protection groups and organizations from the 1860s, since the unification of Italy (e.g. Neri Serneri 2010, Osti 2007, Piccioni 2010), while others focus on its more recent 20th century history (e.g. Della Seta 2000, Graf von Hardenberg 2010). Many have examined the historical progression and more current relationship between Italians and their environment. Armiero and Hall (2010) edited a volume entitled *Nature and History in Modern Italy*, which includes numerous contributions that offer an overview of the political orientations (and others) that have dominated the discourse at various moments in Italian history. It is revelatory of the ways in which the rapport between nature and culture in Italy followed an evolution of events punctuated by a broad set of Italian attitudes. Italy can very much be understood as a “hybrid landscape” (Armiero and Hall 2010:3) shaped by human presence and labour more than nature. What comes out of it is that the historic relationship of Italians to nature, and in particular to water, had less to do with (re-)conquest of wilderness as a new frontier, and more to do with domination of the landscape and its reshaping, a sort of domestication and often overthrowing of nature.

Stemming from these and other chronicled case studies, is the idea that nature in Italy, throughout its history, has been ascribed values of nationalism and national pride, of beauty and aesthetics, of industrialized production, of political landscapes. Only more

recently, has it also been defined in terms of its ‘environmental value’. Italy’s natural landscape is in part the product of the country’s various political orientations over the last 150 years. These include the particularly environmentally destructive Fascist domination of the country from the early 1920s to nearly the end of the Second World War (Osti 2007:119, see also Graf von Hardenberg 2010), and of the legacy of the country’s then rampant industrialisation that glorified an aesthetics of grandiose nation-building and the creation of a collective patrimony, through centralized power and patriotism, turning out, in some cases, to be detrimental to regional and local natural resources management.

The reviewed literature uses multiple terms for designating the various forms of human activities concerned with nature in Italy. Osti (2007) refers mostly to “nature protection organizations” (an expression used very flexibly throughout his argument to refer to organizations whose primary motivations are nature protection, as well as others in which it is not a formal goal), while others refer to an “ecological movement” (Della Seta 2000), to “environmental organizations” (Bevilacqua 2010), or to activities concerned with the “protection of natural beauties” (Graf von Hardenberg 2010). Osti (2007) also sorted the various protection goals of the different organizations in his analysis into the following categories: cultural landscape, wild animals, wilderness, animals, and environmental organization (127). Less specific, Yearley establishes a historical distinction between conservation groups and environmentalist groups. As such, “conservation groups typically had a background in natural history and their membership has generally been dominated by enthusiasts or scientists. As a result, their ethos was different from that of the environmental groups which started off in the late 1960s and early 1970s as groups critical of Western society” (1993:62). While the former, in Italy, were often adherents of more Liberal views,

coinciding with a more elitist fragment of society and very strong in the pre-Fascist era, the latter emerged from a strong Leftist worldview coinciding with the rise of a socialist ideology, in Italy and elsewhere, and out of which Legambiente, among others, was born in 1979¹.

These various, often intertwined, naming conventions are simultaneously encompassing of a similar idea, of a movement, and of the groups of people composing it. The motivations and *raisons-d'être* of such groups vary considerably, often in accordance with the time period examined. The terminology labelling these variations also differs according to author. It is a reflection of the multiple trends that gradually developed side by side in Italy, as well as their various components which, over time, sometimes sporadically merged, separated and converged again. Three types of concerns for nature therefore emerged from the literature: naturalistic and conservationist concerns; aesthetic concerns; and ecological and environmental concerns.²

Naturalistic and conservationist concerns (see Della Seta 2000:21) include the preservation or protection of fauna and flora, and wilderness, as well as concerns presented by natural history and strictly scientific conservationism. In these, I include the following groups: the Italian Botanical Society (1888); the MIPN (1948) *Movimento Italiano per la Protezione della Natura* (Italian movement for the protection of nature); Pro Natura Italica

¹ Official year of creation varies between 1979 and 1980 according to the source consulted. Legambiente literature indicates 1980, but a lot of academic literature on the environmentalism in Italy (e.g. Osti 2007) states 1979 as a founding year.

² There can be overlap of these categories for some of the organizations. In addition, the categories are not associated with a specific form of public action by a given organization. Indeed, various authors (Osti 2007, Della Seta 2000) have researched how different forms of action (e.g. lobbying, single-issue campaigns, conflict, political campaigning) have evolved over time for specific groups. The categories, however, enables us to see how Legambiente distinguishes itself, thematically and historically, from other groups. It emerged as new type of environmentalism, tied to industrialization problems, bearer of a socio-political and scientific vocation. (Della Seta 2000:45-46)

(1959), now known as Federnatura (1979), and born from a collaboration between MIPN and five other groups; Lenacdu (1965), now known as LIPU (1975) *Lega Italiana per la Protezione degli Uccelli* (Italian league for the protection of birds); and, WWF Italy (1966).

Aesthetic concerns include concerns such as the preservation of natural beauties, monuments, patrimony, and related tourism activities; Italia Nostra (1955), for instance, was a prominent group concerned with the aesthetic conservation of historical monuments and buildings. Earlier inclinations of this type also include the Touring Club Italiano and the Club Alpino Italiano (Piccioni 2010).

Finally, *ecological and environmental concerns* involve a human element, as found in political ecology and environmentalist campaigns (see Osti 2007: 123-124), providing a socially anchored basis for conservationism. In the past 50 years, this would include concerns over nuclear energy, pollution, and other topics falling under the topic of environmental justice (health, risk, inequality). This is where I position Legambiente.

The history of environmentalism in Italy thus reveals that Italians live in what we could call a 'domesticated' relationship with nature, where Man and Nature occupy a commonly shared space. Perhaps in part as a consequence, and in the wake of industrialism and political ecology, environmentalism has gradually evolved from conservationist nature-protection trends to a current environmentalism centered around humans. This human-centered approach is very present in Legambiente's philosophy.

A human-centered environmentalism, as we will see, positions human activity at the center of the environmentalists' engagement with nature, influencing the types of relationship humans can have with nature. It also reinforces a distinction between man and

nature. As Descola writes: “A common feature of all conceptualisations of non-humans is that they are always predicated by reference to the human domain” (Descola 1996:85-86) He describes *naturalism*, a western-anchored mode of identification, an antithetic hybrid nature-culture producing perspective, where nature and humans both exist as distinctive sets of entities, belonging to different ontological domains, (Descola 1996:88-89) and which can be ruled almost exclusively by relations of predation, dating from European Middle Ages practices and of subsequent protection, increasingly determined by human social conventions (Descola 1996:97-98) . Relations of reciprocity, in this worldview, are impossible as it would defeat the very foundations of the antithetic dichotomy. (Descola 1996:96-97)

Descola argues for the need to go beyond dichotomous epistemologies of culture versus nature. Similarly in *Politics of Nature*, Bruno Latour, situates humans and Nature in two seemingly irreconcilable chambers (or domains). In one, Nature, exists, quiet but true, unquestionable, alongside established verifiable scientific facts. In the other chamber, political debates, science in the making are at work are deliberating for rights to speak, to make claims, to shape decision-making. (Latour 2004a:32-38) This separation renders Nature inaccessible (Latour 2004a:50). Only in the case of ecological crises can a necessary questioning and possible reconciling of both domains occur, in which Nature and the sciences that examine it become the subject of debate and discussion, that suddenly have no choice but to be internalized by the philosophical chamber and those in it (Latour 2004a:60, 94). Latour also insists that the nature-culture dichotomy embodied by both chambers must be surpassed by composing a common world, a ‘collective’. In other words, Latour wants to redistribute speaking rights to the Nature’s chamber, to have it reinstated in a

collective discourse articulated around a common, shared world, rather than an ontologically divided one (Latour 2004a:121-135).

The challenge brought forth by a human-centered environmentalism situated in a antithetic naturalist worldview is that it continues to center the debate exclusively around humans. Nature can only enter the discussion through human terms, via predation or, as in the case of environmentalists, through a relation of protection, at the risk of becoming irrelevant or obsolete when it isn't directly tied to human activity. As Descola writes: "the programme set forth by environmental activists will perhaps lead, unintentionally, to a dissolution of naturalism, since the survival of a whole range of non-humans, now increasingly protected from anthropic damage, will shortly depend almost exclusively upon social conventions and human action." (Descola 1996:97-98) Legambiente's environmentalism doesn't only perpetuate a human-centered ontological dualism, through the "social objectivation of non-humans" (Descola 1996:86). But by believing in the vision of a collective environmental conscience as fact, it also expands the ontological divide to include a specific interpretation of modes of relations to Nature and the world, alongside Nature in its quiet, unquestioned chamber. If it is treated by environmentalists as fact, like Nature, within a Western, naturalist framework, then similar modes of relations can apply to it.

With the vision of a collective environmental conscience as fact, Legambiente members haven't just 'othered' themselves from Nature. In part because of this domesticity with nature, they have somehow 'morphed' the idea of their vision together with this Nature to protect. Though they retain the Nature-culture dichotomy, it is as though the vision of a collective environmental conscience (as way of life, for instance) has been classified as

belonging to the same domain as Nature - something unquestioned, and quiet; something that has to do with humans, and with which environmentalism can engage in a relation of protection. In a way, environmentalism has taken the crown off Nature's head, and set it on the head of a human-centered environmentalism that becomes the new quiet, unquestionable matter of fact. It is not about what happens to nature, as much as it is about what happens to humans (who, incidentally, are in that Nature, in that environment). Nature and the vision of a collective environmental conscience then become a backdrop that plays contextual role to the articulation of human-oriented environmental claims, important in how it affects human livelihoods, but not subject to *discussion*.

But by staying in a naturalistic worldview and relegating this idea of collective environmental conscience to the same chamber as Nature, environmentalism runs the risk of stripping it of speaking rights, of transforming it into a vision that can only be engaged with in terms of relations of protection (as do environmental activists promoting the vision) or predation (as do actors who oppose or resist the vision). In other words, when the vision of a collective environmental conscience is embedded in a dichotomous worldview and unquestioned, there is a danger that relations of reciprocity, the possibility for exchange, will disappear.

And yet, as mentioned, the very idea of a collective environmental conscience carries the two problematic notions of conscience and collectivity that expand well beyond the associative vision. Those standing outside of it, who are being called out by it, may reject it, discuss it, in many ways, reclaim their speaking rights with regards to it from those they haven't elected to speak on their behalf. The task of environmentalists then becomes challenged, as this thesis will show.

What is next?

The remainder of the thesis is divided as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces some of the *theoretical tools* I will later use as a directing thread for my analysis. The four principal concepts that will be presented in this section are Lejano et al.'s *narrative networks* - with a particular emphasis placed on metanarratives (and related subconcepts), Bruno Latour's *matters of concern*, Goffman's idea of *performance* as strategy, and Litt's *imagined audiences*. Their authors are by no means the only ones to have tackled such concepts, but my analysis operates within the framework their combined vision proposes, so I am using them as reference point. The analysis will provide a further illustration of how they are operationalized within the scope of this research. These four principal concepts are umbrella concepts that overlap various sections of the analysis, forming a "bed" for the discussion, while letting it follow its own course. They will be complemented by many other theoretical elements along the way.

Chapter 2 presents the *case* of the Goletta Verde campaign, its history and place within Legambiente, and its place within environmental and conservation movements in Italy. It includes details about the functioning of the Goletta Verde campaign, which includes technical and communication aspects, as well as various operational levels (national, regional, local); the campaign's main objectives and targeted audiences are described, providing a global overview of Goletta Verde's communication practices. The association and its campaign are then contextualized with the help of timelines and brief overviews, within the history of the Italian people's relationship to nature since the country's unification in 1861, explaining what role various trends of nationalism have played on the ideas of

nature conservation and, more recently, environmentalism. This gives a better sense of the backdrop against which Legambiente plays out this idea of the creation of a collective environmental conscience in Italy, and of the values and principles subsequently advocated.

Chapter 3 builds on this case to explain the *research methods* used in this research. This section includes a discussion of the case's methodological relevance.

Following this, there will be a lengthy discussion of the research results in my *analysis*. The analysis is divided in 3 parts. In Chapter 4, *Part I* of the analysis presents a response to the subquestion *How is the association's vision constructed, represented and claimed (brought to life) in the campaign?* It goes into an explanation of how Legambiente targets and imagines three different audiences for its Goletta Verde campaign: the administrations, the media, and the public. It also reveals that universal elemental narratives are used to shape symbolism and values representative of the campaign, as well as to ascribe characteristics to various actors involved. It also presents the importance of a scientific methodology to infer perceived credibility and legitimacy to the campaign.

Part II of the analysis, in Chapter 5 presents sources of discontinuities encountered in the campaign: these can be internally-based (unintended narrative gaps) audience-based (counternarratives), or context-based (alterity). Together, these shape disruptions that contest the metanarrative told by the campaign.

Part III of the analysis, in Chapter 6, addresses another subquestion, about the implications of forming the project of creating a collective environmental conscience. It includes a discussion on how the association understands and measures its campaign success. It suggests that there is a disconnect between some of the associative objectives and actions, and its unstated campaign goals. It goes on to question the meaning of a collective

environmental conscience, from an environmental anthropology perspective.

The research is then concluded, having tentatively responded to its original research question.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL TOOLS

According to Brosius, intense anthropological focus has been directed towards “indigenous eco-politics” (Brosius 1999:277). In Italy, as this case study on Goletta Verde will show, there isn’t *one* indigenous eco-politics, but *several*, that come together and sometimes clash, and many of which remain to be investigated academically. In the construction of a collective environmental conscience, the notion of indigenous Italian is translated and included in environmental themes and issues against a backdrop of socialism and catholicism, framed in terms of environmental justice, and much more. Through environmentalism, the translation of the Italian identity is reclaimed by some of the members of the community that act as proxy for others. Environmentalists become, in a way, active indigenous eco-politicians, defining their identity on their shared concern for humans in nature - a highly domesticised one, in the case of Italy.

The study of environmentalists - in industrialized societies particularly - is challenging, as they are often drowned in noise from competing interests and dynamics. Anthropological inquiry can unite the scattered and isolated perspectives around the environmentalist project, proposing ways to reconcile it with the challenges encountered all around. Anthropological work can help shed light on the construction of this different form of indigenous identity that is outside traditional cultural definitions, and that is shaped and shared through the construction of environmental narratives about sustainable futures and battles against environmental injustice.

To answer my research question and subquestions in a way that also matched the data I had gathered, I turned to the social sciences theoretical literature and extracted a few useful

concepts. The following section introduces the principal tools used to guide the analysis.

Narrative networks

To describe the articulations of Legambiente's vision, I chose concepts derived from Lejano et al. (2013), *The Power of Narrative in Environmental Networks*, their theory of narrative-networks, according to which, complex layers environmental networks are bound together by narratives. Narratives are a literary tool used in this case to lead environmental networks, into taking shape, sharing values and experiences, and finding associative renewal within the power of a storytelling performance. This performance, sometimes collective, sometimes individual, is constructed and entertained by the various actors involved. The concept the authors use to describe this storytelling performance that binds together a network, is a *narrative-network*. My research method was more suited to uncovering narratives than to measuring social networks, and the latter are consequently not at the forefront of the analysis. Narrative-networks theory, however, enables me to acknowledge the presence and importance of Legambiente's network, while focusing on the power of the narrative that are embedded in its vision. In my research, I want to retain the narrative nomenclature presented with this concept. The beauty of the narrative form, as explained by the authors, is that it goes beyond the more structural notion of 'frame' (as 'backstage' in the sense intended by Goffman, 1959), because it allows for the backdrop against which an environmental network operates to be *chosen*, to be *told*, in other words to have actors choose to embed themselves in it (Lejano et al. 2013:54), instilling a stronger sense of agency. This also enables us to step away from the structural limitation in Osti's more institutionally-driven, top-down analysis of environmental groups like Legambiente in Italy.

It allows to situate the story from the perspective of the association and to follow the direction they themselves have given the story, to find out what agrees and disagrees with their vision, while positioning ourselves within their viewpoint, within the story they are telling.

A key feature of narrative-networks are *metanarratives*, defined by the authors as being “[n]arratives that are not just individual but shared across individuals [...] [such as that of a] larger or overall narrative that unites and reconciles different or individual narratives.” (Lejano et al. 2013:75) The concept of metanarrative ties in nicely with Legambiente’s project of shaping a *collective environmental conscience* in Italy. It highlights the idea that there is (or that Legambiente is creating) a shared interpretation of the environmental issues at stake. Within narrative networks, *subnarratives* are understood as parts of the metanarrative that contribute to moving it forward (Lejano et al. 2013:75). In that sense, there are many subnarratives within Legambiente. I suggest that environmental campaigns are a sort of ‘embodiment’, an actualization of subnarratives, working toward the achievement of the metanarrative. I thus view Goletta Verde as a subnarrative. It could be argued that Goletta Verde itself could be further divided into more subnarratives occurring at different stages of the campaign, namely through its scientific rationalization and legitimization, as well as through its discourses on (shared) values. I find, however, that a better nomenclatura to designate these subnarratives within the Goletta Verde subnarrative would be the designation ‘*elemental or mythical narratives*’. Lejano et al. describe the latter as “universal stories that, in their most basic form, can be seen to underpin subsequent narratives, whether individual or grand narrative.” (2013:75) Elemental narratives are a tool used by Legambiente to enact some of the ideas pushed forward in the campaign and make

judgements or assertions on the importance of the campaign, on shared values, and on symbolism. But despite the best attempt of elemental narratives to attend to the sub- and metanarrative, the latter sometimes aren't reached as hoped. They are often interrupted or disrupted by discontinuities of various sorts. Some discontinuities are situated outside the metanarrative; for instance, *counternarratives* are “[n]arratives that exist in opposition or as an alternative to metanarratives” (Idem). Counternarratives can arise as a challenge to some of the choices made in Goletta Verde's communication strategies. I would like to suggest another possibly unintentional locus for discontinuity in the form of *narrative gaps*, which are described as willful omissions from the metanarrative (Ibidem: 70). Two other concepts *characterization* and *alterity* will be present throughout the discussion as well. They are processes through which Legambiente and members of the organizations define and give a voice (*characterization*) to themselves and several others (*alterity*) they encounter: target audiences, nonhuman actants (Ibidem: 65), various projects and policies (Ibidem: 66), and so on. Characterization can therefore be exercised in defining the campaign itself, or related items (various environmental issues, or in the awarding and retribution system). Perhaps the last notion to take away from narrative networks is that of *emplotment*. This is the process by which individuals engaged in the narrative relate their particular circumstances to it, binding themselves to the story being constructed (Ibidem: 60-63). In the case of Legambiente's campaign Goletta Verde, this is particularly important because of the complexity and versatility of the actants who move across the network, shaping the campaign; from national, regional, and local Legambiente members, to members of the administration, the media, and citizens more generally, to the multiplicity of issues encountered from the start to the finish of the campaign.

Emplotment needs a *raison-d'être*, however, which is another way to say that wilful actants need a motive for joining the narrative. The story they adhere to needs to be grounded in reality, or rather, in *a* reality - a reality in the making, a reality being shaped, discussed, debated, cared for, made important, denied, fought for, transformed.

The metanarrative is the overarching, most important narrative embraced by the association, the one they believe in as guiding and factual narrative, the one that shapes their collective identity (as association), and the one within which, and around which, multiple other plots can be articulated: agreement, opposition, resistance, indifference...many of which are addressed in the analysis using other narrative devices, such as counternarratives, emplotment mechanisms, and so on. The metanarrative of a collective environmental conscience therefore presides as the overarching vision in Legambiente's activities and a campaign like Goletta Verde is an operational enactment of this metanarrative.

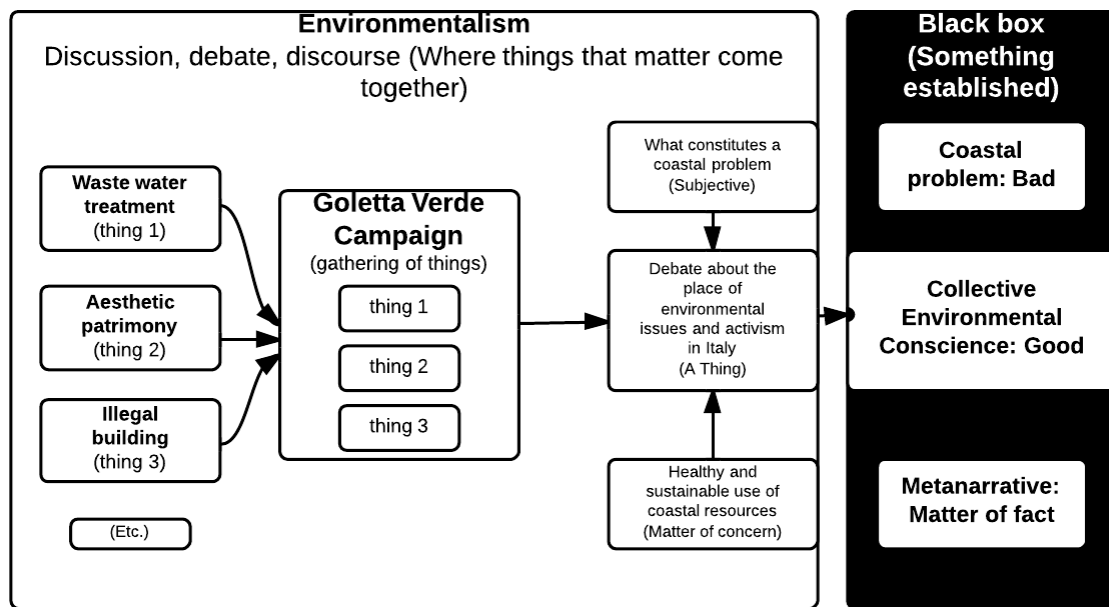
However, the metanarrative does not preside as such *outside* the associative worldview. This inside/outside distinction is important, and leads me to our next concepts: Latour's matters of concern, versus matters of fact.

Matters of concern

The distinction Latour is making is between *matters of fact* and *matters of concern* (see Latour 2004b, 2008). *Matters of fact* refer to realities that are taken for granted, such as scientific findings or technologies used in everyday life (computers, vaccines, etc.). They refer to things that have been accepted as certain, as indisputable, where sufficient evidence (it could be scientific, but also from social processes) has established them in a way that these things are no longer the source of a debate; in other words, they have become 'black boxed' (Latour, 1987). *Matters of concern* refer to gatherings of things that are being

questioned, debated, discussed, weighed, that are in the process of being proved or disproved; in other words, they are still in the process of being socially constructed - as possible, eventual facts. They infer that no ‘matters of fact’ became such without first being the subject of much discussion, debate, social construction, in other words, without first being *matters of concern*. And, in Latour’s opinion, matters of fact - in and of themselves - are “a poor *proxy* of experience and of experimentation” (2004b:245) Latour writes “all objects are born things, all matters of fact require, in order to exist, a bewildering variety of matters of concern”. (2004b: 247) Matters of concern, in turn, must be grounded in realism, and in realist vocabulary not only reserved to ‘fact’ (i.e. object), but also to a *gathering*, to the arena that enables the Thing to take place. (2004b: 246) In other words, matters of fact are accepted objects, *unquestioned* objects (as opposed to unquestionable ones; when they are questioned, they become once again matters of concern).

Figure 1



Environmentalism is no exception. As we have briefly seen, Latour's book *Politics of Nature* (2004a) is a reflection on the task of political ecology which should be tasked with eliminating dichotomies (human/non-human, fact/value, objective/subjective) to redirect antagonistic arguments that traditionally shape the discourses of actors of political ecology (activists versus scientists versus politicians versus nonhuman actants). It aims to position them under a same umbrella to form a Collective in which Nature - no longer viewed like a ready-made whole that is subject to debate only in time of crisis - awaits to be shaped, discussed upon, and eventually legislated. While Latour advocates a return to critically discussing matters of concern, Legambiente's metanarrative is an interesting case of such matters of concern trying to be collectively transformed into a matter of fact by the association.

This metanarrative as matter of fact is physically translated and embodied by initiatives and actions, but also by people, such as the Goletta Verde campaign and its participants. It is embodied, by Legambiente, as a collectively shared narrative in which the different actors can find their place. In that sense, it can be taught, shared, and interpreted. It regroups both 'master' and 'apprentices', forming a consciousness of the world, (Gieser, 2008: 301-302) a knowledge of the environment, feeding participants in their bodies and minds, and possibly shaping their understanding and relationships to the environment. I try to show that is something that Legambiente treats a matter of fact, a Latourian black box (Latour, 1987) that would - if pushed to its fulfillment - exercise a form of collective transcendence over society's understanding of their environment.

Going back to the inside/outside worldview distinction, I argue that inside the association, the metanarrative of a collective environmental conscience is *treated* as a matter

of fact that shapes the association's collective identity. On the other hand, once exported outside the association's worldview, the same metanarrative is subjected to a series of social mechanisms of distrust and uncertainty that reanimate its discussion as a matter of concern. What is certain inside the association's worldview has yet to be constructed as certainty outside the association's worldview. Members of the association, through campaigns like Goletta Verde, make themselves the spokespersons of the metanarrative, by exporting it outside the association. They engage in a performance in which they present the metanarrative to the outside world in a way that they hope will shape outsiders perception of the metanarrative. In other words, their performance is geared toward guiding the direction of the debate around the matter of concern, in order to eventually turn it into a matter of fact as it is treated inside the association.

This performance uses two additional mechanisms: imagined audiences and impressions management. Eden Litt's (2012) article on imagined audiences refers to the idea that to reach desired outcomes, the act of communication is tailored according to the emitter's audiences, as he or she imagines audiences to be and to interpret the emitted message. This concept is complemented with Goffman's (1959) concept of impression management, which involves the practices performers engage in, in their attempt to control how their performance will be perceived/received.

Imagined audiences

Much academic literature is dedicated to the study of audiences (see among others

Radbourne et al. 2013). In fact there are journals, such as *Participations - Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, and others, dedicated to the study of audiences in the arts (performing arts, museums, films, etc.) and in communication studies (news, television, social media). Interesting analogies can be made with environmental communication and social movements about audiences and co-creation of a message with audiences. Little is currently done in the field of environmental anthropology with regard to environmental group-audience interactions. The case of Goletta Verde therefore presents an opportunity to explore strategies of environmental communication from their starting point as interactions with audiences and possible discontinuities in message communication.

My primary article reference to study audiences will be Eden Litt's 2012 article "Knock, Knock. Who's there? The imagined audience". In recent research, like Litt's (2012), the concept of *imagined audiences* it is often applied to social media analyses. It basically talks to the idea that the act of communication involves an audience. Sometimes the communication emitter knows exactly who his audience will be, but many times, as in the case of social media and, for this research, of Goletta Verde's campaign, the audience isn't known, or is only partially known. In these instances, the communication emitter therefore has to go through the act of mentally fabricating his audience beforehand, prior to the communication act, to tailor his message in a way that he will reach desired outcomes. He does this on the basis of the various sources of information available to him about his possible, probable or entirely guessed audience. This audience, as it is then pre-understood by the emitter, is the imagined audience. Sometimes the imagined audience concords with the actual audience who will receive the message. Sometimes it doesn't at all, and sometimes this imagined audience reflects only a part, a portion of the full, receiving audience.

The act of imagining involves strategizing to reach a desired communication goal. Whether the communication emitter is right or wrong in his guess and assessment of his imagined audience(s) is no guarantee of the way in which the communication will be received, interpreted, or complemented, accepted, fully or partially, or rejected. Theoretically, the more accurately the audience is imagined, the better are the chances of the communication strategy to work. My results include participants' perception of their audiences, as well as anecdotal and observed evidence revealing that some of the challenges that arise for Goletta Verde are tied to its imagined audiences. One way Legambiente chooses to engage with its audiences is through the establishment of a credible performance via the communication of scientific data that serves, in a most Western scientific tradition, as evidence that increases the verifiability and probability of something to be true. Possible sources of challenges to be explored in this thesis then have to do with how Legambiente's scientifically founded environmentalism is challenged by audiences. Indeed, the literature suggests that some of these challenges can come from the fact the fact that science communication and knowledge is more and more contested, debated, and subjected to increased scrutiny and mediation. The public becomes a "powerful challenger to the authority of expertise" (Young and Matthews, 2007: 124) that triggers, in scientific circles, "an awareness of "lay" scepticism of black-boxed science." (Young and Matthews, 2007: 131) Meanwhile, the media plays an important role as "interpreter of expert knowledge" (Young and Matthews, 2007: 132), which creates considerable friction between science and reporters over the "legitimacy of expert knowledge claims." (Young and Matthews, 2007: 137)

In the case of Goletta Verde, however, this lay versus scientific knowledge

dichotomy is blurred. Legambiente is an association of citizens - lay knowledge - practicing forms of popular epidemiology, while simultaneously grounding these in scientific claims and methodology used in their environmental campaigns. How they are perceived by the public and other audiences, and how they imagine they are perceived by these audiences becomes problematic because they simultaneously consider themselves to be - or have been, to have emerged from - these audiences, yet claim to be 'knowledge brokers' for these audiences at the same time. They want to be seen as experts, but also as citizens, making claims that are scientifically grounded. Also, while Young and Matthews (2007: 132) view the media as the official interpreter of knowledge, the interesting aspect of Goletta Verde is that it is part of a broader environmental association, Legambiente, and they internally manage the mediatisation and dissemination of their scientific knowledge via awareness campaigns. This creates particular dynamics of knowledge interpretation between Legambiente and its imagined audiences.

Performance

As mentioned earlier, the concept of imagined audiences also introduces the idea that the communication act is first and foremost a *performance* act. Similarly, because the association's metanarrative is played out in the field through campaigns, it is, in some way, 'acted out' like a performance. This is why I want to propose one last set of tools, attributable to Erving Goffman. In *Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman presents the ways in which individuals social interactions are in fact strategically performed to convey meaning and to shape other people's impressions of them. Communication as performance can have many objectives, like informing and convincing, but also some less

desirable ones such as deceiving and cheating, for instance. The communication act takes place in at least two points, being interpreted by its receiver, for one, but also by previously being reshaped by the communication emitter in a way that this “individual reinstates the symmetry of the communication process, and sets the stage for a kind of information game-- a potentially infinite cycle of concealment, discovery, false revelation, and rediscovery.” (Goffman 1959:8)

What interests Goffman is not so much the idea that people are ‘acting’, but rather, what that acting reveals about real techniques of staging (successful or not) that can inform social interactions (Goffman 1959:254-255) Performance should therefore be understood as multi faceted strategy. Thanks to this extrapolatory potential, instead of focusing on the staging of a specific ‘character’, this research focuses on the staging of the campaign itself³, which contains, at times, strategic elements of deception, but also, more generally, elements of *impression management* (see Goffman 1959:208-237) as a part of the association’s communication strategy. Impression management is the performers’ need, and attempt to control how their performance will be perceived (Goffman 1959:208-212). In the process of managing impressions, performers engage in a variety of practices, including dramaturgical loyalty (to other members engaged in the performance) (Goffman 1959:212-216), discipline (maintaining a balance between a passionate yet believable performance) (Goffman 1959:216-218), and circumspection (mitigating the risks of things not going as planned)

³ A lot of the distinctions Goffman made remain valid and applicable to interactions between campaign participants among themselves. For instance, familiarity between team members in the backstage is present in the case of Goletta Verde, whereas a formal tone is adopted during the performance in front of the audience. (Goffman 1959:128) Evidently, in the ‘backstage’ of Goletta Verde, for instance, when there are no target audiences present, similar social interactions also occur between individuals, but that is not helpful to the present analysis. The “character” being observed as a whole here is the campaign, and the associative character of Legambiente. Individual performances are therefore only taken into account in the analysis if they relate to the broader character of the campaign.

(Goffman 1959: 218-228). As we will see in the analysis, impressions management is key to identifying some of the potential weaknesses of the campaign communication. While Goffman often focuses on the 'slips', the unintended mishaps of performers being caught out of character - as causing a series of unintended social consequences⁴ - I focus them on how some of them become sources discontinuities inherent to the campaign itself, in other words to the choice of performance *itself*, rather than to a *failed* performance.

A lot of the theatrical performance strategies illustrated by Goffman are useful to explaining exchanges between Legambiente and their target audiences, and the functioning of their performance (such as on-and off-stage communication rules⁵, and performance regions⁶). However, this research will not explore them all. The theory section will limit itself to the two ideas it already explained - performance and impressions management - as they will be the most useful ones. If other elements of Goffman's work are referred to

⁴ For instance, in the case of the failed segregation of an audience, that is, when "an outsider happens upon a performance that was not meant for him, difficult problems in impression management arise" (Goffman 1959:139), leading to confusion and embarrassment.

⁵ Goffman's on- and off-stage communication rules (1959) are fairly strictly defined, following patterns of deception that often give a negative undertone to the nature of social communication. In the case of Legambiente, such deception is not the intent of the performance and staging. Therefore, less than the strict rules he sets out to describe, I want to retain the general essence of his work about performance. His ideas, for instance, that in backstage-communication, the 'Absent' (1959:170-1) is informally referred to, or that the backstage team withholds 'strategic secrets' (1959:142) from its audience, depict situations that occur during the Goletta Verde campaign, particularly as they relate to their understanding of their target audiences, but their intent is not necessarily the negative, insulting or disrespectful one that Goffman describes.

⁶ Goffman situates performances as taking place in "regions", which he defines as "any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception." (Goffman 1959:106). There are front regions and back regions (or backstage), the former referring to "the place where the performance is given" (Goffman 1959:107), where, following standards of politeness (directly engaging with the audience) and decorum (facing the audience but not engaging with them), "[p]erformers can stop giving expressions but cannot stop giving them off" (Goffman 1959:108), hence highlighting the struggle between the two parts of communication - emission and interpretation. For example, the Goletta Verde boat is a region in the Goffman sense, that can "isolate" Legambiente - in a positive sense of protecting it and helping it acquire almost symbolic status (as a front region, Goffman 1959:111, like a stage, that has its frame and delimitations, isolating the action on - or through the symbol of - the boat where the performers' interaction with the audience occurs); but also in a negative sense of both isolating it from feedback (as a back region, or backstage, Goffman 1959:112) and also imposing a reliance on the boat for the success of the operations which - in reality - carry no explicit involvement of the boat to succeed. Also of particular interest to understanding the complexity of the networks of interactions involved around and within the Goletta Verde campaign, are backstage relationships (Goffman 1959:134), as they can be self-referential reinforcing performances in and of themselves.

throughout the analysis, they will be explained contextually at that point in the research.

Legambiente members make themselves the spokespersons of this matter of fact metanarrative and performatively try to engage those outside the campaign via imagined audiences. That collective, very much like Latour's matter-of-factual Nature that is quiet inside the association, argues for (multiple sets of) speaking rights as soon as we step outside the borders of the associative vision. The performance and spread of the associative vision as a matter of fact in Italy is met with interferences, or discontinuities, as I will call them throughout this thesis. These coexist as observable and variable realities (otherness) alongside Legambiente's vision (or worldview). Existing academic literature identifies multiple possible reasons for discontinuities (or alternate reactions to those expected in a given worldview on the environment). These all affect how sources of 'otherness' will engage with the vision embodied as matter of fact by Legambiente.

Discontinuities, the literature suggests, can come from people's individual behaviours and varying relationships with the environment. Various authors have provided explanations for discontinuities between people's enjoyment of a place, and the inconsistencies between their desire for an environmentally viable management, paradoxically coupled with a lack of engagement with major environmental problems. Some social sciences literature brings about the idea of visibility and invisibility of a problem, particularly as it ties in with consumption and responsibility (or responsible consumption). Human 'consumption' of places is dominated by a 'hegemony of vision' (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:109), where man, in the persona of the 'gazing tourist', has become a fierce consumer of places (Urry 1995) through massive sight-seeing and the collection and accumulation of visual 'evidence' (for instance, maps, photographs). The proposed dilemma is that oftentimes, an

environmental problem only becomes understood as such when it is visible to the eye (or otherwise perceptible by our senses, with a predominance of sight). If consumption is temporally or sensorially limited, problems can easily ‘disappear’ - from sight, from proximity. This ‘invisibility’ of possible resulting environmental damage from human activity is analogous to the study of waste (Moore, 2012), or with air pollution, that can be made invisible (the waste in the trashcan) and possibly someone else’s responsibility. These make it difficult for people to internalize issues that they don’t really have to deal with (de Coverly et al., 2008). But at the same time, these issues remain ‘matters out of place’ that have the potential “to cross borders of place and purity” (Bickerstaff and al., 2003: 50) and disturb everyday life if they become visible or present in the public mind (see: de Coverly et al., 2008; Moore, 2012; and others).

The waste crisis in Naples and the region of Campania offers a particularly striking paradoxical example of this approach because the problem it faces is so blatantly visible - to everyone (Greyl et al. 2013; Pardo 2011). The only people that make invisibility claims are the administrations responsible for it that are corrupted and tainted with criminality. When the problem is visible, and the system fails to function, how are responsibility and accountability enforced?

An important consideration then is that of the civic tradition and geopolitical contexts in the country. Civic action and notions of citizenship in Italy are explored by Muelhebach through the rise of the voluntarism as new neoliberal ideal in Lombardy (2012), by Pardo (2011) and Greyl et al. (2013) who focus on crises of governance in Campania. Putnam is another one who studied civic traditions of Italy by investigating, for about twenty years, the implementation of regional governments in Italy since the 1970s. He was able to draw on the

very different developments that followed in the institutional settings of the twenty Italian regions to provide extremely important insights about the ideal "conditions for creating strong, responsive, effective representative institutions" (Putnam 1993:6). Despite "essentially identical constitutional structures and mandates" (Putnam 1993:6), regional institutional performance displayed an incredible degree of variation deeply rooted in historical conditioning factors and social contexts in which various regions functioned (Putnam 1993:6-8). This variation is crucial to understanding the context in which change (of any kind - social, economic, political, etc.) occurs in Italy.

The question of responsibility also highlights the fact that our societies' increasing interest for human-environment interactions comes with increased uncertainty - on knowledge claims and validity, on risk perception. This uncertainty goes hand in hand with new forms of expertise, knowledge appropriation and shifts in responsabilization. Discontinuities can therefore also be viewed in terms of these new risks and vulnerabilities, and their individualization by authorities who more and more proceed to a shift in environmental health responsibility (Beck 2006). It is now up to the individual to protect his- or herself.

These are only some of the possible explanations provided by the literature about sources of discontinuities challenging a given environmentalist worldview. We could also refer to the literature on environmental communication and the dynamics of perceptions and constructions of the environment by various groups trying to mobilize public attention (e.g. Cox 2013). We could also look at the vast literature on social movements, and how Legambiente can be understood through the prism of environmental social movements literature (to name only a few Salman and Assies, 2010, Diani and Della Porta 2006 among

many of their works,), in terms of the place of culture in the rise of social movements and in shaping group habitus and collective identity, or in terms of relations of cooperation and competition with other organizations in Italy, and so forth. However, as I focused on the case study of a specific campaign, Goletta Verde, I privileged the work of Lejano et al. (2013) and Latour's matters of fact versus matters of concern as an entry point in the conceptual literature to describe some of my observations.

Summary

Let us summarize briefly, then, how the various proposed theoretical tools intermingle. The vision of a collective environmental conscience corresponds to a metanarrative pushed forth by the network (Legambiente and others who embrace their environmentalism). This metanarrative is constituted by the *gathering* of Things (an ensemble of ideals and concerns of an environmental nature, along with the actors and sequences of events interacting with them), that animate the vision and matter to the people in the aforementioned network. The achievement of this vision can be 'measured' or assessed on the basis of the *gathering's* ability to become a matter of fact (or of its subparts to become matters of fact), in other words, to become accepted as such, as an object in its own right. This is achieved through the collective sharing and acceptance (i.e. collective engagement) of the Things that compose the metanarrative. To reach collective engagement, Legambiente has to embed this metanarrative into the desired network, composed of members of the association, but also of targets audiences they wish to have emplotted with them. Legambiente's actualization of the vision is a performance, which they stage using a

campaign. Goletta Verde is therefore a sort of emplotment vehicle constituting a subnarrative for this metanarrative. Legambiente strategize, using many tools (elemental narratives, characterization, symbols, shared values, etc.), to optimize this performance on the basis of how they imagine the audiences. However, somewhere along this tedious process, the metanarrative falls flat, either not reaching, not resonating, not being internalized or being disagreed with by target audiences, suggesting breaches such as impression management failures, poor understanding of alterity (imagined audiences), the existence of counternarratives, and unsuccessful narrative gaps that weren't accounted for or perhaps understood within the metanarrative as it is presented by the association through Goletta Verde. These concepts set the stage for the analysis that answered my research questions.

CHAPTER 2

PRESENTATION OF THE CASE

Goletta Verde

The citizen-based Italian environmentalist association Legambiente (literally, League for the environment) was born as an environmental group with a scientific orientation, in Italy, in 1979. Trying to reconcile a scientific investigative approach and the promotion of an environmental defense agenda (Legambiente, 2013b: 1 page), Legambiente's members work at gathering data and raising awareness about environmental issues in Italy, through various campaigns and initiatives (Legambiente, 2013a: 1 page). One of their campaigns - the most important one over the years - is called Goletta Verde (or the 'Green Schooner'). This initiative constitutes the primary research site of my thesis project.

Goletta Verde is a campaign about the 'health condition of the seas and coasts'⁷ of Italy. It is carried out yearly during the summer months (from mid-June, to mid-August). The campaign process has a double scope: scientific monitoring and environmental communication. Though the range and parameters for scientific and communication activities have changed a few times over the years, they try to address gaps in existing regulations about the quality of the seawater in Italy, particularly in relation to its bathing quality.

Scientific monitoring

Each year, Italy's coasts are monitored by public institutions, the Regional Agencies

⁷ One of the campaign's slogans (translated). The notion of "health" will be further discussed in the analysis.

for Environmental Protection (ARPAs), that conduct microbiological analyses of seawater along the beaches and bathing areas. To determine the quality of bathing waters, the ARPAs abide by European Directives that classify bathing water pollution according to two bacteriological fecal contamination indicators, intestinal enterococci and *Escherichia coli*, both indicative of pathogenic substances in the water. While this monitoring is conducted accurately, it often avoids critical points where water channels estuaries, streams, and drains, meet with seawater. Currently, the range of Goletta Verde's scientific activities focuses on evaluating the bathing waters in those specific critical points according to the same normative parameters followed by ARPAs, and putting pressure on the responsible groups, administrations, industry, and civil society, where the points turn out polluted.

With Legambiente being engaged in scientific environmentalism, part of the Goletta Verde campaign is dedicated to scientific 'spot monitoring' of the coasts; in other words, a Goletta Verde technical team travels by land along the Italian coastline, collecting samples of seawater near the shore. The samples are then analysed in the team's mobile laboratory (literally, a van transformed in a field laboratory) by a technician that will rank the less to most polluted shores, and identify critical points and frequency of microbacteriological water pollution (per region and nation-wide). The results of their analyses are then released publicly in a second phase of the campaign, the communication phase.

Environmental communication

In the communication phase, another dedicated Goletta Verde team travels by boat (hence the campaign name, Green Schooner), following the same route as the technical team, only about a week after them and travelling by sea. The communication team makes frequent

daily stops in various ports and seashore localities, giving press conferences, and participating in local initiatives related to the campaign. Once per region, they announce the results of the seawater samples analyses for that region, indicating publicly where they have found polluted water. Formally, Goletta Verde therefore has the particularity of acting both as scientific actor, and as a public awareness vehicle.

From a communication standpoint, the campaign, when issuing the results publicly, then also serves as an umbrella to denounce other damaging local coastal practices (poor water treatment, oil extraction and offshore drilling platforms, illegal constructions, coastal land use, large ships, pollution from military activities, among many others), or reward sustainable initiatives. Goletta Verde has been - and still is - involved in many side campaigns and initiatives where they make their environmental assessments public, and contribute to raising awareness and shaping perception about the 'quality' of a coastal area.

2013 edition

In the summer of 2013, the campaign celebrated its 28th edition. For the 2013 edition, the campaign's themes were presented (reiterated collectively) during a pre-campaign, general meeting, on June 5th 2013, where all the direct campaign participants met. The themes identified were the following: water quality, tourism, cementification, land consumption, depuration (waste water treatment), illegal building, coastal erosion, drilling rigs and offshore drilling platforms, eutrophication, fishing, biodiversity, (free) beach access, and 'hot topics' in sustainable navigation. (Field notes, June 5th 2013) Throughout the campaign, many of the local stops of the communication team in various harbours also included partnered initiatives, or public debates about the following topics (among others):

marine parks and protected areas; differentiated waste collection and plastic recycling; the “Pesce ritrovato” (Found Fish) initiative⁸; health degradation issues and environmental justice lawsuits around industrial work environments⁹; denouncing crime and corruption related to the Ecomafia¹⁰; as well as issuing statements about other coastal issues or accidents¹¹. Goletta Verde’s main areas of concerns and themed activities or initiatives are often the result of collaboration between the national association level of Legambiente, and its regional or local offices, as well as collaborations with some of the campaign sponsors, with local or regional administrations, and the media.

History and evolution of the campaign

Goletta Verde was born in 1986, at a time when environmentalist movements were concerned with other types of pollution - especially nuclear - and showed little or no interest and awareness of sea-related issues. These were not well understood or translatable into public issues. In 1982, the Italian Presidential Decree N° 470/82 was put in place, for the implementation, in Italy, of the 1975 European Council Directive 76/160/EEC for the

⁸ This part of a broader European initiative “Fish Scale” which, on the Italian territory, was a 2010-13 project to encourage a change in consumer attitudes toward fished species, and foster the appreciation and consumption of often neglected local fish. With Goletta Verde, this was translated in the recognition of activities like the hosting a public event by a restaurant that cooked some of these neglected fish and provided flyers with recipes and information about the fish.

⁹ An example encountered in the field is the case of the “the dead of the Marlane”. Marlane was a textile factory based in Praia a Mare, in the province of Cosenza (on the coast of Calabria). The factory was the cause of very important soil and water pollution, and many local residents were affected by it. Additionally, the colouring and other chemical processes used in the factory were dangerous, poisoning many factory workers. Marlane closed in 1990 and there have been litigations for environmental health compensations ever since, but they remain unresolved. The fear is that if the lawsuits go on getting postponed for too long, they will expire under the statute of limitations. The Marlane case, presented by Goletta Verde and others at local debate in Praia a Mare in 2013, has somewhat of a syndicalist tone to it, echoing Legambiente’s leftist environmental justice orientation.

¹⁰ The term ecomafia was coined by Legambiente and will be further discussed in the analysis.

¹¹ For instance, the current repercussions of the (visual) pollution of the accident of the Costa Concordia (Goletta Verde Diario di Bordo 2013); or statements on illegal immigration boat accidents and sinkings.

regulation of bathing waters. In theory, the Italian regions were in charge of selecting areas along their coastline to sample seawater and take measurements of various parameters they would analyze to determine the bathing water quality of the given point and then inform citizens. However, despite these regulations, there was little effective institutional control or monitoring of bathing waters. By 1986, there was hardly any institutional data available, and in some parts of the Italian coastline, none at all. In addition, the formal regulation of water supply and sanitation services didn't effectively start in Europe until 1991 with the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC, which Italy only really seriously started implementing through its 1994 water sector reform, particularly the Law N.36, or Law Galli (Armeni 2008:3-4). The lack of regulatory framework and available data was worrisome to the point that some activists at Legambiente set out, in 1986, to conduct their own samples and analyses of bathing water around Italy, to compensate for institutional shortcomings. It became the first edition of the Goletta Verde campaign. The founding members of Goletta Verde therefore went out on a boat, and without many reference standards, following their own scientific protocol, they started conducting investigations, collecting water samples from the boat, getting them analysed. The first year, starting in July, barely half of the coast was covered (Fiorillo et al. 2010:22), but gradually, as the campaign got better organized, it covered all of Italy. It started seeking real-time data, on the basis of the 12 parameters proposed by the decree 470/82, that would be made available to citizens about bathing seawater points all around Italy. In the first few years, the campaign was made up of two boats that covered either side of Italy - the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic, with two mobile laboratories, one for each boat, for a duration of about 2 months, monitoring the double (nearly 600 points) of the points currently covered by the campaign (13726_002:6). Over the

years, the campaign followed its own evolution: various boats were used, different portions of the territory were covered differently, the parameters changed, the scope of the campaign increased or decreased, based in part on the resources, sponsorships and partnerships available. Gradually, more coastal issues were added as part of the campaign's awareness-raising and activism agenda.

Since the campaign's beginnings, various journalists, like Gad Lerner from *L'Espresso* in 1986 (Fiorillo et al. 2010:20) have followed *Goletta Verde's* activities - on a given year, or over time. Different sponsors have come and gone. Current campaign sponsors include COOU (Mandatory consortium for waste oils), COREPLA (a consortium that works toward the establishment of good practices around plastic packaging recycling in Italy), Novamont (a company producing biodegradable and compostable bioplastics), NAU (an eco-friendly eyewear brand that makes glasses from recycled plastic), SOLBIAN (a company that produces innovative photovoltaic panels), and one main media partner (*La nuova ecologia*). Sponsors, also called partners, share similar values to the association.

For many years, one of *Goletta Verde's* initiatives to interact with the public was "SMS al mare" (SMS to the sea). It involved a collaboration with the phone provider and then campaign sponsor Vodafone. Together with the Italian ICRAM (Central Institute for Scientific and Technological Research Applied to the Sea) and others, they had developed a phone application with which beach users could be notified by SMS about marine water quality and conditions, thanks to satellite and airborne imagery technology (see Salvioli, 2006: 8, and FlyBy Srl: 1-2). *Legambiente* also had side initiatives or campaigns related to *Goletta Verde*. In May 1990, for instance, there was also first edition of side campaign "Spiagge Pulite" (Clean beaches), not directly a part of *Goletta Verde's* campaign, but in

relation to it, that seeks Italian volunteers for a yearly beach clean-up all around the country. (Fiorillo et al. 2010:33) Another campaign was “Campagna Occhio alle Coste” (Campaign Watch the Coasts), from 2006 to 2009. During the spring months, Legambiente initiated an information campaign in Calabria, educating the public, going in schools, inviting people affected by the problem (fishermen, and others) to discuss the problem of marine pollution that is very significant in that region of Italy, to the point that municipal authorities had presented public apologies to bathing tourists for the poor quality of the water. Goletta Verde used this opportunity to consolidate its awareness campaign in the region. (Nicoletti, 2012: 1)

Today, Goletta Verde’s general goal remains the same as it has been throughout the years: to be a citizen-based¹² campaign informing other citizens, as well as administrations and the media, about the condition of the health of the Italian seas and coasts.

Legambiente: the association and its philosophy

Goletta Verde exists alongside other initiatives conducted by the environmental association, Legambiente. Legambiente is a registered ONLUS, in Italian, which roughly translates to non-profit, public-benefit or social-benefit association. It is recognized as an organization that provides information to the public, while providing an environmental service for society. Legambiente invites volunteers to participate to their activities, engaging together members of the public, members of Legambiente at any of their three levels of administration (national, regional, local), various administrations and industry groups, and

¹² The idea that Goletta Verde and the Legambiente are citizen-based seems to be a given for the members of the association who consider themselves ‘active citizens’. What is less clear is how true this effectively is, as there seems to be a discontinuity in the way the rest of the citizens (the ‘public’) interpret this assumption about the foundation of the association and its civic nature. This will be a part of the discussion in the analysis.

the media. Legambiente takes particular pride in identifying itself as a citizen association, that is, as a member of civil society. Though it has a strong leaning toward leftist political views, and originally “was tempted to become a political party and strive for seats in lawmaking bodies” (Osti 2007:124), Legambiente has long abandoned what would have been considered like a “betrayal of environmentalist ideals, which were thought to stand above political struggles” (Osti 2007:124). It claims to have no official political affiliation and is therefore able to put pressure for change on any administration, no matter its political stance. This is the subject of much debate¹³, although from a strict point of view, Legambiente can indeed be considered “apolitical”, or autonomous (Della Seta 2000:62).

In an anthology of Legambiente’s 30 years of active service to society, a former president of the association (1987-2004) Ermete Realacci, describes part of Legambiente’s philosophy with the phrase *Pensare globalmente, agire localmente* (think globally, act locally). Legambiente, he praises, abides to the following environmentalist ideals: a non defensive environmentalism that accounts for the existence and action of Man in a society based on green economy; a scientific environmentalism that focuses on the quality of its analyses, a broad, multidisciplinary knowledge, and a heavy reliance on human intelligence; and an environmentalism that joins various associative models intertwined with individual decision-making, and that, for the first time, coordinates thematic action nationally on the Italian territory (paraphrase, translation by the author, from Fiorillo et al. 2010:36). Legambiente’s environmentalism is therefore human-centered (considering the needs of man

¹³ Some people claim that Legambiente is highly politicized, and that for some, it serves as a trampoline to a political career. Upon its creation, Legambiente had clear political ties with the ‘Greens’ in Italy, but after 1986, it developed an autonomy from all political parties, though it still kept (independent) political ideals (Della Seta 2000:51). More will be discussed in the analysis section about how the construction of the campaign’s ‘neutrality’ is subject to counternarratives from various groups.

and nature), it is scientifically-based, and it operates at the national level, with regional branches and local branches (called “circles”) (Della Seta 2000:46). These dynamics are particularly well exemplified in Goletta Verde.

Background: Environmentalism and attitudes toward nature in Italy

The following timeline identifies some significant dates, since the country’s unification in 1861, to help contextualize Legambiente’s environmentalism. Environmental protection in Italy started with groups of scientists in the 1880s-1890s, such as the Italian Botanical Society (1888), who advocated for botanical protection. (Osti 2007:118) They were joined shortly after by non-scientific voices of another protectionist movement, as “a renewed, neoromantic interest was emerging in the arts, in ethnic and national roots, and in the rapport between people and nature.” (Piccioni 2010:253-254) This linkage between nature conservation and cultural patrimony (arts, literature, etc.) merged the natural landscape with the historically constructed one it wished to preserve for its aesthetic legacy, (Piccioni 2010:254-7) to include, at the turn of the 20th century, the Touring Club Italiano (TCI) and the Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) This aesthetic approach was founded in part by a relationship between “nature and memory”, heightened by the ‘discovery’ of the mountains post World War I, that commemorated the sacrifice of fallen soldiers, creating a mythical archetype for the Italian Alpine man (Armiero and Hall 2010: 236-238). Many places in Italy - particularly national parks - similarly acquired a status of ‘natural monument’ and natural beauties to be conserved for aesthetic reasons. The movement came to an abrupt halt under Mussolini’s Fascist regime, which Osti identifies as one of two major turning points in the history of nature protection in Italy, facilitated by a weak civil society and an unmediated

class conflict (2007:119) While the cult of natural beauties continued to rise for ideological purposes, all attempts at environmental protection were forcefully aborted by the regime, who was distracting public interest with nation-building military efforts (Piccioni 2010:258), while marginalizing and “suffocating special interest groups and bureaucratizing institutions of environmental protection to the point of paralysis”, leading Italy into “another two decades of

	1861	Unification of Italy	
Significant Dates	1914-1918	World War I	
	1922-1943	Mussolini's Fascist Regime in power	1922 Law on natural beauties
	1939-1945	World War II	1939 Italian Heritage Laws
	1948	Constitution of the Italian Republic	
	1950s-1980s	'Economic Miracle'	1963 Italian translation of Rachel Carson's <i>Silent Spring</i>
			1968 Club of Rome
			1972 Publication of <i>The Limits of Growth</i> report by the Club of Rome and Italian edition of <i>The Closing Circle</i> , manifesto of political ecology
			1975 EC Directive 76/160/EEC for the regulation of bathing waters
			1976 Legge Merli (Merli Law)
			1978 EC Directive 78/659 for continuous monitoring of freshwater Never implemented by Italian administrations
	1979	Legambiente	1979 Three Miles Island incident (first major nuclear incident)
			1982 Italian Presidential Decree N.470/82 for the implementation of 1975 EC Directive 76/160/EEC on bathing waters (7 years later)
	1986	Goletta Verde (first edition of the campaign)	1986 Creation of Italian Ministry of environment Chernobyl Disaster
	1987	Green Party enters Italian Politics winning a small percentage of votes	1987 Anti-nuclear referendum in Italy
	1990s - ongoing	Waste crisis in the region of Campania, Italy Crisis drawing international attention, major case of environmental injustice, corruption, criminality, and illegality in Italy fought by Legambiente and generating public outrage and civic action	1989 Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill
			1993 Creation of ARPAs (Regional Agencies for the protection of the environment) in Italy
			1994 First State of Emergency declared for Campania's waste crisis
			2004, 2007 European Commission infringement procedures for Campania's waste management
			2008 Second State of Emergency for Campania's waste crisis
			2010 European Commission infringement procedure against Italy for failure to comply with urban waste water treatment standards that should have been met by 1998
			2012 Cruiseship <i>Costa Concordia</i> shipwrecked off the coast of Isola del Giglio Second European Commission infringement procedure for urban waste water treatment
	2013	28th edition of the Goletta Verde campaign	

political negligence” (Piccioni 2010:252) after the war.

The massive industrialization that would follow in the post-Second World War years destroyed green urban spaces, to the point that by the late 1970s, “no town had more than 3 square meters of green per capita.” (Bevilacqua 2010:27) With the rise of industrial capitalism in Italy, the environment came to be seen through an aesthetic lens of sacred romanticism of industrial landscape narratives that shaped what Barca calls a sort of false “ecological consciousness” of capitalism and the naturalized machine. (2010:217) This false consciousness produced the paradox of industrial change, where the use of natural resources, like water, for capitalist endeavours was simultaneously perceived and accepted as naturally occurring, organic and therefore legitimate, while being violently forced upon nature, impacting social life practices and health in the process. (Idem:226-227)

From the 1950s to the 1980s, employment migration from south to north of Italy (Osti 2007: 121-122) rose alongside urban sprawling and illegal building¹⁴, to the point that “(i)rreparable damage was thus inflicted on Italy’s landscape and urban heritage” (Bevilacqua 2010:27). Pollution became increasingly problematic in many industrial sectors (Bevilacqua 2010:21-23): mining, the tanning industry, asbestos, iron and steel, and so on, many even at the source of serious court battles for environmental health litigations and accident compensation, some still ongoing today. To this day, these remain major issues, particularly illegal building, as there are little consequences for unauthorized construction (financial sanctions often result in the individual returning to build after paying the fine). By

¹⁴ Illegal building in Italy is the practice by which “Private individuals began to erect houses without any authorization whatsoever in the most diverse locations - on beaches, along the banks of rivers, on hilltops, inside natural parks, and in historical centers.” (Bevilacqua 2010:27) Take the example of Torre Mileto. It is an illegally built-upon area, a “set chosen in the 1970s by unauthorized vacationers for the construction of an entire illegal coastal resort.” (translated by author; Capozzo 2013: 1)

1985, of the nearly 8,000 km of Italian coastline, “only a thousand [...] were still preserved in their original state. All the rest had been modified or often completely destroyed” (Idem:24), with a urban coastline growth of 25.8 percent between 1975-1990 (Ibidem).

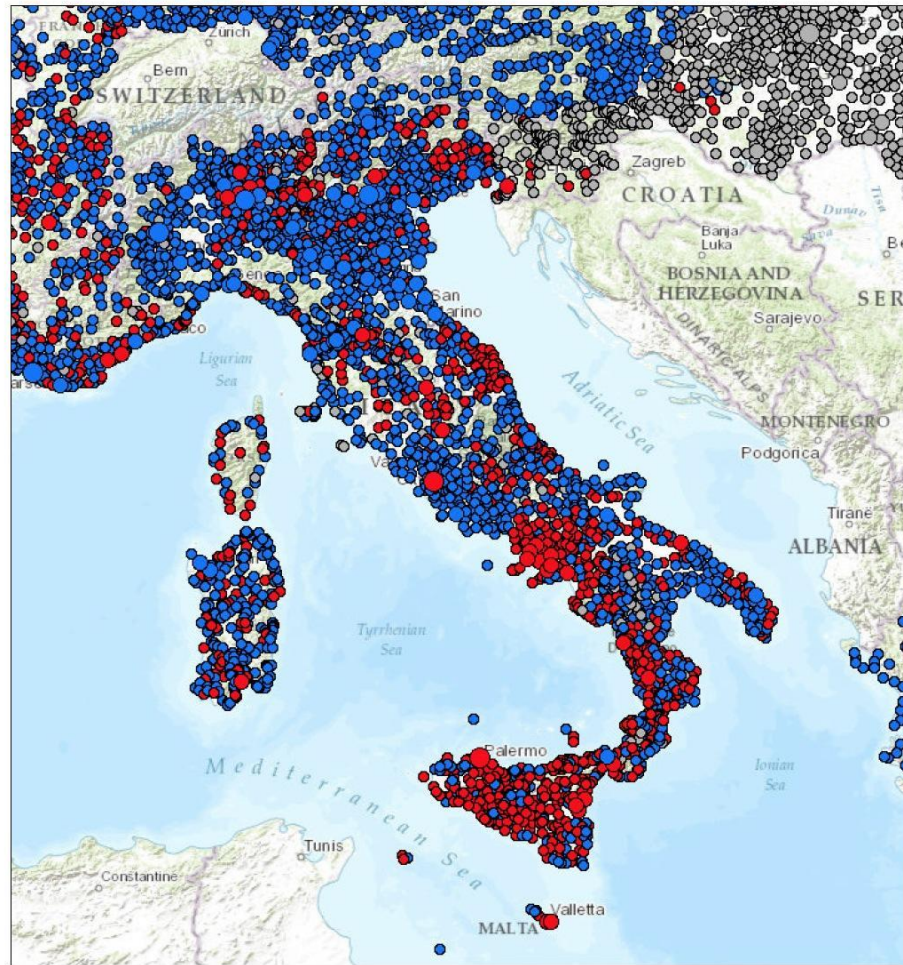
In the wake of the negative consequences of mass industrialization and urbanization, the sixties therefore gave rise to a new form of concerns for nature. For the first time, aesthetic and purely naturalistic convictions were confronted with anthropocentric approaches to nature protection, witnessing the birth of political ecology and environmentalism for the “safeguarding [of] humans and society” and for which “pollution, and later nuclear energy, became the main targets of movement rhetoric” (Osti 2007:124), about social conflict and civil rights respectively. Legambiente materialized from these trends at the end of the 1970s and has been active ever since, trying to extend its influence across the nation.

Meanwhile, environmental issues have continued to pile up, poorly regulated by the Italian administrations, and at times plagued with corruption and crime, or negligence and institutional paresse (see Greyl et al. 2013, Piccioni 2010:252; and many others). Several times in recent years, Italy has received sanctions from international bodies (such as the European Commission) for many environmental norms and regulations infringements, particularly as they relate to waste collection and disposal, sanitation, access to clean water, and urban wastewater treatment and disposal, several times (see, for instance European Commission, 2010 and 2012)¹⁵

¹⁵ Excerpt from the 2012 press release: “In 2011 the Commission sent a reasoned opinion as over 143 towns across the country were still not connected to a suitable sewage system and/or lacked secondary treatment facilities or had insufficient capacity. While considerable progress has been made, 14 years after the original deadline expired at least 50 agglomerations still present shortcomings, and more work is needed to ensure that urban centres that are not yet compliant achieve the standards required to protect citizens and the environment.”

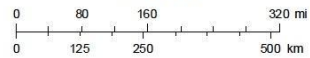
(Map 1 below shows the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) in Italy. Blue indicates compliance with EU standards, red indicates non compliance, and grey is not relevant. The size of the dot is linked to the size of the agglomeration.)

Urban Waste Water Treatment maps



February 2, 2014

1:9,244,649



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geodise, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

fantamir

Map 1

As Serneri (2010) explain, with the historically poor regulation of industrial waste and sanitation in Italy, there is a clear falling behind other countries when it comes to implementing proactive environmental institutions and regulations. Italian policies over time

have often just barely met the basic minimum requirements - when they even met them. The country's approach to healthy environmental management and sound industrialization is a very reactive one, that at times seems more like proactive negligence. The Italian people's relationship to nature in Italy - or rather, "Italy's lack of environmental awareness" has therefore led to "some of the country's most serious environmental problems" (Bevilacqua 2010:26) many of which Legambiente, through its campaign Goletta Verde and other initiatives, still fights today.

Thus, as various authors point out, at the turn of the 21st century, environmentalism, both civic and political, remains a very partial, incomplete and confused, while simultaneously converging process, as problems like illegal construction and the illegal disposal of waste continue to surge, particularly in the south (Della Seta 2000:60-61, Bevilacqua 2010:23, Grey1 et al. 2013).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Fieldwork Materials and Methods

The research methods carried out to answer the proposed research question involved a case study research design geared towards the collection of qualitative data, mostly through fieldwork and through the examination of some documentation. This section will describe in detail the selected research design, methodological tools for data collection, and fieldwork timeline. It will also provide a rationale for the research's various methodological choices, as well as some inherent limitations. The obtained results and their coding will be discussed in a subsequent section.

The choice of ethnographic case study design

As previously exposed in the introduction and presentation of the case, my unit of analysis is the 2013 edition of the Goletta Verde campaign of the Italian scientific environmentalist association Legambiente. The unit of analysis included an examination of the functioning of the various networks established within this annual campaign and of the related activities and initiatives. My geographical focus was on the Italian regions that were travelled during the fieldwork, but the analysis will include references to events or instances occurring in other regions as well. A particular focus was therefore given to the regions of Puglia, Calabria, Basilicata and Campania, where I explored and collected data for multiple aspects of the research, both with the technical team and the communication team, giving me

a sample of the full scope of the campaign activities.

Given the complexities of my unit of analysis exposed in the presentation of the case, I decided that the case study design was best adapted to the collection of detailed empirical qualitative evidence on Goletta Verde, to gain a broader understanding of its discourse and its circumstances. I am basing my understanding of a case study inquiry on Robert K. Yin's (1997) description the case study as a tool for social research, which "may be defined as a technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points" (Yin 1997: 230). My fieldwork was circumscribed in specific time, geographic and conceptual constraints that limited its scope and length, therefore making it difficult to call it an ethnographic research. But given my focus on describing culture knowledge and behaviour of the actors, and their interactions, observed through fieldwork, I will take the risk of calling it an *ethnographic* case study.

The ethnographic case study design allowed me to account for many levels of variability. For instance, the human effective involved in the Goletta Verde campaign for the duration of the campaign was dynamic, as it was in constant rotation (there were different teams, locations changed, people in the teams changed, the people and groups that Goletta Verde participants interacted with changed, the campaign initiatives changed based on location). A case study design also allowed me to conduct my fieldwork "without knowing precisely the boundaries of the case, and even to discover telling insights into the ways that decisions are made" (Yin 1997: 238). But the processes within each of the stages of the campaign (sampling, communication, etc.) were consistent in their scope, hence the use of the campaign Goletta Verde as delimiting framework (see Yin 1997: 237-8). The case study is also useful because I am not trying to *generalize* the results from my case study (Yin

1997:239), but rather to analytically transpose the concepts that emerged in it, to arrive at specific conclusions that will generate general interest (Gummesson 2000: 84) and illustrate the theories I develop, informing environmental studies in social sciences.

Methodological relevance of the chosen ethnographic case study

Many works of social science research and literature (Pardo 2011; Greyl et al. 2013) use Legambiente's findings and reports to inform their studies and academic publications. However, Legambiente itself has seldom, if ever, been the object of a social science inquiry, let alone an anthropological one. Apart from Osti (2007) who makes an in-depth examination of four current environmental groups in Italy - including Legambiente - to theorize on the recent convergence of thought within the environmental movement in the country, other references to Legambiente are mostly fillers, secondary to a principal topic under scrutiny. I have found a few publicly available university theses that looked at aspects of the organization, one even that followed the analyses of an edition of *Goletta Verde*; none, however, from the social sciences, and none that dig deeper to understand how social and cultural mechanisms intermesh with the organization's dynamics.

Yet, over time, Legambiente has become the second most important environmental organization in Italy in terms of its membership, ranking first among Italian-only environmental organizations, with 110 000 members in 2003. (Osti 2007:126-127) It is well established as an environmental authority in Italy and is one of the main environmental references in a country affected by serious problems of environmental criminality and environmental injustice (Greyl et al. 2013:291-2; 299-305). While these themes, as well as others relating to citizenship and environmental history in Italy have been partially explored by anthropological and social sciences literature (Muehlebach 2012; Prato 1993; Pardo 2011;

Osti 2007; Putnam 1993; Greyl et al. 2013; and more), there is room for gaining additional perspectives on the problematiques that affect the country. One of them is to slip on the shoes of the groups like Legambiente, that are trying to resolve these nation-wide issues, and engage academic inquiry into understanding how they go about doing so.

In Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture* (1986), Tyler wrote prescriptively about post-modern ethnography. He explained that there is no "synthesizing allegory" (Tyler, 1986: 132) to universally define the world. Haraway pushed this further in claiming that knowledge must not claim objectivity unless it is situated from a "limited location" that enables it to "become answerable for what we learn how to see," thereby avoiding "irresponsible knowledge claims." (Haraway, 1988: 583). In this frame of mind, Goletta Verde as research site makes logical sense: being the association's most important campaign, it is also one of the oldest established environmental campaigns in Italy. As a nation-wide initiative, with multiple subsets and partners, it offers an ideal entry point for a holistically-inclined, yet situated ethnographic exploration of the dynamics that at play between the ideals of a contemporary environmentalism (embodied by the association) and the various groups of humans who live the environmentally-ravaged coasts and seas of Italy. It enables us to explore these other perspectives, without falling into the trap of claiming to speak on their behalf. Instead, we can focus on exploring on how Goletta Verde (through its participants) interacts with them, and is shaped by them.

Gieser states that: "It is only when there is a world accessible for everyone that I can begin to perceive through the eyes of another person." (Gieser, 2008: 309) Environmental problems are diffused in Italy, and the association and its campaign are equally diffused, with varying degrees of understanding and interpretation, across the country. Situating the

research within the viewpoint of Goletta Verde and its participants means to start understanding the various problems in their footsteps. It is a humbling activity - as no research, especially with such a small scope as mine, will be able to instantly absorb thirty years of experience of thousands of individuals who participated at different stages of the various editions of the campaign; nor will it suddenly provide an exhaustive and comprehensive analysis of an entire country's gathering of perspectives around environmentalism. It remains a "blind man's" perspective, but not one that is trapped. The national component of the campaign will make possible the exploration of potential dynamics of interaction between the trunk and the tail of the anthropological elephant that moves as one, despite its multiple unexplored functionalities. As Haraway said, "(s)ituated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular." (Haraway, 1988: 590) Following the isolated individuals that come together to form the collective, the community of Legambiente, and more specifically, following Goletta Verde, means to embark on a journey to understanding the collectives and the communities that shape or distinguish themselves from an Italian collective environmental conscience in the making.

The campaign itself travels around Italy, it is confronted with national, regional, and local variability, and has to deal with multiple different responses to its claims from the various audiences it targets. But because it is situated within one perspective, Legambiente's, it also remains sufficiently narrow and focused of a subject of inquiry from which to examine these multiple other points of view across the country. Finally, as a broad enough campaign covering much of the territory, and relating to many different environmental themes, it also enables me to extrapolate some of the research findings to a discussion on the place and

challenges of environmentalism in Italy, more generally.

Timeline and development of the fieldwork

The idea behind the chosen methodology was to follow the campaign and partake in its various stages through fieldwork. I was able to do so without too much difficulty because of my ability to travel, my previous travels to Italy, my extensive knowledge of Italian and understanding of Italian culture, being half-Italian myself.

I travelled to Italy for nearly three months from mid-May to mid-August 2013 conducting fieldwork intermittently to be directly involved in a broad range of Legambiente's activities related to Goletta Verde 2013 campaign. My time of direct involvement in these campaign activities constituted my primary source of data collection. As secondary data sources, I also informally conducted some additional on-site data collection outside of the campaign activities.

Primary Data Collection

My fieldwork activities with Goletta Verde were divided in four types, representative of the various stages of the campaign:

1. Attendance to various meetings at the association's headquarters in Rome (a few days);
2. Direct participation, as a volunteer, to the technical team's sampling and coastal monitoring activities and field laboratory analyses in 3 different regions (two periods, each 7-10 days long, covering Puglia, Campania and Basilicata, and preceding the communication team by about a week); and,

3. Direct participation, as a volunteer, to the communication team activities that took place mostly on a schooner and in campaigned coastal areas (10 days, in the regions of Calabria, Campania, Basilicata and Lazio).
4. Throughout, I entertained pre-, post-, and in-fieldwork communication by email and telephone with the campaign organizers and participants.

While these took place, I used different methodological tools to collect data. I conducted interviews, participant observation, field notes-and picture-taking.

Sampling and Interviews

Semi-structured individual audio-recorded interviews with open-ended questions were conducted in Italian with a number of individuals with the following people: Three scientists members of the technical team, two members of the schooner's crew, two campaign organizers, the head of Legambiente scientific office, a photojournalist, a mayor, and three informal interviews with members of regional and local circles of Legambiente and another member of an administration. More information about the interviewees is listed below, in the preliminary findings.

Interview sampling was achieved mostly through a loose form of snowball sampling. Although snowball sampling can be criticized on a few different levels (not randomized, equivocal, affected by possible community biases in choice of referred participants, etc.), these criticisms were addressed in my research. First, the fact that my unit of analysis was fairly limited contributed to diminishing a lot of these biases. Secondly, my first point of contact when I started out with Legambiente was the primary Goletta Verde campaign

organizer, who put me in touch with some key members. Additionally, the breakdown of my participant observation - with the technical team and with the communication team - ensured that I spent extensive time on a daily basis with the various team members. The snowball sampling was therefore mixed with on-site recruitment through consensus obtained from participants. Recommendations to interview specific other members generally didn't come from a single participant, but from various ones.

The fact that I started my participant observation with the technical team and finished with the communication team allowed me to accustom myself to the "hierarchies" within Goletta Verde. My interviews naturally followed a reverse hierarchical order, from bottom to top, and I interviewed the primary campaign organizer and the head of Legambiente's scientific office last, which gave me time to significantly improve my understanding of the campaign dynamics. Similarly, during my first period with the technical team, I familiarized myself with some of the technicians in a few interviews, but waited until my second round with the technical team to interview the team leader. Once my comfort level with the topic at hand increased, I also thoroughly interviewed a photojournalist travelling temporarily with the technicians (during my second period with them), as well as a mayor of one of the municipalities visited by boat with the communication team. They provided me with two very different yet insightful outsiders' perspectives (the first from the public's perspective, the second from the administration's perspective), which I confronted with my own understanding of the dynamics at play in the campaign. As previously mentioned, additional informal informative recordings and conversations contributed to the collected interview data from people I met along the way. These were not as thorough as the other interviews, but provided missing pieces of information in specific situations as well as offering different,

sometimes challenging perspectives to the organization line.

The purpose of the interviews was to gain knowledge that would provide me with grounds for some comparison basis of various themes related to my research question. However, my data coding and analysis was never intended to have a rigid comparison framework as this is an exploratory research, and I wanted to be able to respect the flow of the answers that I came across. This is due in part to the fact that my original topic shifted during my fieldwork, because I realized early on that my original research question was relatively unanswerable in the field. Indeed, I encountered a lot of resistance to some of my preliminary assumptions, stemming from the research I had done prior to starting fieldwork. Facing this resistance, I realigned my research project to open it up to a more flexible set of questions and answers that proved to be insightful about the inner workings and mechanisms at play in the Goletta Verde campaign. My interview questions therefore similarly cover a seemingly large area of research. This proved to be a double-edged sword. On one hand, a major difficulty this brought along was an overabundance of data, sometimes a little too general and globally challenging to compare. However, with increased practice and knowledge of the organization, as well as considerable probing during interviews to stray away from the formal organizational discourse, my questions also opened the door to very long and elaborate answers from the part of dedicated campaign participants. These proved crucial in understanding the essence of the driving forces animating the campaign and its challenges.

Although I followed a general interview questionnaire, interviews therefore had different styles, purposes, and flows, depending on who was being interviewed, their role in the association and their comfort level with the interview. Despite the inconsistency this may

have generated, the quality of the analysis is only partially affected, as the testimonies were lengthy and concurred for the most part, with other participants' accounts, with the literature I found, and with my own field notes. Some of the interviews helped fast-track my observations and learning of different processes. Others provided me with more analytical insight. But generally, all interviews included questions about motivations for the participant's involvement in the Goletta Verde campaign; for their understanding of the purpose of the organization and campaign; their understanding of different components (scientific and communication) of, and values promoted by, the campaign; for their impressions on various challenges faced by the campaign and their own personal difficulties. Additional questions - which were mostly addressed during my time with the communication team - concerned financial aspects of association and campaign, campaign sponsors, the economic crisis, and political, as well as other considerations.

Secondary Data Sources: Pre-fieldwork on-site data collection

The time I spent in Italy prior to formally starting fieldwork was invaluable because it set the tone for the upcoming participant observation I was going to conduct as part of the technical and communication teams of Goletta Verde. I will stray off from the formal methodology a bit to offer an account of how it prepared me and eventually - and unexpectedly - contributed to my collected data. I arrived in Italy in mid-May, and spent the following month reacquainting myself with the language, the people, the general atmosphere of the country. To facilitate this process, I rented a room in Montesilvano, in the Province of Pescara, and the region of Abruzzo, for about a month. Montesilvano is approximately 2 hours away from Rome, where Legambiente's headquarters are located. There are buses

travelling to and from Rome a few times a day, which made it convenient when I needed to attend meetings with Legambiente. Montesilvano is also considerably cheaper than Rome when it comes to living expenses, particularly considering I hadn't been to Italy in several years, and had no pied-à-terre in Rome when I first arrived. Montesilvano, and Pescara, more generally, are also located on the Adriatic Sea. The area has several environmental and coastal management problems, several of which relate to Pescara's harbour.

While I wasn't there to study these specifically, I was quickly made aware of these issues by local people and friends I made during my stay. These problems and the general knowledge about them that stemmed from my various acquaintances' informal accounts were an invaluable insightful introduction about the different ways the Italian people view their interactions with the sea and the coastal area they inhabit, and the way they form opinions about a given coastal management situation. Though none of my acquaintances in the area of Pescara and Montesilvano formally or even informally worked or contributed to the management of coastal issues, their opinions covered a broad range of emotional responses to coastal issues, from offshore drilling platform debates, to beach littering, to private access to the littoral, to harbour fishing issues. They converged in one thing, that is their proximity to and use of the sea in Pescara. These ad hoc observations and episodes made Pescara an ideal and revealing setting to understanding some of the global issues faced by Italy with regard to coastal management, setting the grounds for me to personally engage with Goletta Verde's most campaigned issues I would soon encounter.

I also travelled independently within Italy before, between and after my various participant observation stages travelling with the Goletta Verde campaign technical and communication teams. I travelled to Northern Italy, in Lombardy and as well as in the

southern region of Puglia, visiting acquaintances and meeting new people. Most of my observations of interactions with the “public”, in Pescara and elsewhere, about Legambiente, Goletta Verde, or coastal issues in Italy, were recorded in my field notes, by hand or, sometimes, recorded with a microphone for information purposes. Those people were aware of the recording taking place but I didn’t ask them for their official consent or to be able to identify them. When anecdotal evidence from those people is used, they will therefore not be named or identified other than vaguely - through a pseudonym, or a neutral referent like “friend” or “acquaintance”. They did not answer structured questions or interview questions like the other “formal” participants. Therefore, unless they were specifically interviewed or identified as such, I do not include these members of the public among my formal participants. Instead, I include their feedback as a part of my personal observations. Their input is relevant because it is a reflection of the variability of opinions and responses to different triggered issues. I will be including some of this feedback as anecdotal evidence, equivalent to field notes, to help support some of my analysis and discussion, but because this data is inconsistent, I will not present it *per se* in the formal results.

This on-site pre-fieldwork preparation time was also important for at least three methodological and analytical reasons:

- First, it confirmed and reinforced - on site - the choice of a case study as a research design. Seeing the range of perspectives that existed in Pescara alone, studying Goletta Verde would enable me to grasp the issues better and situate my research within one, more structured, perspective about the networks involved in coastal issues management in Italy.
- Secondly, given that a lot of invaluable data came from situational observations, my

on-site preparation stressed the importance and value of my choice of informal and observational qualitative data collection throughout the fieldwork as one of the most useful and flexible ways to absorb and understand the complexity and the range of the ongoing processes of negotiations between all the actors involved.

- Thirdly, it gave me an exposure to the “Italian public” outside the direct range of Goletta Verde’s activities by allowing me to hear out random people who belong to that “public” targeted by Goletta Verde and who have different perceptions, understandings and opinions of the various problems exposed by the campaign. This would later prove very useful to shaping my analysis of the situation, and my understanding of a challenge encountered by Goletta Verde, and which I had myself witnessed, the problem of the public (discussed in the analysis).

Interviewed Participants

Participants from the campaign

Head of Legambiente scientific office

Head of communication team and Legambiente campaign office

Head of Goletta Verde technical team

Technician (sampling)

Technician responsible for laboratory analyses

Campaign participant, communication team

Head of Legambiente Local Circle (Bari)

Legambiente Regional Director (Calabria)

Crew member

Crew member (other)

Participants outside the formal campaign

Mayor of Pollica (Campania)

Mayor of Ricadi (Calabria)

Freelance photographer doing a photo reportage on the campaign

Citizen victim of 'ndrangheta

Details on Interviews

I ended up with between 15-20 hours of interview materials (see breakdown below) and over 30 pages of typed field notes. A lot of recordings became verbal field notes in cases where note taking was too invasive and the recorder was more discreet. These informal recordings of conversations are informative but consent wasn't explicitly sought out, so data extracted from there will be used as though it came from field notes, to avoid anonymity breaches. Interview data was coded according to match data with various categories of knowledge that would inform the analysis.

From both my formal and informal interactions with participants that were not a part of Legambiente's teams, I noticed that people were generally very interested in the project I was conducting. They all came very different social, economic and educational backgrounds, different incomes, family structures, and interests and opinions; some were citizens of Italy and from the specific locality I was visiting, others were foreigners, or at least had come from other regions of Italy, and had different world travel experiences. All expressed different levels of knowledge and involvement in the environmental issues tackled by

Legambiente. They also tied these issues to different subsets of the Italian reality. Some people responded by strongly linking environmental problems to politics, others to criminality, others to social inequality issues, others with local economies (e.g. fishermen), others by simply expressing how they felt, personally, about the issue in question. Sometimes, I was asking specific questions, but other times I was simply witnessing exchanges that spontaneously arose between two or more individuals. The relevance of these non-Legambiente participants had to do with a) opportunity and b) added perspectives on the spread of the association's vision of spreading a collective environmental conscience. They are not exhaustive, but they still provide significant insight. Many informal recordings were unplanned, yet contributed background information (for instance, on a specific local issue) and very useful anecdotal content reinforcing either dichotomous viewpoint (inside/outside the associative vision).

Limitations

Fieldwork limitations

Though the ideal scope of my fieldwork activities with Goletta Verde would have reached if I could have stayed with them for the duration of the campaign, through all of their activities. However, full involvement for the total duration of the 2013 campaign was impossible for the following reasons:

- First, the way in which the campaign is organized involves a continuous overlap of the activities of the technical team and of the communication team who travel approximately one week apart, the first through land, the second, mostly by sea. This would mean that my research would have necessitated at least two researchers on site

at all times, which wasn't possible under the circumstances of my masters thesis.

- Secondly, there were restrictions imposed on me by the campaign's organizers who limited my sojourn, particularly on the boat, to roughly 10 days. They also limited my time with the technical team to two periods of roughly 7 to 10 days each. In both teams, I was acting as a volunteer and so they treated me as one. Their - very legitimate - reasons for limiting my periods of stay pertained to (mental) sanity, as working on the campaign, with either team, is a very demanding process and most other volunteers and campaign participants weren't scheduled to stay on board for the entire duration of the campaign anyway. This was further emphasized by the fact that it was my first time with the campaign and by reasons of practicality - there would have been too many people on the boat during given periods.
- Thirdly, I wasn't able to stay until the end of August because I had professional commitments to attend in North America during the last portion of the campaign (mid-late August), prompting my early return to Canada.

Data limitations

My interview, field notes, and participant observation data by themselves offer an incomplete picture, as I was only there for a portion of the campaign and significantly lacked the time and mostly the resources to interview all the candidates I wished and gain the on-site observational depth and subsequent distanced researcher's perspective desired. To address this limitation and still continue with the necessary analysis, I took a few steps:

- As previously mentioned, while formal interviews were crucial in the data collection, they needed to be juxtaposed and complemented with informal talks (sometimes

recorded, sometimes not, sometimes probing, sometimes more natural, according to the flexibility of the setting) and with my outsider's observations (participant and nonparticipant) of the variability of the evolving contexts and paradoxes that emerged throughout the different stages of the campaign I witnessed.

- As part of my onsite and post-fieldwork data collection, I am therefore also adding some of Goletta Verde press releases, website publications and reports, and other documentation to complete missing factual information and details about the campaign. I am not doing an exhaustive analysis of this documentation. Rather, I will employ it to triangulate and expand on some of my field observations.
- Since my return from the field, I have also added extensive research about the environmentalist movement in Italy and case studies about crises in Italy to situate my data within a context I would be well-informed about. I completed this with theoretical literature, about Italy and about a series of concepts I had come into contact with during my time on the field: environmental advocacy and communication, citizenship, legitimacy, audiences, narrative networks, to name just a few. Knowing better what to look for in the literature, I was able to make sense of the complex set of data I had gathered. Exploring a few of these different avenues, my analysis will be a reflection of a combination of my data that I've situated into explanatory frameworks backed by the evidence found in other research as well. In it, I will suggest how my case studies fits within a broader Italian context, affected by set of complex historical, national and regional, socio-cultural considerations that are intertwined with the various components of Legambiente's metanarrative about the creation of a collective environmental conscience in Italy.

My hope is that these multiple sources of evidence, particularly contextual, formed together a “chain of evidence” (Yin 1997:243) that enabled me to triangulate and construct validity, as well as internal validity through pattern constructions and explanations in the analysis.

A note on translation

The interviews were conducted in Italian and translated by the researcher. As such, some of the wording and idiomatic expressions could have multiple translations. There are also a few words that refer to different words, but have similar meanings in English. Having the incumbent choice of translation, I tried to ensure consistency in meaning throughout the interview translations and the research. There might however be some inconsistencies due to translator fatigue and error, and to the various speaker’s intended meaning, which may not always have been the same. This does not affect the results, but I acknowledge it may constitute a minor limitation.

ANALYSIS

The next three chapters are dedicated to the discussion and analysis of the findings. The first part explores how the story of Goletta Verde is brought to life when it is exported outside the association. I identify the three target audiences (the administrations, the media, and the public) in how they are understood by the association; I describe some of the elemental narratives that make the metanarrative compelling (characterizations of good and bad, values about beauty, environment, territory, and symbolism, as that of the boat); and I show the use of a scientific methodology to bring weight to association claims Legambiente wants those outside their worldview to accept.

The second part explores how various discontinuities break the flow of the metanarrative. Some discontinuities come from the limitations in Legambiente's impressions management strategies; others come from the various audiences, whose actual responses to the metanarrative are different from the ones imagined by Legambiente; others still, come from the Italian context.

The third part of the analysis builds on the first two. The metanarrative Legambiente is trying to export through initiatives like Goletta Verde is that of a collective environmental conscience. Though such a vision is unquestionably accepted from within the association, many of the discontinuities seem to indicate that there is a problem with the very understanding of what that 'conscience' actually means when it is operationalized, particularly because it is unclear who the collective actually represents. Can claims of collectivity be made when the very members of that collectivity in part reject those claims? This reflection on some of the implications of claiming to represent the public as collective is

an invitation for the association to re-examine its metanarrative internally as a matter of concern that is still being shaped, and to reflect on the meaning of collective speaking rights.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS PART I: BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE

Part 1 of the analysis tries to show manifestations that Legambiente treat the vision of a collective conscience as a matter of fact and that they try to construct it as such to others.

Section A. Who they tell

(or: imagined audiences)

The Goletta Verde campaign targets three main audiences that were identified by participants at various points during my fieldwork: the administrations, the media, and the public. Together they form groups of actors that Legambiente engages in, to tell a common narrative. In their ideal representation, these groups would be involved reciprocally in telling the story that makes the campaign. This potential participation and employment in the campaign narrative would engage them in plurivocity (Lejano et al.2013:75) with campaign participants, where all would share and tell the same story, but from their own particular starting points.

The Administrations

Definition

The first imagined audience Legambiente interacts with can be referred to as the administrations. Administrations, within the context of Goletta Verde, can be understood as the institutions that operate at various levels of government (municipal, regional, or national) and that are responsible for the implementation and functioning of infrastructure and laws or

regulations pertaining to the various themes covered by the campaign (water purification, verification of buildings legality, waste collection, coastal management). In Legambiente's eyes, administrations are the ones responsible and accountable for taking measures - preventive, reparatory, or punitive - against environmental emergencies, environmental inequalities (as relate to health, for example), breaches of regulations, criminality, and other relevant issues that occur on their territory. As a technician explained to me, an administrator is someone who has the personal "duty of guaranteeing, since [he/she] was elected to protect public interests, therefore [the interests] of everyone, [someone who therefore] has the duty of checking, of improving, of intervening where things are not going well." (130626_002) As a mayor explained it to me, local administrators particularly, are people who have a personal and sensorial knowledge of their territory, their land, their water, and who are able to know when there is a problem, just like the people living that land do. (130726_004)

Communication strategy and relationship to administrators

I witnessed throughout my fieldwork, that mayors in smaller communities, have a very intimate, first name-basis relationship with the people who live in their comune. In many cases, as a mayor from the region of Campania, well acquainted with Legambiente's work was telling me, when a mayor makes a statement, his name and reputation are attached to it. (130726_004) Goletta Verde's campaign organizers are aware of this, and they count on this local familiarity to influence the strength of the message they are passing. They strive to establish good relationships with administrators to increase their stimulus action, and gain local legitimacy, while providing national recognition to sustainable local management. The head of communication explains to me that if local administrations are taking a step to solve

a problem identified by Legambiente, “they underline it to you, they seek a contact with you, they search for an ally, as we want them to be. And we, at the end of the story, obviously do everything following an approach that is collaborative with people who, by law, then have to resolve the problems.” (130728_001) Echoing her, the mayor of Pollica, Campania, illustrated that the optimal relationship between Legambiente and local administrators is bi-directional, where “maybe [our *comune* will] receive [...] the recognition of the five sails because we worked well, so we receive something from Legambiente. But Legambiente receives from us, in terms of what we do on the territory. That is, Legambiente recognizes us this award because we do thing they have, in quotation marks, “suggested” to us. It’s not exactly that they’re suggestions, but they shared with us a different idea.” (130726_004)

There are different kinds of administrators, and Goletta Verde organizers expect it, building the campaign knowing that they will receive the support of some, but not others. Another quasi-certainty they have is that administrators will be present at their press conferences and events. During one event, I was remarking to a member of Goletta Verde’s communication team that there were very few people attending most of the press conferences. His response was categorical: “You are forgetting something essential. In all these events, there are administrators [attending]. Whether they be good or bad administrators, there are always administrators.” (Field notes, July 27, 2013). Administrators are viewed as a crucial audience, because they are able to implement change. They are however perceived by some as the most difficult target audience, particularly at the regional and national level, because of the numerous environmental institutional shortcomings in Italy. The head of the communication team was telling me that “[n]ext year, for instance, based on the new European Directive on bathing waters that will include a chapter on the

information [available] to citizens, [administrations will have to] set up signs, every x kilometers [of the coast], that provides information about the quality of the sea as it was found in that point for the last four years. I don't want to be discouraging, but [...] I don't know [how much we will actually] see this happen. And so, [...] [this sort of thing reflects] the incapacity of the technical bodies or of the Ministry of Health's portal on waters that should be doing by law, [to] organize themselves." (130728_001) They are also an audience that is likely to contest the findings of Goletta Verde when they reveal a problematic situation. Legambiente prepares for this with follow-up dossiers to back up each polluted point, including pictures and specifying the conditions in which a given sample was collected. (130718_005) They view their relationship with administrators as a dynamic one, aimed at simultaneously putting pressure on them, but also at creating a greater understanding of coastal issues for future improvement.

Legitimacy with administrations

To retain legitimacy and facilitate communication of problematic points, Legambiente uses a nomenclature and a sampling methodology that follow the official ones, done by the ARPAs - Regional agencies for environmental protection - who collect monthly samples of seawater from beaches around the country. Osti writes about this choice of a mutual language, explaining that this is a common trait among environmental organizations in Italy. He explains that "[c]ooperation with governments creates a common culture in which the partners come to share a method of working and a view of the situation. [...] This common culture inevitably pushes environmental organizations, despite their ideology and tradition, to adopt the same language, the language of public administrations." (Osti

2007:131). When sampling and analysing seawater, the head of communication explains, “we investigate two parameters that are escherichia coli and intestinal enterococchi, because those are the ones provided by the law on bathing waters in Italy. [...] [We do not] do more or less than the technical bodies to determine if a body of seawater can be swam in or not. So it’s the same typology of analysis.” (130728_001) The results are published accordingly, falling within one of the categories of classification: within the limits of the law, polluted, or very polluted.

Asked about the possible impact of their choice of common language - possible limitations, influence on the understanding of people who do not know the classification, or misunderstandings related to the parameters for the categories changing over the years - campaign members were unanimous in indicating that, on the contrary, it was something that made sense, enhanced their legitimacy with administrators, and gave them a clear cut language audiences could refer to. The head of the scientific office explained: “to give this judgement [...] of polluted, or highly polluted, we refer to the limits of existing laws [...] because it is the tool that allows you to speak the same language as the other bodies that are doing research.” (130726_002) The technician’s team leader told me that one time, they had been approached by a company that sold analysis kits, and were offered one that might have facilitated the sampling and analyses. But Legambiente refused to purchase it because, though its results may be scientifically sound, the kit didn’t follow institutional protocols. Using it would have made it “even more complicated to communicate data [...] [as] that system [...] would have been even less objective, because [...] [it was] completely different [...].” (130718_006). Another technician illustrated the importance of this method of communication: “over the course of the years, norms can be made more restrictive, or

abolished or changed. But in any case, they serve as guideline to have a value of objectivity and credibility that is grounded, founded. [Judgments made by the campaign] [...] can't just be the point of view of Legambiente, or of a single individual or a small team. And so, the continuous evolutions, be they technological or legislative, serve to modify the course of action, [...] to attain an objective that is, in practical terms, always the same." (130626_002) In participant's view, campaign legitimacy with the administrations is therefore conferred by syncing language and methodology with the official, administrative ones.

The Media

An interesting characteristic of Goletta Verde and Legambiente more generally is their hybridity: they conduct scientific monitoring on a given issue, but they also hold control over the first hand contextualization and communication of its results. A few channels of media communication originate from within the organization. Throughout the campaign, Goletta Verde organizers hold press conferences and issue press releases. They have their own media platform (website, facebook, and other social media), as many organizations do, but they are also affiliated with a their own media partner, *La Nuova Ecologia*, a magazine that, since 1995 operates on the reporting of Legambiente initiatives and related issues. "It is born from and works in the belief that the information, education and communication are essential tools in the environmental policy of sustainable development." (Translated from Italian; *La nuova ecologia, Chi siamo*, 2002-2008; 1 page: <http://www.lanuovaecologia.it/extra.php?extra=Chi%20siamo>) In addition, Legambiente retains control over the primary media releases during the Goletta Verde campaign by having

a press office staff along for the duration of the campaign. The job of campaign's press secretary's is essentially to 'translate' the events that occur daily on Goletta Verde through a conscious simplification, but mostly contextualization of the data against the backdrop of the general coastal condition of an area.

During the summer months, frequent reports on status of the campaign, ongoing activities and upcoming initiatives can then be found online on the campaign 'log book' or diary, available to all. More specifically for external media, the communication team issues regular press releases, on the basis of the analyses results and various local and regional contexts. Generally, it appears Goletta Verde participants share a positive opinion about having an primary channel of communication within the association, as it enhances legitimacy and enables them to back up disputed claims with original unfiltered press information. Some media control gives them an additional vehicle for sharing their associative ideas and vision: "when you do a blitz or [a similar activity], the *how you communicate it* is as important as the *how you've done it*. It is fundamental that the press secretary be a person that knows the association, shares its spirit, and most importantly, is [engaged] in the campaign itself. It's the only way to have a tool that transmits in the best way possible [the work] you are doing, especially in a system as complex as Goletta Verde." (Head of scientific office, 130729_003)

Interaction with external media

Goletta Verde campaigners engage with external media, by issuing press releases, holding press conferences, and inviting the media to blitz activities and other initiatives. The media is the primary direct audience of some of the campaign activities, such as blitzes,

where the entire activity is shaped around feeding the media something clear and visible - through a photograph with a banner, an interview (TV or radio). The media is invited to all of the events. Legambiente participants view the media as being very interested in the campaign and in receiving updates. This is demonstrated by the reporters' regular attendance to press conference events and their interests in being kept in the loop. This was evidenced in many occasions. For instance, a journalist who was on vacation with his family happened to stumble upon an ongoing campaign event. He approached Goletta Verde participants to get contact information to write an article to send to his paper while he was away on vacation. Many reporters have also been following Goletta Verde activities for years, and are their point of contact in a given municipality or region. Other journalists have also collaborated with Legambiente to write on a specific theme discussed in the campaign. As such, one journalist who came onboard for a part of the campaign had also worked with Legambiente in the past, writing a publication about the ecomafia (organized criminality as it pertains to environmental issues) in Italy. It therefore appears that Goletta Verde's understanding of and interactions with the media and media representatives occur in a spirit of collaboration. The media appears viewed as a useful vehicle for the campaign message, albeit one that needs guidance.

Sensationalism and influence on public perception

Indeed, while crucial, the media coverage of Goletta Verde also seems to be perceived as very sensationalist and very headline-driven, a characteristic that some participants attributed to Italian media in general. Unfortunately, it could potentially have damaging repercussions on the perception of environmental progress. The mayor I

interviewed made the following observations: “in Italy what's often in use, [is] [...] a very impact-strong communication. Often, [...] we have with us journalists that [...] to make news, [...] put a huge headline that isn't very coherent with the article. So, when you instead want to transmit news, you have little choice but to adhere to this way of communicating with which the information is made. [...] [In my opinion, this is not] correct. [...] if a small little bad thing happens, it is worth more than a great good thing. This is a bit the flaw of communication these days. Now with social networks, you get on, you write "Acciaroli is a really ugly place", tomorrow morning 1000 people will know this, the day after tomorrow, a million people. [...]” (130726_004) And as the campaign occurs during the summer months, intentionally coinciding with tourism season, this sort of publicity can really affect smaller, economically-vulnerable communities - something Legambiente hopes to be a stimulus for environmental action. Problematically, it can also affect the ones making slow but steady progress toward becoming more sustainable.

The media therefore represents a significant filter of information about Legambiente and their campaign Goletta Verde for the public and the administrations. It is difficult to say whether in their imagination of the media and the public audience, Goletta Verde organizers understand how this relationship between the public and media can affect Legambiente's own interaction with the public. This could suggest a potential for discontinuity in the way the campaign narrative will be received and shared, with a possible bias from public predisposition toward different media in Italy. Anecdotally, during the earlier stage of my fieldwork I was hosted by some friends. Over lunch, the television set was on, showing the latest news. With all the rain there had been in May, there was flooding in many parts of the country and politicians were issuing official statements, along with other news. My hostess, a

professional journalist with has years of experience in her field, received the news report with a blatant sarcasm directed at its lack of quality and “very relative” truthfulness. She quickly changed the channel to another one, a terrible TV show giving its watchers their daily zodiac readings: “We might as well watch the horoscope!”, she exclaimed. She is far from being the only one to hold the media in such cynical contempt. In addition to be headline-driven, Italian media can also be fairly controversial, particularly against a backdrop of political control of some of the most important media outlets in the country for many years. In this context, we catch a glimpse of explanation to some of the Italian attitudes (skepticism and other) to the content delivered by news coverage in the country. Although the ownership of mainstream papers is dominated by industrialists and politicians, the written press is fairly evenly distributed among contenders and perspectives (The Economist 2011b). But roughly 80% of Italians still receive their news primarily from television. Free television channels, however, are largely concentrated in the hands of Berlusconi (Mediaset) or controlled by government (RAI), who then influence their content (see: http://ejc.net/media_landscapes/italy and Reporters Without Borders, *World Report. Italy*, 2014, 1 page, available at: <http://en.rsf.org/report-italy,111.html>). Though the situation is deemed “satisfactory” (Reporters Without Borders, *World Report. Italy*, 2014, 1 page, available at: <http://en.rsf.org/report-italy,111.html>), the country faces many challenges and ranks 49th out of 180 globally in the World Press Freedom Index, falling far behind the UK, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and many other Western European countries. (Reporters Without Borders, *World Press Freedom Index 2014*, 1 page, available at: <http://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php#>).

It seems that Legambiente imagine a public as an audience of their own campaign

message, but not necessarily as an audience of the media first, and only secondly of their media-filtered message. Interview materials reveal that Legambiente members seem more focused on being able to claim that they conveyed accurate information than on understanding their secondary repercussions. As the heads of the campaign explain it to me, they feel that during the transition from their press conference or press releases to media headlines, there is often a loss of content driven by other imperatives, such as the need to generate media interest, to ensure coverage. The data has to be simplified for media releases and the various media representatives needs guidance and contextual information (130728_001) to retain the essence of the message Goletta Verde is sending out. According to the head of the communication team, “[Legambiente] have been explaining to every journalist that the key to reading [sampling results communicated] is a given, rather than another, and so that if [Legambiente] are not being alarmistic, [they] don’t see why the journalist should, to be able to sell a few extra copies of the paper” (130728_001). There can be misinterpretation of the data by the media who focus on one specific aspect of the press release. For instance, many headlines will feature messages along the lines of: “According to Goletta Verde, 50% of the Italian beaches they sampled are polluted.” (Del Guercio, Huffington Post, 2013). By contrast, says the head of the scientific office, “on our own press releases you'll never read "the sea is polluted" or "the Calabrese sea is polluted" [...]. We try to show how many points we have made, actually, we always say it, why we do this number of points, and [...] contextualize [them] well [...]. [W]e are not pleased with catastrophic headlines about the condition of the Italian sea. [...] [But] it is always complicated, [...] once you give news, to retain control over how they get spread and printed in the press, it's very complicated. [...] one has to evaluate in which cases it's going to be useful to intervene

reiterating certain things, and what are the cases in which [it is] not.” (130726_002) The fact that the data can at times be skewed by the media can be both an advantage and a disadvantage for Goletta Verde, depending on the situation.

Beyond their in-person interactions with the public and administrations through various campaign activities, one of Goletta Verde’s principal public interfaces or access points is through the intermediating media coverage of their activities and investigations. This can be problematic. “[When] we [...] have to respond [to an alarmist media publication] we have to underline certain things, because it is important for us that our work should be interpreted properly. And often it isn’t. So on the side of the citizens, there isn’t really another real source of information from the institutions and on the side of communal administrations, [...] obviously they feel [a sensitive chord has been struck], and [our message] is misguided by the formula chosen by the journalist to communicate [our] data.” (130728_001) Campaign organizers know that they will sometimes need to readjust the aim of the coverage, but what isn’t clear is to what extent they feel this is effective in representing them in the public eye. Outside a few general comments, this is something that hasn’t been explored very much in interview, although various reactions and attitudes emanated from my observations and my interactions with Italian citizens outside the association.

The Public

The third target audience of the Goletta Verde is a broader category - the public. Among the multiple campaign interlocutors identified by the association, the remaining ones can loosely fit in this category. The public roughly refers to citizens, people who live, work

in, travel through, and in many other ways temporarily or sedentarily occupy coastal spaces. It can also expand more largely to all of Italian society in general, and temporary residents of the public sphere. It is a non-descript other that doesn't fit a particular role or characterization other than that of taking part in society, in one way or another, and who could be affected by a repercussions or benefits of a particular coastal situation as equally as the next person. As a technician described it: "The public [...] are the citizens [...] in the form of residents, [...] who live in that location as well than tourists, who move around specifically to go on vacation in that location. So it's all those people that have the right to be, [...] informed if there are problems, and so they can then make choices, for example, not to go on holiday in that location, instead of another. But it's also the public in a larger sense, to bring attention to an awareness of all the citizens [...]. [Everyone uses], especially in this [summer] period, the sea as landing point for their own vacations, weekends, [for] their walks for who lives there." (130626_002) A member of the public - or citizen¹⁶ - is an abstract entity, but paradoxically one that has agency, the possibility to take action in the context of any given issue, the right to be informed, the right to make choices.

This right falls under the realm of Legambiente's action. Their primary concern in reaching out to this audience is that the latter have access to intelligible and accurate information on the condition of the Italian seas and coasts. This has been the case since the beginning of the campaign, which associatively started as a form of citizen action, to eventually get bigger to gain the recognition of official campaign over the years. At the origin and still today, Goletta Verde "wanted to offer citizens a tool to understand the sea in

¹⁶ The terms might be used interchangeably in the research, as they have been by participants. The notion of citizen is not limited to official Italian citizenship holders, but refers more to a 'person living the place' who has a form of citizenship to the environment he or she inhabits.

which they were swimming, to understand if it was a clean sea, if it was a sea that presented pollution, or problems” explains the head of the scientific office of Legambiente and a major spokesman for Goletta Verde campaign (130726_002). Many campaign participants described the public as information-deprived citizens in a system of institutions that makes such information counter-intuitive, inaccessible, complex, and at times incoherent - when it is even available. Legambiente establishes that the public has a ‘right to know’ but the poor institutional communication mechanisms mean that to benefit of this right, citizens need an intermediary - an association - to turn institutional gibberish into intelligible, simple, and accessible information that is contextualized in such a way that citizens are able to make appropriate and safe decisions. The head of the communication campaign describes their founding relationship to the public as follows:

“I, as a citizen, not having information, I do not know that I can find data about bathing waters on the site of the ARPAs, which are technical sites - except maybe for a few regions that are a little more advanced in terms of communication, but I assure you, many times, it is really difficult, even for us [Legambiente], to find official data. So imagine, a citizen, without great scientific culture, without great knowledge, [...] in short, it’s hard to achieve. [You go on the Ministry of Health’s website], the water portal, [...] which makes all [the bathing water] data converge, - [...] [even though,] sometimes we find discrepancies between [...] ARPAs’ points and [...] the water portal’s which should be the same, in substance because the data comes from [the same place] - but [they] [...] don’t do mass communication [...]. So you find yourself where the only ones [...] who then come and tell you what condition the sea is in, are those of Goletta Verde.” (130728_001)

As intermediary, Legambiente then engages in the ‘translation’ of the data for the public. The association, however, adds another layer to this communication. Contextualization of the information is a crucial step, as it raises awareness. Goletta Verde is an activist initiative and a civic one, and it’s on behalf of this civic action that they conceptualize the translation. “I believe that the translation is necessary. Because the way in which you approach people -- that is before people approach you, take you as the source of a data, or of a position, or a battle, [they] have to be able to understand. Obviously, translate doesn’t always mean simplifying. It can mean explaining things well, on the basis of what you are assuming a position over another, trying to create a community that then supports you in your battle. (130728_001)

Legambiente therefore view the public as one that needs to be informed not only of minimum facts, but one that has the right to know the why and the how these facts all fit into a bigger picture - a vision they want to convey to the public and that they would like it to embrace. This isn’t an easy task. Sometimes, the public would prefer to just have basic information. As a technician explains to me: “it is difficult to make the bather understand [our vision]. [B]ecause the bather precisely just wants to know, ‘yes but can I swim here or not, is the water clean or not?’ The small step we have to take [...], is to inform the citizen that it isn’t just a question of whether the sea is clean or not, but that all the environment that you are living [in] - so beach, sea, shoreline, etc. - has problems or doesn’t. So it’s informing the citizen that the law isn’t so simple, but that it is also in their [citizens] interest that they inform themselves during the year, and that they apply pressure on their territory. And in any case, it’s a fusion with the concept [of] ‘swimmable: yes’ or ‘swimmable: no’. [So] this is the other important aspect of the divulgation of the data that we obtain. We start to transform

these numbers, these parameters above or below the [acceptable] value, into motivations and explanations to citizens.” (130626_002)

To better communicate with citizens, the Goletta Verde campaign includes a few channels of communication. During public speaking events (e.g. press conferences, local initiatives, stops in harbours), education initiatives (for instance, in collaboration with sponsors), and other types of interactions, communication team members engage with the public, answering questions, giving tours of the boat, explaining the importance of the campaign, and its *raison-d'être*. The public can also contact Legambiente via social media (facebook, email). In addition, a special tool at the public's disposal is the initiative Legambiente calls “SOS Goletta”. SOS Goletta is a cellphone-based and online-based reporting tool where members of the public can send Legambiente notices about specific critical points in the sea where they believe there is a pollution problem. They can either fill out a form online or send an SMS/MMS to Legambiente, including their contact info, a description of the point, a picture (if applicable), an address near the point, the GPS coordinates, the date and time of observation, the comune and province, whether it's a sea or lake point, and specific sensorial cues picked up at the location (foul smell, suspicious patches, suspicious discharge pipes, presence of waste, daily frequency of problem, and whether there are water purification plants or estuaries nearby). The technical team is principally in charge of monitoring this activity as it might help them with their sampling activities. The technical team lead tells me about the dynamics of the initiative: “we'd typically receive 200-300 [per year].[...] [We let people know that if we haven't gone by, we might try to check it out, and if we have already gone by that area, we will try to include the point in next year's scientific program. If possible, we try to coordinate with those people

who were available and made this point known to us, and make them sorts of protagonists, and it becomes an educational exchange.]"(130718_005)

Asked whether they believe the citizens can and do actively engage in this vision, the answer is positive, and double. First, there is a self-referential approach: Legambiente started out as a group of citizens who were concerned with environmental issues and started acting on them. Secondly, there is a belief that anyone can act - by writing a petition, by making complaints to authorities, by joining an association, and so forth. Campaign participants believe in the strength of the public - though some, as the technicians team leader, underline the need for an systematic and structured public action: "I believe in the power of the citizen - [however it] has to be an organized one [that is backed up with proof, verifiable assertions]. [...] This is why I think Legambiente is strong [...] because it has verified [statements and assertions]." (130718_005) The view of the public is therefore very much self-referential, shaped by similar motivations to the ones campaign participants carry forward with their own project.

Section B. What they tell

(or: Elemental narratives forming the plot)

As we have seen in our section about theoretical tools, the campaign is a sort of performance, acting out the elements of a narrative that composes it. (Goffman 1959). To create loci for connectedness (Lejano et al. 2013:122) with audiences, the performance is staged using strong characterization elements, that give “actants (abstract role-players) life and basically giving them specific identity” (Lejano et al. 2013:63). In this *mise-en-scène*, notions like the environment, the boat, and eco-monsters come together, bearers of universal elemental narrative features of good and bad, right and wrong. (Lejano et al. 2013:75) The next section shows us how the voices multiple human and nonhuman actants are joined together in these elemental narratives, revealing how this plurivocity is constructed.

The Goletta Verde campaign is embedded in a discourse where language is strongly infused with moral judgment, symbolic imagery, and values. In many ways, the articulation of the metanarrative throughout the campaign follows narrative elements found in tales and fables. There are strong characterizations of ideas defining what’s good versus bad, what’s right versus wrong, with a moralistic undertone reminiscent of the ‘inevitability of fatality’ when a given moral code isn’t followed. This is part of the process of establishing themselves and their metanarrative as matters of fact (Latour, 2004b). The following section will explore how some of these moralistic dichotomies are manifested in various campaign thematics.

The good, the bad, ...

If one were to find a caricatural synopsis of the plot of Goletta Verde’s campaign, it

might read something like: ‘*Goletta Verde is the story of the good green sailors who waged wars against the enemies of the coasts and brought environmental equality and prosperity to all the good people of Italy.*’ Indeed, the *Goletta Verde* is - not unusually for environmentalist campaigns - filled with strong, appealing and especially sharable imagery and ideals.

Featuring of protagonists and characterization non human actants

The campaign protagonists are Legambiente’s environmental activists - or *Legambientini*, as they sometimes refer to themselves. In the forefront of the campaign narrative, the *Legambientini* that appear the most publicly are the ones who belong to the communication team; that is, the ones who travel about by boat, holding public events and divulging the results of the scientific monitoring in every region. Technicians, on the other hand, operate behind the scenes; more quiet, but essential to the functioning of the campaign. They themselves are not really included in the elemental narrative, though their monitoring work - interpreted and contextualized by the communication team - is constantly visible. The technicians find their place in the emplotment mechanisms of the campaign - to which the next section of this analysis is dedicated.

The elemental narrative’s protagonists are *essential* to story they are trying to tell. This essentiality takes shape through three main claims, or features: *togetherness*, *uniqueness*, and *authority*. With these, campaign participants are legitimately brought into existence within the story, as carriers of the elemental narrative, able to distinguish between the good and the bad, able to carry forth their vision.

Togetherness is featured in the both national and universalist character of the

campaign. Goletta Verde sails around the entire Italian coastal territory once a year. It serves as a place of gathering for issues across the territory - nationally, regionally, locally - and anyone can join it. It holds together Legambiente's network all over Italy, ensuring that its message remains consistent, accessible, and available throughout, but also, highlighting the variability that exists in the smaller fractions of the national territory. It is a constant open invitation for others to join the campaign. In return their local or individual sustainability efforts are reunited with the campaign's, and recognized by the collectivity. As a mayor from Campania put it, "Goletta Verde pretty much represents a very important feast (celebration), because [it is where] we collect the fruit of all of our work conducted during the year". (130726_004) Togetherness brings in *allies* who work alongside the protagonists: good administrators and active citizens.

Good administrators are like Angelo Vassallo, the former mayor of Pollica, Campania, who worked for years at improving local environmental conditions, before being murdered in 2010. It is suspected that his hard work, his environmental program promoting better and more sustainable practices, and obstructing criminal control in the area, were the cause of his assassination, though the latter was never claimed by anyone. Good administrators therefore aren't just a metaphorical archetypes instrumentalized to serve campaign purposes. They are very real individuals who share the values embodied by the campaign and its participants. They are individuals who form a network with Legambiente, and collaborate with them out of principle and belief. The heritage they leave behind, as in the case of Angelo is grounded in more than grandiose gestures. As the head of the communication tells me about him, she gets very emotional. She tells me of how he would come to greet them, welcoming them every year, every time they arrived in the harbour. He

embodied the soul of the place - it wasn't Legambiente who taught something to this mayor, she explains, but rather, it was the mayor who had taught them what it meant to change a place, who had left them such a powerful legacy. (Field notes, July 27, 2013) The narrative also has room for 'good citizens' to embed themselves in. People with restaurants on the beach near a sewage discharge that lobby to have it treated as it affects local business. Members of the public, small business owners, particularly the ones dependent on tourism, blue collar workers who suffered from environmental injustices. The narrative even has room for citizen-heroes. In Reggio-Calabria, a restaurant owner who joined us during one of the campaign stops was telling us about how he helped get members of the local 'ndrangheta (regional organized criminals) arrested and for extortion by installing hidden video cameras in his restaurant¹⁷; with their upcoming release from prison, he hoped to broadcast his message as a form of protection against retaliation. This embeddement of multiple interconnected subnarratives, finding their voice in the metanarrative, is a set of personal connections, a set of very real attachments, friendships, even, cast during the campaign between *Legambientini*, the people of local and regional circles, the people from the *comuni*.

Togetherness therefore engages them in "the [field of] action of Legambiente [...] that of moving forth an idea [...] of development, of sustainability, [that rests behind] everything that is affirmed" (Head of technical team; 130718_006). Protagonists put forth the idea of a collectivity that is responsible as a whole, where community members help each other remain accountable: "[...] The position of Legambiente is never accusatory. Well, it is accusatory in regards to the responsibilities [...]. [B]ut you can [always] say, 'here, there is the problem, you haven't fulfilled your responsibilities; let's find a way together to solve this

¹⁷ The video made it to Italian news. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xX6H0o6XSbU>

problem.” (Head of communication team; 130718_006) This ideal of shared responsibility reflects an acceptance of the imperfections that exist throughout Italy, but insists on seeing improvements, reaching for a higher standard of perfection (or less imperfection). For instance, during one of the communication initiatives in the problematic region of Calabria, the emphasis was put on the *comune* of Tropea, recognized for its beauty, as a model for others to replicate. There, Goletta Verde denounced some of the environmental issues in the region with a motto that roughly translates to: ‘Loving Calabria: denouncing in order to improve’. In making themselves visible, our protagonists thereby emphasize the necessity of togetherness that collectively embraces ‘tough love’ for the successful implementation of their vision.

The second feature of Goletta Verde’s protagonists is their *uniqueness*. It situates their essentiality, their importance, in the fact that they are the only ones who do this sort of work in the country, the only ones denouncing problematic coastal situations. As the heads of communication and technical teams explained, “GV is the only reality that communicates the data in our country; [...] [with] all the tens of dossiers that we do, I think we’re the only ones in Italy to put together all the data and give it an interpretation. And the campaigns are used to translate all this amount of information, that can be at the hand of the citizens and the administrations, [raising issues while implicating the media] [...] [and reaching] our proposals.” (130728_001)

Finally, a third feature of Goletta Verde’s protagonists is their *authority*. Throughout the campaign, they establish themselves as truth holders, particularly through their claim of uniqueness. Beyond the construction of their scientifically-based claims (explored in the next section), protagonists characterise themselves as go-to people, that are legitimizing of others,

and have (or rather *take*) the authority to reward or denounce others publicly. Their associative character gives them additional functional and operational strength, moving forward one voice that is the regroupment of many.

The key characters have their antagonists. In the elemental narratives of Goletta Verde, their portrayal proposes a rudimentary polarity with the protagonists'. Administrators, for instance, do not always agree with Legambiente's premises or proposed changes. Many get defensive, reactionary, and at times hostile. Their designation, in the daily conversations with participants, is categorical: they are the *bad* administrators - in stark opposition with the 'good' administrators, those who side with Goletta Verde, working conjunctly.

Bad administrators are one example of antagonists to the elemental narrative. Antagonists are basically 'polluters', people or groups bringing about the environmental problems fought by the campaign, or allowing them to persist. They can take the form of owners of beach establishments who privatize large portions of the beach, or people constructing on the coast without building permits, infringing regulations, and so on. One of the groups that fits the 'bad' denomination and that is particularly worthy of mentioning is what is called the 'ecomafia'. In the literature, Greyl et al., among others, describe it as "a network of criminal organizations that commit crimes causing environmental damage" (2013:273) Similarly, a mayor I interviewed narrowed the term to the following characteristics: "With ecomafia are married two important phenomena: the capacity of criminal organizations to damage the environment, at the same time as recuperating money."(130726_004) Ecomafia is a neologism coined by Legambiente, and now widely used in the media and making its way into mainstream language to refer to environmental damage of criminal nature, and it is particularly prominent around the issue of waste

management in Italy, known for its highly corrupted and criminally-based practices, that cause significant environmental, and most importantly health problems. Ecomafia talks to the idea environmental injustice and inequality, to political and economic problems, to the reality of organised crime ingrained in Italy, with a strong presence in the South. Legambiente issues yearly reports on statistics linked to the damages caused by the Ecomafia. They are not a direct result of the Goletta Verde campaign, but the campaign continually denounces and antagonises the activities of the ecomafia in its fight toward sustainability. Environmental organized criminality is a reality in Italy, and the second part of the analysis examines more closely some of its contextual roots and impacts in the country. The word ecomafia, however, was created by the association to put a name on a reality they wanted to make visible and identifiable as a counteractive force to their vision.

Values and symbols that shape the elemental narratives

In addition to the characters that constitute it, the plot of Goletta Verde's elemental narratives is filled with values and symbols. These contribute to shaping a certain vision of the world, inclusive of a human centered environmentalism that associates the good in the natural world with beauty, territory and health, and the bad, with symbols tainting it. The campaign is filled with symbolic articulations of this vision.

From interviews, I realized that definitions of key terms like the environment, encompassed other notions filled with symbolic meaning and shared values. Participants established very close ties between their definitions of the environment and an in-depth knowledge and pride of territory, the recognition of beauty, people's civic duty, and notions of sustainability and environmental justice. These all have a very strong link with

understanding the Italian context from a historical perspective and one that looks at current state of affairs. It is also one that demands taking into account a geographical understanding of the territory and its divisions into regions with different subsets of the Italian culture.

Vision of the world

The idea of a collective environmental conscience is symbolically developed and articulated around associative values that promote civic action. The ‘environment’ in the vision is not limited to nature. As participants explain it, “by environment, we mean not only natural heritage, [...] [but more a] context in which you have the cohabitation between man and nature [...]” (Head of the scientific team; 130729_003) In Goletta Verde’s elemental narratives, the natural world is closely linked to the way in which humans use it (benefit from it, take advantage of it, or exploit it). “[The] environment is ...nature... but also... the social network that is created around for the protection of environment in general[...]. So it’s the just coexistence between nature and man. (Head of the communication team; 130728_001) A ‘just coexistence’ is a reference to the important idea of *balance* that recurs throughout the narrative. Nature in and of itself is not at the center of the campaign message. It is understood primarily as *resource* for man, in a holistic sense (not exclusively an economic one). Consequently, a resource, in that sense, can bring economic prosperity, but also health, quality of life, pleasure, and a sense of history and community.

This understanding of a resource is summarized by three concepts that emerged my fieldwork, as dominant positive features sought from the natural world: beauty, territory, and health. All three are considered ‘values’, in that they carry intrinsic value (weight), but also because they are symbolic *gatherings* of other values. Together, they shape Legambiente’s

concept of *environment*, vehiculated through Goletta Verde campaigns. Beauty, territory and health are constructed as *rights*. They are available collectively, - or could readily be made available - to all citizens in the country. They encompass the notion of equal access to the environment as resource: free access to beaches, access to clean water, access to environmental compensation, and to all the things can that come from a resource. Within Legambiente's framework, they also stand for *responsibility*. This is where the association and its yearly campaign establish their importance, taking the collective values that constitute their definition of environment, and leaning them against the campaign's core associative values of environmentalism and sustainability. In other words, one can preserve the environmental balance, that is, the beauty, territory and health of the natural world as resource (*right*), if one embraces Legambiente's framework of environmentalism and sustainability (*responsibility*).

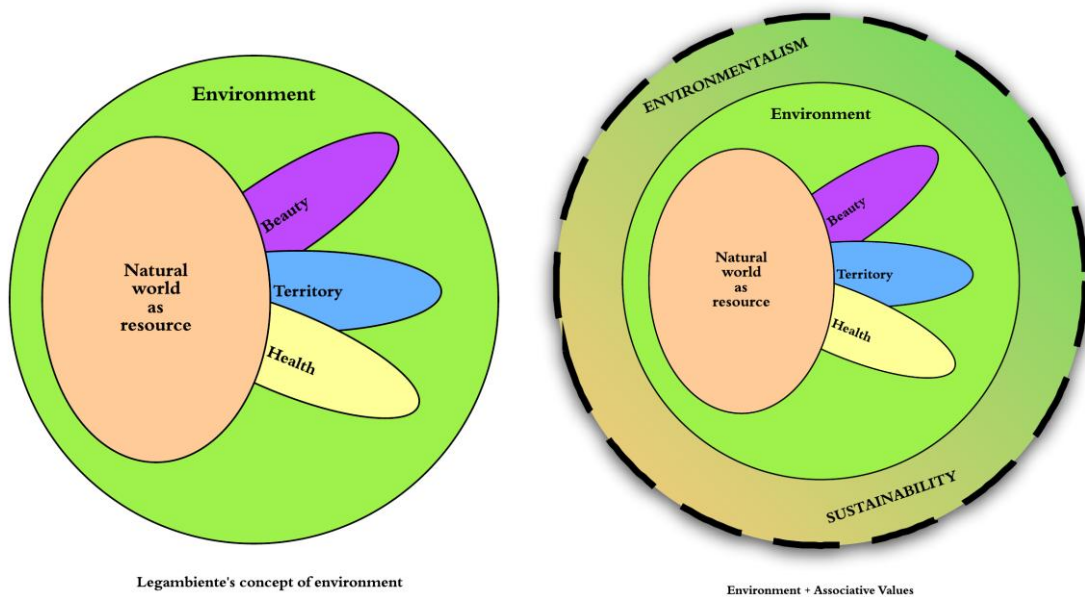


Figure 2

Let's take a closer look at how these core associative and collective values are understood by participants. I will attempt to describe them separately, but they are extremely fluid notions that overlap and interact continuously.

1. Environmentalism

The first time I went to Legambiente's headquarters in Rome, I remember feeling like I had stumbled upon the live manifestation of the environmentalist essence incarnated into a physical setting. Situated on Via Salaria, the same street as numerous embassies, it is enclosed and surrounded by one of Rome's spectacular parks, Villa Ada. From the street, I crossed a large gate, next to which there hung a huge "Legambiente" yellow flag. Crossing the gate, I walked a long driveway that spiralled up alongside the park, lost in vegetation. When I finally reached their offices, hidden by trees, it looked as though I reached the grounds of an old highschool, with a trailer-like feel to it. (I was told that it was in fact formerly a school.) With minimum air conditioning restricted to the computer room of scientific office, the rest of the premises are subject to Roman heat and humidity. The conference room was filled with tables and chairs made of cardboard. Apparently there is a supplier in Italy that provides cardboard furniture to organizations that want to be "green". Or maybe it's just a Rome thing. The staff were all dressed in very, very casual clothes, wide pants, linen fabrics, sunglasses made from recycled plastics. There were pen writings on the wall indicating which door needs to be slammed shut, to keep lights off, which one closes by itself. Posters from previous campaigns and initiatives covered the walls. The setting exuded an environmentalism bathed in calmness. Fast-tracking a few weeks later and my definition had expanded to encompass a key element crucial to shaping Italian environmentalism today:

a human element. Legambiente's environmentalism is one of careful human considerations for nature, as reflected in something as banal as their choice of cardboard furniture over more common alternatives, but it's also and especially an environmentalism that thinks of man as the principal character in this nature. Against extreme conservationism - "we don't [particularly] like reserves...never do we want to close off an area to people [prevent public access]" (130728_001) - the head of the communication campaign would reiterate that "at the basis of our quotidian battles, there is the conviction that man is at the center, in some way, of the environment, of nature. When we fight our battles, [...] we do it [...] so that all citizens, all people may benefit civilly of a good [a resource like that] [...] of an uncontaminated coastline." (130728_001) A human-centered environmentalism is a search for balance between man's enjoyment and use of nature, and his respect of the resources it provides him with. A lack of balance isn't just caused by proactive damage to the environment. It can also be caused by a lack of activity, or by negligence. For instance, as explored earlier, Italy's massive flooding is very problematic. A mayor I interviewed was telling me: "I am convinced that a lot depends on the fact that man has abandoned the cultivation of the land [the fields]. Before, there was agriculture. [What] the farmers [...] did was that they would have large gardens on the hills, that regulated the flux of rain waters [...]. The environment had reached a balance [...] thanks also to human intervention. From the moment in which the farmer no longer did this work, a negative discontinuity was created [...] produc[ing] this type of problem. So [...] we have to find the right means to use the environment. [...] [Legambiente's] definition of environmentalism doesn't have to do only with nature, or with the preservation of -- say -- biodiversity, but it's really a matter of society and of civic education." (130726_004) The project of environmentalism is therefore a

learned one, that includes man and society as whole, and works holistically with them. It is a project where man is “not necessarily [...] the devastator of nature, but instead [...] the motor of civility and passion, as in our case, that can valorise beauty, enjoy it without having to necessarily having to affect it [negatively].” (Head of the communication campaign; 130728_001)

2. Sustainability

This project of environmentalism has to be thought out over the long term. In Goletta Verde’s message, coastal development in Italy has to be sustainable - for generations to come. This is a shared vision. The various campaign’s sponsors are groups openly endorse the idea of sustainability. NAU!, an optical company that produces sunglasses for the campaign participants from recycled materials, writes in their mandate: “We are aware of our responsibilities to future generations and are committed, together with our Customers, to sustainable development with concrete actions.” (NAU!, *Who we are*, 2013; 1 page: <http://www.nau.it/en/about-nau/who-we-are/>) The associative value is one that is also shared by some of the administrators and citizens trying to bring about change. In my interview with that mayor from Campania, Angelo Vassallo’s successor, he was very adamant about this idea of legacy to future generations: “[the efforts and improvements you make], you never do them for yourself, or for the generation that grows up with you. You always do it for the people who will come after. We're always thinking -- at least I am -- I am always doing things for the children. I often meet children in schools because it's them who'll have to be equally knowledgeable and good in taking care of this place.” (130726_004)

3. Beauty

Beauty is the first pillar of sustainable development and environmentalism. On July 22, the boat makes a stop in Tropea, Calabria. During a public event in piazza, local, regional, and national Legambiente representatives, together with local residents and administrators, make a point of praising the beauty of Tropea - an exception in the problematic region of Calabria. They validate it through the promotion of a proposal for a law they are pushing forward - a Law on beauty. The idea of a legalizing beauty is not new. As seen in our earlier introduction, the idea of beauty as aesthetics goes back long way in Italian history. The idea of tying nature, to beauty, to territory and national pride is not new. Within the last 150 years, it can be linked to various political ideals. Von Hardenberg, in his essay *Act Locally, Think Nationally*, proposes “an overview of the evolution of nature conservation and resource management legislation and ideology in Italy during the Fascist Ventennio period (1923-43)” (Graf von Hardenberg 2010:141). The author traces back environmentalism in the 20th century to the Fascist era, where the idea of creating a “New Italy” was tied to the idea of promoting the natural beauty of the national territory. (Graf von Hardenberg 2010:142). In 1939, there was a renewal of the *Legge sulla difesa delle Bellezze naturali* (Law on the defense of natural beauties). Only more recently, does is more explicitly incorporate beauty with a component of human centered environmental development. Legambiente dedicated a work to one of the precursors of this idea, Antonio Cederna, one of the founders of Italia Nostra, an ONLUS created in 1955 and dedicated to artistic and environmental protection in Italy. (“Antonio Cederna. Una vita per la città, il paesaggio, la bellezza”, Legambiente 2012: <http://archivio.eddyburg.it/article/articleview/19350/0/236/>) Legambiente’s proposal for the

new law begins with the following premise:

“Beauty is without doubt, the principal characteristic that the world recognizes to Italy. For its cities, landscapes, artworks, the *made in Italy*, the creativity and the list could go on. [...] Culture and beauty are indeed decisive factors on which to [shape] our development. Because around the concept of quality, in its many cultural and social declinations, at the inextricable crossing between nature and wise human intervention, is enclosed the best of our identity and our history, and at the same time, a key for imagining another future, beyond the [economic] crisis. [...] we have to make quality the key of each transformation on the Italian territory. [...] It’s therefore to be a country able to move intelligences, attentions, and investments, around an idea of landscape as added value to the extraordinary patrimony of the cities and small centres, of environmental goods, historical and architectural, artistic, of cultures material and immaterial.”

(http://www.legambiente.it/sites/default/files/docs/bellezza_proposta_di_disegno_di_legge.pdf; <http://www.legambiente.it/bellezza>).

Insisting on the action of all levels of governance, it encourages the valorization of the local, and proposes 10 articles to define future action: (1) Beauty as heritage of the country; (2) Protection and redevelopment of the Italian landscape heritage; (3) Land protection and containment; (4) Beauty of public works and design contests; (5) Urban renewal; (6) Contribution for land protection and urban renewal; (7) Suppression of unauthorized building and environmental restoration of areas; (8) Public debate for the approval of infrastructure of national interest; (9) proclamation of ideas for beauty; and (10)

beauty of the gestures and civic sense.

Once again, responsibility for the resources comes with its benefit of beauty. The implementation of a collective environmental conscience is a civic project developed and repeated in all of the values it advocates. Legambiente advertises this vision through a variety of outlets. The back cover of the May 2013 edition of *La nuova ecologia* (Legambiente's magazine) features the picture of woman dressed in hills and vegetation (see below). The tagline reads: *Let's dress Italy in beauty*. In the text, it informs reader of the importance of beauty as cultural heritage, inviting them to contribute to the cause and to 'let themselves be contaminated by beauty'.



Figure 3 Vestiamo l'Italia di bellezza (Source: *La nuova ecologia*, May 2013 anno xxxiii numero 5)

When asked about whether they equated beauty, environment, sustainability and civic education, some participants responded affirmatively.

“They can be synonyms, yes. [...] we've reached the point where we use the concept of beauty, in my opinion in the right way. In the sense that up until now, normally, [...] you see a beautiful woman, beautiful jewellery, a beautiful car. Now, finally beauty is associated to the right things. Beauty is [...] the sensation that can be offered to you by the living of a place, the living in a place. Beauty can be what nature gives to you, and so, beauty becomes a synonym of environment, of sustainability. But maybe beauty is represented by the whole of all these things. It is very difficult to define. [...] It's a little bit a balance of all these things put together. [...] it's very important to understand that sometimes, the beauty of things is not only in what you can perceive with only one sense, but it's represented also by everything that comes out together of the [ensemble of] perceptions that you can have.” (Mayor of Pollica; 130726_004)

The mayor cautions on the need to carefully proceed with the economic development of a territory so that its beauty remains accessible to the people of the place:

“If we become an elite tourism destination, [...] we risk doing something that I don't really like[: privatizing the beaches with beach establishments]. The common people risk not being able to go for a swim in the sea. [...] On the Romagnola shore (Riviera Romagnola) 99% of the beaches are occupied by private [ownership]. In Pollica, there are the free beaches, where [if] you decide to come for a swim, you don't have to pay anything to swim. [...] Beauty is for everyone.” (Idem)

4. Territory

The territory is another value advocated by Legambiente, generally alongside beauty, keeping them close in meaning. Knowledge of the territory comes from living the territory. Knowledge of the territory is probably the most distinct idea vehiculated by this value, attributing a lot of importance to the variety of places, landscapes and people that coexist in Italy. With over 8,000 *comuni*, it is a land of particularisms and localisms. Knowing and understanding them, in their differences, plays a big part in the narrative told through Goletta Verde. Monitoring the coasts does not stop at following a scientific methodology: “LG is teaching that a technical, scientific aspect is not made only of a sample. It is made also by the knowledge of that place.” (Mayor of Pollica; 130726_004) The contextualization of issues within the territory is crucial, because, as the mayor tells me, you can’t just know a place in a moment: “in Italy, we talk about the "spirit of the places" [*"spirito dei luoghi"*], in latin, *genius loci*, which, practically, means that a place is not just made of houses, boats, of the nice harbour, but it is made by those who live it, of the real sensations that people experience. It's made of the way of welcoming people. It's made up of a lot of things.” (Idem) Looking out of his window, seeing hills merging into the sea in the distance, is what he calls the *privilege* of knowing the territory. It is a privilege Legambiente shares through the regional and local components of the association, that help recognize and promote this great diversity.

5. Health

One of Goletta Verde’s logos is that it’s a campaign for the ‘health of our seas and coasts’. The notion of health regroups all the themes in the campaign, not just pollution. The

notion of health is all inclusive, in that it looks around “at 360 degrees of all the problems” (Head of scientific office; 130726_002). Health refers to indicators of coastal well-being, like “the naturalness, the condition of the health of the biodiversity, of the animal species of the marine ecosystem, of the algae, in short everything that enters in the natural component of that ecosystem [...] [as well as indicators of the environmental] [...] well-being [...] of a locality, [...] [through] good environmental management, [...] but also the health and the quality of life of the citizens.” (Idem) One of the technicians explains it a little differently, focusing especially on the health of human populations: “Health of the sea, specifically, but health also of the people who use it. That is, having a healthy sea, or waters that arrive to the sea healthy, thus clean, or at least purified, at least treated. It is a synonym not only of environmental protection, it is a synonym also of attention toward the people who use the beach, the sea, the kids who play on the beach and for whom it’s not fair that they’d go, unknowingly, to play in those transition zones between the river and the sea, which unfortunately often turn up to be FI. So this is for health. So you have a concept linked both to environment, and also to the health, specifically of the people.” (130626_002)

The boat as symbol

Along with values, there are many symbols that articulate Legambiente’s vision of a collective environmental conscience throughout the campaign - for instance, the association’s symbol is a swan, the campaign’s logo features a seahorse, and so on. I would like to focus on the symbolism behind the boat, the schooner Goletta Verde’s communication team travels on to deliver its campaign message around the country. I believe more than any other, this is the symbol that personifies the campaign message the most. The boat is actually

several boats, as historically, the campaign has alternated using four different vessels. The present one, called *La Catholica*, has its own history, legacy. Used in the war for weapon smuggling into Yugoslavia, (Fiorillo 2010: 21) “it has had a second life from the moment it was recovered in the 1980s [...]” (Head of the scientific office; 130729_003) Sailing with *Goletta Verde* since 1993, purchased expressly for the campaign by the association in 2006, it also served as a boat for social rehabilitation programs of former addicts; its current captain and members of his crew are part of an alternate association, *Unione Vela Solidale*, which runs sailing programs for people with disabilities. “From the moment in which it started a second life, that boat has always had a mission of educative action, of rehabilitation of addicts, of association, so, for us, this particular boat has always been a boat the people know as it has always carried in its center common themes of citizenship [themes common to citizens, of civic action].” (Idem)

The boat is a symbol of “*extra-active citizenship*” (Head of the communication team; 130728_001) since the beginning of the campaign. At the time, for the first while, the samples were even taken from the boat. Many people still believe it is the case, creating a myth of the “laboratory-boat” or the “floating laboratory” of Legambiente. (Head of the communication team; 130728_001) Incorrect though it may be, this interpretation has its advantages, and may even be a desirable myth, creating an image of the campaign that is easy to assimilate in the public mind, while granting a welcomed discretion to the technical team actually conducting the monitoring. (Head of the communication team; 130728_001) The boat is “showy” and has a lot of communication appeal. Some participants described it to me as a sort of *microcosm* of the campaign and of the world, in that the replication of real-world behaviours on the boat is much more strongly felt. If you pollute on the boat, it is

immediately visible. Participants jokingly even created a *comune* on the boat, broadcasting ‘local’ news reports to each other. Internally, and for their audiences, Goletta Verde is then a travelling example of the narrative they are communicating. The boat embeds itself in the narrative by *generating experience*. “Beyond transmitting certain objective concepts, it also conveys exactly what it [means to be] living in that moment. [...] The boat, from the perspective of the campaign, [...] represents the best way to move around and to live directly what you are communicating, what you are transmitting.” (Head of scientific office; 130729_003) The boat is way to *connect* - with end-users, and with the reality Goletta Verde is campaigning - as it is “the symbol of the sea” (Head of the communication team; 130728_001), the provider of a privileged perspective. “[B]eing on the sea, being on the boat, you meet fishermen, you come across ships, you see the plastic that the people who live on the sea also see, you see the coasts from the sea, and so you realize the condition of their health, in short, you have the point of view of someone who lives the sea and the sea itself. So this, by far, is one of the fundamental aspects.” (Head of scientific office: 130729_003)

The campaign is highly dependent on the *visibility* of the boat. Visibility, in this case, is equated with an opportunity to generate proximity between people and the issues campaigned. As the head of the scientific office tells me: “it wouldn’t make sense (to have) a campaign about the sea that travels by land [...]. The times when we [do] press conferences in the cities that aren’t looking out on the sea, [...] you realize how difficult it is to make the messages pass. You even see it in the journalists that come there, in the sense that it is really a different perception of the campaign.” (130729_003) The essentiality of having the boat as symbol is echoed by the other participants.

“It has happened sometimes that we have had troubles, and stayed without the

boat, [...] doing some stops via land, for instance, sometimes when maybe it can't reach some of the places. And it is a problem. It is a problem. Because in any case, you're missing, in some way, the scenography. [...] we could go do Goletta Verde, taking with us all its contents and all that we are doing now on board. But, without the boat, [...], it's half [of the story]. [...] we [generate] less fascination, and we are less recognizable, it's less of an image, indubiously.” (Head of communication team; 130728_001)

The boat is key to having the narrative accepted. This much needed proximity to the sea highlights one of the difficulties of making their claims a priority to those farther away, an issue that as we will see manifests itself in many ways.

Counter-values embedded in the narrative

We have explored some of the values and symbols that shape the campaign narrative. Also present are elements that go against those values, and that Legambiente has identified as targets to fight. A few symbols act as counter-values in the narrative. Oftentimes, just as many of the listed values are shared, counter-values are collectively and unanimously thought of negatively, by campaign participants but also outsiders. I will briefly look at a few articulations of these counter-values.

1. Bacteria

Classically, the expression *Mare Nostrum* refers to the Italian portion of Mediterranean sea. Literally, *Mare Nostrum* means “Our sea”, and describes the Mediterranean coastline and sea that were historically under the rule of the Roman Empire. Both Legambiente and various news providers, after them, have put a twist on the phrase, in

their written communication, referring instead to the Italian seas as *Mare Monstrum*, or “Monstrous Sea” (Legambiente 2013c). Indeed, seawater can enter the elemental narrative under a negative, tainted light, through pollution, its categorization and interpretation. It includes non human antagonist symbols, in the form of two bacteria, *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci, found in bathing waters. Bacteria are tricky to fight. They cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are therefore an invisible enemy that threatens the populations of bathers around the country. “The bacteria are invisible. It’s not looking at water that you’ll see them [...] and so something that is not visible is more difficult to combat and to communicate, in a certain way. And so other systems are necessary to be able to say that - look, here there is a problem.” (Head of the technical team; 130718_005) What Goletta Verde’s campaign does it to transform them, from invisible foe, into visible realities that can be fought against. The narrative does not attribute intentionality to the bacteria, which retains an intrinsic neutrality. It does, however, suggest that the cause of the bacteria’s presence is not neutral - it is tied to negligence, ignorance, irresponsible management practices, deficient infrastructure, and so on. The narrative turns the bacteria into a symbols of antagonist human actions to be combatted.

2. Ecomonsters

Another symbol of the association’s counter-values are a concept that Legambiente coined ‘*ecomostri*’, which would translate to *ecomonsters*. Contrary to the invisible bacteria, ecomonsters’ visibility is in part what makes them an enemy. As the name suggests it, ecomonsters are literally monsters, “skeletons and structures that are already finished that exist on the coast - and elsewhere - and that in some way deface-spoil-disfigure the landscape” (Head of communication campaign; 130728_001) They “either don't have any

use, or are incomplete, and they deface (disfigure) not only the landscape from an aesthetic point of view, but can also pollute as maybe they don't have drains in good standing.” (Independent photojournalist; 130718_001) Ecomonsters aren't necessarily illegal structures, as in the case of illegal buildings, but “their environmental impact is disastrous in the broad sense.” (Idem) The term has entered the Italian news vocabulary, but to members of the public, it remains unclear, at times, how these ecomonsters are classified, and according to which criteria (e.g. see: photojournalist comments; 130718_001).

3. Cruise ships

The paradox of a beautiful place is that everyone wants to visit it. Italy is an important European tourist destination, and some key cities, such as Venice, are at the top of European destinations for cruise liners, attracting more than their fair share of visitors. The problem is that cruise ships leave behind them a trail of environmental damage, from waste and discharges of all sorts, to wreckage, to badly stirring the seabed near the harbours. Not only that, they are huge and visually horrendous, particularly when juxtaposed with an old city. This is particularly felt in Venice because it has such a fragile and old ecosystem, already used and abused, and the returning cruise ships only generate a continuum of cumulative cycles of abuse as they cross through the lagoon's barely deep enough canals. Cruise ships are one of the themes actively fought against by Goletta Verde. An independent photojournalist travelling with Legambiente to document the campaign gave me his account of the problem: “What struck me the most was to see these enormous ‘buildings’ [referring to the cruise ships] overlook Venice, [...]. Witnessing this [...] fair of consumerism crossing through is horrendous. It covers [the city], obscures it [...]. It makes it become like any other. This cruise ship could be anywhere. I mean, Venice has gondolas, there are the taxis that are

motorboats, steamers. [They can only be found in Venice]. Even if sailboats go by, they pass. [But] that one [cruise ship] is bigger than... There's gotta be more inhabitants on that cruise ship than in all of Venice [...]. It's enormous. There will be [at least] 4000 passengers! It's ...embarrassing.” (130718_001) What is particularly striking about this description is the choice of words he uses: a fair of consumerism, and the idea of embarrassment. Cruise ships are an attack on the notions of beauty and territory. They are an attack on symbols of Italian identity (e.g. the gondolas) and its sense of belonging. They should not be there, they are an embarrassment that Venice (and other places) are supposed to comply with for the sake of tourist’s visual consumption. The photojournalist tells me about how one of the liners broke down in the laguna and had to be towed, not an easy enterprise for a ship of that size: “while the boats in the lagoon are tugged by a tugboat because they have a motor and a minimum of push, this time you had this enormous cadaver dragged by *four* tugboats[...].” (130718_001) The *cadaver*, symbol of ugliness as he described it, had made the news in no time. In the aftermath of the sinking of Costa Concordia off the shore of the island of Giglio, under environmentalist pressure fearing similar accidents that would have catastrophic ecological and structural repercussions on the laguna and Venice’s fragile foundations, a ban had been temporarily put in effect, limiting cruise ship access to the city, but it was recently lifted enabling cruise ships to cross through again. (Gazzetta del Sud, Legambiente slams suspending ban on big Venice cruise ships, March 18, 2014, 1 page, available at: <http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/84116/Legambiente-slams-suspending-ban-on-big-Venice-cruise-ships.html>) Legambiente is contesting and denouncing the issue which should be debated again in court in the upcoming months. (Gazzetta del Sud, Cruise lines vow to give Venice a wide berth from December, April 17, 2014, 1 page, available at:

<http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/88450/Cruise-lines-vow-to-give-Venice-a-wide-berth-from-December.html>).

There are many more counter-values, found in the thematics fought by Goletta Verde; each of them stands against elements of the narrative promoted by Legambiente, stands in the way of sustainable development, of beauty, of a healthy territory.

Key campaign actions: Rewards and punishments

To conclude this section on how elemental narratives shape the plot of Goletta Verde's campaign, let's make one last stop to look at some of the key activities that shape their environmental action. Because of space restrictions, I will again give only a couple of examples of how Legambiente expresses its agency through a positive reinforcement versus denunciation system. Rewards and punishments in the campaign seem to have multiple purposes: 1) making something public and known (reward or shame); 2) making it personal (to the target of the tool); 3) establishing/reinforcing/defining a relationship/bond (friend or foe) between Legambiente and the target of the tool.

One of the denunciation mechanism used by Legambiente are blitzes. Blitzes are sudden, short, and intensive grouping of Goletta Verde activists in a given location to publicly and mediatically denounce - through the use of visual and sound tools such as banners, t-shirts, as well as media interviews - a specific coastal issue in that area. During blitzes, Goletta Verde gives the municipality the *Bandiera nera*, or 'black flag' [basically a demerit award resembling a pirate flag], to really abusive situations, to municipalities that are particularly unsustainable or lagging behind for coastal management. The attending media

usually pick up on the story and make it public, and the denunciation becomes a form of public shaming.

In terms of positive reinforcement, different types of rewards¹⁸ are decerned by the campaign to various people, groups, municipalities. They indicate recognition of the recipient's successful efforts at instituting and promoting - often independently from Legambiente - the associative values. Generally, the awarding of a prize, or the stops made by the communication team in harbours of 'good' municipalities, is marked with an almost ritualistic communal activity - sharing of food, greeting with a local fanfare, and other marks of a rare and gracious hospitality, that seal the - sometimes yearly - renewal of a collective friendship between the people of the place and the association.

As part of its 'reward-system', every year, Legambiente, through what they call the Touring Club, issue a book called *Guida blu* (Blue Guide). It is a travel book about coastal municipalities in Italy which have been awarded sails by Legambiente (basically the symbol of a blue sail) based on the sustainability and environmental quality of the locality (the range is from 1 to 5 sails, 5 being the highest score). The guide aims to instruct the public (and whoever purchases it) about the 'best' beaches and coastal areas in Italy, based on a variety of criteria explained at the beginning of the guide. The guide, published every year, reflects assessments made throughout the year, and comes out in June, as Goletta Verde engages on their campaign. Throughout the Goletta Verde campaign, whenever the boat stops in a locality that has been awarded sails, campaign organizers will recognize and personally

¹⁸ For instance, other awards are also delivered in collaboration with one of the campaign sponsors, like COREPLA - a national consortium for the collection, recycling and recuperating of plastic packaging (COREPLA, *COREPLA premia il comune di Sapri per la buona performance sulla raccolta degli imballaggi di plastica*, News, July 25, 2013; 1 page: <http://www.corepla.it/news/corepla-premia-il-comune-di-sapri-la-buona-performance-sulla-raccolta-degli-imballaggi-plastica>).

reward the deserving comune.

One of 5 sails recipients this year was the Comune of Acciaroli, in Campania, neighbour to the Comune of Pollica where in 2010, the then very active mayor, Angelo Vassallo, was shot down. I interviewed his successor, who is carrying on the work and legacy of his predecessor. Basically, to the inhabitants of that area, receiving the 5 sails has an a lot more profound and personal meaning than just a superficially symbolic reward. It evokes the incredible difficult task of investing all of one's energy into continuously moving a community forward, making it a leader in the excellence of its practices, and navigating the fine lines of the various competing interests at stake. In the case of Angelo, it was an effort that ended up in the costing him his life. Goletta Verde's recognition of this hard work therefore marks the progress of his legacy being pushed forward.

Section C. How they make it credible

As demonstrated in the last section, elemental narratives (Lejano et al. 2013: 75) are a constitutive form of symbolic action (Cox 2010: 18-20), one that Legambiente hopes audiences can adhere to, from an ideological or value standpoint. Once the elemental narratives are constructed, Legambiente grounds them in the second feature of environmental communication understood as symbolic action - that is, pragmatism. (Cox 2010: 18-20) Essentially, they have constructed an appealing ideal to share collectively, they need to make it credible from a applicability point of view. And as such, they must also evidentiate their claims a need for change with more than accusatory elemental narratives defining the “other” as bad. The substantiation of these claims starts with nothing less than the construction of scientific proof, in other words, the search for evidence that can be constructed into a matter of fact (Latour 2004b) as ‘irrefutable’.

Proving the narrative: constructing a matter of fact for those outside the worldview

Scientific environmentalism as methodology

The construction of a matter of fact starts from a discussion around matters of concern (Latour 2004b:245-247). Matters of concern are a vehicle of choice for the narrative Legambiente wants to evidentiate through Goletta Verde. And there are plenty of concerning matters for the association to discuss. To structure their claims, they have recourse to an approach that grants them increased legitimacy: scientific environmentalism. Roughly, it involves the use of scientific data to make claims about environmental issues. Some of the literature identifies scientific environmentalism as a legitimizing tool for “(a) distancing the organization from irrational and mystical approaches to environmental issues; (b) an effort to

find common ground in a matter as controversial as the environmental crisis; (c) faith in modernity, or at least the belief on the irreversibility of processes triggered by it.” (Osti 2007:128-129) Yearley explains that the use of science can be ambiguous for green groups, because on one hand, Science is a way to reach universalism of belief (through proof), but on the other, some modern and technological products of the same ‘Science’ are part of the ideology fought by environmental groups (for instance, nuclear power). (1993:61) That’s why defining their scientific ‘ethos’ (Yearley 1993: 65) is a way for an environmental organization, such as Legambiente, to situate itself within this large field of knowledge. Legambiente has a dedicated scientific office. It provides expertise and support “to the whole association and the circles. So whoever on the territories, a local or regional circle, needs a hand to analyze a document, to make technical observations and perhaps during the procedure of a project [...]” (Head of scientific office; 130726_002:3) can consult with the scientific office. This is not unusual. According to Osti, environmental organizations in Italy “have sought to build a distinct community of experts, based mainly on ecology, a science already well rooted in the nature protection milieu.” (Osti 2007:129) In this first sense, the scientific ethos is a legitimizing, and possibly money-making feature of an organization (Yearley 1993:65-6), enhancing its public credibility and ability to secure contracts, and to be consulted to provide advice. Legambiente notably takes on government contracts and consultancy works (Osti, 2007:130).

But for Legambiente, scientific environmentalism also and especially means grounding environmentalist claims into sound, verifiable scientific claims, coming from original data or from secondary research. Original data is gathered in the field by members of the organization. For instance, primary data is collected and used during the Goletta Verde

campaign. In the case of secondary data (collected by others, such as official institutions, universities), the scientific capacity is therefore that of “reading the data, understanding it, and make a proposition on this data”, particularly as it relates to other themes tackled by the association (such as the other coastal issues covered in Goletta Verde). (Head of technical team: 130718_006) Scientific environmentalism involves what the participants call a ‘translation’ of this primary and secondary data about scientific matters into communicable materials to the public. It’s a matter of “translating [...] the scientific data, of translating elements or studies that are being done, maybe [because] they are not accessible, maybe more because they are very technical studies, or [because they] remain within the universities, or with [those] who did the studies; and we take care of collecting also all this data and to see it in the diverse situations and to elaborate, describe, in a way that is more legible and communicable, to then convey this knowledge to all the citizens” (Head of scientific office; 130726_002:3). “So, scientific environmentalism means [to]start off from obvious data about the reality at stake, [...] start from what are scientific elements to then create an association of citizens, militancy, and political action [...] in short, [grounding decisions] on data, evidence, to try to understand what are the best environmental policies to implement.” (Head of scientific office; 130726_002:3)

The translation is not value-free and the participants clearly state it: “the evidence will speak. But it is clear that both the selection of sources and their explanation are accompanied by comments, [that do not constitute] an ascetic translation in which we [would] only explain the data and how [it was] measure[d][...].” (Head of scientific office; 130726_002) Given this significant loaded ‘translation’ process, the use of scientific environmentalism in the campaign can be misleading. It seems like science, it follows a

scientific methodology, but is it science? The association is not a research body, and neither does it aim to or claim to be objective. It claims legitimacy, however and strongly defends the validity of the methodology it uses. As indicated earlier, technicians follow official parameters, they use the same tools and sample analysis methods as the ones used by institutions. But the resemblance ends there. Legambiente seeks very specific results, through the instrumentalization of the methodology:

The collection of our own data is important because we have the ability, compared to research institutions [...] we have the ability to be more agile, being an association. [...] we can go, using clearly the very set of protocols of serious (established) legislation [...] - thus trustworthy from the scientific point of view and referred to by their standards - so we have the chance to go to do the monitoring or sampling in those points where maybe there is no coverage by institutional research, or veritable scientific research. [...] starting from the situation that you want to denounce, going with your monitoring to concentrate exactly on that situation, and so collecting data about that in a punctual fashion. (Head of scientific office; 130726_002)

Their aim, in a way, is the reverse from traditional scientific investigation. “They manipulate the methodology, to give value to their thesis... which for them, however, is already true from the beginning. They are not trying to discover something particular.” (Independent photojournalist; 130718_002) They don’t set out to test a hypothesis to disprove it. Rather, they set out to use science to prove a hypothesis, a point they are making. “In reality, seen from the reverse [point of view], it's right. Because they go where the problem is. And they use the scientific analyses to then do the communication. So their

starting point is that the pollution exists.” (Independent photojournalist; 130718_002) And they don’t stop at pointing out the problem. Participants agree that the data enables them to make proposals for solutions that are grounded in verifiable evidence and within an attainable ecological framework. (Head of technical team; 130718_005; Head of communication team; 130728_001).

Scientific environmentalism in Goletta Verde’s campaign therefore means environmentalism first, and science as communication tool, as evidence of truth claims. Evidence comes in many forms: the type of monitoring, the choice of points, the photographic documentation, and anecdotal evidence. The next section looks at this type of evidence.

1. Monitoring

The following provides an overview of the monitoring conducted by Goletta Verde’s technical team. Goletta Verde’s technicians use two vehicles to travel around Italy. One of them is a smaller vehicle, a white *Fiat punto* that they use to collect samples in the field. Inside the trunk, they’ve hooked up a refrigerator to preserve the samples during what can be long 10-12 hours daily expeditions to gather points around a given region, fighting traffic, rough terrain, and uncertainty as to the exact location of new points to sample. The other vehicle is a yellow van that gets parked at the camping site that serves as home base in a given region for about 5 days. The van is transformed into a field laboratory, where the analyses are conducted.

It is my first night with the technical team, at a campsite in Monopoli, Puglia. As the samples come back from the field, I spend part of the evening with the laboratory technician.

She is a bit nervous - it will be her one of her first times doing the analyses and she wants to have everything ready. She is also overly nervous about a beer she had much earlier in the day, fearing it might influence the results when she will use a pipette with the samples. She has been reassured by everyone that enough time has passed. (Laboratory technician; 130625_001) She summarises the scientific protocol to me. For every region that has under 500 km of coast, the technicians sample one point for every 15 km. In regions where the coast is equal to or greater than 500 km long, they sample one point for every 30 km. In the islands, it's one point for every 60 km. To these, in each of the regions, they add two points. This is done, the head of the technical team explained to me, so that they will "have a margin of choice of more points to use in communication" (130718_005).

For the next 24 and 48 hours (depending on the bacteria), the collected samples are analyzed using Slanetz (for enterococci) and TBX (for E. coli) membranes on petri dishes, wrapped in foil, and thrown into the oven. Upon completion of their respective cooking times, the dishes are pulled out of the oven, opened up, and the laboratory technician counts how many dots she finds on each square of the membrane grid to determine what will be the final verdict attributed to each of the samples: very polluted, polluted, or within the limits of the law. For E. coli, more than 500 dots means a point is polluted. More than 1000, and it is very polluted. For enterococci, more than 200, it is polluted, whereas the double, more than 400 dots, indicates that the sample is very polluted. After the counting is done, the petri dishes get photographed, the bacteria killed by alcohol, the dishes repackaged and discarded into a bin that follows the team throughout their trip, until they return in Lazio, where they will be properly disposed of, following special waste treatment guidelines. (Laboratory technician; 130625_001)

Monitoring and analysing urban waste water treatment failings is a fraction of Goletta Verde's work, "but it has its strength, because at the European level, Italy is in situation of infraction, paying fines because it doesn't adhere to a service of depuration according to parameters applied in Europe." (Head of technical team; 130718_006) Monitoring is far from being a neutral activity - it is punctuated with choices that reflect the agency of individual participants as well as associative free will. Choice is a part of everyday decision-making. For instance - if a TBX membrane turns out having 501 dots, depending on the point and region, the association might decide to withhold a polluted verdict, allowing context and several other factors to contribute to the decision of what constitutes sufficient or insufficient proof that a given point is polluted. Monitoring means navigating the grey zones of subjective choices.

Monitoring is also an act of reappropriation by the association of official protocols and parameters to go evaluate a grey zone where different regulations meet: transitional waters. Transition waters are the locus of passage from laws on inland waters, entering the sea, to laws on bathing waters in the sea. This area is problematic because of the lack of correspondence between the different types of waters and their respective regulations. The head of the technical team makes the distinction between the actual sea, waterways (understood as water currents arriving to the sea following a natural course), and channels (understood as artificial, or natural geographic beds where channels were shaped by man to bring discharges directly to the sea). (130718_005) The sea (via beaches) is where the ARPAs conduct their sampling, to fulfill EU obligations on bathing waters. In this regard, Italy is recognized to exceed European standards. However, the ARPAs do not evaluate the other waters, in transition zones. And those are the problematic ones, targeted by Goletta

Verde. As one of the technicians put it: “the important concept to understand is that we are not doing an analysis on the quality of the waters *of* the sea, but we are doing an analysis of the waters that *arrive to* the sea.” (Emphasis added; 130626_002)

Historically, Goletta Verde took water samples from the beaches. In earlier years, before the ARPAs existed and monitored the beaches, this was done to serve as institutional stimulus. When official monitoring started, Goletta Verde continued its action,

both of verification of pollution, and also of prodding, of stimulation to make the institutions work. And clearly, with the years, the controls increased, the attention to the sea, the beaches, to bathing also increased, [...] and so we reached at a certain point, in 2003, 2004, [when] [...] our data, [...] was very similar, and superimposable to that of ARPAs [...] and so our monitoring was a little flat. [...] [and] we realized that we had reached a point where [our] objective had been attained. (Head of scientific office; 130726_002)

There was no sense, from an activist perspective, to focus on the same controls when there were still many other environmental issues to be tackled. Legambiente decided to change its focus based on two aspects: waste water treatment, and citizen reports of critical situations.

[W]e decided [...] [to start] [...] a service oriented monitoring. One, for citizens who have doubts about the quality of the sea, or that saw a suspicious situation that maybe isn't controlled by the governing bodies. And two, we decided to concentrate all our monitoring - more than on bathing waters, on the problem of the discharges that through rivers and water channels, arrive directly in the sea. [...] [T]oday our monitoring has become a collection of

reports through the service SOS Goletta and the individuation of points [...] which we call the *critical points* along the Italian coast. (Emphasis added; Idem)

Critical points are another twist in Goletta Verde's use of official protocol. While the methodology of analysis, the tools and the laboratory are consistent with those used by regional monitoring institutions, the monitoring offers a *one-time snapshot* of the given critical points. This "punctual photography" (Head of communication team; 130728_001) is what participants call 'spot monitoring'. Spot monitoring is Goletta Verde's trademark to remind their audiences that they are not an official institution, that they do not have the power to implement change or effectuate regular monitoring. With spot monitoring, Legambiente is able to draw attention to a series of problems throughout Italy while simultaneously disassociating itself (rightfully so) from the full spectrum of responsibilities required to rectify the issues. Spot monitoring ensures that Legambiente, acting as stimulus, retain only a part of the burden of proof (showing that a point is polluted) onto themselves, while shifting the greater part of the burden of proof (showing that a point is maintained non-polluted) onto the administrations (ARPAs, research entities, European Directive norms). Legambiente's role is to point out the problem, and if possible to offer solutions. But they are not responsible for their implementation or long-term monitoring. It's a question of resources, but also of scope.

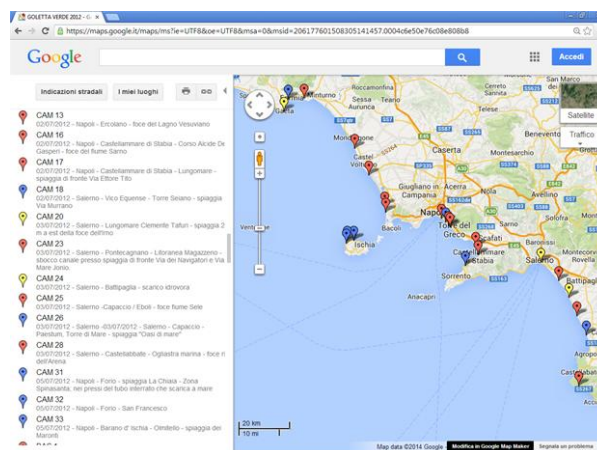
Once spot monitoring and partial responsibility are embraced, the campaign has a lot more flexibility in how it implements the methodology to critical points. For instance, "if I have to do the equivalent of one point every 15 kilometers, to maintain a number of points that is proportional in every region, I can also decide to do two of those points right next to

one another. Even, we assert our flexibility, because that's the "juice". It's not like we're the technician from ARPA [...]. We have never claimed to be objective." (Head of communication team; 130728_001) Goletta Verde are therefore navigating the fine line on the continuum between objectivity, legitimacy, validity. Participants don't claim to be objective, but they follow an objective methodology (the objectivity inferred by the fact that it is the official one). Their results are legitimate, as they reflect real, though not continuous data. Goletta Verde's claims are therefore valid, given the boundaries they have set to delimit the campaign, but they are only valid within that tightly knit framework. Objectivity, legitimacy and validity must therefore be understood in a very relative sense, something which the association recognizes. The head of the communication team refers to this ambiguous labeling of campaign activities a sort of *escamotage* (130728_001) - somewhat deceptive, but not malevolent. The interpretation of a photojournalist travelling with them is perhaps a little more honest - despite the impression they give, the association's starting point is fighting pollution, not monitoring. "I had the impression that they are trying to find points that might prove useful to them, to communicate data that will allow them to be -- to give that idea that they want to give. Because fundamentally if they did a control and everything came out clean, they wouldn't have much sense in existing." (130718_002) While spot monitoring still carries a connotation of generalizability - if it was polluted there on *x* day, it is legitimate to say it was polluted. The photojournalist prefers to put the emphasis on their active intent: they are actually and actively *seeking out* pollution.

Accessorizing the case

In addition to the analyses, the campaign documents and accessorizes its case with

maps, pictures and anecdotal evidence. The head of the technical team showed me that as of 2012, they started documenting the points they had sampled and released in communication on Google maps, as shown in the figures below. This way, with precise indications, people could see “where Legambiente was, where the sea was clean, where they could go for a swim” (130718_005) when travelling to a given area. Using a tricolored legend (red for very polluted, yellow for polluted, and blue for points falling within the limits of the law), the map for each region is presented at press conferences held by the communication team. (130718_005)



Map 2 Goletta Verde 2012

Sampling is also photographic. Pictures are used to contextualize a point and provide visual evidence that the sampling was indeed done on a given day and time, in a given location. It's "the freezing of a moment" (Head of technical team; 130718_005). As the head of the scientific office explains "the technicians are the eye of the communication crew. In the sense that when we travel with the boat, we don't have the possibility to see all the points of monitoring, all the samples done, and to visit all the Italian coasts. This therefore is the task of the technicians." (130729_002) Pictures should include visual geographical cues that make the point recognizable, "[h]ow much water there was, how was the sample point, how to get there, where it was, let's say, it makes known all the aspects of the sampling, even the issues that relate to that sample." (Idem). They also include a visual of the technician taking the sample, with an emphasis on the t-shirt's campaign logo. (Head of technical team; 130718_005) The camera is also programmed to record a timestamp on all the pictures. (Independent photojournalist; 130718_001) Photographic documentation is as precise and detailed as possible, as it may be useful in the event of a dispute with an administration over a problem. Sometimes, bystanders get photographed, if they are swimming or in contact with the water near the sampling point. Those pictures are unlikely to make it to press releases and news media, for normative reasons, but they carry some weight with the administrations. In fact, if children are bathing, technicians will try to photograph them rather than adults.

Goletta Verde, [...] has the objective of denounce with force a problem. So [...] if there are children bathing in a point that comes out polluted, [...] it doesn't serve a sensationalistic purpose to take the child's picture. [But] it serves an end however in that you are trying to say -- we have sampled that channel, and there were also people bathing there, including children in the

water. [...] we use [the pictures] when we engage in our interlocution with the mayor[s], [...] if the point is contested, [...] [if they say] it reflects only [a one-time monitoring], so it's not indicative of a national average and so on, at that point, to explain well that look, even if it's just one point, [it is indicative of] a grave situation, and we have an additional element to go explain it to the administrations.(Head of scientific office; 130729_002)

In addition to actively accessorizing Goletta Verde's monitoring with maps and photographs, sometimes situations arise outside and independently from the campaign, supporting its claims. This unplanned anecdotal evidence is not necessarily instrumentalized as such by campaign participants, but because it can reflect the gravity of a problem, it contributes to a common reflection and discussion of that problem, and reinforces the value of the work they are doing. When negative, this evidence embeds itself in what Cox describes as the precautionary principle of the communication of equivocal scientific evidence: "when an activity threatens human health or the environment, even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically, caution should be taken" (Cox 2013: 341). Though Goletta Verde's monitoring might contain uncertainty, if it points to a problem that is grave enough, this should suffice to incite caution. For instance, while I was travelling with the technical team, the team leader told us about a news episode that just occurred at Alba Adriatica, in the region of Abruzzo: a 2 year-old girl had fallen into a coma induced by fecal bacteriological contamination contracted in bathing waters she swam in that day. The location of her swim was in a locality that had been awarded the blue flag award by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), an initiative present throughout many European countries and elsewhere around the

world.¹⁹(<http://ilcentro.gelocal.it/teramo/cronaca/2013/06/26/news/alba-adriatica-bimba-in-rianimazione-dopo-un-tuffo-nel-mare-premiato-con-la-bandiera-blu-1.7323896>) It was a zone monitored by the ARPAs. But controversially, it was located right by a critical point identified as polluted by Goletta Verde.(<http://www.greenreport.it/news/acqua/goletta-verde-abruzzo-mala-depurazione-acque-monitorate/>) This sort of situation serves as an example of why the work Legambiente do is important, and it's for this reason that sometimes being perceived as alarmist by the media or the public is not a bad thing if it can move the discussion. The head of the communication explains:

“we are aware of the fact that we create a panic when we arrive, because there is no other information, no other communication, and because the mark of GV is very, very strong, from the media point of view, as well as for its whole history, after which, we don't give ‘discounts’ to anyone, even if there are competent authorities -- from the moment in which we find situations that are critical and very critical, -- let's say -- it's not that we can soften the communication. We try to be as linear and correct as possible, but after that, we don't have requirements to render the communication more --- let's say --- more than underline all the things we said earlier, but then the situation has to emerge in one way or another.” (130728_001)

Goletta Verde's motivation goes beyond the search for scientific proof. It knows that there is plenty of evidence on the territory to justify its work, but scientific evidence serves as a way to structure it and enables the matter of concern to gradually get shaped into a matter of fact.

¹⁹ NB: The blue flag award is a different award from the five sails award granted by Legambiente in its yearly Blue Guide. The two are completely independent.

The idea of a collective environmental conscience as necessary and desirable is internally established in Legambiente. It is the idea of an environmental conscience that is collectively shared by the association's members - and, incidentally, by some members of the population outside the association. It is a vision that solidly anchors the association within its environmentalist worldview. In that sense, internally (to the association), the vision of a collective environmental conscience is a *matter of fact*. It is unquestionable, it speaks for itself, it is foundational to its group identity. It exists as a sort of 'constitutional fact' for the association. Its existence enables mechanisms and articulations that give birth to discussions around matters of concern, providing grounds for invoking arguments of environmental justice, equal access to beaches, rights to health and uncontaminated waters, and so on. But the actual vision, the inevitability of its existence (for the association), is never subject to discussion. (In fact, discussions around the nature of this associative vision, or *raison-d'être* were met, in interviews and conversations, with a puzzled, disoriented look from my participants.) I consider that Legambiente treats this vision a *matter of fact*, in other words, something that is, in a way, perfectly essential to participants, and the unquestionability of which somehow transcends the association.

Now for bringing the vision closer to the humans who carry it out operationally and for understanding how it is 'branched out' to 'others', a useful conceptual tool to concretize this somewhat abstract vision is the *metanarrative*, a device developed by Lejano et al. The metanarrative is useful, because in it are embedded other narrative devices (emplotment, plurivocity, subnarratives, etc.) that enable actors to engage with and find a place and a voice for themselves within the metanarrative. It allows the vision to be conceptually anchored

within the actors and networks that embrace it as essential (as fact). It is a self-contained, internally 'defined' matter of fact.

I want to insist on this essential character of the vision for the association. It is precisely *because* the metanarrative of a collective environmental conscience is established and accepted as a matter of fact inside Legambiente, that campaigns like Goletta Verde are being carried forward by its members, who then act as articulations and network of this vision. If the metanarrative was not already established as matter of fact within the association, a campaign like Goletta Verde would hardly stand on its own. But everything in Goletta Verde serves the 'higher purpose' - to speak almost religiously - of a collective environmental conscience that grants it meaning and justification. Only within this vision can the otherwise scattered campaign components make sense: a loose scientific methodology, a symbolic communication campaign on a boat, a melting pot of local initiatives. All of these come together, are sort-to-speak instrumentalized to serve that higher purpose of which the association members and ramifications (the network) are entirely convinced.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS PART II: DISCONTINUITIES

In bringing the story of Goletta Verde to life, Legambiente, as we have seen, work within a framework involving communication strategies, strong narratives and emplotment mechanisms that make the story accessible, embraceable and credible. This process, though presented fluidly, is one filled with challenges as a series of discontinuities emerge throughout the campaign.

Just as clearly as the metanarrative of a collective environmental conscience is matter-of-factual to Legambiente, it is not established as such to those outside the association. In fact, outside Legambiente, this vision is very much thrown back into the discussion arena, competing with other matters of concern for general attention. In fact, Part two of my analysis, which explored possible sources and reasons for discontinuities looks precisely at that. I try to show how some try to debunk this matter of fact, others simply opposing it, others again hardly even aware of its existence. Legambiente doesn't succeed to unanimously convey the *essential*, or *necessary* character of this metanarrative to the broader Italian collective.

There are varying sources and degrees of discontinuities. For the sake of the analysis, they were regrouped into three general categories. Some have to do with the way the story is told (internal discontinuities); others have to do with the way actual audiences receive and at times oppose or question the narrative presented to them, leading from slightly to radically different interpretations (audience discontinuities); while others, still, have to do with external elements rooted in Italian history, context, or character, that contribute to shaping a

discourse that differs from the one presented by the association (contextual discontinuities).²⁰

Let us now explore how these become noise sources disrupting the campaign message, bombarding it with interference.

Section A. What the narrative is missing and what it means

Narrative gaps and impression management

To introduce examples of internal discontinuities, I want to return to two theoretical tools - Goffman's impressions management and Lejano et al.'s narrative gaps. Together, the two concepts help us understand what the narrative is missing - at times intentionally, at times not - highlighting inconsistencies and possibly overlooked communication potentials.

Impression management is the process of conveying to an audience a certain perception, image of the self. This perception has to be consistent with the desired results envisioned by the performer. In the case of environmental organizations, Legambiente particularly, impression management wants to be consistent and aligned with the metanarrative presented by the association. As described in the first part of the analysis, Legambiente uses communication strategies that tie them to certain values and ideals, portraying them a certain way (they hope) in the eyes of their target audiences. With this self-portrayal comes a presentation of the campaign, its purpose, development, validity, and importance.

²⁰ Again, these are analytical suggestions for discontinuities as observed in a very brief period of time during my fieldwork. There might be considerably more accurate or different ways of structuring them, but I base my analysis on the data gathered from my participants, my observations and informal interactions with various audience members, support documentation materials and the literature I have read through for this research.

Impression management is thus achieved via the shaping of the perception through a variety of tools. One of them we haven't so far examined in the case of Goletta Verde is the narrative gap (from Lejano et al. 2013). In literature, narrative gaps are equated to the *ellipsis*, a narrative device used by leaving out portion of the story, with the intent of moving forth the story and having the reader complete the gap using his imagination. This is often used when an author chooses not to narrate a sequence in its entirety (e.g. narrating a character's life from childhood to adulthood, leaving out large uneventful sequences for the reader to fill in). An assumption is that the story will hold together, and at times more fluidly, with these gaps. Similarly, Lejano et al.'s proposed concept of narrative gaps is a device used in telling the environmental metanarrative, to make it stronger and tighter by 'incorporating' willful omissions into it.

Intentional narrative gaps are generally useful to prevent faux pas, to prevent disruptions to the performance, or "incidents", as Goffman calls them (1959:212). The performers include these gaps as a way to influence the audience's impression of them, their perception, in a manner consistent with the metanarrative. Here are a few examples of how this is articulated in the Goletta Verde campaign.

Leaving out resorts, turtles and buckets

A photojournalist travelling with Goletta Verde was telling me about a location in Puglia, called Torre Mileto, on the Lake of Lesina, where many houses have been built in breach of regulations and without proper water purification networks. The problem, he says, is that Legambiente can't really pinpoint the poor water treatment as a target issue, because technically, it is members of the public who erected the many houses forming the unofficial

resort, and so these problems on the isthmus don't fall under a specific jurisdiction. In other words, there is no administration to point the finger to in order to fix the water treatment problem. Instead, Legambiente therefore has to find another way to label the problem; in this case, they designated the resort an ecomonster. (Photojournalist; 130718_001) They hence created a useful narrative gap (not mentioning the problem), and substituted it with another that better fits the campaign.

In another instance, the head of the technical team and other participants told me about the problem of "the bucket". At times, when sampling a point, the conditions for sampling are far from ideal - either the point is too dangerously located to access (for example, off a cliff), or it is simply evidently so dirty or deep that it would pose a health risk for the person sampling (despite sampling with gloves and rubber boots for added protection). In these exceptional cases, technicians occasionally use a bucket to collect water from which they will then extract and fill their sample bottle. The official protocol dictates that sample should be taken directly submerged in the water source, and the bucket is a source of controversy as some claim it could be a source of water contamination that would skew the results. This is a source of contestation, particularly in problematic regions, for instance, in Calabria, as demonstrated in earlier examples. But, as technicians explain, the bucket can only have a very minimal effect on results, if any. In addition, results in the problematic cases are usually so highly polluted that it is not the bucket that made a difference in findings, especially since these are intended to point to a critical situation, and not to exact, consistent monitoring. Nonetheless, to prevent this type of contestation, technicians explain, they tend to avoid taking documentation pictures that show the bucket, and they avoid using them as evidence to back up a critical point (see comments in

130718_001; 130718_005). The narrative gap is here used to avoid feeding audience opposition.

The photojournalist was also telling me of another example he witnessed. He described a centre for turtles rescue in Manfredonia, Puglia, where Goletta Verde made a stop, and was taking pictures of the initiative. The photojournalist explained:

“This centre for turtles saves hundreds of turtles every year. They do amazing work. Amazing. Unquestionable. But they didn't want the photos [taken by Goletta Verde] to be published. [...] [The rationale was that the turtle rescue centre has] tools that are undersized; or inadequate. [To upgrade their equipment,] they should spend a lot more money that they don't have, [for instance, to] buy a much bigger tank that costs [around] 30,000 euros. They have small tanks. And if this is seen [in pictures publicly], it becomes a weak point. And this despite the fact that they save 250, 300 turtles per year. [...] They are very concerned with not showing that they are constrained to do it in a certain way that isn't the perfect way. And so they tell you "this, don't show it" as though it were something to be ashamed of.” (130718_002)

And so, Legambiente leaves those pictures out of the campaign, to better serve the partnered initiative they are publicly supporting. As we see, these examples of narrative gaps are strategic, and aim to move the narrative forward in a way that is consistent with the perception Legambiente wants to maintain, the image they want to project.

Not all narrative gaps serve the campaign in such a clear-cut way. Some gaps can actually be of disservice to the campaign. Both of our key concepts for this section - impression management and narrative gaps - when used together, have implications. In the

case of Goletta Verde, I want to suggest that in the process of fulfilling impression management goals, narrative gaps can transform into additional unintended gaps that then prove to be missed opportunities for addressing and improving the audience and contextual discontinuities. This transformation of the narrative gap into unintended gap is analogous to what Goffman refers to as ‘given off’ impressions. Given off impressions are sometimes intentional, often unintentional impressions conveyed onto an audience, and they are presented by the author in opposition to given impressions (which are always intentional) in communicative interactions (Goffman 1959:2).

The implications of this transformation of a narrative gap into an unintended given off impression can become limitations such as the following:

- Limitation 1: As a part of their impression management strategies, Legambiente omits information and strategies from the metanarrative. These are narrative gaps inform us about how the association perceives itself and its campaign (as seen in Part I of the analysis). Legambiente want audiences to perceive them the same way. The issue is that this poses difficulties for Legambiente to actually see themselves the way they are (given off impressions) and the actions they are posing. They have a good grasp of the general image they project, but by being so selective in what they choose to incorporate and leave out of the metanarrative, they create a curtain between what they are in reality (added details, including what filled the narrative gaps) and what they seek to project. Legambiente therefore have a difficulty seeing themselves *differently* from this image they want to project.

- Limitation 2: The more rigid Legambiente are about their image and the choice of narrative gaps (things to omit) to remain faithful to their given campaign narrative, the more difficult is it for them to *change* themselves, because they have greater difficulty seeing where they might need to change, hence a certain lack of flexibility.
- Limitation 3: The implications of the first two limitations can result in significant difficulties for the association to relate to their audiences' *actual* perceptions of them, making it substantially more difficult to reconcile with audience and contextual discontinuities. Inherently, this suggests that it prevents the association from exploiting communication potentials (in those ignored areas), resulting in missed connection opportunities with their audiences.

In Goffman's work, dramaturgical circumspection is one of the impressions management practices used to convey genuine communication. Dramaturgical circumspection implies that the performers have to take planning precautions ahead of time in staging their show, or in Goletta Verde, in how they will present their campaign, their narrative. Goffman warns of two extremes of the dramaturgical circumspection spectrum:

“If no care and honesty are exercised, then disruptions are likely to occur; if rigid care and honesty are exercised, then the performers are not likely to be understood “only too well” but they may be misunderstood, insufficiently understood, or greatly limited in what they can build out of the dramaturgical opportunities open to them.” (Goffman 1959:218)

In the case of Goletta Verde, I focus on the latter observation which, as indicated in limitation 2, seems to occur. As we see, for instance, through participants' choice of

narrative gaps, great care is applied to staging their performance, sometimes very rigidly, to the point that it might prevent them from taking advantage, or even noticing performance opportunities presented to them. I will present two examples of this.

1. Communication from the technical team

There is a generally shared belief from participants that technicians are not responsible for or engaged in the formal communication aspects of the campaign. They make a clear distinction between the technical team and communication team's responsibilities. However, technicians do engage in communication activities. Some are activities that are conscious and admitted to (for instance, they engage with members of the association from local and regional circles when finding sampling points, they talk to members of the public if approached by them while sampling, they respond by email to citizens' reporting of critical points with SOS Goletta). Others are less obvious communication instances (for example, when technicians create and update the online Google map of sampled points; or when they fill up a sample form for every point sampled that includes information about physical characteristics of the place, shaping how the message is going to be described later on by the communication team and making themselves "spokespeople" of the visible sea's health conditions both to future audiences of administrators and the public, but also internally to the communication team). Participants recognize that communication is everywhere, but the distinction they seem to make is between communication and *official* communication. The head of the scientific office describes what constitutes campaign communication the following way:

“Communication is everything. That very work the technicians are doing is communication. In the sense that going around with the shirt of Goletta Verde, on those points, monitoring, like you’re saying, that’s the first passage of communication. Then there is the *official* communication, with press conferences. Then there is the communication that comes after the press conference, like communication with mayors. That is also a piece with the citizens. There is the communication which we do through SOS Goletta, in which we ask the citizens to go around and scout out the critical points. [...] So everything is communication. [But] it’s clear that the moment in which this communication explodes is the moment in which you communicate with the press.” (Emphasis added; 130729_003)

He calls this formal explosion of communication the “outwards communication”. (130729_003) It’s the one targeting audiences specifically with the campaign’s official message and results. In that sense, communication by the technical team does not formally fit in the association’s communication activities. One of the technicians explains to me that he is completely detached from the aspect of science communication to the public. In a way, he concludes, he is losing all access to being able to himself “translate” to the public, the found data, which needs to be, in his words, “simplified” for public access. This simplification falls under the responsibility of Legambiente and more specifically Goletta Verde’s communication team. (Informal interview; field notes June 26) This division of labour between the scientific and communication teams seems very important for members of the technical team. Under the recorder, they seem to withdraw from questions about communication, out of, it seems to me, a genuine belief that they have nothing to do with

how the data they gather will be transformed and used in communication. For them the processes are separate. To me, from the outside, they are all-encompassing, particularly because they start long before the message goes out to the public. The distinction I sense within the Goletta Verde campaign, is that the control over the diffusion of information is done according to precautionary principles, something along the lines of Goffman's too rigid dramaturgical circumspection, all geared to how findings are going to be presented in outwards communication. This caution is reflected by the fact that the communication team becomes a filter for the raw data. The communication team revises the data, determines whether the circumstances of its sampling make it appropriate for communication uses (were there any ambiguities, if yes, how can they be explained, and can they discredit GV in any way?), situates it within the context of the area, city, province or region it was sampled in, to best target the responsible polluting party or administrations responsible. This communication strategy is very protective of the association and very specifically oriented to answer a goal of denunciation and promote change. This internal filtering system is dominated by an (obvious) self-preserving, survival strategy that aligns itself with a strict narrative.

What is lost in this approach is two-fold: first, a communication opportunity, and second, a sharing of direct experience. First, there is a paradox in the self-perception of the communication act. Technicians will say, of the technical team, that it is "the eyes and the operative arm of the boat, that then communicates things that maybe it hasn't seen" (Head of technical team; 130718_005), and that it is the association's "interface with the territory" (Head of technical team; 130718_005). They recognize that "effectively, there is a communication force, [within the technical team] [...] [as from] the moment in which one

wears the Legambiente shirt, one represents Legambiente.” (Head of technical team; 130718_005) But it stops with representing the association from afar: “in the communication of the data, [in] press releases and towards institutions, it’s not the technical team, but the boat. At the institutional level, it’s Legambiente-boat that talks, not the technical team.” (Head of technical team; 130718_005) The reason this is limiting is because the technical team actually spends considerably more time on the field, near critical points, and meeting the public close to the problem, than the communication team does. By intentionally removing the technical team from the formal outwards communication, there is a huge window for communication potentials (to clarify the campaign scope and engage with members of the public) that isn’t strategized upon, because it is not considered to be a part of the official communication. Yes, technicians engage with the public; but most of their rehearsed performance consists in redirecting the public to the boat’s campaign and press conference events that will occur a week after the technicians’ passage in a given municipality.

The second loss is at the level of the experience the technicians gain in the field that is not translated into the communication. They experience coastal problems first hand, something shared only by a few of the local residents. This interaction between human and nonhuman actors (pollution, water contamination, landscape destruction, garbage and dog carcasses on beaches), this interaction is lived, is experienced *directly*, in what Tim Ingold would call a “synergy of organisms and environment” (Ingold, 2000: 16). In Ingold’s sentient ecology²¹, this synergy therefore happens pre-objectively and pre-ethically (Ingold, 2000: 25), in other words, before it hits the brain. There is a first hand, intuitive, direct

²¹ This is not studied in depth in this research, but many authors elaborate on the variability of human sensorial experience and experience as a way of learning (see for instance: Csordas 1990; Ingold 2000).

relationship between human and nonhuman (environmental) actors that is then translated by the mind, but only *after* having been experienced. This is an aspect that was mentioned by the head of the scientific office as being problematic. How can they take the experience of the technicians who are travelling the field and collecting samples in very critical points, seeing, smelling, hearing, touching, witnessing and living these critical situations, and then translate them into a communication campaign drowned in a multiplicity of stops in various harbours, often far away from the critical points themselves, and communicate it with the same intensity and criticality to their target audiences? (130729_003) When there is no visible or palpable “parallax object” to show off in the communication campaign, in other words, nothing “that ‘disturbs the smooth running of things’” (Moore, 2012: 793) to catch the attention of audiences, it can be difficult to stress the gravity of a critical situation. If direct experience (Csordas 1990: 9, Ingold 2000) and visual consumption (De Coverly et al., 2008; Macnaghten and Urry 1998) shape the way we think and perceive the environment, non physiological and sensorial “perceptors” have to be appealed to trigger a response prior to a mindful interpretation of the information visually received. This is particularly important, because the geographical distribution of population around the Italian coast doesn’t necessarily coincide with the critical points, and so only local residents may be experientially aware of a given problem, which is then more difficult to convey to the rest of the population as critical. By shutting out the possibility of establishing formal communication strategies through the technical team, Goletta Verde is eliminating some alternative communication potentials that might resonate further with the broader public.²²

²² There are some rare exceptions to this. For instance, the association and campaign’s website does show a video of some technicians describing their experience working in the field. But the exposure of these is limited

The second example is anecdotal and was told to me by the photojournalist travelling with Goletta Verde to build a thematic photographic dossier of the issues covered by the campaign. It is a demonstration of an unintentional gap. This example relates to limitation #1, whereby Legambiente have difficulty seeing themselves differently from how they perceive themselves to be. The photojournalist made an interesting point. In following the campaign through the lens of the camera, he noticed that all the formal external media coverage of Goletta Verde ends up being a replication/repetition of the snapshot campaign. When invited to an event, reporters all take a picture of the same thing (same banner, seen from the same standpoint, reporting the same facts), leaving little room for variability of interpretation. While in the short-term, this can be useful - as Legambiente gets their message across - it doesn't offer much more than a mirroring of their own activities that boxes Legambiente even tighter in its campaign, offering little insightful perspectives of what works and what doesn't work in the campaign. While Goletta Verde organizers might have an accurate understanding of their media audience, their strategic use of this audience for the self-improvement possibilities it can offer seems limited. Again, this wasn't explored sufficiently in interview to assert positively that it is contributing to some of the discontinuities broached in the next section, but it is worth mentioning. Anecdotally, the photojournalist recounted an episode during a blitz, when the communication team denounced offshore drilling platforms, near l'Ombrina on the Abruzzo littoral. As they couldn't get close to the platforms with the media, the communication team

“took the Goletta and put in front of the beach. Then they took a motorboat

to audiences that will proactively engage with the association by visiting their website. See: <http://golettaverdediariodibordo.blogautore.repubblica.it/2013/08/13/viaggio-con-i-biologi-di-goletta-verde/>

and put a pyrotechnic expert onboard. That pyrotechnic expert took another very small boat of a meter, and mounted smoke bombs on it. They all went behind the Goletta, and lit up the smoke bombs. So from the beach, you could see the Goletta, and this black smoke going up, really high. The journalists were on the beach, and they took these nice pictures of Goletta on which was written --- they had a banner [saying]"Enough oil" [...] and this black smoke, very polluting. I, on the other hand, was in the black smoke. Behind [the Goletta] , on the small boat [...] with the pyrotechnic expert.” (130718_001)

The reason he situated himself behind the boat was to penetrate the Goletta Verde myth, to demystify it, in order to generate more thought. He explains:

“Goletta Verde is communication[...]. Because it *tells* things. It goes around, it does press conference, it is *seen*. And it doesn't matter that below [the deck] there is a motor (engine). You see the sails, this beautiful boat. People see it and are attracted [to it]. It's like the publicity for a perfume. Except that it's a serious thing, presented well. So those who are on the beach [including the media], it's like being [...] in front of a TV, watching advertisements. [...] I wanted to be inside these things. [...] [There, you are] so close, that the sense of communication is lost. It's a bit estranging[...]. You're so close to what's happening that you see the pimples. And so, you [end up asking yourself] more questions. Whereas the position from the beach is an answer [...]. It's an affirmation, [a cocktail] that you have to drink, [...] in the sense of believing it, you have to stay there and undergo it [be subjected to it]. [Meanwhile,] behind the smoke, you can't be subjected to it, because you don't know what it

is. You have to ask yourself, you have to reason, you have to ask questions to someone, you have to use your brain. [...] [When he sees pictures taken from a different angle, like mine,] the spectator has to make the effort of asking himself a question. Even at the level of images only. [...] Whereas, when you see the boat, with the banner, that says "Enough with oil", and the black smoke, you look at it... and it passes you by. 'Ah yes, Goletta Verde does work against [environmental problems]. Ah Ok.' [...] When you'll see mine, you'll say: 'what is this smoke?' Because it won't be clear right away, that is it a advertisement campaign. You'll say: [...] 'is there a problem here? Is there an emergency? Is something on fire? What is it that's burning?' You'll have to put in it a piece of your brain." (130718_001)

This approach would incite people to ask questions about an issue and focus less on the vehicle campaigning on it. When he proposed this idea to Goletta Verde participants and communication team organizers, it was met with incomprehension and a vague malaise. It was too unfamiliar of a terrain for them.

"You know when you repeat a word so many times you don't even know what it means anymore? They are like that. [...] they see the pictures that I did, and they try to recognize something that they already know. But they don't recognize it. So they say... 'Bah, yes, maybe.' They are [so deep] inside. They are like a mouse in a lab doing the experiments. Can you ask the mouse to do the experiments on itself, by itself? No. So, you have to be there, and be patient with the mouse, and do the experiments yourself. It doesn't matter that the mouse in reality would like to run away and doesn't understand."

(130718_001)

The malaise the photojournalist is ‘diagnosing’ in the campaign is the comfort they have taken in the familiarity of their self-referential character. It’s a comfort that can be debilitating as it can close up opportunities to try things differently, to reach out to more people. These become potentially missed communication opportunities, because Legambiente is so stuck in its performance, focused so much on one profile of impression management, that they are unable to ‘see’ alternatives. According to Della Seta, “naturally, the difficulties of environmentalism do not only come from the outside, but they are also born from its limits and its flaws: the principal one being in the danger of lingering in a “self-referential” interpretation of their own values, to prefer to bear witness [of them] to a “hard and pure” minority than to convince the majority about them.” (Translation from Italian; Della Seta 2000:62) That being said, participants, particularly from the science side, definitely showed at least a distant awareness of these gaps, but they expressed their lack of knowledge how to deal with them.

Section B. When audiences depart from their imagined selves

Audience Discontinuities and Counternarratives

Audience discontinuities relate to Lejano et al.'s concept of *counternarratives*, which are oppositions to the main narrated discourse. In other words, they are audience actions and reactions that conflict with their expected (or wished for) behaviour by the metanarrative pushed forth in *Goletta Verde*. Throughout my fieldwork, I have identified - or noticed - three types of audience discontinuities: opposition, misunderstanding (in its literal sense, 'failure to understand'), and unresponsiveness. These discontinuities reveal disagreements that are at times explicitly stated, and other times more subtle.

Opposition

The first type, opposition, involves an understanding of the campaign scope and purpose, but a disagreement with either its process or its findings. Opposition includes actions and reactions of accusation, contestation, and resistance. These reactions do not always aim to discredit the campaign, or to attack it in its entirety, but they form channels of opposition where counternarratives develop, suggesting alternate sets of beliefs, behaviours or ascribing alternate motivations to the campaign and its participants. In the case of opposition counternarratives, what appears to be happening is that something disrupts what Druckman calls the "framing effect" of the campaign. According to Druckman, "a framing effect is said to occur when, in the course of describing an issue or event, a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions." (Druckman 2001:1042) Framing effects, however, have limitations. Druckman focuses on the "credibility of the framing

source” (2001:1041) - in this case, Legambiente - as a limit to effective framing, especially as “[p]erceived source credibility appears to be a prerequisite for successful framing.” (Druckman 2001:1061) According to Druckman, “[f]raming effects may occur, not because elites seek to manipulate citizens, but rather because citizens delegate to credible elites for guidance.” (Druckman 2001:1061) In the case of a failed framing effect, the credibility of the elite reference point (institution, environmental association, expert, politician) can lead to an ineffective ‘black-boxing’ of a matter of concern into a widely accepted matter of fact. In the next section on contextual discontinuities, I suggest that a tradition of public distrust in institutions and administrations, along with a backdrop of tedious characteristics of the Italian context, can contribute to hinder on the campaign’s credibility and perpetuate some of these audience discontinuities. I divided opposition into these three sets of actions/reactions (accusation, contestation and resistance) for the sake of exemplifying each one, but the three overlap continuously.

1. Accusation

The first type of opposition, accusation, is most easily demonstrated by an attack to Legambiente that I heard throughout my fieldwork. Legambiente, particularly through Goletta Verde, is often accused of having ulterior political motives and of following a political agenda, evidenced by placing some of their people in positions of political power. This is a very difficult allegation to evaluate, as it would require an analysis of its own, examining the political roles occupied by various current or previous Legambiente members over the course of the years, before, during and after their time at Legambiente, and really examine the significance of the role Legambiente had to play in these developments.

Officially, Legambiente declare themselves to be apolitical, in the sense that they are not affiliated to political parties, although they may have political inclinations²³. Their strategic use of political resources appeared to me to be ambiguous, and it may be instrumental, but remains somewhat irrelevant to the construction of their campaign message. What is more interesting to me was how this political inclination was constructed by their opponents as being relevant, and used by them to delegitimize and publicly discredit the association. During one such episode, where the communication team made a stop in Calabria, denouncing the ‘catastrophic’ state of the water purification in nearby comuni, (<http://www.tropeadintorni.it/la-goletta-verde-di-legambiente-a-tropea-230713.html>), some of the mayors of these comuni were present. One of them, the mayor of Ricadi, stood up to the campaign representatives and complained about the negative publicity they made. Saying that one point monitored was polluted on the basis of a one-time microbiological sample and analysis was quite excessive. He explained that the comune of Ricadi monitored every 500 meters of coast every 15 days to understand where the problem was, promoting concrete facts to improve the situation. Referring to the local monitoring, he explained that “these are the official data, not just the chatter of four friends meeting at the local bar” like Goletta Verde’s was. I later asked him what he meant by the expression “the chatter of four friends meeting at the local bar” and he explained to me that the local representative of Legambiente was also his primary political opponent, hence reducing Legambiente’s criticism of the area in large part to a political collaboration and set-up, where the campaign was instrumentalized to promote a certain candidate over another. That afternoon, upon my return to the Legambiente camp, I asked participants about the claims made by the mayor, but they

²³ Please refer to the section on the Presentation of the case to get a better context of their more Leftist political tendencies over the course of their history.

dismissed his intervention, with a few arguments: First, that they never claimed that the ‘whole sea was polluted’; secondly, that ‘if it hurts, it’s because we struck a nerve’; and thirdly, and most importantly, that the mayor of Ricadi is apparently a tourism operator in the area, owner of coastal establishments that aren’t always in good standing with environmental regulations. He therefore had a vested interest in dismissing Goletta Verde’s criticisms. By default, his own conflicts of interests discredited him in the eyes of Legambiente and he was therefore not in a position to make accusations. (Field notes, informal conversation, July 23). Legambiente therefore handled this counternarrative, along with other instances of political accusations, with dismissiveness. If it didn’t hold true for them, then it didn’t hold true in the metanarrative, therefore it didn’t generally hold true (or belong to the matter of concern). The mayor of Ricadi was categorized in the bad administrator’s category. The issue with this protective and somewhat rigid mechanism is that it may contribute to enhance the gap between desired message construction and actual message reception, further deepening an audience discontinuity rather than making it disappear. Indeed, Legambiente may not listen to the mayor, but his constituents might, and they may see some truth in the accusations he makes.

Several other references were made to Goletta Verde’s political affiliations throughout my fieldwork. Though not necessarily portrayed under such a negative light, they may contribute to shaping public perception and counternarratives. One participant explained to me that many people think Legambiente is a platform for a political career, feeding in subsequent political ties to the association. For instance, while I was there, a woman from Legambiente’s head office who was originally supposed to travel with the communication team during the campaign had to cancel her participation in the 2013 edition of the campaign

(and resign from Legambiente) because she was offered a role as Vice President of the Municipality Roma III and Councillor for Environmental Policy. Examples like this feed into these counternarratives, though they are not publicized *per se* by Legambiente itself. After conducting the sampling and analyses with the technical team, these alleged political affiliations didn't strike me as having an impact on campaign methodology, but I do believe they would have an effect on public perception. They are certainly instrumentalized as detrimental and discrediting affiliations. The other impact, as we will later see in the contextual section, is that they may contribute to a public distrust in the association analogous to public distrust in Italian institutions and politics, though this is simply a suggestion and was not evaluated as such during my fieldwork.

2. Contestation

Other times, opposition is rooted in a disagreement over the validity of the findings or against the universalism of the values promoted by the campaign, in other words, contestation. Asked if they encountered difficulties when their analyses results were compared to lay knowledge or official administrations findings, some campaign participants agreed that contestation of the data was one of the greatest challenges encountered. To be successful, the message transmission needs to include an understanding and acceptance by the audiences of the 'spirit' in which Goletta Verde operates, the spirit of the message they are trying to convey. (Head of scientific office; 130729_002) Without it, Legambiente's campaign is reduced in the public mind to a monitoring of the official institutions accountability, to the role of guardian of the guardians, something the association doesn't have the tools, resources, or desire to do:

[When] our action is interpreted only as a control on the [...] official control, and then yes, it becomes much more complicated to make it go through. And this is maybe one of the most complicated points of all the action of Goletta Verde. That is, to communicate exactly the message that you are trying to pass. [...] [The press] ring the alarm, all the sea is polluted, all the data [came out] polluted, or [issuing] warnings - risk of swimming here, etc. [Which are] things that we clearly don't say because they are not the ones we monitored, [and] that then compromise all the operation. So on the legitimacy of the data, it is fundamental that the spirit with which we do this monitoring be understood. [...] if they think that our data is going to substitute the pluriannual data of the monitoring of the ARPA that classifies the waters, it is clear that our data, scientifically, is worth nothing,[...] so it makes no sense from that point of view. (Head of scientific office; 130729_002)

An example of this form of official contestation involves, once again, the region of Calabria, where explicit formal disagreement with Goletta Verde findings and methodology was strongly expressed from the part of various administrators and members of the public. Calabria is part of the more problematic regions where Goletta Verde isn't always well received. According to Goletta Verde's analyses, Calabria was identified in 2012 as having the worst coastal pollution in Italy (Il Quotidiano della Calabria, 2012a). This assertion was strongly contested by Calabria's Governor who claimed that the number of samples taken by Goletta Verde in various points of Calabria's coastline was far superior to the number of samples taken in other regions, and that Goletta Verde purposely targeted critical points such as the mouths of streams where pollution would be expected to be higher (because of the

proximity and direct discharge of urban and rural land-based human activities). He also accused Goletta Verde of engaging in a smear campaign against the Calabria region, an undeserved attack on citizenship to the area. His hypotheses were supported by the regional assessor for the Environment, who questioned what seemed like deliberate attempts from Goletta Verde's part to discredit the region's efforts to improve its environmental health, and undermine the impact of years of abusive industrial exploitation in the area. But Goletta Verde's response, at the time, was that by bringing forth the water purification problems of Calabria, they had the merit of pointing out a problem that those administrations could tackle. Their assessment of Calabria was not uncalled for, as the European Court of Justice had previously denounced the region's poor water treatment infrastructure and the many victims it causes. (Il Quotidiano della Calabria, 2012a, 2012b)

Examples like this highlight the dichotomy between those who endorse the vision of a collective environmental conscience and those who situate themselves outside of it, throwing into relief the debate about its factuality. In the previous example, administrations were the ones to refuse to endorse Goletta Verde and the proof it was presenting. On other occasions, administrations position themselves within the vision. Some mayors, for instance, face the same challenges to convey it than Legambiente does. The public may not buy into the water sampling findings, even though these may be legitimate. I encountered an interesting example of this in the field when the communication team stopped in Pollica, to award the municipality the 5 sails reward, at the end of July. The mayor there shared Legambiente's vision and of his own administrative initiative, conducted regular and rigorous water monitoring in the area. In that period, the temperatures were very high and a natural phenomenon occurred in the waters of the surrounding area. There was a sudden

spread of microorganisms in the water, coming from *posidonia oceanica*, a type of seagrass. This is a biological phenomenon caused in part by the shifts between highs and lows in temperature. For the locals, the surge of seagrass microorganism release was immediately the source of a panic, mistaken for a pollution problem because of colour of the organic discharges. Paradoxically, the prevalence of *posidonia oceanica* is an indicator of clean and healthy waters. Indeed, the analyses conducted by the mayor came out clean, but the local residents continued to believe the water was 'dirty'. Some people even approached Goletta Verde, asking them to withdraw the 5 sails awards to Pollica. The mayor, who was working in collaboration with Goletta Verde, described the paradox as such:

The objectivity of science tells you that that water is clean. The subjectivity, however, of your sense of sight [...] induces you to think that this water is not clean. Because it has a yellowish colour. But if you then go to see the cause of this colour, you realize it is extremely natural, because it is produced by algae. And where that type of algae grows - the *posidonia oceanica* - the water is very clean, because otherwise this algae would not survive. And so we, on the littoral, here, have a very large quantities of *posidonia*, like a field. So, in the sea, you find this immense grazing of seagrass that contributes to maintaining the balance on land and in the waters. [...] [O]n land it allows you to combat the phenomenon of coastal erosion, that is, the disappearance of beaches. And it allows you to also have waters of higher quality, because it adds determined elements, like iodine, to the water. In counterpart, there are micro-organisms that live together with the algae, and that in a given period of the year when it is particularly hot, like in the summer, detach themselves from the *posidonia*,

they are of a yellowish colour and they give this coloration. And then there is the part of communication. You have to make people understand that it's not dangerous; it doesn't mean that the water is polluted. The major part of my day today, and in the last few days, I've been going to the beach to explain this thing to people. [...] The majority of people when they meet me tell me "No, the sea is polluted" because the technical, scientific objectivity is superseded by the visual perception of the quality of waters. And very often, the people who listen to your message are not prepared or ready to receive this message, which is why it is also important to communicate correctly a piece of cold, accurate, scientific data (evidence), but it's essential. (Mayor of Pollica and Acciaroli; 130726_004)

What comes out of this example is the contestation of findings, but more deeply, of the definition of beauty. For Legambiente and the mayor, beauty is also this visually uglier thing - the microorganisms living on the sea grass, which constitute an environmental strength. But the residents do not accept this narrative. Where for the former, beauty is a fluid and dynamic concept whose subjectivity is in relation to ecological balance, according to interviewed participants, for the latter, dirty is not beautiful and is a synonym of risk, uncertainty, and pollution. The input from the mayor reinforces Legambiente's vision, while the public's reaction, in this case, was one of contestation. It highlights the difficulty for the association to expand its vision as an indisputable matter of fact in a consistent way outside the boundaries of those who already partake in it and share it as such.

I continue to say that the water is clean, because it's true that the water is clean, but it's a lot harder to think of things to make people understand, when

people asked as mayor if the water was *clean*, the first thing I would tell them "Look sir the water is *not dirty*. The water is a different coloration but it is not dirty." It is very complicated, it's difficult, but I think we'll succeed. (Verbal emphasis; Mayor of Pollica and Acciaroli; 130726_004)

The meaning of the different values surrounding the environmental discourse differed according to the humans who interpreted nature's manifestations. Though there were many example of audiences contesting findings, this one was particularly striking as it constituted a firm distrust of and opposition to the authority of the association's findings as well as the local administrations, to the universalism of the value of beauty promoted by the campaign, to the scientific validity of the claims they made, and an expressed disappointment with the award given to the comune.

3. Resistance

Resistance often goes hand in hand with accusation and contestation. For instance, the controversy over the levels of pollution in Calabria's coastal waters that resulted from the publication of sampled waters analysis results by Goletta Verde is revealing. First, the criteria on which Goletta Verde was primarily attacked was its methodology, the way it came, via scientific means, to conclusions that the region disagreed with. Second, this episode is an example of the negative loss of the original scientific motivations when marine pollution is translated into results to the public. Troubled regions seem to have very visceral negative responses to a pejorative assessment of marine pollution along their coasts. This is due in part to historical, socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances. But almost inevitably, the response is conditioned by elements that have a lot to do with 'reputation',

with recognition by others. The people of Calabria are not their waters, yet they identify with the negative publicity as though them and the polluted sea were "one". They need to deflect what they seem to perceive as a personal attack, rather than as the assessment of a problem that needs to be addressed. Meanwhile, the sea of Calabria remains polluted, along with their water purification system. According to the head of the communication campaign, often:

The difficult category to manage is the administrators who think that we want to damage their communities. (...) That is people who think that our work is to point the finger against a person, or that we have interests to obscure (tarnish) a comune over another. (...) They can have the presupposition that we head out to (collect samples) with the prejudice of wanting to punish a given administrator or comune. So that category is difficult to manage because it starts from a presupposition of non-collaboration, and they don't even take advantage of our monitoring to do something, they limit themselves to say that it is clean, even if they don't have the analyses. They are on the defensive and don't think that maybe it would be wise to - before being defensive - having their own analyses done continuously, to be able to say, the sample of GV was collected during a critical moment, but I, as good administrator, I went to check up on the situation, and the next steps will be this, this, and this.

(Head of communication; 130728_001)

I noticed resistance in the people too. In the region of Campania, sampling with the technicians early in the morning in a municipality near Naples, we witness a small altercation between two old ladies walking on the beach and an old man observing us. We hear them

talking angrily about us: ‘Seriously! They’re coming to evaluate *our* beach!’ The man then tells us: “No, no, it’s that, you see, here, we are the ones who take care of keeping the beach clean, with the comune.” We nod, to show we understand. But one glance around us actually reveals that trash is scattered here and there on the beach. And the smell is not particularly pleasing. Many other bystanders are eyeing us suspiciously. We finish entering our data in our grids. The old man is still standing about, as though to keep an eye on us. He yells: “So, is it polluted?” “We don’t know. We have to do the analyses.” We ask him for directions to our next point. He gives them to us. He adds: “Here it’s not polluted. But there [where you are going], there yes, it’s dirty!” We thank him and leave. As we drive away, the car passes next to a huge pile of garbage that stinks beyond comprehension. On the ground, next to it, is a sign prohibiting the dumping of waste. This example, among many others, reveals a paradox of resistance: why resist analyses that would improve the local conditions which are clearly substandard? And why shoot the messenger? Legambiente didn’t cause the problem. They are merely reporting it - this is what they claim. But there lies a subtle contradiction. And although Legambiente is not to blame for the problem, I want to suggest they might be (intentionally or unintentionally) contributing to perpetuating parts of it in their communication strategies. I strongly believe public and administrative resistance is (at least partially) rooted in contextual elements to be explained in the following section. But what they seem to be resisting is the categorizations that Legambiente will engage in, when disclosing the results, the eventual “tarnishing” that will come to them. Part of Legambiente’s misstep, in my view, is in simultaneously promoting a motto “think globally, act locally”, emphasizing the importance of the local efforts and initiatives, and controversially publishing their analysis results regionally, therefore - mediatically speaking

at least - putting an entire region in the same basket. Part of the issue is that the polemic information that will make the headlines decontextualized, in the middle of summer, will indeed affect that entire region's ability to attract tourism and investments, on top of - though unintentionally - perpetuating particularly damaging stereotypes about the southern regions. Resistance therefore struck me to be a defense mechanism in opposition not so much to the essence or the ideas and values vectored by the campaign, but more to its process, unlike the first two forms of opposition (accusation and contestation), but I believe it is also one of the driving forces behind the first two.

Misunderstanding

The second type of audience discontinuity shaping counternarratives is misunderstanding. Misunderstanding can involve a misrepresentation and/or a poor understanding of the campaign scope and purpose, or of the association's role and mandate. Misrepresentation occurs in part in the media, sometimes in ways that are desirable, other times confusing the narrative, as we have seen in an earlier section on Legambiente's relationship to the media. But more interestingly is the public's poor understanding of the campaign.

The first point of confusion commonly encountered during the campaign, and described by campaign participants, is that members of the public audience think Legambiente, through Goletta Verde, is an actual official institution responsible for monitoring bathing waters quality. In many places the technical team and I would travel to, the only question we would be asked was by members of the public was: "Is it clean here?" In the public imaginary, explained campaign organizers, because Goletta Verde for many

years have been the only ones to do this monitoring, people often assume that they are funded by the government. When a member of the public points out a polluted (critical) point and asks them to come verify, they assume Legambiente will have the resources to do so and expect that they can and will immediately come and verify it. The technical team leader explained to me that in reality, if the technical team has already gone passed that point in their monitoring, they can't go back to it, for financial and time constraints. (130718_005) The lack of continuous monitoring has made this public angry or disappointed, and demanding much more from Legambiente than they can achieve through Goletta Verde.

A second point of confusion relates to how the analyses are done, and what is being analysed. We have gone over the myth of the laboratory boat in an earlier section, but it is interesting to point out that this discontinuity can become problematic when the belief is so widespread that inside the association itself the myth prevails. In Puglia, travelling with the technical team, the local circle contact in Bari had sent us the coordinates of two points to sample, that should have been accessible to us from a beach, and from the city's harbour Porto di Bari, Varco della Vittoria. But the GPS always brought us to completely inaccessible points on docks that were gated or under construction. After much confusion and deliberation, we finally met our contact from the local circle. When he saw us, driving around in the campaign's white Fiat punto, he exclaimed: "I gave you the points thinking stupidly that you were sampling with the boat from the sea." He added: "What are you looking for? Any type of pollutant?" The internal lack of understanding of the basic functioning of the campaign was a little disarming. I was told that this was an exceptional case, as the local circle was under new management and there had been a lot of movement recently, that people hadn't been brought up to speed. Another important element was that

many of the people in local circles are volunteers and so their training and knowledge of the association varied considerably. When I spoke to the campaign participants about the incident, they insisted that this was an isolated event. Nonetheless, it threw into sharp relief the incredibly large potential for campaign misunderstanding from the part of the various audiences.

A third recurring confusion relates to another initiative called the Blue Flag award (Bandiera Blu). It exists throughout Europe. Bandiera Blu delle spiagge (Blue Flag of beaches) is a “voluntary eco-label assigned to seaside touristic resorts that fulfill criteria relative to sustainable regional management” (Translated by author, from Programma Bandiera Blu, 2013: 1 page). The way Bandiera Blu works in Italy is that each year, seashore municipalities (the Italian term for these administrative divisions is ‘comuni’) are able to, on a voluntary basis, submit their candidacy to become recipients of a Blue Flag award. To do so, they must fill up a questionnaire prepared by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and other collaborators, who seek to assess specific criteria related to environmental sustainability (see, for example: *Bandiera Blu Delle Spiagge. Questionario 2009*). The Blue Flag award is in no way related to Goletta Verde or to Legambiente’s activities. As mentioned previously, Legambiente, through Goletta Verde and the Blu Guide initiatives, does give out different municipalities awards that are called ‘sails’, but the criteria for assessing those are completely different from those of the Blue Flag award. The problem is that there appears to be a systematic public belief that they are the same thing, or at least that Goletta Verde awards the Blue Flags. Returning from a sampling day in Ischia and Procida, we were approached on a passerelle in the harbour by a man who asked us directly: ‘Are you [Legambiente] impartial?’ The technician I was walking with instantly responded:

‘Yes we are. Analysis results are what they are.’ The man started arguing with him: why, then, had they awarded beach x with the Blue Flag when it was so polluted? And so the technician had to start explaining that Goletta Verde was a separate initiative and that it had no affiliation with the FEE, and that Goletta Verde had not been giving out the award in question. This type of encounter with the public happened countless times during my stay in the campaign. Campaign participants claimed it wasn’t too problematic, as “once we explain it to them [members of the public, citizens], they understand and they aren’t angry anymore.” (Example extracted from Field notes). However, it is once again a reflection of the limits of Goletta Verde’s abilities to control their audiences’ perception of them.

Unresponsiveness

As we have seen, Goletta Verde’s narrative can generate opposing responses, misunderstandings, but sometimes, it fails to generate a response at all. This third type of reaction, unresponsiveness, involves a lack of response to a given stimuli. In other words, it’s an audience’s choice to not be involved in (an aspect of) the campaign; this doesn’t mean that there is no awareness or understanding of the campaign, but rather that the audience takes a distant stance vis-à-vis the campaign. According to participants and to my own observations, unresponsiveness is particularly problematic with the audience identified as the public (or citizens). The head of the scientific office elaborated on this a few times in interview. He told me about the passage of Goletta in the municipality where the water was filled with seagrass micro-organisms that people thought were pollution:

[...] what really strikes me is the fact that a situation, like the one of Acciaroli, in which there was dirty water, people on the beaches were complaining. Well

we stayed for more than two hours on the beach, talking with the citizens, trying to understand what was the problem, inviting everyone [to join us at] 5:30pm at the harbour [for a meeting], where there were [going to be] the harbour authorities, the mayors, the managers. So we convoked everyone for 5:30, so that anyone who had problems could see all the subjects that were involved, to whom they could ask information. Because us, as an association, we aren't the ones who can do the monitoring, but what we can do is to be an intermediate, but our task between you who are protesting and the administrations, is to put you together, and have you debate on this. There was everyone - mayors, etc. [But from] the public, two people came from the beach. [That is, two out] of the 200+ that we met [on the beach that day] and with whom we discussed. [...] They are all ready to protest against the problem they have [near] their home, but then it's too complicated when you call them on to discuss [it] and [be constructive]. (130729_003)

This paradox of public involvement was raised by several participants and I noticed it myself several times during my fieldwork. My participants seem to attribute it to three types of behaviours. Irresponsiveness of the public can be a curious, but uninvolved position; it can be willfully ignorant position (refusal to commit); or it can be a deflective position, acknowledging a situation, but deflecting commitment or responsibility for it. Here are examples of all three encountered in the field.

1. Indifferent curiosity

On July 22, the communication team was having a press conference and public event in the square of Tropea, a municipality of Calabria which was being recognized for its beauty. In the square were gathered members of administration, of Legambiente, some journalists, and a few other people whose work or initiatives were being recognized. Aside from that, there were very few people from the public. Most of them were there prior to the conference, sitting at tables of the terrace, or passersby, strolling about, sometimes asking questions to the campaign participants holding a kiosk with advertising materials and small items for sale - Legambiente t-shirts, hats, flyers. One of the crew members took me aside and, pointing to the public, started explaining to me that this was the phenomenon he called “the indifferent curiosity of the public” (Field notes July 22). He explained that this approach, curious but uninvolved occurred frequently with members of the public.

Another instance of this was at a beach establishment called Poseidonia. The communication team had anchored the boat about half a kilometer from the shore, near a municipality where the Goletta had previously hardly done any communication activities before. They chose to do a quick stop there so that members of the public who were enjoying their morning at the beach establishment could get a chance to visit the boat and hear about the campaign. A smaller motorboat would take them to and from the Goletta back to shore. Meanwhile, on board the Goletta, campaign participants served visitors antipasti of zucchini, melanzane, mozzarella di bufala, with pizza. The initiative turned into chaos. From the beach, people who hadn't pre-registered earlier on were complaining that they were being refused access to the motorboat to be able to go visit the schooner, the motorboat was overcrowded, even the Goletta eventually had way too many people on board at the same time, making it unsafe. People ate the food, walked around the boat and essentially left and

went back to the beach, while campaign participants cleaned up after them. A campaign participant that was with me during this process continually muttered, sotto voce: “Ah Italians are all mad!”, a self-reflexive remark I will address in the section on discontinuities. (Field notes, July 27) In an earlier part of this research, I focused on the boat as microcosm of the real world. This particular incident near the beach establishment was extremely telling of the this symbolism at its worse. Though campaign participants played it down, I was struck by the incongruity of telling people about a campaign on coastal health, while on an overcrowded boat with people disposing of their trash without further consideration for who will clean it up. Something just didn’t fit. Of course, from a public perspective, it made perfect sense to want to see the Goletta - as a schooner, it is beautiful and unique. But that particular time, it felt as though the symbolic boat did the campaign a disservice, focusing people’s distracted attention on the wrong attractions, and away from the campaign message, feeding into this indifferent curiosity described earlier by the crew member.

2. Wilful ignorance

Another position described by participants is that of wilful ignorance. The head of the technical team talks about people’s ignorance, as “[l]ack of information, but also voluntary lack of information, people who are not interested, that is, they would go for a swim even if there was a pile of garbage. We’ve seen it happen. [...] [W]e try to valorize something, a good that we have, we try to make it more useable, more beautiful, and to swim in clean water [...]. Some people don’t have that conscience, precisely because they dodge the information. It is ignorance that comes maybe from older people, maybe they’ve never studied, maybe they don’t have an open conception of the thing.” (130718_005) This a sort

of individualistic conscience that, the head of technical team explains, can clash with the idea of environmental conscience promoted by Legambiente. It's the attitude of thinking: "I'm only interested what happens around me, I don't care about bigger problems that might actually interest also others. So there is a conscience that is solely mine, and not very focused on the country." (130718_005) Another technician calls Goletta Verde a "responsibilization campaign" (130626_002) precisely because it's a campaign that is trying to promote a common will for change. He laments citizens who know of a problem, but don't do anything to denounce it. This is problematic because those citizens are the ones voting, electing public administrations, and so they can't "close their eyes", and yet they do. (Paraphrase; 130626_002) A lot of this wilful ignorance is said to be caused by a lack of education. The head of the technical team explains:

"[It has to do with] education, [with the] context in which you live and grow up. If you don't get taught and you're always surrounded by waste, your [understanding] is different. I was lucky to grow up and study get a scientific training that maybe enables you to understand better things that others don't [as well], but this doesn't mean that I'm better than another who hasn't received scientific training - it's just a different education exposure, civic respect before others, it's a philosophy that [aims] a little higher - it's not a question of being environmentalist or not, I think it's a question of being educated, or not educated on certain themes, obviously. (130718_005)

But sometimes, lack of education is not the problem. Wilfulness is important in the ignorance equation. One day, we were collecting a water sample in a beach in Campania. There were children playing in the water a few meters away from us, people enjoying the

beach. Oddly enough, the beach was covered in garbage. Not five meters from where were sampling, in a little stream of water running to the sea, a swollen dog carcass lay rotting, seemingly about to explode, surrounded by flies, so bloated it was hardly recognizable as a dog. People were walking barefoot and in open sandals, stepping in the water right next to it. A woman approached us as we were sampling. She started asking about the types of analyses we were conducting. She told us she was interested because she was a biologist and also did analyses. And yet, she was standing barefoot, with two feet in the water, next to her friend, a couple of feet away from the rotting corpse, as though it wasn't there, as though she had no notion of possible dangers of contamination. But she chose to ignore it, prompting us to wonder whether lack of education could really systematically be invoked as explanation. Indeed, we witnessed many instances of deliberate ignorance of what was right before people's eyes and accept it as such, without questioning it. And at some point, it is no longer just a question of education and awareness.

3. Deflection

The third position described by participants is deflection. Members of the technical team and the head of the scientific office, particularly, describe many instances when they meet members of the public who complain to them about a problematic situation on the coast. The technicians give them advice on what to do, tell them who to talk to, how they should organize themselves collectively, sign petitions. But generally, the public's response is evasive, refusing responsibility for the problem, finding it sufficient to have pointed it out to the attention of Goletta Verde participants. Deflection is tied to delegation - it's not the individuals' problem to fix, even though it is affecting them.

“They find someone else to transfer the problem onto, when in fact, they could be the ones writing up that petition. It happened to us many times “there is the river that is dirty - write us a letter”, when [instead] the gentleman could easily write a letter [himself] to the administration saying: “on beach x-y there is this problem”. Get [many] people to sign it and raise the issue. Obviously having Legambiente [do it means that] there is a different strength because now Legambiente has been around for 30 years doing these activities, so it carries a certain weight when they say something. The single citizen alone is a drop in the sea; it’s harder for him to get listened to. But Legambiente started out with a few people who got together and tried to do something so it’s a bit that.” (Head of technical team; 130718_005)

A lot of the weight of the solution, then, remains on Legambiente’s shoulders, or on the shoulders of a local mayor. This is something the association wants to avoid, as it removes the possibility for individual action and responsibility on the part of members of the public, little individual engagement with the metanarrative of a collective conscience, of the project of a collective effort towards a greener Italy.

“[O]ften the people tend to complain about problems and do little to invest themselves personally to fix them. [...] Without doing anything in the first person to fix it. And clearly, with regard to Legambiente, what we ask is: there is a problem, let's get together to fix it. In the sense that, being all on the same level, try to join us in this battle and let's go forward together. [...] [Through] our action [...] [we are] receiving a lot of denouncements, but very

few constructive contributions to fix them. So that isolates us a bit in pushing forward some issues.” (Head of scientific office; 130729_002)

Deflection follows the “somebody else will take care of it” approach.

“[It’s like if I say] “Oh, I have a fridge to throw out, I’ll put it out there [on the street, on the beach] because somebody else will take care of it.” ‘Somebody else’, that’s a bit the mentality - but ‘someone else’ - you’re the first who should think about putting the fridge in the right place, because if nobody else does, then it will just stay there [...]” (Head of technical team; 130718_005)

We have seen this approach in the literature exploring people’s relationship to responsibility for an invisible problem (de Coverly et al., 2008; Moore, 2012; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). There are other possible explanations for unresponsiveness. It can be a sign of human powerlessness trying to feel in control before all the uncertainty that seems to surround it more and more. Indeed, confronted with the omnipresence of risk in our societies, Ulrich Beck predicts three responses: denial, apathy and transformation (2006:331). Denial and apathy can indeed encompass various forms of unresponsiveness, as people’s response to the new and individualized risks and responsibilities frameworks put before them. But it seemed to me that this unresponsiveness is not solely rooted in individual apathy or denial, or in closing a blind eye to one’s responsibilities. It seems to also have roots in other causes, some particular to Italy’s context, as we will see in the next section.

All three responses though, opposition, misunderstanding and unresponsiveness, are indicative of a difficulty faced by Legambiente. The imagination of the public audience is

one filled with assumptions that are much more difficult to find evidenced in the field. Theoretically, categorizing the public as an audience is useful, as in this research for instance. The public can be defined as this abstract entity known as the civic society. But at the operational level, the public cannot be so abstract, it cannot be reduced to such a category with the same ease, without risking encountering severe clashes and disconnects, as seems to be the case within the articulation of the campaign. On one hand, there is a wide acceptance among participants that there exists a significant variety of issues and initiatives around the Italian coast, due in part to geographical factors that shape the country very differently throughout. On the other, there is no indication that Legambiente's definition of the public as an audience accounts for these differences, geographical as a start, let alone the individual ones. I do not mean to imply that Goletta Verde campaign participants aren't *aware* of this difficulty and these distinctions, or they haven't *internalized* them, but rather, it seems to me that they haven't *operationalized* them in their communication strategies, or at least not always effectively, resulting in a disconnect.

Section C. Other “matters of fact”: A look at Italy’s context

Contextual discontinuities and the roots of alterity

I have made previous mention of the fact that contextual elements can influence audience discontinuities. The present section looks at some of these contextual factors. It is in no way an exhaustive examination, though it presents some pieces that are useful to relate to previous sections. The two main theoretical tools I found useful to tackle the section on contextual discontinuities were Lejano et al.’s concept of alterity, and Latour’s matters of fact. I will get back to them shortly. First, let’s briefly turn again to media and communication studies to tie context and audiences. Citing Gadamer, Livingstone, Corner, Dahlgren, and others, Harindranath (2006) examines media audiences in democratic societies. Harindranath describes “audience activity and viewership as a ‘potential moment of citizenship,’” for democratic action. Harindranath explains that:

“the audience-citizen’s historicity, their specific socio-historical and cultural context, is crucial to their engagement with mediated forms of knowledge. Gadamer considers this historicity to be the consequence of both a biographical past as well as a cultural past, which both fashion the ‘hermeneutic situation’ of the audience, that is, the context of audience’s interpretive activity.” (2006:1)

As seen in the previous section, with Goletta Verde, several audience responses didn’t concord with the narrative conveyed by the campaign. These other responses are rooted individual agency and responses, for one thing, but they are also embedded in sociocultural realities that differ around the country, shaped by its history, politics, economics, and various traditions, in other words, the ‘hermeneutic situation’ that guides the

interpretive activity of these various audiences. Once we accept that there are these other things that constitute the hermeneutic situation, we can start seeing that, this hermeneutic situation, in its own Latourian way, constitutes its very own “matter of fact” (or set of matters of fact) that isn’t always aligned with Legambiente’s metanarrative, or in other words, with the matter of concern Legambiente tries to turn into a matter of fact. To sum it up, Italy is filled with matters of fact (accepted truths) that precede (existed in precedence or in coexistence) to the message the association is promoting with its campaign. These matters of fact, when they are not harmonized with the metanarrative, can create noise - disruptions, discontinuities - for the metanarrative at play. That’s the first concept.

As for alterity - the otherness of the responses and contexts constitutes a form of alterity to Legambiente’s metanarrative, sometimes recognized by the association, other times less evidently so. When the ‘universality’ of the metanarrative is tested out, in practice, against these other ‘matters of fact’ constituting alterity, its applicability isn’t always successful. Let us explore some of these ‘others’ that form black boxes mediators that sometimes work against Legambiente metanarrative.

Italian schizophrenia

A running joke I heard a few times during my trip told the story of the creation of the world, where all the countries were giving God a hard time for making Italy so perfectly beautiful in terms of its climate and resources. In his defense, and to appease their envy, God responded: “wait, I’m not done, I still need to put the Italians in there!” This is one of those ambiguous jokes that is better digested when told by an Italian to another, less to laugh, and

more as a demonstration of ‘yet another thing’ that isn’t working in Italy - the economy, the politics, the postal system, the bureaucracy, the trains, ...the list is long. Variations on the theme include everyday expressions of apathetic disbelief before a situation or problem that doesn’t suit the native speaker: “Italians are all crazy!”, or “The problem with Italy are the Italians.” While seemingly harsh, these semi-serious assertions were usually uttered *sotto voce*, with a bit of clairvoyant introspective truth, a hint of irony, but mostly, a touch of almost indiscernible pride that revealed their speaker’s own deep desire to *challenge* those very words. Strangely enough, most people who I heard vocalize this humorous criticisms were very civically and socially engaged individuals speaking informally - a member of a town council, members of Goletta Verde’s communication team, campaign technicians; all a little jaded perhaps, with the many problems faced by Italy.

What is the Geertzian thick description can be read into this sort of comment, when one hears it? Is it a facade? An oversimplification of a very complex reality that is going on? A coping mechanism for the chaos and disorganization? Perhaps I misunderstood some of them, but such remarks struck me as revelatory of a way of thinking and acting (full of paradoxes) that I witnessed many times throughout the campaign and, which, it seems to me, has repercussions on civic life and engagement. Like Geertz’s wink, understanding the nuance of the Italian character - a little jaded, a little evasive, very capricious, and a little humorous, ready to resort to eloquent criticisms, slower to act - says lots about the spices that flavour many collective interactions.

An Italian journalist, Roberto Ippolito, writes about what some call the phenomenon of Italian schizophrenia:

“This is Italy. Infinite riches: 4,739 public and private museums, 62,128 public and private archives, 59,910 archaeological and architectural sites, 1,144 and protected natural areas. It is a widespread cultural movement. But Italy manages to harm to herself. According to Paul Conti, essayist and journalist of the newspaper "Corriere della Sera", there is "a kind of schizophrenia": the high level of cultural production coexists with the increasingly low level of commitment of the state.” Introduction, *Il bel paese maltrattato: Viaggio tra le offese ai tesori d'Italia*, by Roberto Ippolito (no page number) Bompiani (Jan. 1 2010)

This schizophrenia - supposedly a particularism of Italian identity - is also discussed by the Italian author Antonio Porta in 1982, in an article published in the Italian journal *Nuovi argomenti*. He describes how the various prides and successes (artistic, technical, engineering) of Italy are constantly overshadowed by political incompetence and a generalized praise and cult of the “rotten”. Italians are plagued by this continuous double-edged sword, that is renewed and perpetuated by a culture of deflection (political, blame, responsibility) that dominates the public sphere, but ingrains itself in the private realm as well, removing agency for action - or at least providing the private sphere with the excuse not to act against this system. (Porta 1982)

These comments are enlightening if they are taken with their appropriate weight - lightly. I do not want to suggest any form of determinism. Simply, I observe that some of the paradoxes described above, and observed in my fieldwork, are not inconsistent with some of the more deeply rooted contextual discontinuities that clash with Goletta Verde’s metanarrative. The ‘Italian character’ is likely contributing to shape these disruptions.

Geographical divide

When asked about whether there were distinct problematic regional features (following, for instance, a traditional North/South divide), interviewed participants were careful not to be categorical in their responses. They indicated that some regions in the south have a tendency to face certain issues because of a variety of factors, insisting however the same issues could just as easily be found in regions of Central and Northern Italy. That being said, the campaign struggles with its audiences from the south. Though it has many local positive affiliations there, a lot of resistance still comes from Calabria and Campania (among the ones I visited). My impression is that part of the resistance comes from the regional disclosure of results by Legambiente, which usually taints the whole region when making media headlines, reinforcing stereotypes about the meridional part of the country. This indirectly strengthens vilifications of the South, like the city of Naples, “as an ungovernable mess, rife with crime, corruption and superstition” (Pardo 2011:30), an idea that the concerned populations would actually prefer to be rid of, especially when they are making significant efforts to improve their environmental situation. It is a treacherous statement to make and one that the Economist thinks can quickly turn into a defeatist, self-fulfilling prophetic argument if we don’t also seek causes for this disparity in the country’s more recent history. (The Economist 2011a) The divide is nonetheless still present, even if simply because the south still feels the burning stigma. It is also suggested in the literature that part of the resistance could also come from the lack of historical environmentalist presence in the south (Della Seta, 2000).

Indeed, the concern with nature has always been the endeavour of a more elite niche of citizens, particularly before the appearance of more centre-left groups like after the 1960s. Even at the height of the TCI and the CAI, the working class in Italy was fairly unresponsive to the call of nature protection organizations (Piccioni 2010:257) In addition, throughout their history, the presence of nature-oriented groups has been geographically concentrated in the north and centre of Italy, with a very scarce presence in the South (Osti 2007: 119). The latter is affected by corruption and crime, with a large portion of its environmental problems ‘imported’ and not locally produced. For instance, waste disposal problems are in part inherited from northern Italy and from neighbouring countries, such as Austria, France, Germany, China, India, Russia, Nigeria, all of which entertain(ed) trafficking ties with the Southern Italian ecomafias (Greyl et al. 2013:296). This can leave a trail of residual bitterness among the southern population toward the preaching of national environmentally-inclined sentiments asking them for amendments. (Greyl et al. 2013)

Civic responsibility and the individualization of risk and responsibility

According to Muehlebach (2012) who studies the rise of the third sector in Lombardy (Northern Italy), Italy is simultaneously facing a phenomenon of detachment from and resistance to institutions, and witnessing the rise of a new form of citizenship that thinks of itself as independent and autonomous: voluntarism. This phenomenon can be understood in Muehlebach’s *ethical citizenship*: “Ethical citizenship signals the emergence of a new mode of social and moral subjectivity, new assumptions about citizens’ rights and duties, and new conceptualizations of human agency, affect, and will” (Muehlebach 2012:17) supposedly

detached from the State. It mixes values of gratuity and solidarity ironically emerged from Italy's double institutional legacy of catholicism and socialism.

The resistance encountered and described by Muehlebach is not necessarily one that is against the values (as those may be deemed "Italian" and/or "personal" and therefore embodied) but to the idea of adhesion to a system. When the structural elements are obvious (e.g. State ideology, or the romanticism of volunteerism) there seems to be increased public resistance to the shift; and less so when it is personalized, and thought to be an 'autonomous choice' (which Muehlebach argues it isn't). Deeply ingrained in social tissue, the values of this new citizenship contribute to shifting social welfare responsibilities (such as welfare or elderly care) to the "Third Sector", or more specifically, as Muehlebach describes it, through a sacralization of a widespread volunteerism as a form of neoliberal morality to be embraced - a shift, ironically again, initiated by the very State they abhor and through which "solidarity is outsourced (or, as regional representatives in Lombardy sometimes prefer to call it, "externalized") onto citizens, every one of which is now coresponsible for the public good" (Muehlebach 2012:11-12).

The devolution of "social welfare functions to lower levels of government intersects with a long regionalist history in Italy" (Muehlebach 2012:16), on a sort of continuum of the decentralization and regionalisation that had already been studied and explored by Putnam's regional experiment (1993). It coincides also with the importance of local powers in the hundreds of Italian comuni. As I witnessed throughout my fieldwork, the precarious balance of civic responsibility alternates from the shoulders of the mayors and that of the individual citizens.

This is the Third Sector background in which Legambiente embeds itself, but also that of the public it interacts with. The State's outsourcing of responsibility to the individual doesn't stop at welfare - it includes what Beck calls the tragic individualization of risk that occurs side by side with a clash of risk cultures (2006: 336-337) Individuals' health and safety is increasingly their own responsibility before environmental and health risks. Beck writes:

“The appeal to ‘responsibility’ is the cynicism with which the institutions whitewash their own failure. However and this is also part of the tragic irony of this individualization process the individual, whose senses fail him and her in the face of ungraspable threats to civilization, who, thrown back on himself, is blind to dangers, remains at the same time unable to escape the power of definition of expert systems, whose judgement he cannot, yet must trust. Sustaining an individual self of integrity in world risk society is indeed a tragic affair.” (Beck 2006:336)

This tragedy can sometimes find escape mechanisms. If there is a tradition of trust in the mayor, in some smaller communities that haven't been contaminated by corruption, this can be a way to counter this individualization of risk. The problem is that it also becomes a way for the citizen to deflect responsibility, as we have seen in the section on unresponsiveness. But in many other cases, where the local mayor can't or won't take on the responsibility of an environmental problem (for instance, making sure the water purification plant is functional), the citizen is caught in a game of options, between the desire to act and the impossibility to have an impact, the simple deflection of responsibility for personal

reasons (including wilful ignorance) but also for fear of repercussions (criminality, social stigma) as we will see.

Civic fatigue

Before this shift of responsibility, the individual is also faced with a political system that is ‘out of whack’ to use an expression analogous to the Italian ones I heard. In Brazil, around the 1990 election, the term *civic fatigue* was used to describe the population’s lassitude with politics. In a wave of continuous frequent elections in a relatively short time frame (Power 1991:89), amidst corruption (Ibid: 94-97), “the negative aspects of Brazil proportional representation and the role of the media” (Ibid: 95), were a series of factors that “affected the electoral process adversely” (Ibid: 95) for the 1990 Brazilian elections, plaguing them with ““*civic fatigue*”, or massive public disenchantment with the political and electoral process” (emphasis added; ibid. 96). This civic fatigue, or disenchantment, is a phenomenon that is also found in Italy, for similar reasons. Electoral participation has dropped almost 16% in the last 60 years (from a high of 93.8% in 1953 and 1958, to a low of 78.1% in 2008). (Lettieri (ed.), 2009: 196)

Italian politics are filled with blame games and irreverent appeals to questionable ‘poetic’ deflections in the face of devastating situations that would normally require immediate support from the rulers and the State. Muehlebach reports that the 2003 heat wave, that caused about 7,000 deaths, mostly of elderly people, triggered a government fight “with the opposition and the general public over who was to blame” (2012:35), a crisis that triggered enormous criticism and prompted the minister of internal affairs to make uninspired comments like “it was not the heat that killed the elderly, but their loneliness!”

(2012:35). Similarly, when initially refusing international aid after the earthquake that shook the region of Abruzzo in 2009 killing hundreds and sending tens of thousands to take refuge in homeless camps, then Prime Minister Berlusconi advised them to enjoy their “campaign weekend”. (Naughton 2009). Similar issues can be observed in Campania’s ongoing waste crisis²⁴, that plagues the region with electoral scandals, political corruption, and repeated disillusionments by rulers that never miss an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to break their promises (Pardo 2011:29), throwing the region in a “crisis of legitimacy” that is threatening the very “principle of governance tout court.” (Pardo 2011:25) Between environmental and health crises, everyday mismanagement, and internally generated political satire, the political climate in Italy is bleak to say the least. These hypocritical stances feed into the so-called Italian schizophrenia, in a way that is difficult for individuals to fight.

In addition, if members of the public associate Legambiente to an institution, or a group having political affiliations, their distrust for administrations and in the political system could affect how Legambiente is perceived. Indeed, one of the crew members was talking to me about Legambiente’s attempt to “recolour” itself. Goletta Verde has to position itself in the Italian milieu. As we saw, it is a movement that was constructed by a fairly closed intellectual milieu of the Italian Left, in Rome; now, the association has been ‘reconquered’ by ‘normal’ people, not rich, but is still facing accusations of being politically

²⁴ There are innumerable accounts of the particular case of the waste crisis in the region of Campania. I cannot list them all here, but the statistics and depictions of the damages done over the years are staggering. Even more disheartening is the systematic sabotaging of any sort of improvement attempted by the public, from the part of corrupt administrations who wasted, mismanaged, and criminally invested millions in EU funds destined to remediate to the situation. Despite public protest, the development of popular epidemiology, and local clean-up initiatives, the situation managed to escalate (even recently, 2007, 2013) to levels non manageable by the sole population, completely disregarded by the administrations in charge of protecting it and ensuring its social health and well-being. For some of these accounts that include attempts of the civic society to shape itself in protest, see: Greyl et al. (2013); also, see Pardo (2011) for a brilliant account of the politics of clientelism and deflection of the waste crisis, and what he calls Naples’ “facelift”, the advertisement by rulers of the image, the impression of change, when in reality nothing improves. (28-29)

leftist, so it remains highly disliked by people of a different opinion; and in a day and age where everyone talks about the environment, including the politicians, the association faces increased pressure to maintain a high performance level. (Field notes July 22, 2013) Even good politicians find it hard “You know, unfortunately in Italy, politics do very, very negative things. You're admirable only when you're no longer there. [...] This is an ugly vice that we have in Italy. We recognize people's ability to achieve things only when they are gone.” (Mayor of Pollica; 130726_004)

And according to many like him, Italians like to criticize the politics and the institutions; anything that resembles it - Legambiente included - is likely to get criticized for what they do well, often having their reputation tarnished by being thrown in the same basket as all the things that don't work in the country.

Diffused criminality and corruption

Civic fatigue and public non-involvement are also reinforced by a diffused corruption (political and administrative) and widespread criminality. Even petty crimes are frequent. With the technical team, at one of our overnight stops in a bed and breakfast, after being assured of the safety of the neighbourhood, our car was broken into within a few hours, and our GPS stolen. This is common, particularly in Campania, explained one of the technicians. It had happened to him before. He added: “the B&B owner was probably involved too.” (Field notes) But organized criminality is particularly dangerous, plaguing the southern regions. At one of the communication initiatives in Calabria, one of the speakers expressed his anger publicly: “People don't participate because they are afraid. They see the *carabinieri*²⁵ having coffee with the corrupt politicians and officials, and they are afraid.”

²⁵ Italian police

Talking about a case environmental health injustice that occurred in the municipality during the 1960s, he described that people died of poisoning in a factory where particularly toxic chemicals were used, thanks to the local deputy whose connections to the 'ndrangheta²⁶ ensured him continuous funds to keep the factory open in those conditions, under the pretense that it wasn't dangerous, and turning him into a benefactor that brought work to the municipality. Criminality is devastating in the South, and its primary victims are the local residents. The mayor of Pollica, Campania, who replaced the one that was assassinated in 2010, recounts:

“we have terrible examples of what they [the Camorra]²⁷ can do on our territory. And here [...] discharging waste illegally on lands, in the sea, in some cases, [represents] things more damaging, in some ways than for example spreading drugs. And [the region of] Campania is a victim of these things, especially the province of Napoli, of Caserta.. you can touch with your hand the incredible damages they [the Camorra] have done, not only to the environment, but also to the people. There are generations destroyed by what was done 20 years ago. There are children who will never be born because of what happened with that territory.” (130726_004)

He himself has lost a friend to it, in the person and model of the former mayor. Though he continues to carry the legacy of his predecessor, not all citizens have the resources or courage to do the same - for many, it's not worth the risk, for others, things are just too confused.

²⁶ Regional organized crime (mafia) in Calabria

²⁷ Regional organized crime (mafia) in Campania

At a harbour in Calabria, local residents are engaged in a conversation with the Goletta crew members. They share with me: “In these parts [...] legality, illegality, they’re very confused. [...] [The authorities] recently arrested this magistrate. [...] So me, the citizen, I don’t know who is [one of] ours, who isn’t...”. One of the crew member commented: “At least here [in the South] they arrest [them now]. In the North, they don’t arrest [them] yet...” (Informal conversation, field notes and unofficial recordings). People feel that they’re on their own, they do not know who to trust. It goes back to Beck’s individualization of risk.

In performance and audience studies, Radbourne et al. (2010) examine the relationship of audiences to performing arts companies. They have criteria to assess audience feedback on the quality of their performance. Radbourne et al. identified four indicators to assess an audience’s feedback on their experience of performances: knowledge, risk, authenticity and collective engagement. Knowledge refers to the audience’s understanding of the act being performed, and the amount of interpretive help and information they have to assist them. (2010:1) Risk relates to the audience’s gain(s) or loss(es) in attending a performance, particularly in relation to their expectations of self and others, whereas authenticity relates to the need for truthfulness (enacted and perceived) in the performance. (Ibidem) Finally, collective engagement relates to the opportunity provided by the performance for engaging with oneself, with the performance, and with others; it is the ‘place’ where the other indicators are checked against each other with a possibility of creating (or not) a synced collective experience among a community of audience-members, and with the performance itself. (Ibidem) The balance between these audience feedback indicators is revelatory of the success or quality of the experience for the audience, and of changes to be made. Contextual factors play a large role in balancing these four indicators.

Goletta Verde, in its own way, is a staged performance aimed at delivering a message to various audiences. In its case, the risk for attendance of one of the campaign initiatives is related to social visibility and affiliations, particularly in potentially dangerous or corrupted areas. The costliness of attending a Goletta Verde event or participating actively in their local activities is also a factor, particularly if people do not feel they will gain anything particular from it, or if there are already representative attendees, such as mayors, and local administrators who act on behalf of the population (or against it), and if there is a particular (individual or social) perception of the relationship between the audience and Legambiente as a source of authority (nourished in part by a distrust in administrators and institutions). Lassitude, a ‘nothing can be changed’ attitude, or a deflection of responsibility on Legambiente believed to be the responsible institution can also hinder on the possibilities for collective engagement with the performance.

As a citizen association from the Third sector, perceived by some to be politicized, by many to be an official institution analogous to the regional ARPAs, by others as the party responsible for making institutions accountable, and by others still as a group of citizens whose analyses aren’t credible, Legambiente and its campaign are in a difficult spot given the country’s contextual realities and paradoxes, these sources of alterity that coexist with the association’s metanarrative.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS PART III – THE MORAL OF THE STORY

(or: Lessons learned for environmentalism and anthropology)

This last part of the analysis comes as revisiting of the conclusions drawn in Parts I and II, and proposes some of the perhaps more fundamental questionings that reside at the core of the discontinuities encountered by the campaign. It seeks to reposition the discussion on discontinuities within the association itself.

Revisiting the collective environmental conscience as a matter of concern... starting internally

The strategies identified in Part 1 of the analysis are a way for the association to operationalize its vision: develop a campaign that tackles one aspect of the vision that faces collective shortcomings (in this case, coastal issues that are brought back into the metanarrative via Goletta Verde's campaign narrative); identify audiences to reach out to, in other words, audiences that form the collectivity and occupy different roles in relation to the campaign (in this case, administrations, the media, and the public whose interactions with the matter of fact metanarrative are initially imagined by the association); come up with collectively credible and acceptable evidence to support the campaign, and inherently, the matter of fact so that it is no longer contained within the association and can be expanded to the collectivity.

The clash between the association's belief in an internally established matter of fact, and the outside world's questioning of this belief is visible. One of the paradoxes is that the

associative vision itself claims to be about the collectivity. It *a priori* establishes itself as a matter of fact, preoccupying itself with convincing its supposed adherents about their belief only after the fact is established. In other words, as part of its essential premise, the matter of fact needs collective support. The reality is that it does not have it unanimously outside the association itself. Hence a return to the dilemma exposed in the introduction: who forms the collective in ‘collective environmental conscience’? And if the collective expands to the broader Italian collectivity (in this case), then can the association really consider its vision an established matter of fact, when parts of this very collectivity reject it?

As Latour writes, in *Why has critique run out of steam*, “The question was never to get *away* from facts but *closer* to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism [...] [T]he critical mind, if it is to renew itself and be relevant again, is to be found in the cultivation of a stubbornly realist attitude [...] but a realism dealing with what I will call *matters of concern*, not *matters of fact*. [...] Reality is not defined by matters of fact. Matters of fact are not all that is given in experience. Matters of fact are only very partial and, I would argue, very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concern and only a subset of what could also be called *states of affairs*. It is this second empiricism, this return to the realist attitude, that I’d like to offer as the next task for the critically minded.” (Latour 2004b:231-232)

In the light of these words and of the observations my very brief field observations allow me to do, I find that perhaps Legambiente would benefit from returning to that idea, so established within the association, of a collective environmental conscience, to debunk it internally, to question it, to transform it back into the matter of concern that it is for everyone outside the association, and turn it back into a source of discussion, of debate, of passion, and

of compromise, within the association itself. This is not a judgment of the laudability of the metanarrative, or its usefulness, nor is it a questioning of why the association set out to follow that path in the first place. Rather, it is a suggestion to revisit the metanarrative from within, to recreate a matter of concern from within, to redefine, discuss, debate the idea of collectivity behind it, before treating it as fact.

A starting point to invite a return of Legambiente on itself could include a re-evaluation of the association's relationship to its audiences, particularly the "public" (who is somehow represented in the idea of the collective), and its goals and targets.

As mentioned before, Cox (2010) identifies environmental communication as a form of symbolic action that is pragmatic and constitutive, features translated in the campaign's vision, goals and objectives. Again, members of the association identified a principal objective as the creation of a collective environmental conscience for the Italian people. (130726_002). Early in June of 2013, at a preparatory meeting for all participants to the Goletta Verde campaign in Legambiente's headquarters in Rome, the organizers jotted down collective brainstorming thoughts on a flipchart. On one sheet of paper, to serve a collective reminder, they identified and wrote down, in a 3-column table, the main 1) themes, 2) actions and tools, and 3) objectives^{28[1]} of the Goletta Verde campaign (in that order). I focus on the objectives identified, which were the following: scientific monitoring, awareness raising, assessment of situations (better or worse) compared to previous years, communication, information, denunciation, change, and valorisation (recognition). (Field notes, June 5th

²⁸ The word "obiettivi" in Italian directly translates to "objectives" in English. However, an alternate, equally valid translation for it is the word "goals". In English, the distinction between objectives (more abstract) and goals (more specific and measurable) is a very important one. The word obiettivo was the only one used by participants. In this case, it seemed to be intended as "goals" (things to achieve during the campaign), but given the lack of measurability of the stated "obiettivi", I am leaving the direct translation of "objectives".

2013) The association therefore has a clear idea of the direction and objectives it holds for the campaign. As such, the environmental communication found in Goletta Verde's campaign aims to educate, change, and raise awareness about coastal issues in Italy. But it also seeks to be constitutive of the way people understand their relationship to nature and environmental issues in Italy, contributing to the shaping of a collective conscience and a common understanding of what the environment means. But objectives isn't sufficient. A businessman friend of mine explained that when he embarks on a project with his team, he draws a pyramid of success that looks roughly like the diagram below, where, the vision informs measurable goals, which in turn inform a specific course of action to follow to meet the goals and fulfill the vision (or objectives).



In the case of Goletta Verde, there are many sub-objectives that fit into the bigger vision of creating an environmental conscience. As we have seen through the examples provided in this research, there are also countless concrete, pragmatic and constitutive actions and initiatives put in motion.

What I haven't seen throughout my fieldwork, were goals. It could be argued that there were implicit goals - and I would agree to a certain extent. In order to reach the media, they issue a press release, hold a press conference and in total for the duration of the campaign, make that many press-related initiatives. To reach the administrations, for each harbour stop, they send the local administrator an invitation to the event, issue a press release identifying a specific municipality as being problematic, send each complaining mayor a report with suggestions for improvements of a local problem. To engage with, and inform the public, they invite passersby on the boat, give out flyers, talk to people on a beach. These actions certainly happened and were certainly consistent with the global vision, and they would probably fulfill a hypothetical goal. But even though the objectives and actions listed were consistent with each other, and with the overall vision, they were not formally equated with specific communication goals (or targets). This opens the door to a critical question: how does the association know if its campaign is successful in meeting its objectives? And how does it narrow down the scope of its actions to be efficient in meeting its vision, if it has no explicit goals to serve as intermediaries?

I asked my participants if they had a tangible way of measuring their success, and of attributing, for instance, a successful operation to the work of Goletta Verde (as opposed to a plethora of other factors and attenuating circumstances). Their responses were unanimous.

Yes, according to participants, Legambiente, through Goletta Verde, "has succeeded in creating a collective conscience on some issues related to the sea and coasts that have now become part of the common patrimony, that travel on their own, that was the objective, really, to create a collective conscience on these themes." (Head of scientific office; 130729_002) As the head of the communication team put it, "the campaign is a container

that we try to fill” (field notes). Goletta Verde as stimulus is therefore an undoubtful success, because it makes things move, which, in and of itself, is a success. It has managed to insert itself in the circles, in the ‘collective conscience’ of all audiences. As the mayor of Pollica explains, often:

“[people] associate the concept of environmentalism to [...] operations of high impact [...] [to] lots of sensationalism, lots of 'integralism' [...]. And that's it. Legambiente instead, succeeds in entering inside the communities, in the *comuni*, in the town halls, which then are the most important part of the Italian institutions because they're the ones that [experience and live] the problems on a daily basis. They're the ones that encounter the people, they understand their difficulties, they understand how important it is to succeed to help a person in need. And Legambiente builds, together with these local communities, the concept of environment, that is not constituted only of – banal example – of respecting the sea by not throwing out waste in it, but it is the one of succeeding to make it such that the environment becomes the central element for the development of a territory.” (130726_004)

The *infiltration* in the collective imaginary of the idea of Legambiente, of Goletta Verde, and of a notion of environmentalism seems to be accepted by all. In that sense, the association and its campaign are indeed successful in *being known*. For instance, the photojournalist following the campaign was telling me that for Legambiente, Goletta Verde is a form of ‘product placement’ placeholder for the association’s metanarrative. For him, as outsider who got to know the campaign much better, Goletta Verde becomes a sort of platform for science used as publicity, as advertisement of an issue. For the public, “Legambiente is an

institution.” He exemplifies using himself. Before being a photojournalist, he says, he is himself a citizen.

“I am the public. [...] I knew of Legambiente before, but without knowing anything of the truth. [...] [Y]ou [as public] always have the sensation that they are super heroes [...]. [Citizens] expect answers [...] from Legambiente. [...] [Legambiente] have done 'product placement'. They have constructed this perception in the public. I don't think it's wrong. But, it is a strategy.”

(130718_002)

So Legambiente and Goletta Verde are known. The *how* they are known, interpreted, understood, is a little more complex, as we have demonstrated earlier, and there is no uniform interpretation of how they are known. This interpretative variability, however, doesn't seem to deter campaign participants from believing they are successful.

Though there appears to be no clear tool for measuring their success, Legambiente participants insist that they know they have had an effect. While in general terms, this seems accurate, as the association is highly influential in Italy, they seem to struggle to identify how successful they are with their various target audiences. Results with media and administrations seem a little more self-evident (through headlines, or the effective destruction of an ecomonster, for instance) and participants give me several examples of these, in the last few years and in this year's campaign. On the other hand, the 'standing operating procedure' to follow for success with the citizens forming the 'public' is less clear, particularly as targets and actions are especially poorly defined in the minds of my participants for this audience. The responses are inconsistent among participants. For instance, for some participants, such as the head of the scientific office, it is clear, as we have

seen previously, that there is a particularly ambiguous struggling relationship with the public whom the association would like to reach out to more. For others, like the head of the communication team, though there is room for improvement, the campaign is already doing enough:

“[...]we could do a lot more. But initiative and initiative have different targets. A press conference [...] is not specifically cut out for citizens, but in general for journalists and the press. Then, it always depends on the territory you're in. For instance, in Calabria, we felt the need to do an experience in the town square, where we talked about the beautiful things that we witnessed - active citizenship, entrepreneurship, among other. La Marlane, we felt the need to involve committees, people perhaps were there, on the beach, [but not others] because [citizens] can't reach such a level of depth that [they] leave Rome to come to Praia a Mare to follow this initiative. But all the people that in the meantime you intercept on the beach with the press and so on, are all people whom, in some way, you have entered in contact with. Like all these people walking here, maybe they have already seen the boat, but the majority of them, it's the first time. So they come on board, they are told what we do, but they are people who prevalently are here by chance. Unless those who have read the paper, saw that we were here and could visit the boat. But many people we meet without it being that they had come out to meet us, or us them. (130728_001)

Realistically, the head of communication adds:

“We don’t have the ambition of informing every single person on that territory. You inform and sensitize a small portion - for one part, those who come into contact with you, and for another, people who are already predisposed to receiving your information. But it’s not like you make a stop [in a municipality] and have the ambition of filling a stadium. Because it depends a lot on the size of the initiative, on what you want to talk about, on the theme that you want to talk about on a given territory.” (130728_001)

Again, the emphasis is put on the fact that a contact with the public was established, independent of *how* (multiple circumstances possible but little to no target guideline), and of the goals it might or might not fulfill for the campaign. A lot of the burden of information is left on the citizen and on the chance that people will stop by.

This leads me to suggest that perhaps unintentionally, there is a sort of hierarchy of audiences for the campaign participants. Given the internal control over and relative straightforwardness of original internally generated press releases, Goletta Verde is almost guaranteed its consistent interaction with the news media. Given also that the accusatory activity of the campaign usually targets administrations - for a response, good or bad - these administrations are almost *de facto* involved in the process of the campaign (and in the broader scale, embedded in the metanarrative). The one audience that can ‘get away’ and slip through the association’s fingers without too much immediate repercussion is the public. At times, it seems as though the association subconsciously is counting on other channels to reach the public (the news with data and headlines on the polluted beaches, or new environmental regulations, when administrative changes are implemented) which might be more effective than the association’s direct interaction with citizens. This highlights a double

paradox: first, throughout my fieldwork, participants kept labelling themselves as ‘citizens operating in a citizen associative capacity, to serve citizens’; and second, considering the admitted campaign (and association) objective is to create a collective environmental conscience, what does that mean if the citizens (who ultimately constitute the collectivity) are not effectively targeted as primary audience? The association could engage in a discussion on the idea of collectivity, where public, the association and its other audiences have rights to speak about defining the vision that is then ‘redistributed’ to them. As it stands, it seems the public is represented in Legambiente’s idea of a collective, yet members of the public contest this vision.

I make this distinction in relation to my earlier comments on the campaign’s lack of clear, explicit goals. To this day, I am struggling to understand - and I believe this is the case for many of the campaign’s participants as well - whether the association’s metanarrative’s primary concern is to change people’s *awareness*, or to encourage a change in people’s actual *behaviour*. Collective awareness (with the inherent variable moral compass and its choices), and collective vigilance are two completely different things.

If behaviour is targeted, then the entire campaign might need to readdress how it deals with the public, and the project becomes a project for the reshaping of (environmental) citizenship, something that many authors have studied.²⁹ It could even be suggested that targeting the media and administrations as primary audiences is problematic as, in the current framework, they can only change the incentive and disincentive patterns of the public,

²⁹ This research does not focus on the environmental citizenship as a concept, but the literature includes Andrew Dobson’s distinction between ecological and environmental citizenship (2003), revisited by David Humphreys in 2009; Simon Hailwood’s reasonable citizenship inspired by Rawls’ notion of otherness (2005); and also J. Barry’s Republican sustainability citizenship (2006), among others.

without necessarily contributing to engraining vigilance ‘within’.³⁰ In targeting the media and administrations over the public, the association would then simply be displacing the management of the problem.

I wish to go back to the confusion around “collective” in collective environmental conscience, and call again upon Foy’s description of Suzuki as being the environmental conscience of others that was presented in the introduction. If Legambiente is to be the environmental conscience of the people, do they act on their behalf, or alongside them? What are the implications for collective? And more importantly, what are the implications for the ‘matter-of-fact’ character of the vision, as perceived from within? Legambiente members declare themselves to be part of a citizen association; this gives them the right to pressure administrations who are accountable to their citizens. As citizens, they can also engage with the media as they do. But in reaching out to the public without clear goals is where there seems to be a significant loss of metanarrative focus, where their progress is continuously hindered by bombarding discontinuities, and a lot of scattered energies seem wasted.

I suggest that in Goletta Verde, the act of the performance is in large part a self-legitimizing one, with which Legambiente’s members engage on a daily basis during the campaign. This isn’t a problem insofar as the most important thing is that the association should understand and believe what they are doing (paraphrase, photojournalist: 130718_001) to carry forward their action. However, the communication strategies involved in Goletta Verde’s campaign discourse reflect an ambiguous self-awareness from the

³⁰ Particularly in Italy, Dobson suggests that, although the logic of the “financial incentive route to sustainability” is “impeccable” (2003:2-3), the moment the incentive system would be withdrawn, public conduct would go back to an unsustainable one, unless there was an alternative approach that would “redirect patterns of behaviour in sustainable directions” (Dobson 2003:3). The question - not explored in this research - would be to determine which alternative approach to use.

organization's part. Some of their actions are clearly intended and carried out as part of the plan, of the communication strategy: participants certainly have an internal understanding of the message they are trying to convey, and its consistency with the actions they pose. These actions are therefore validating of a vision they are reiterating - first and foremost - to themselves as citizens and performers, before conveying it to others. But the lack of clarity and linearity between the objectives, the various actions and the targeted audiences, reveals that perhaps the association is standing too close to its own performance. This is probably the association's most overlooked impression management weakness, or dramaturgical circumspection shortcoming (Goffman 1959:218), as it fails to see how the very conceptualization of the actions to be performed will affect the audiences' perception of the campaign, especially their public audience consisting of citizens like themselves - with the difference that those citizens are not yet technically engaged in the performance. Most importantly, it fails to internalize that outside the association, the metanarrative is very much still a matter of concern.

Describing his project to get rid of what he calls the 'nature-culture orthogonal grid' (Descola 1996:99), Descola writes: "the entities of which our universe is made have a meaning and identity solely through the relations that constitute them as such. Although relations precede the objects that they connect, they actualise themselves in the very process by which they produce their terms." (Descola 1996:98-99)

If the vision of a collective environmental conscience can be revisited by Legambiente as matter of concern, in other words, when the ideas of collectivity, environment, and conscience, can be questioned *before* being affirmed, maybe then, can the dichotomies of nature versus culture, of inside versus outside the vision, finally be surpassed

beyond a traditional naturalism. Maybe then there can perhaps be a shift in modes of relations between self and other, to surpass predation and protection. A shift in which relations of reciprocity, among others, can be considered: relations of reciprocity between humans and nonhumans, humans and other humans representing the current “outsiders” that don’t abide by the vision. Most importantly relations of reciprocity that grant back speaking rights to all those, quiet and less quiet, who form a commonly shared world and who will voice “so many variations within a single set of relations encompassing humans as well as non-humans.” (Descola 1996:99)

CONCLUSION

Our journey following the Goletta Verde campaign comes to an end.

It started out seeking to explore how this campaign is used as a vector by the association Legambiente for the transmission of their project to create a collective environmental conscience in Italy, and how this vision - this narrative - is at times challenged by various discontinuities, understood as noise, as disruptions that interrupt and mediate its diffusion.

The journey has shed light on the history of Goletta Verde within Legambiente, as its principal and oldest campaign, and within the environmental history of Italy. Goletta Verde, as campaign about the health of the coasts and seas, was introduced in its hybridity: simultaneously as a scientifically-versed campaign, conducting first hand spot monitoring of the seawater along the Italian coasts, unearthing critical points that go unchecked by regional regulatory bodies; and as an environmental communication campaign, advocating for the bettering of shore management, of water sanitization and urban waste water treatment, denouncing local and regional coastal problems, promoting sustainability and a wise use of natural resources, holding press conferences and public events to increase public awareness.

Equipped with various theoretical tools, the journey continued to address the main research question and subquestions. Through Lejano et al.'s theorization of narrative networks, the *metanarrative* appeared as a crucial umbrella tool in which to embed the others - it is the grand narrative that can be shared across actors, who find in it a place to include their personal story, while gaining a sense of belonging to collectivity united by shared beliefs towards one vision. Each actor's contribution and the united front resulting this gathering of contributions consist in *performances* (Goffman), where adherence to the

metanarrative involves telling the story a certain way, to convey a given set of impressions in its audiences. These audiences, before being encountered, are first *imagined*, understood as groups, categories, targets that will have a given set of potential reactions, responses to the story, and for which storytellers try to prepare as adequately as possible, to sustain the believability of their performance to come. These *imagined audiences* (Litt), however, do not always correspond to their real others, and subsequent clashes may occur. These clashes, finally, throw in relief the metanarrative as a locus for discussion, for debate, for something that is not yet truth, but only still a *matter of concern*, coexisting alongside many others.

After conducting fieldwork, participant observation complemented with literature, and interviews with campaign participants and a few outsiders, the main research findings were joined with the theoretical tools. In a first part of the analysis, the tools helped make sense of the data, revealing how the association's metanarrative was constructed and narrated in the campaign, bringing its story to life. This first part described who the targeted audiences were - the administrations, the media, and the public - and how campaign interactions with them were understood and imagined by participants. This first part also showed how the campaign narrative was constructed with the help of universal elemental narrative tools, characterizing good actors, symbols, and values, as well as bad ones. Finally, the first part of the analysis showed us how campaign credibility is established with the help of emplotment mechanisms in the metanarrative, the use of a scientific methodology that is black boxed as an indiscutable matter of fact...until challenged.

Part II of the analysis opens up these black boxes, revealing some of the challenges encountered by the metanarrative. The first one, internal discontinuities, revealed weaknesses in the construction of the campaign narrative, particularly surrounding the use of narrative

gaps, which sometimes lead to unintended overlooked communication and public outreach opportunities for the association. Audience discontinuities also occurred, when the audiences departed from their imagined selves, and formed various types of counternarratives that challenged the campaign metanarrative. Finally, contextual discontinuities revealed contextual otherness, other ‘matters of fact’ existing in Italy, complexifying the metanarrative, proposing an alterity rooted in sociocultural and geopolitical differences across the country.

Meanwhile, the third part of the analysis suggested that the metanarrative, in its current state is problematic when regarded as a matter of fact, where different modes of relation cannot be expressed. This is shown in the operationalization of the association’s vision. Such a broad, complex and challenging endeavour as that of Legambiente’s mission to implement a collective environmental conscience through campaigns like Goletta Verde deserves not only to be studied, externally, but also revisited internally by the association that believes in it, to engage in a collective discourse on the vision as collective matter of concern.

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