società e storia

Sommario

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Orientamenti e dibattiti

Il mestiere di storico

Dalla sorveglianza alla vigilanza:
a proposito di "culture della vigilanza"
di Arndt Brendecke e Paola Molino.
Introduzione

di Alessandro Buono

Il saggio introduce un dossier scritto assieme a Teresa Bernardi, Umberto Signori e Stefano Poggi, che si propone di mettere alla prova la proposta storiografica di Arndt Brendecke e Paola Molino sulle "Culture della Vigilanza". Attraverso l'analisi di tre casi studio (il controllo dei matrimoni nella città di Venezia tra cinque e seicento, l'analisi della produzione delle informazioni dei consoli veneziani a Smirne tra sei e settecento, la riorganizzazione del controllo del territorio nella città di Vicenza in età napoleonica) gli autori del dossier indagano, ognuno nel proprio contesto, l'utilità di passare dal paradigma della sorveglianza all'analisi delle concrete pratiche e culture della vigilanza. Questo saggio introduttivo cerca di tracciare un percorso comune tra i tre interventi, mettendo in luce alcune questioni metodologiche e nodi tematici, e dialogando più in generale con i recenti studi dedicati alla delazione e alla comunicazione tra governanti e governati. In particolare, si sostiene la tesi che per meglio comprendere quale sia la specifica "cultura della vigilanza" di antico regime, sia necessario metterla in connessione con la sua peculiare "cultura del possesso", ovvero l'idea che il potere e la giurisdizione, come qualunque altro diritto, siano definiti nei termini della *possessio* e dell'effettivo esercizio, piuttosto che in quelli del *dominium*.

Parole chiave: sorveglianza, culture della vigilanza, delazione, comunicazione, culture del possesso.

From surveillance to vigilance: debating "cultures of vigilance" by Arndt Brendecke and Paola Molino. Introduction

This essay introduces a dossier written together with Teresa Bernardi, Umberto Signori and Stefano Poggi, which aims to put to the test Arndt Brendecke and Paola Molino's historiographic proposal of "Cultures of Vigilance" to the test. Through the analy-

sis of three case studies (the control of marriages in the city of Venice between the 16th and 17th centuries, the analysis of the production of information by Venetian consuls in Smyrna between the 17th and 18th centuries, and the reorganization of the control of the territory in the city of Vicenza in the Napoleonic age) the authors of the dossier investigate, each in their own context, the usefulness of moving from the paradigm of surveillance to the analysis of the concrete practices and cultures of vigilance. This introductory essay attempts to trace a common path between the three interventions, highlighting some methodological issues and topics, and developing a dialogue with recent studies on denunciation and communication between the rulers and the ruled. In particular, this essay argues that in order to better understand the specific early modern "culture of vigilance", it is necessary to connect it with its peculiar "culture of possession", i.e. the idea that power and *iurisdictio*, like any other right, are defined in terms of *possessio* and actual exercise, rather than in terms of *dominium*.

Keywords: surveillance, cultures of vigilance, delation, communication, cultures of possession.

Il dossier che qui si propone nasce dalla collaborazione tra chi scrive, una studiosa e due studiosi i quali da poco hanno terminato i loro studi dottorali su argomenti relativi al controllo della mobilità, all'identificazione delle persone e, in senso più generale, alle pratiche controllo del territorio[1]. È una collaborazione che si è svolta durante questi due anni di pandemia – anche grazie a una serie di seminari dedicati al tema "Identificare le persone, controllare i movimenti tra antico regime e primo ottocento" svoltisi virtualmente presso l'Università di Pisa nella primavera del 2021[2] – che prende spunto dall'uscita di una serie di studi che nel corso degli ultimi anni sono stati dedicati al tema della delazione, della denuncia, della vigilanza e della comunicazione tra governanti e governati. In particolare, il dossier è nato dall'idea di sviluppare una riflessione comune a partire innanzitutto da una proposta storiografica, esposta in numero monografico di rivista del 2018 dedicato alle "Cultures of Vigilance" a cura di Arndt Brendecke e Paola Molino: si trattava, in altri termini, di mettere alla prova questa idea delle *culture della vigilanza* su concreti terreni di ricerca della prima età moderna.

Ma a spingere la riflessione, almeno per quanto mi riguarda, è stata anche proprio l'esperienza della pandemia. Chi l'ha vissuta in Italia ricorderà, nei

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1. T. Bernardi, *Mobilità femminile e pratiche di identificazione a Venezia in età moderna*, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, Tesi di perfezionamento in discipline storiche, a.a. 2019-2020; S. Poggi, *A Conflict of Identities: Personal Identification in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy (1796-1814)*, Fiesole, European University Institute, PhD thesis, a.a. 2020-2021; U. Signori, *Proteggere i privilegi dello straniero. I consoli veneziani nell'Impero ottomano tra Sei e Settecento*, Milano, Università di Milano, Tesi di dottorato, a.a. 2016-2017.

2. I seminari, tenutisi ad aprile-maggio 2021, avevano visto oltre agli autori e all'autrice di questo dossier la partecipazione anche di Chiara Lucrezio Monticelli e Laura Di Fiore, e avevano coinvolto studenti e studentesse dei corsi di laurea magistrale delle università di Roma "Tor Vergata" e Napoli "Federico II".

giorni più duri del primo *lockdown*, televisioni e quotidiani online ritrasmettere immagini della polizia in cui si vedevano spiagge e parchi deserti «setacciati a terra con i quad e, dall'alto, con (…) droni per segnalare, in tempo reale, la presenza di persone, sull'arenile o tra il verde, zone vietate dalle ordinanze restrittive emesse a contrasto della diffusione del coronavirus»[3]. Ma anche – forse ancora più impressionanti – le notizie delle delazioni dei cittadini chiusi in casa che, dai propri balconi, denunciavano chi infrangeva le regole del confinamento. L'eccezionalità del momento non portava quindi solo all'esposizione di arcobaleni con la scritta "andrà tutto bene", o a intonare collettivamente l'inno nazionale dalle finestre, ma rendeva evidente lo spontaneo emergere dal basso di meccanismi di controllo orizzontale e di delazione che a molti sono parsi poco compatibili con una "moderna" democrazia liberale, in cui il monopolio del controllo del rispetto della legge è affidato alle forze dell'ordine e non a meccanismi di *self-help* comunitario.

Nell'era digitale, poi, le "app" prendono il posto delle famigerate *bocche di leone* destinate a raccogliere le denunce degli abitanti delle città di antico regime. Si potrebbero citare molti casi, come ad esempio quello di Roma. A fine marzo 2020 la sindaca Virginia Raggi annunciava che ogni cittadino romano avrebbe potuto partecipare al controllo del rispetto delle norme da parte dei suoi vicini attraverso il "Sistema Unico di Segnalazione":

Ci sono assembramenti di persone che ritieni in contrasto con le regole sull'emergenza sanitaria? Puoi segnalarli direttamente all'Autorità competente con il Sus (Sistema Unico di Segnalazione) attivo sul portale istituzionale di Roma Capitale. È semplice, segui le istruzioni[4].

Questo incentivo alla delazione, criticato nei commenti sui social come «caccia alle streghe», tra le «iniziative che rievocano il ventennio fascista»[5], o in modo derisorio sui giornali come «versione amatriciana e dunque grillina della Ceka di Beria»[6], sembrava avere tuttavia grande successo a giudicare dalla risposta dei cittadini, disposti evidentemente anche a non restare anonimi e ad autenticarsi mediante il cosiddetto SPID (il Sistema Pubblico di Identità Digitale che permette la comunicazione tra cittadini e le istituzioni dello Stato). Mi sembra significativo che le immagini sui giornali, non casualmente,

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3. Vedi, ad esempio, le immagini della riviera riminese pubblicate nell'edizione online de «Il Messaggero» del 19 aprile 2020 <https://www.ilmessaggero.it/video/cronaca/coronavirus_rimini_spiaggia_controlli-5179947.html> (ultima consultazione 11 marzo 2022).

4. M. Perrone, *«Segnala online gli assembramenti». La Giunta Raggi invita alla delazione, i cittadini insorgono*, in «Il Sole 24 Ore», 27 marzo 2020, edizione elettronica <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/segnala-online-assembramenti-giunta-raggi-invita-delazione-cittadini-insorgono-AD3AaPG?refresh_ce=1> (ultima consultazione 11 marzo 2022).

5. *Ibidem*.

6. S. Merlo, *La Raggi invita alla delazione, e nella tragedia c'è da ridere*, in «Il Foglio», 28 marzo 2020, edizione elettronica <https://www.ilfoglio.it/politica/2020/03/28/news/la-raggi-invita-alla-delazione-e-nella-tragedia-ce-da-ridere-307335/> (ultima consultazione 11 marzo 2022).

paragonassero l'iniziativa del comune a due istituzioni che nell'immaginario collettivo evocano il massimo grado di sorveglianza e disciplinamento sociale: l'Inquisizione, da un lato, le polizie segrete dei regimi totalitari, dall'altro.

Ma tale fenomeno non è stato certamente solo italiano[7], e non è possibile addebitarlo all'eccezionalità della situazione pandemica: proprio quel sistema di segnalamento utilizzato nel 2020, infatti, era stato inaugurato nel luglio 2018[8], e simili sistemi esistono per la comunicazione di disservizi o di denunce sui siti di altre città italiane, così come sono state sviluppate applicazioni per la comunicazione con le forze dell'ordine[9]. Sarebbe quindi riduttivo leggerlo come semplice espressione di una certa cultura politica, o solamente come risultato di una spinta proveniente dall'alto: la stessa sindaca Raggi, infatti, si difendeva dalle critiche ricevute in un'intervista televisiva alla RAI, dicendo che «in questi giorni abbiamo ricevuto migliaia di segnalazioni, e così abbiamo deciso di convogliarle in un unico canale per evitare che si disperdessero»[10]. In altri termini, l'iniziativa del comune rispondeva ad una richiesta sociale di rispetto delle norme restrittive della libertà, una richiesta di protezione dal pericolo e di punizione dei trasgressori. Certo non si è arrivati a ipotizzare, come Duterte nelle Filippine, di sparare «a morte» contro chi fosse stato sorpreso a eludere le misure anticontagio[11]; tuttavia il fioccare delle denunce da parte del vicinato nei confronti di coloro i quali erano giudicati abusare delle pur ristrette possibilità di spostamento – accesi dibattiti vi sono stati a proposi-

7. *La "delazione da coronavirus" è diventata uno sport mondiale*, in «Wired», 6 aprile 2020, edizione elettronica <https://www.wired.it/attualita/politica/2020/04/06/coronavirus-delazione-vicini-stare-casa/> (ultima consultazione 11 marzo 2022).

8. La stessa sindaca di Roma, nel luglio 2018, come riportato dai giornali, pubblicava in rete un «filmato dello "scroccone sul bus": "Ecco cosa accade quando i cittadini onesti lo scoprono"», il giorno dopo aver inaugurato proprio quel sistema di segnalazione. *Roma, Raggi pubblica filmato dello "scroccone sul bus": "Ecco cosa accade quando i cittadini onesti lo scoprono"*, in «il Fatto Quotidiano.it» 3 luglio 2018 <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2018/07/03/roma-raggi-pubblica-filmato-dello-scroccone-sul-bus-ecco-cosa-accade-quando-i-cittadini-onesti-lo-scoprono/4467393/> (ultima consultazione 11 marzo 2022).

9. Si veda, ad esempio, l'app YouPol, sviluppata dalla Polizia di Stato, creata per segnalare episodi di spaccio e di bullismo e progressivamente aperta ad altri tipi di segnalazione (ringrazio Teresa Bernardi per avermi suggerito questo paragone). Ma si potrebbero citare anche le cosiddette applicazioni di "citizen journalism" e giornalismo partecipativo (come ad esempio MyScoop).

10. «La sindaca rifiuta l'equivalenza tra delazione e segnalazione: "Si tratta di segnalazioni che arrivano dai cittadini su chi va nei parchi, ad esempio"». M. Perrone, *«Segnala online gli assembramenti»*, cit.

11. Si leggeva sull'edizione elettronica de «La Stampa» del 2 aprile 2020 che «nelle Filippine, ora la polizia ha l'ordine di sparare "a morte" a chiunque causi "problemi" nelle aree chiuse per arginare la diffusione del coronavirus. L'ordine è arrivato direttamente dal presidente Rodrigo Duterte, anche se il capo della polizia ha presto precisato che gli agenti non lo eseguiranno». A. Ursic, *Duterte ordina di sparare a vista a chi viola la quarantena*, in «La Stampa», edizione elettronica, <https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/2020/04/02/news/duterte-ordina-di-sparare-a-vista-a-chi-viola-la-quarantena-1.38668878/> (ultima consultazione 11 marzo 2022).

to di quante volte il padrone di un cane potesse accompagnarlo a fare una passeggiata, o se fosse lecito ai bambini uscire in bicicletta senza che quell'attività fosse qualificata come gioco, e quindi proibita – ha reso evidente come un ampio consenso sociale si fosse formato attorno a questa attività di controllo orizzontale.

Mal comune, mezzo gaudio, si potrebbe dire. Ma anche che i diritti e le libertà degli altri – al di là di una visione progressiva – sembrano essere percepiti come una risorsa finita, come un gioco di vasi comunicanti a somma zero, a prescindere dal fatto che la loro estensione o restrizione ad altri leda effettivamente i diritti individuali di chi si sente colpito. Più in generale, mi sembra, la recente esperienza spinge a riflettere su quale sia, anche nelle società contemporanee, il rapporto tra pubblico e privato, tra istituzionale e sociale, tra individuale e comunitario nella difesa del "bene pubblico"[12].

È in questo contesto, quindi, che è nata l'idea di confrontarsi collettivamente con quel paradigma delle "culture della vigilanza", per capire come le pratiche sociali di controllo del territorio interagiscono con gli obiettivi e gli interessi delle istituzioni in precisi contesti storici. Il cuore dell'approccio esposto da Brendecke e Molino consiste nel proporre uno spostamento di prospettiva nell'analisi della relazione tra lo *sguardo istituzionale* e il potere, dal paradigma della *sorveglianza* a quello della *vigilanza*:

The term vigilance is used (…) to mark the difference between attention in general terms and cases in which the cognitive capacities of individuals are put to the service of externally set targets. Whereas many historiographical traditions tend to analyze how institutions developed and how their effects on society varied, the vigilance approach instead draws attention to how individuals conceptualize their own roles in society and contribute to its functioning. (…) The approach of cultures of vigilance proposed here differs from that of surveillance in two regards. First, the concept of surveillance comes with a normative bias, whereas the term vigilance indicates a lasting

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12. A questo proposito, interessante mi sembra quanto è avvenuto in Texas con il Senate Bill n. 8 (2021), che ha fortemente limitato in quello Stato l'interruzione volontaria di gravidanza. Uno degli aspetti che più colpisce di tale legge è l'affidamento all'iniziativa privata della sua applicazione: «Any person, other than an officer or employee of a state or local governmental entity in this state, may bring a civil action against any person who: (1) performs or induces an abortion (…) (2) knowingly engages in conduct that aids or abets the performance or inducement of an abortion» ("Senate Bill n. 8", *Texas Legislature Online*, consultato il 23 settembre 2021, <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=87R&Bill=SB8>). Per una lettura critica di questa chiamata alla delazione, che trasforma i cittadini in «bounty hunters, offering them cash prizes for civilly prosecuting their neighbors' medical procedures», si vedano le riflessioni della giudice della corte suprema Sonia Sotomayor (Sotomayor 2021, p. 2). Se a Sotomayor ciò appare un «extraordinary step», stabilire una ricompensa per il delatore è sin dall'antichità una delle tecniche di governo più utilizzate per coinvolgere i governati nel governo del *bene comune*, come dimostrano i saggi raccolti in Muzzarelli (2020a). Proprio una lettura attenta al genere ci ha mostrato che nel controllo del corpo delle donne e della maternità la collaborazione e la compartecipazione delle autorità familiari, del vicinato, dei poteri laici ed ecclesiastici è più stretta e di più lunga durata. Per l'età moderna Filippini (1997) e (2017), e per esempi dell'Italia liberale e fascista, Gissi (2006) e (2015).

normative indecisiveness: being vigilant can be perceived both as threatening (indiscrete, surveilling, disciplining), or as a precondition for eventual gains (in security, predictability, control over oneself and over others). Second, vigilance is free of the idea of a central and superior observer, and thus it also offers a response to a certain dissatisfaction which has emerged in the field of surveillance studies in recent years. (...) Surveillance is Janus-faced and ambivalent, (...) there is control on the one hand but also care on the other, and (...) it cannot be viewed as either inherently 'good' or 'bad'[13].

L'interesse per questo tema, da parte dello storico tedesco, non è nuovo, e già si era manifestato nel volume del 2009 dal titolo *Imperium und Empirie*[14], nel quale Brendecke prendeva in esame la relazione tra sapere e dominio nel contesto della Monarchia spagnola di antico regime, in particolare in relazione al dominio coloniale. Una relazione, quella tra informazione empirica e governo, che è appunto non qualcosa di contingente ma come dice lo stesso Brendecke "strutturale", anche se declinata nei vari contesti ed epoche storiche in differenti forme. Qual è allora questa relazione nel contesto della Monarchia spagnola della prima età moderna?

Para que las personas a quien tenemos cometida la governaçion de los Indias y cada provinçia y parte dellas pueddam açetar a governar lo que es a suo cargo y cumplir con la obligaçion de sus officios es necesario que tengan entera notiçia[15].

La citazione, tratta da un'ordinanza data al madrileno *Consejo de Indias* nel 1573, declina nel contesto storico di antico regime un concetto più generale: per governare è necessario conoscere o, almeno, dire di essere pienamente informati. Il problema, dice Brendecke, è non prendere le rivendicazioni come descrizioni: «from a historian's perspective there is a (...) factor to be kept in mind when dealing with optical metaphors of power like that of an all-seeing eye. Such postulates of full knowledge served to legitimize rule, not to elucidate its actual functioning»[16]. Torneremo sulla questione.

Ma le istituzioni come raccolgono queste informazioni sulle quali dicono di fondare le proprie decisioni, e attraverso le quali legittimano le proprie azioni? Nel suo libro del 2009 Arndt Brendecke forniva un paradigma interpretativo molto utile. Esiste un vincolo tra l'esercizio dominio e uso del sapere, come messo in luce da Michel Foucault; tuttavia, l'immagine benthamiana dello sguardo onniveggente, del controllo panottico, così come quella del potere pastorale – centrale nel paradigma della sorveglianza – rischia di leggere in maniera troppo unidirezionale (anche al di là delle intenzioni e della complessità del pensiero del filosofo francese) questo vincolo. Lo storico tedesco, quindi,

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13. Brendecke (2018), pp. 18, 20, 27.
14. Tradotto come *Imperio e Información* nella versione spagnola a cui si farà riferimento, Brendecke (2012).
15. Brendecke (2012), p. 21.
16. Brendecke (2018), p. 26.

in quel libro proponeva un'altra ottica, quella della "vigilanza"[17]. Questa riflessione è alla base del progetto di ricerca da questi diretto negli ultimi anni dal titolo "Cultures of Vigilance. Transformations – Spaces – Practices", presso la Ludwig-Maximilians Universität di Monaco di Baviera. Il numero monografico della rivista "Storia della Storiografia" curato assieme a Paola Molino nel 2018 è parte del lavoro preparatorio di tale progetto[18].

Lo spostamento del paradigma dalla sorveglianza alla vigilanza appare assai significativo e produttivo, e a ben vedere mi sembra possa essere accostato ad altri progetti e ricerche che in questi ultimi anni hanno ribadito come la partecipazione dei "governati" alla costruzione di quelle informazioni che saranno utilizzate dall'amministrazione per governarli non sia un fatto sporadico o straordinario. Starebbe quindi agli storici qualificare come avviene tale partecipazione in ogni singolo contesto, e come questo configuri – come dicono Brendecke e Molino – delle culture ma anche delle pratiche della vigilanza[19]. Negli ultimi anni, in effetti, è stato pubblicato anche un altro interessante volume, a cura di Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, dedicato alle denunce, alle delazioni e alla "cultura dell'accusa" tra medioevo e prima età moderna (*Riferire all'autorità. Denuncia e delazione tra Medioevo ed Età moderna*)[20]. Ma si potrebbe forse leggere in quest'ottica anche il rinnovato interesse per il tema delle suppliche, tema tradizionale della storia moderna[21], di recente rivisitato in maniera innovativa in primo luogo da Simona Cerutti. Cerutti, che ha curato già nel 2015 assieme a Massimo Vallerani un volume sulle *Suppliques*[22], è stata animatrice negli ultimi anni di una serie di seminari parigini assieme ad Alain Blum ed Emilia Schijman (*S'addresser à l'autorité*[23]; *Autour de la source "Cahiers des doléances"*[24]). Da incontri nati all'interno di questi *ateliers* di ricerca, da ultimo, è scaturito anche un convegno romano e un volume, a cura di Enrica Asquer e Lucia Ceci, dal titolo *Scrivere alle autorità. Suppliche, petizioni, appelli, richieste di deroga in età contemporanea*, pubblicato nel 2021.

Lavori differenti, nati in contesti storiografici diversi e con metodologie non perfettamente sovrapponibili, ma che tuttavia mi sembra rivelino una tendenza verso il superamento di una lettura evolutiva della relazione tra sapere e potere, e un'uscita dal paradigma dell'eccezionalità del fenomeno della sorveglianza e della vigilanza. Come sottolinea Simona Cerutti, la supplica,

forme d'adresse directe à une autorité présentant la demande d'une faveur, d'une aide, d'une dérogation à une règle, faite au nom de la spécificité du cas présenté – a eu – et

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17. Sulla questione mi permetto di rimandare a Buono (2018a).

18. Ringrazio Paola Molino per le utili informazioni sulla genesi del progetto.

19. L'approccio di Brendecke è fortemente e dichiaratamente *prasseologico*. Cfr. Buono (2018a).

20. Muzzarelli (2020a).

21. Nubola, Würgler (2002).

22. Cerutti, Vallerani (2015).

23. Blum *et al.* (2018).

24. Si veda Schijman (2019), oltre al saggio pubblicato dalla stessa autrice nel libro a cura di Asquer, Ceci (2021).

a – une diffusion extraordinaire dans le temps et dans l'espace. Toute l'Europe occidentale, mais aussi l'Empire ottoman, la Russie ainsi que la Chine et le Japon, ont connu et connaissent encore aujourd'hui une utilisation extraordinairement large de cette forme de communication[25].

Tanto la supplica così come la delazione – ricorda Muzzarelli nell'introduzione al volume da lei curato, «che i delatori siano sempre esistiti è fuori questione, erano attivi tanto nel mondo antico come in quello medievale»[26] – non possono quindi essere visti come fenomeni eccezionali: la comunicazione col potere, che permette l'applicazione della norma al caso specifico, è al centro di ciò che chiamiamo *governo* come ha mostrato Massimo Vallerani[27].

Non potendo quindi attribuire la sorveglianza capillare sulle «vite degli altri» – per riprendere il titolo di un noto film – ai soli regimi totalitari o autoritari del novecento[28], o ai momenti eccezionali (come, per esempio, una crisi epidemica o la "caccia alle streghe")[29], è necessario confrontarsi con la proposta di Brendecke e Molino e collocare questo fenomeno all'interno di varie culture e pratiche della vigilanza. L'interesse dei governanti verso il controllo delle popolazioni e l'interesse dei vigilati nel partecipare a questo controllo, in questo modo contribuendo al governo, sembrano due facce inscindibili della medesima medaglia, l'una legittimante l'altra. Nei prossimi paragrafi, sulla base delle mie precedenti ricerche e dialogando coi saggi di Teresa Bernardi, Umberto Signori e Stefano Poggi, cercherò di fornire alcune riflessioni sulla questione.

L'articolo di Teresa Bernardi cerca di mettere in gioco la proposta di Brendecke e Molino – ma anche del volume di Muzzarelli – nel suo specifico terreno di ricerca, quello del controllo dei matrimoni operato dalla Chiesa post-tridentina nella città di Venezia, utilizzando una fonte di grande interesse come sono i cosiddetti *processetti matrimoniali*. In una città come Venezia, centro cosmopolita e punto di snodo tra Europa e bacino Mediterraneo, la mobilità delle persone rendeva necessario un attento controllo della loro identità, così come del loro statuto personale, per evitare tra le altre cose il crimine di bigamia. Bernardi intende mettere in luce come nella particolare *cultura della vigilanza* da lei analizzata il coinvolgimento dei governati nei processi di certificazione dello "stato libero" delle persone fosse necessario non solo per la difficoltà di reperire le informazioni. Sottolineando l'idea che «the control of marriage was not simply a top-down process, or a centralized disciplinary action» (p. 550), il suo articolo mette in evidenza come la procedura che portava all'approvazione di un matrimonio fosse il frutto di

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25. Cerutti (2021), p. 21. Per ricca bibliografia sul tema si veda in generale il volume Asquer, Ceci (2021). Una ricostruzione dal medioevo ai nostri giorni in Bercé (2014).

26. Muzzarelli (2020b), p. 10.

27. Cfr. il numero monografico di *Quaderni Storici* a cura di Vallerani (2009).

28. Da questo punto di vista rimando ai saggi di Asquer, Blum and Kustova, Zalc in Asquer, Ceci (2021).

29. Vedi ancora Vallerani (2009).

a sort of a "collective" license, since it was granted through the cooperation between local and foreign institutions, with the contribution of various social actors: the notaries in charge of transcribing, the witnesses who provided names, professions and origins, movements of the applicants, and the applicants themselves (p. 555).

Il discorso che fa Bernardi mi sembra riproducibile anche in altri coevi contesti e in altre procedure di autorizzazione: così come i nubendi dovevano ottenere la licenza per sposarsi innanzitutto dai corpi in cui erano inseriti, al fine di ottenere l'approvazione delle autorità ecclesiastiche, ciò accadeva per esempio anche nel caso della licenza che gli abitanti della Penisola Iberica dovevano ottenere per partire per le Indie. Per lasciare la propria comunità, infatti, bisognava avere determinati requisiti (avere il permesso della propria sposa, non avere pendenze criminali o debiti, non essere tutori di minori o curatori di patrimoni, avere la *limpieza de sangre*, ecc.) che venivano certificati tramite una procedura di *información y probanza de testigos* svolta localmente, che permetteva poi l'ottenimento di una licenza reale a Madrid dal Consejo de Indias, verificata infine a Siviglia dalla Casa de la Contratación. La "licenza di partire" che veniva dal sovrano, dunque, ratificava in una "licenza di lasciare il proprio corpo" la cui concessione era affidata al controllo sociale locale. La responsabilità di autorizzare la partenza, in ultima istanza, era condivisa con i corpi, secondo un meccanismo di autorizzazione che sfruttava quel "triangolo vigilante" di cui parla Brendecke[30]. Come dice Tamar Herzog, infatti, non era tanto il movimento di una persona a essere stigmatizzato, ma il fatto che questo movimento fosse senza un giusto motivo e, soprattutto, che non terminasse con una reincorporazione degli individui: si era teoricamente liberi di muoversi nell'Impero spagnolo, ciò che era vietato era rimanere da soli[31]. Da questo punto di vista, mi sembra evidente l'utilità di passare dal paradigma della sorveglianza e del disciplinamento, a quello della vigilanza.

I saggi contenuti in questo dossier, a mio modo di vedere, mettono inoltre a frutto anche altri due punti focali della proposta di Arndt Brendecke e Paola Molino. In primo luogo, l'idea che nel processo di trasmissione delle informazioni gli attori che fungono da intermediari siano parte integrante della produzione delle informazioni stesse. Non sono solo, quindi, dei semplici "trasmettitori", ma dei "traduttori", che trasformano un *sapere locale* in un *sapere amministrativo*. In secondo luogo, che nella raccolta delle informazioni, ottenuta mediante l'incentivazione dei processi di vigilanza orizzontale, dal punto di vista della relazione tra sapere e dominio il contenuto dell'informazione è, a ben vedere, meno rilevante dell'azione stessa di informare.

Vediamo il primo punto. Ancora una volta mi rifarò a ciò che Arndt Brendecke, nel suo libro del 2009, chiamava il modello del "triangolo vigilante", emerso dalla cultura inquisitoriale medievale, una modalità di controllo sociale orizzontale più adatta a descrivere il funzionamento del controllo del territorio in antico regime, rispetto all'idea dello sguardo panottico. In questo model-

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30. Su tale questione si veda Buono (2020a).
31. Herzog (2012).

lo, dice Brendecke, ciò che è decisivo non sono tanto i contenuti della comunicazione, valutati semplicemente secondo una scala di oggettivo/non oggettivo, quanto l'atto di comunicare che forma lealtà politica. Possiamo vederlo con chiarezza proprio nel caso studiato da Bernardi. Così come già stabilito nella decretale *Licet ex quadam* (IV concilio Lateranense, 1215), nella certificazione dell'identità, della parentela e dello *status* delle persone, durante le procedure di controllo dei matrimoni, era previsto l'utilizzo della prova *de auditu alieno*, nonostante tutte le remore della dottrina medievale verso questo tipo di prova indiretta[32]. Questo, va da sé, lasciava ampio spazio alle comunità e alle reti sociali nel condizionare e produrre lo statuto delle persone, e tale problema era ben presente alle autorità ecclesiastiche. Ma ciò appare del tutto coerente con la natura corporativa di quella società di antico regime e quindi con la sua specifica *cultura della vigilanza*: gli informatori ricercati dalle autorità (tanto laiche quanto ecclesiastiche) sono i membri di quei corpi ai quali gli individui appartengono e questo non solo perché sono quelle stesse entità corporate a possedere le informazioni, ma anche perché sono i familiari, i vicini, i compagni di lavoro ad essere ritenuti i principali "esperti" ai quali rivolgersi per decifrare la realtà locale, e i responsabili in ultima istanza del rilascio di quella "licenza"[33]. Come dice uno dei testimoni citati da Bernardi, infatti, i comportamenti individuali hanno sempre una rilevanza pubblica, soprattutto quando si tratta di azioni che potrebbero sollevare uno *scandalum*: «Io sono sicuro che se non si contraesse matrimonio (...) potriano nascere gran *scandali*» (vedi p. 561, n. 62).

Centrale allora in questa *cultura della vigilanza* mi sembra proprio lo *scandalum* che, come ha bene ricostruito Arnaud Fossier, è una categoria del diritto disciplinare e del diritto penale della Chiesa che si precisa tra XII e XIV secolo e che diventa pietra angolare della giurisdizione papale: lo scandalo provocato dalle azioni individuali, infatti, è un attentato contro la carità, «puisqu'il consiste à mettre en danger le salut de son prochain»[34], è qualcosa che mette in *pericolo di rovina* l'intera società. Esso giustifica quindi la delazione: agli occhi di alcuni azione deprecabile in quanto potenzialmente distruttrice dei legami sociali, per altri è giustificabile proprio in quanto difesa della *publica utilitas*[35], difesa di quegli stessi legami sociali contro il cattivo esempio degli individui devianti.

Alla genealogia proposta da Brendecke, che vede nella cultura inquisitoriale l'origine di quella enorme "offerta di denunce" dal basso[36] che permette agli stati premoderni di estendere il loro dominio, si potrebbe aggiungere l'enorme sviluppo di ciò che con Luca Mannori potremmo chiamare «la tecnica dei di-

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32. Su questo si vedano in particolare gli studi di Bassani (2012) e (2017).

33. Come mostrano bene, per fare alcuni esempi, Raggio (1996) e (2001), Ago (1998), Martinat (2010), Stopani (2012), a proposito dei testimoniali nelle dispute di confine, sulla proprietà o sulla stima del valore delle merci e dei salari.

34. Fossier (2009), p. 321.

35. Come mettono in evidenza molti dei saggi in Muzzarelli (2020a).

36. Brendecke (2012), p. 76.

vieti legali con riserva di autorizzazione»[37]. L'estensione del controllo sulle attività sociali da parte delle magistrature di antico regime, infatti, avveniva innanzitutto attraverso questa intensa opera di concessione di autorizzazioni, licenze, deroghe che abilitavano ad operare. La deroga, la dispensa come strumento amministrativo – come sottolineano anche Vallerani e Cerutti[38] – non restringe ma anzi aumenta le possibilità di intervento del potere: ne è ampio esempio il governo per *rescritti*, come mostrato nella magistrale opera sempre di Luca Mannori, *Il Sovrano Tutore*[39]. Ma questo avviene, durante tutto l'antico regime, non derogando al principio secondo il quale il potere rimane saldamente nell'atto di *ius dicere*[40] rendendo quindi necessaria, almeno attraverso la sua qualificazione come indistinta *pubblica fama*, una qualche forma di denuncia proveniente dal basso al fine di attivare la giurisdizione. Nel quadro dell'*amministrar giudicando*, infatti, anche l'intervento *ex officio* del magistrato dava comunque luogo necessariamente «ad un regolare giudizio in contraddittorio»[41] senza il quale il comando non sarebbe stato giustificato. Quando il denunciatore non c'era, allora, era necessario evocarlo tramite una pubblica grida, o almeno dire di «essere informati»[42]. In questo senso, nell'età del diritto comune, appare evidente perché sia ancor più necessaria la mobilitazione della vigilanza corporativa al fine di legittimare l'intervento dell'autorità.

In questa *cultura della vigilanza*, quindi, evitare lo *scandalum* non è qualcosa di demandato solamente al magistrato, ma è un dovere di ogni buon cristiano a cui spetta difendere il *bene pubblico*. In primo luogo, allora, bisogna difendere la famiglia, quell'ente primario preposto al raggiungimento di tale pubblico bene, difendendo la sacralità del matrimonio, ma anche il suo patrimonio contro le appropriazioni indebite o l'esecuzione del volere dei defunti, e particolarmente delle opere pie da questi ordinate a favore delle anime del purgatorio. Così il celebre giurista spagnolo del XVII secolo, Juan de Solórzano Pereira, nella *Politica Indiana* giustificava la denuncia da parte dei vassalli del re di quegli esecutori testamentari che, invece che dare seguito alle trasmissioni ereditarie, occultavano i beni dei defunti[43]. E questo era particolarmente importante nel caso delle trasmissioni ereditarie intercontinentali: i magistrati dovevano quindi prestare «mayor atención en las Indias, por su mucha distancia». Ma l'«utilidad pública» della difesa dei patrimoni familiari e delle opere pie chiamava ad agire non solo le autorità *ex officio*, ma anche «qual-

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37. Mannori (1990), pp. 444-445.

38. Cerutti (2021), p. 28; Vallerani (2009).

39. Mannori (1994). Sempre per il caso toscano, sull'intensificazione di questa tecnica proprio nel cinquecento si vedano le osservazioni di Alessandro Lo Bartolo a proposito della «dialettica tra favore e giustizia», tra il governo di Alessandro e Cosimo I. Lo Bartolo (2019), cap. VII, in particolare pp. 484-498.

40. Vedi, tra gli altri, i classici lavori di Costa (1969), Mannori (1990), Mannori e Sordi (2001), Vallejo (1992), Hespanha (1993), Garriga (2004) e (2009), Agüero (2009).

41. Mannori (1990), p. 447.

42. Per il caso della giustificazione dell'azione delle magistrature fiscali al fine del recupero dei beni vacanti si veda Buono (2014b).

43. Solórzano Pereira (1647), L. 1, cap. 7, pp. 798-799.

quiera del pueblo», che con «gran vigilancia, i atención»[44] avrebbe dovuto denunciare le appropriazioni indebite. Come mostra anche Bernardi nel suo saggio, dunque, la *pubblica utilità* è qualcosa che si costruisce nella relazione tra alto e basso, e il *rischio di rovina* dell'ordine è qualcosa anch'esso di costruito tanto dalla legge quanto dalle percezioni e dalle domande sociali.

Un secondo aspetto che credo questo dossier aiuti a mettere in luce è relativo alla questione di come venivano utilizzate le informazioni raccolte attraverso la vigilanza. Come dicevamo più sopra, spesso non è tanto l'informazione trasmessa ad essere importante, quanto il fatto che l'atto stesso di comunicare col potere crea e rinforza il legame di obbligazione politica[45]. A tal proposito Arndt Brendecke, mi sembra, riprenda una critica luhmaniana alla teoria classica del potere, sostenendo l'idea che questo sia sostanzialmente un mezzo di comunicazione che permette l'ordine sociale[46]. Ciò, per esempio, emerge dalle sue osservazioni a proposito del governo a distanza – giustamente sottolineate da Bernardi e Poggi[47] – visto come qualcosa che non consiste semplicemente nell'accentramento e nel trasferimento del potere dalla periferia al centro, ma in complesse concatenazioni di azioni e comunicazioni[48]. La *catena* che si costruisce attraverso la comunicazione è ciò che permette di esercitare il potere attraverso l'organizzazione, ma al tempo stesso rappresenta una *empowering interaction* (per dirla con le parole di André Holenstein)[49].

Come sintetizza Christian Borch a proposito del pensiero luhmaniano, quando il potere si esercita attraverso una catena di distribuzione, si innesca una relazione tra potere centrale, amministrazione, mediatori e il pubblico sul quale questo si esercita, che ha due dimensioni:

First, for every link added to the chain, more possibilities emerge for the individual nodes to use the power that the chain endows them with for their own purposes. The longer the chain is, the more difficult it becomes to control such local "parasites". Relatedly, second, an ever greater information asymmetry is likely to occur as new links are added to the chain. The power "centre" (A) simply does not have access to all the information and knowledge that is produced locally. In combination, these two dimensions imply that chains of action will not only increase the power of the "centre" (A), but just as much of each link in the chain (B, C, D, etc.). In fact, states Luhmann, when the complexity of organisations increases, this will be to the advantage of the employ-

44. Ivi, pp. 799-800.

45. Brendecke (2012), p. 66.

46. Per un'analisi del pensiero di Luhmann, si veda Borch (2011), p. 127.

47. Questo passaggio è citato tanto da Bernardi quanto da Poggi nei loro rispettivi saggi: «the center of an expanding political entity usually becomes more and more dependent on mediators and local knowledge from the periphery» Brendecke (2018), p. 26.

48. Parlando del modello pastorale di governo Brendecke fa riferimento a come questo fosse costituito da «complex chains of cognitive and communicative interactions». Brendecke (2018), p. 25. Su concatenazioni comunicative e concatenazioni di azioni, Luhmann (1990a), pp. 281-290.

49. Holenstein (2009).

ees, as they will become more powerful due to insertion of the chains of action that the complexity demands. More generally, this demonstrates that chains of action effect a plus-sum game of power rather than a zero-sum game, thereby undermining one of the central implications of classical theory of power[50].

Ciò mi sembra centrale per comprendere il perché – come fa anche Umberto Signori nel suo saggio in questo dossier – le istituzioni, pur consapevoli del fatto che un'informazione proveniente dal basso fosse carica di interessi, nondimeno incentivino la comunicazione. A interessare, come si diceva, non è tanto quindi l'informazione oggettiva, ma il ruolo di mediazione nella catena del potere che l'informatore svolge. Nel caso esposto da Signori, per esempio, è ampiamente mostrato che le informazioni e le denunce prodotte dai consoli veneziani nel Levante non fossero primariamente utilizzate per governare, quanto piuttosto per rinforzare legami di lealtà con famiglie e specifici soggetti presenti nei porti ottomani, ma anche per generare una competizione tra questi soggetti: «the Venetian authorities, therefore, favoured accusations, complaints, and information communicated by third parties to stimulate competition and generate vigilance between these and the consuls» (p. 537). Anche in questo caso, lo *scandalum* è al centro della competizione tra soggetti che cercano di creare un vantaggioso legame con la città dominante: non stupisce che gli avversari politici ed economici fossero così denunciati sottolineando le loro condotte «scandalose» contro il bene pubblico veneziano – come l'evasione fiscale e il contrabbando – in assonanza con quello stesso linguaggio che abbiamo visto più sopra.

Un'altra osservazione di Niklas Luhmann mi sembra interessante ai fini del nostro discorso: quando si guarda a un'organizzazione dall'esterno è facile sovrastimare il potere attribuito all'apice della gerarchia[51]. In realtà, concepire il potere come mezzo di comunicazione – come direbbe Luhmann un mezzo *generalizzato a livello simbolico*[52] – permette di apprezzare che, proprio come quell'altro medium che è la *moneta*, esso è qualcosa che sta in una relazione simile a quella del mercato, e il suo valore sia quindi fortemente legato al suo uso:

the concept of symbolic generalization makes it possible to transfer the concepts of *deflation* and *inflation* from the theory of money into the theory of power (…). If the holder of power makes *too little* use of the power attributed to him and limits himself to the power that he "really has," he triggers a *deflationary* trend. He operates too close to his means of sanctioning. And the danger in this is that he does not escape the zone

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50. Borch (2011), p. 131.

51. «Viewed from outside, the homogeneity of the organization and the ability to implement organizational power is typically overestimated. Power is attributed to the top, while in truth complicated balances of power exist that vary, especially with topics and situations». Luhmann (1990b), p. 164.

52. Luhmann (1990a), in generale cap. IV, *Comunicazione e azione*, e in particolare p. 278.

of threatening to exercise power into that of successfully exercising it. Conversely, if the holder of power relies *too strongly* on the power that is merely attributed (to him), he triggers an *inflationary* trend. In this case he becomes dependent on visible successes that demonstrate that he has power. At the same time he is also made vulnerable by crises that show that he cannot cover his decisions with sanctions[53].

Questo nodo teorico sottolineato da Luhmann mi sembra importante e straordinariamente utile per intendere quella che il sociologo tedesco chiamava la semantica del potere *vetero-europea* (anche al di là di quanto lo stesso sociologo tedesco non pensasse)[54]: ovvero l'idea che il potere – per dirla in termini *emic*, la *iurisdictio* – fosse qualcosa che si poteva detenere non nei termini del *dominium* ma nei termini della *possessio*.

Lo ha di recente ribadito sempre Simona Cerutti:

[la] capacité de gouverner, nous apprennent certains historiens médiévistes (Calasso, Conte, Madero), n'est pas de l'ordre de la propriété: on ne peut pas être propriétaire d'une juridiction. Elle est de l'ordre de la possession, qui doit être continuellement vivifiée, nourrie, revendiquée. Elle ne peut pas exister sans un public sur lequel l'exercer[55].

Una straordinaria testimonianza di ciò, mi sembra, si può trovare nel modo in cui le capitolazioni date agli aspiranti *conquistadores* immaginavano il processo di appropriazione delle terre e della giurisdizione nel Nuovo Mondo:

la manera que habéis de tener en tomar de la posesión de las tierras e partes que descubriéredes ha de ser que estando vos en la tierra, o parte que descubriéredes, hagáis ante escribano público y el más número de testigos que pusiéredes, e los más conocidos que hobiere, un auto de posesión en nuestro nombre, cortando árboles y ramas, e cabando o haciendo, si hobiere disposición, algún pequeño edificio, e que sea en parte donde haya algún cerro señalado o árbol grande (...) e hacer allí una horca, e que al-

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53. Il corsivo è dell'autore. Luhmann (1990b), pp. 164-165. Per un commento si veda anche Borch (2011), p. 129.

54. Per Luhmann, in effetti, la metafora della "trasmissione" non è adatta a illustrare la comunicazione, perché essa «suggerisce che il mittente consegni qualcosa che il ricevente ottiene. Ciò non è esatto per la semplice ragione che il mittente non esterna niente che egli stesso perda. L'insieme delle metafore del possedere, dell'avere, del dare e del ricevere, le metafore di tipo materiale nel loro insieme sono inidonee per quanto riguarda la comprensione del concetto di comunicazione». Per Luhmann, infatti, concentrare l'analisi della comunicazione al solo atto di trasmissione non ci dice nulla sull'elaborazione della comunicazione, sull'accettazione o meno del processo di selezione (Luhmann 1990a, p. 253). Pertanto, per Luhmann, il potere (come ogni altro mezzo di comunicazione simbolicamente generalizzato) non può essere trasferito come una "cosa" di cui si abbia la proprietà. Ma il sociologo tedesco, tuttavia, non sembra avere in mente come in effetti la proprietà e il possesso siano concepiti in una società come è quella di antico regime, e come questa avesse *un altro modo di possedere*.

55. Cerutti (2021), p. 41. Si veda, tra gli autori citati da Simona Cerutti, in particolare Marta Madero sulla *physique du pouvoir* (2016), ma anche i lavori di Angelo Torre, tra i quali *Il consumo di devozioni* (1995), nel quale sottolinea la stessa questione per la giurisdizione ecclesiastica.

gunos pongan demanda ante vos, e como nuestro capitán e juez lo sentenciéis, e determinéis, de manera que en todo toméis la dicha posesión[56].

Quelli descritti altro non sono che una serie di *atti di possesso*, tanto di cose materiali, quanto di cose immateriali: così come un contadino dimostrava di possedere il suo pezzo di terra tagliando rami o arando un terreno, così gli ufficiali del re avrebbero dimostrato il possesso della giurisdizione *dicendo* giustizia in seguito ad una *domanda* di giustizia. Per dirla in altri termini: non è possibile una risposta senza una domanda, non c'è potere senza comunicazione.

Questa specifica *cultura della vigilanza*, quindi, non può essere compresa se non in connessione con la specifica *cultura del possesso* dominante in antico regime. È per questo, come dice Cerutti, che la comunicazione da parte dei *giustiziati* attraverso le suppliche è necessaria alla creazione della giurisdizione e al mantenimento del ruolo del *giusdicente*. Ciò che la supplica contribuisce a rivivificare continuamente, in altri termini, è proprio la relazione di potere: al *dovere di chiedere consiglio* del re[57], quindi, corrisponde un uguale e contrario *diritto* del vassallo ad essere ascoltato[58] e un *dovere* di partecipare alla difesa del bene comune. Pertanto, è necessario uscire dalla logica del clientelismo e reinterpretare queste azioni di comunicazione in termini *giurisdizionali*: non esisterebbe lo *iusdicente* se non vi fosse un pubblico su cui esercitare questa *iurisdictio*, e l'uno e l'altro si costruiscono mutualmente[59].

A mio giudizio, quindi, gli "atti di comunicazione" che Brendecke descrive nel suo modello del "triangolo vigilante"[60] vanno appunto letti come "atti di

56. Istruzioni date a Juan Díaz de Solís, per una spedizione clandestina sulle coste del Brasile da effettuarsi a «das espaldas de Castilla de Oro e de allí adelante», in risposta all'arrivo dei portoghesi in Patagonia (1515). Morales Padrón (1955), p. 352.

57. Sánchez (1993).

58. Cerutti (2021), p. 43.

59. «Les obligations qui s'instaurent dans cette relation entre gouvernants et gouvernés "are not simply based on contrats", as Baldus says (*sic*), (comme il nous paraitrait 'normal' de le concevoir aujourd'hui); on est confrontés plutôt à des obligations "that are real rights: as such, one can protect them with possessory proceeding, acquire them by the passage of time...". Il faut bien reconnaitre (et cela est une découverte récente), que dans les société médiévales et modernes, le contrat n'était pas la seule source d'obligation légale réglant les relations interpersonnelles. Certains statuts personnels "could be treated as generating a kind of social rights...There are obligations that depend on personal subjection: although they are not material things, yet they 'smell like real rights', as Baldus wrote". A la base des relations instituées par la juridiction il y a donc moins un contrat, qu'un pacte fondé sur l'absence de contestation, sur la continuité et la reproduction dans le temps des demandes (suppliques!) et des réponses de protection, d'aide etc. (absences de contestations, continuité et production/ répétitions, sont autant de conditions qui renvoient a des actions possessoires)». Cerutti (2021), p. 42, alla quale rimando per la bibliografia. Per un'applicazione di questo approccio alla questione dello statuto personale si veda Buono (2020b).

60. «Alli donde el dominio se establece adopta una forma básica triangular – Yo lo llamo el "triángulo vigilante" – La base está constituita por actos de vigilancia; los lados, por actos de communichión». Brendecke (2012), p. 256.

possesso" che rivivificano il patto giurisdizionale esistente tra governanti e governati: in questo modo, come mostra Umberto Signori nel suo saggio, è la comunicazione a fare dei consoli dei "fedeli confidenti veneziani". Il fatto che le informazioni che questi fornivano alla Serenissima, in ultima istanza, non fossero poi utilizzate non significa che non fossero uno strumento di governo: se letta in una prospettiva giurisdizionale, la comunicazione col potere è già un atto di governo. La comunicazione immette sangue nel tessuto del corpo politico; la mancanza di comunicazione, al contrario, può provocare la morte di quello stesso corpo[61].

Il saggio di Stefano Poggi, infine, ci porta al cuore della dialettica tra le categorie di *sorveglianza* e di *vigilanza*. E non potrebbe essere altrimenti: come giustamente nota Poggi, infatti, il paradigma della sorveglianza è stato ed è ancora giustamente al centro dell'interpretazione del periodo napoleonico, periodo in cui il controllo dall'alto diviene uno dei cardini dell'intero progetto statale. Ciò che tuttavia l'autore mostra, attraverso il caso studio di Vicenza, è che spostare il punto di osservazione verso le pratiche sociali permette di vedere come, in un contesto nuovo, l'evoluzione dei meccanismi dei i progetti di controllo dall'alto portarono tanto alla risignificazione della precedente *cultura della vigilanza*, quanto alla riattivazione di meccanismi di controllo nati nel periodo precedente.

Significativamente, dopo un periodo in cui le autorità filo-francesi nel cosiddetto Triennio democratico sembrarono immaginare un mondo in cui la polizia avrebbe potuto finalmente disfarsi di ogni mediazione con la società locale, durante il periodo napoleonico vennero recuperate quelle figure tipiche della società corporata di antico regime che, utilizzando una definizione dell'antropologo Max Gluckman, potremmo definire "ruoli intergerarchici": anziani delle parrocchie, consoli delle comunità, capi contrada, ecc. tutti quei personaggi che nelle società dei corpi assicuravano il collegamento tra le comunità locali e le autorità superiori[62]. Tali figure si trovavano allo snodo tra i gruppi corporati, ai quali appartenevano, e le magistrature (e in seguito le polizie), che affidavano loro una serie di compiti di vigilanza locale.

Non si tratta quindi di negare la novità, anche nei loro compiti e nella loro relazione con le autorità, comportata dalla ripresa di figure "antiche" in un "nuovo" regime amministrativo; ma piuttosto di misurare in che modo quel vincolo tra dominio e sapere di cui parlava Brendecke si configuri in questa società in trasformazione. Non mi sembra irrilevante, da un lato, che laddove

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61. Ho provato a sottolineare questa questione in relazione al tema del *governo straordinario* in Buono (2018b), e a proposito della relazione tra *archivio* e *amministrazione* in Buono (2020a).

62. In generale, si devono a Livio Antonielli gli studi su queste figure nell'ambito italiano, Antonielli (2008) e (2015). Sui "ruoli intergerarchici" si veda Gluckman (1968). Per una utilizzazione di Gluckman nell'interpretazione dell'*english constable* si veda Kent (1986). Seguendo l'intuizione di Joan R. Kent, ho provato ad applicare la concettualizzazione di Gluckman a un ampio spettro di figure intergerarchiche a livello globale in Buono (2018c).

tali figure erano esistite (come i capi contrada di Venezia o gli anziani delle parrocchie di Milano) queste siano riattivate: a ulteriore conferma di quanto dice Poggi, per esempio, si potrebbe citare anche il caso dei *nonzoli*, sacrestani delle parrocchie veneziane, che nel 1799 furono richiamati ai loro compiti di vigilanza dal Regio supremo Tribunale di sanità di Venezia – assieme ai *massari* e *consiglieri* delle parrocchie nella Terraferma – per svolgere quei compiti di segnalazione di nascite, battesimi e soprattutto delle morti[63]. Dall'altro lato, che laddove tali figure non erano esistite (o, per lo meno, laddove i governanti non erano in grado di riconoscerle o volevano delegittimarle) si pensi di mutuarle da altri contesti: è il caso vicentino mostrato da Poggi, in cui i *capi contrada* vengono eretti sul modello veneziano; ma si potrebbe dire lo stesso, per esempio, per la figura dell'*alcalde de barrio* madrileno che viene "esportato", tra sette e ottocento, in molti contesti iberici e coloniali, come mostrato negli studi raccolti da Arnaud Exbalin e Brigitte Marin[64]. Non mi sembra si possa sottovalutare, inoltre, un'altra cosa sottolineata nel saggio di Poggi: che quelle stesse figure che agiscono come informatori tra livelli centrali e periferici dell'amministrazione Napoleonica, continuino poi a svolgere uno dei più importanti compiti di rappresentanza delle società locali, ovvero la presentazione di quelle suppliche che abbiamo visto essere così importanti nel mantenimento della relazione tra governanti e governati.

Da questo punto di vista, quindi, il caso dell'Europa napoleonica è di particolare interesse proprio perché mostra come quel nuovo progetto culturale incentrato sulla sorveglianza necessariamente si accompagni a una nuova *cultura della vigilanza*, nella quale sono ridefinite le condizioni di partecipazione dei cittadini al nuovo regime, senza che tuttavia quel coinvolgimento venga meno. Di come, in definitiva, lo spostamento dell'accento proposto attraverso il passaggio dalla *sorveglianza* alla *vigilanza*, non miri semplicemente a contrapporre un rigido schematismo (dall'alto verso il basso, dal centro alla periferia) ad una altrettanto rigida impostazione (dal basso o orizzontale che sia), o a sostenere che nulla sia cambiato nel passaggio dallo stato giurisdizionale allo stato amministrativo, da una società che si pensa e si organizza per corpi a una società che si ridefinisce a partire dall'uguaglianza degli individui. Al contrario: tenere in conto l'interdipendenza dei due piani, ci aiuta a meglio comprendere proprio il cambiamento, cogliendolo a partire dalla riconfigurazione di quel vincolo esistente tra sapere e dominio[65].

Proprio le figure studiate da Poggi, allora, sono utili a comprendere come in quel passaggio tra sette e ottocento, alcuni degli attori fondamentali della precedente *cultura della vigilanza* subiscano una progressiva ridefinizione,

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63. Buono (2015), pp. 240-241. La lunga rilevanza del ruolo dei parroci nel controllo del territorio è stata sottolineata da Chiara Lucrezio Monticelli, della quale mi limiterò a citare Lucrezio Monticelli (2012).

64. Exbalin, Marin (2017).

65. Da questo punto di vista, mi sembrano fondamentali per gli storici le osservazioni di Clifford Geertz (1959) a proposito di come il cambiamento possa essere compreso in termini di riconfigurazione formale.

nelle loro competenze così come nella loro fedeltà, venendo *assorbiti* – diceva Livio Antonielli – da «un'autorità superiore che può snaturarle, che può conservarle, che può modificare determinati caratteri lasciandone intatti altri»[66]; ma in questo passaggio restano comunque «ben marcate» le *tracce*[67] del mondo dal quale provenivano. Sta a noi riscoprirle, al fine di ridurre lo spaesamento[68] tanto quando le osserviamo nel passato così come quando le vediamo riemergere nel presente.

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66. Antonielli (2019), p. 293. Su queste figure, si veda anche Antonielli (2008) e (2015).

67. Antonielli (2019), p. 295.

68. Geertz (1973), p. 16.

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Between Misery and Reward: The Culture of Vigilance in the Experience of a Venetian Consul during the Early Modern Period*

di Umberto Signori

Consular participation in state surveillance did not seem to be the basis of the legitimacy of Venetian consuls in Izmir in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Indeed, their activity as informants did not contribute to producing the knowledge that was then used by those in power to make decisions, or to judge and punish illegal behaviour.

By placing the Izmir consuls in a broader context in which the state rewarded the participation in a set of specific tasks of as many private individuals as possible, this article reassesses the often-debated and much-contested efficacy of consular information activity. Rather than providing the Venetian authorities with reliable and indispensable information, this article argues that consular vigilance defined a bond of loyalty and mutual expectations between these consuls and Venice. Far from resulting in superior central control, political power projected its authority onto the narratives and behaviour of consuls and potential informers.

Tra miseria e ricompensa: La cultura della vigilanza nell'esperienza di un console veneziano d'età moderna

La partecipazione dei consoli alla sorveglianza statale non sembra giustificare l'esistenza stessa dei consoli veneziani a Smirne tra la fine del Seicento e l'inizio del Settecento. La loro attività informativa, infatti, non contribuiva a produrre un sapere

usato poi dal potere politico per prendere decisioni, giudicare o punire i comportamenti illegali.

Situando i consoli di Smirne in un contesto più ampio in cui lo Stato premiava la partecipazione a una serie di compiti specifici del maggior numero possibile di individui privati, l'articolo rivaluta l'efficacia, spesso discussa e molto contestata, dell'attività informativa consolare. Piuttosto che assicurare alle autorità veneziane informazioni affidabili e indispensabili, questo articolo sostiene che la vigilanza consolare definiva un legame di fedeltà e di aspettative reciproche tra questi consoli e Venezia. Lungi dal tradursi in un controllo centrale superiore, in tal modo il potere politico esercitava la sua autorità sulle narrazioni e sul comportamento dei consoli e dei potenziali informatori.

Parole chiave: cultura della vigilanza, consoli veneziani, Smirne ottomana, Repubblica di Venezia, età moderna, aspettative statali.

On 7 October 1700, the Venetian Senate wrote in alarm to the *Capitano Generale da Mar*, asking him to explain why there were one thousand men and eight hundred women from Tinos living in Izmir[1]. Migration from Tinos was a concern for the Venetian government because it left its easternmost domain uninhabited. This was not just a threat to the island community itself: in the view of the central institutions, it also constituted a political risk.

Originally, the information had come from the Venetian consul in Izmir, Francesco Luppazzoli. The consul had forwarded a message to the extraordinary ambassador in Constantinople, who had then reported the news that worried the Senate. The replies from the *Provveditore Generale da Mar* and the rector of Tinos certified that Francesco Luppazzoli had raised the alarm. In other words, all of the representatives of the ruling class emphasised the source that had informed them of the worrying fact, namely the consul. Moreover, their correspondence expressed their awareness that consular information was not objective but rather tinged with personal interests. These Venetian representatives thus confirmed that, even if the information had initially come from Luppazzoli, other «well-founded» sources supported the view that four hundred men had left the Venetian island over the course of the previous ten years[2].

It was not the first time that Venetian representatives doubted the impartiality of Luppazzoli's reports on emigration from Tinos: in 1672, the bailo in Constantinople had written on the migration issue in a way that

1. Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 35, cc. 232v-233v (7 Oct. 1700).

2. Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 164, cc. 370r-v (25 Aug. 1700); Asve, Senato dispacci, Provveditori da terra e da mar, n. 6 (1 Jan. 1700mv); Asve, BaC, b. 122-I, fasc. 16, 22 Nov. 1700 and annexes. The highest maritime position in the Venetian state was the *Capitano Generale da Mar*, who was only elected wartime, and the *Provveditore Generale da Mar* who acted during peacetime. The historical context is immediately after the War of Morea (1684-1699) when the *Provveditore Generale da Mar* replaced the *Capitano Generale da Mar*.

depicted Francesco Luppazzoli as greedy and of reprehensible conduct. The «reliable information» the bailo referred to, on the presence of 100 Tiniots in the Ottoman capital, 200 in Chios, and 300 in Izmir, had not come from any of the consuls[3].

How can we explain that, for several years, Venice legitimised a consul in the Levant whose information was unreliable? Did the institutions' awareness of the partiality of consular narratives impact state decisions? How did the central institutions react when the sources they collected painted a picture that conflicted with those sketched by the consuls in their communications? Did the collection of information on the consuls allow a coherent state view of such informers?

In recent years, the circulation of documentation produced by consuls has become a topic of particular interest among Mediterranean historians. A book edited by Marzagalli has emphasised how consuls living in the Mediterranean area selected and manipulated information in order to achieve personal goals. The various contributions to this volume have shown how the increasing professionalisation of the consular system between 1550 and 1950 aimed to make the consuls' correspondence conform to state demands for decision-making (in the political, health, military or commercial fields)[4]. Another publication, edited by Bartolomei, Calafat, Grenet and Ulbert, suggests that we analyse how consular information was redistributed and concretely exploited. The study of consulates through the lens of non-consular sources led the various contributors to think about the actual beneficiaries of consular services beyond the strategic outcomes desired by states and guilds. The volume thus approaches the issue of who benefited by looking beyond the consuls' personal ambitions[5].

However, these studies have more or less explicitly highlighted a question that remains unresolved, one that emerges explicitly in the case I described at the beginning of this paper. Why was misconduct or ineffectiveness in the exercise of consular activity not necessarily followed by punishment? What was the link between the status of consul and efficiency in the exercise of the office?

One way to address this challenge is to think more about how the cognitive and communicative capacities of non-professional individuals were put at the service of society. The special issue edited by Brendecke and Molino has argued that institutional apparatuses could never have been entirely efficient in the exercise of vigilance. As such, the participation of ordinary people, putting their watchfulness in the service of societal goals (i.e. public safety, law, politics, health), was necessary for vigilance to work, but changed depending on culture. Thus, the collection of several case studies in the special issue

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3. Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 156, cc. 187r-188v (28 Mar. 1672), cc. 199v-201r (25 Apr. 1672), and cc.336v-337r (16 Jul. 1671 [sic] actually 1672).

4. Marzagalli (2015). See also Marzagalli, Ulbert (2019).

5. Bartolomei, Calafat, Grenet, Ulbert (2018).

aimed to explore how cultural means could have integrated, motivated and regulated people's vigilance[6].

In his own book, translated and published in different editions, Brendecke has argued that the historical narrative treats information production with a certain prejudice: it sees it as being immediately used for the exercise of power. Brendecke has shown that the content of the communications the Spanish crown received from overseas agents was not always that crucial in determining the decisions taken by central authorities during the early modern period. The sovereign power promoted the transmission of observations from distant informers (who thus exercised a supervisory function) by dispensing punishment, disgrace and rewards to make its control of the colonial administration effective[7].

More recently, a volume edited by Muzzarelli has reflected on how secret denunciations were solicited and rewarded in the pursuit of the common good. This work has demonstrated how, between the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, informing the authorities meant participating in the community's social life and communicating one's own membership of it. The many contributions to the book have also shown how society did not always perceive denunciation as a virtuous collaboration but also as a reprehensible act that could lead to marginalisation[8].

By building on the issues raised in these studies, I present the case study of the Venetian consul in Izmir and his successor (between the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries) as a way of thinking about consular participation in the "culture of vigilance" during the early modern period. The article focuses on this case because of the extraordinary amount of documentation produced in the Venetian context. The wealth of documents allows us to reconstruct how different institutions evaluated the information provided by the consuls and how the consuls' own behaviour and attention developed over a period of several years, both in war time and in peace, and under different forms of stimuli[9]. Moreover, what is exceptional about this amount documentation is that was not produced as a result of the professionalisation of the consular office. Like other consuls in the eastern Mediterranean, Luppazzoli had not been employed as an informer by Venice. It was he who had offered himself as someone who could convey his observations to Venetian representatives. He was not paid by his

6. Brendecke, Molino (2018).
7. Brendecke (2009; 2012; 2016).
8. Muzzarelli (2020).
9. Before 1718, only the consular correspondence from the Venetian consul in Genoa equals the extent of the correspondence coming from Izmir: Asve, Senato, Dispacci dei consoli, Genova. The correspondence of the consul of Chios preserved in the Biblioteca Marciana (It. VII, fz. 1191=8881 and 1208=8853) is not as rich. Instead, the consuls of Cairo and Aleppo, who wrote to the Venetian Senate on a regular basis (Asve, Senato, Dispacci dei consoli, Aleppo and Egitto), changed every three years and received fixed salaries.

administration of origin and did not even claim residence in the country he served. The consul did not inform the Venetian authorities in the guise of an official agent, such as ambassadors, local governors or consuls in Aleppo and Cairo. His observations, moreover, did not differ from those of other non-official Venetian informers[10]. The consul obtained and maintained his status by transmitting information as a private individual.

My approach follows the most recurrent themes in Luppazzoli's consular correspondence and verifies their impact on institutional responses. This correspondence was addressed to the diplomatic representatives who were the Venetian Republic's main source of information on the Ottoman Empire (i.e. the extraordinary ambassador to the Porte and the bailo resident in Constantinople), to the Board of Trade (*Cinque Savi della Mercanzia*), and to the Senate[11]. I use the analysis of these sources to understand the meaning of the participation of consuls (as non-professional informers) in the vigilance and registration of the behaviour of subjects.

In the pages that follow, I argue that consular correspondence is a source we can best address by examining the practices of reward and punishment created to stimulate a particular style of consular conduct. Therefore, this article proposes a shift in perspective, away from considering the consuls' usefulness and efficiency (in the expectations of the authorities and otherwise), and towards an evaluation of their information activity *per se*. This paper also emphasises how consular activity was often subject to both praise and criticism, but that it was primarily evaluated on merits that were not related to its usefulness for decision-making and punishment. Its value lay beyond the surveillance paradigm.

1. Useless information? The division between consular vigilance and punishment

Francesco Luppazzoli's consular correspondence is full of references to his vigilance activities. A typical topic of his reports were attempts by Venetian seamen and foreign merchants to avoid paying consular fees on incoming and outgoing goods (namely *cottimo* and *consolato*). In his letters, he portrayed the ethics of the traders who operated between Venice and Izmir as scandalous, especially when they evaded consular dues or smuggled forbidden goods. The consul's accounts repeatedly stressed the immorality of these fraudulent activities, such as the forgery of original shipping manifests (a kind of statement of everything that was placed on board a ship and on which the consular collection of taxes depended) or refusals to hand over these manifests to the consul.

10. Preto (2010), pp. 197-234, 247-260.

11. Unlike the extraordinary ambassador, sent by Venice only on important ceremonial occasions and with a very specific mission to the Porte, the bailo resided in Constantinople for two or three years to represent and protect Venetian political interests: Dursteler (2001), pp. 3-4.

He also complained that Venetian ships' captains often used the Venetian flag at sea but changed flags before getting to Izmir. Typically, the vessel trading under another nation's banner paid consular fees to that nation's representative. Not paying the Venetian fees was detrimental to consular revenues and meant defrauding the state treasury and undermining the financial standing of Venetian diplomatic representation in the Levant[12]. According to Luppazzoli's reports, such fraud was possible both thanks to the complicity of the other European consuls in Izmir and the cooperation of local and Venetian merchants.

The consul's transmission of such observations to the Venetian state often made explicit reference to the «factual truth» (*pura verità* or *verità del fatto*) and highlighted his «diligence». The call for «factual truth», also recurring in the statements given by European witnesses when questioned by the consul, had been carried over from legal procedure[13]. However, unlike witness statements, the observations of truth reported by Luppazzoli were intended to establish the guilt of fellow countrymen (or those foreigners who had obligations towards Venetian institutions). Luppazzoli strove to demonstrate that he could exercise a large amount of attention and vigilance in order to find out the truth about what was happening and communicate it. The consul also pointed out as «false» the actions and omissions of those fellow nationals who did not conform to institutional expectations and, therefore, had to be sanctioned[14].

European consular reports from the period were full of stories of the fraudulent activities of merchants who traded in the Ottoman Empire. These stories were especially concerned with forged manifests and the circulation of counterfeit coins. They circulated across a wide variety of media, from consular letters to travel literature, and even appeared in private correspondence[15]. The stereotypical theme of fraud and falsity was so effective among the European audience that it cropped up again and again in consular correspondence (even in that of Luppazzoli's own successors) and

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12. On this see Judde de Larivière (2008), pp. 86, 89-90, 211-216.

13. On the relationship between "facts" and "truth" in legal proceedings in medieval times, especially in inquisitorial procedures, see the divergent interpretations of Vallerani (2001; 2008); Brendecke (2016), pp. 65-77. For a sample of such witness statements, see Asve, BaC, b. 117, 25 May 1673, 15 Nov. 1673, 14 Oct. 1674; ivi b. 119-II, fasc. 8, 25 Jun. 1677.

14. On consular "diligence" see Calafat (2015); Petitjean (2015). See also Petitjean (2013), *passim*.

15. Dam van Isselt (1917); Pastine (1952), pp. 61-89; Anderson (1989), pp. 120-124, 178-185; Fioriti (2013), pp. 100-131; Olnon (2014), pp. 259-280, 319; Allain (2015; 2018); Lo Basso (2015), pp. 150-154. On the use of these tropes within the travel literature see Rycaut (1680), pp. 258-260; Magni (1692), pp. 27-35; Chardin (1983), vol. I, pp. 40-42, 46. Petitjean describes this point well: «Les nouvellistes imitent les praticiens, qui utilisent les nouvellistes, qui imitent d'autres praticiens, qui s'adaptent à la nouvelle donne médiatique», Petitjean (2015), p. 79.

customs directives throughout the Mediterranean[16]. That such information spread in both manuscript and printed form indicates that fraudulent activities were attractive news in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Its transmission through different textual types also tells us, more generally, that such information had become a fact, an event, a process that anyone could have known about and that was now in the public domain.

Luppazzoli's complaints repeated tropes that were drawn directly from these European stories on the Levant. The Venetian consul was familiar with these tropes, having previously authored an Aegean *Isolario* (a guide to navigation) and worked as chancellor for the Dutch consulate in Izmir[17]. He presented his observations in such a way as to conform with Venetian expectations, knowing that they would confirm the stories already heard or whispered at the bailo's court in Constantinople[18].

The consul's repeated denunciations seem to have had an echo in the action of the courts in Venice. Between 1670 and 1672, the Venetian Senate instructed the Board of Trade (*Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*) to investigate these allegations of fraud. The Board of Trade then devised an elaborate system to cross-check the information contained in the manifests of all the ships trading with the Levant. As a result, ship officers and owners who wanted to travel between Venice and Ottoman ports had to be in possession of a cargo manifest with the seal of a Venetian representative. In this system, the consuls were supposed to collect the cargo manifests and send them back to the bailo in Constantinople and to the Board of Trade. The Senate, therefore, expressly charged the consuls, the bailo, and the Board members with exercising watchfulness over this trade[19].

«Spies» that the consul had in the harbour – including a customs clerk, a «[Venetian] subject who does not fail to inform me with secrecy», informed him if the papers delivered to him were forged. Between March and October 1672, Luppazzoli complained to the bailo in Constantinople about forged manifests used by six ships bound for Venice. Of these six ships, the Board of

16. Müller (2004), pp. 83-90, 94-106, 144-154; Kadı (2012), pp. 237-273; Beri (2013); Aragón Ruano (2013); Denis-Delacour (2013); Zamora Rodríguez (2014); Calafat (2015); Pialoux (2015); Carrino (2011a, pp. 99-113; 2011b; 2018); Le Gouic (2018); Mézin (2018). On the continued use of these themes by the consuls who succeeded Luppazzoli see Asve, BaC, bb. 126-I and 129, fasc. 4, *passim*; Asve, Csm, I s., b. 749, *passim*. On falsification as a recurring theme in reports to the authorities from the late Middle Ages onwards, see Milani (2020).

17. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Levantse Handel, b. 73, c. 192 (15 May 1656), b. 122, *passim*; Burgh (1882), p. 56; Hasluck (1906, pp. 200-201; 1911); Heywood (2013); Wilson (2013a; 2013b); Tolias (2007; 2012; 2017).

18. See, for example, Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 154, cc. 10r-11v (5 Mar. 1670), cc. 50r-v (22 Mar. 1670) and cc. 430v-441r (1 Nov. 1670). For a different opinion see Maréchaux (2013), pp. 154-155.

19. Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 30 Oct. 1670, 26 Oct. 1672; ivi b. 103, "Manifesti", 9 Aug. 1672, 10 Sep. 1672, 13 Sep. 1672; Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 32, cc. 223r-v (9 Apr. 1672), c. 246r (20 Aug. 1672).

Trade confiscated the cargo of only one of them, the *Santissima Nunziata*, in Venice. The consul had repeatedly targeted this specific vessel, sending frequent denunciations that the ship's charterer and its owners were promising to exempt merchants who loaded their goods on it from the payment of consular fees. The «truth» of the fact, Luppazzoli stated, was attested by the manifest he had sent to the members of the Board[20].

The seizure order issued by the Board of Trade, though, made no mention of the cargo manifest. The ship's captain himself, who had previously denounced the abuses of the vessel's charterer and the merchants who had loaded goods onto the same ship, provided the information to take action against the fraud. Moreover, only two of the six boats that Lupazzoli reported for carrying forged manifests were mentioned in the bailo's dispatches to the Senate. The case of the *Santissima Nunziata* was not recorded among these. The Senate did directly forwarded the file on the other two vessels to the Board members. In the end, though, the Board of Trade wrote back to Izmir to say that, due to timing constrictions, they had not carried out the necessary checks[21].

Eventually, one of these two ships, the *San Martino*, was seized by two corsair boats under the Spanish flag during its second voyage of the year towards Izmir. Both corsair captains checked the *San Martino*'s cargo manifests, looking for evidence of goods belonging to Muslims or Jews but, not trusting the papers, they interrogated the captain and searched the ship (according to the right of *visita*). The *San Martino* eventually sank in a storm, without its manifests ever being of any use[22].

Despite several enforcement orders, formal notices, and the circulation of cargo manifests, even in the following years, the allegations of fraud made by the consul in Izmir apparently did not lead to the seizure of any goods embarked on ships bound for Venice[23]. Two years earlier, the English consul

20. Asve, BaC, b. 117, 14 and 28 Mar. 1672, 22 May 1672, 4 Jun. 1672 and following dates.

21. Ivi, 28 May 1672, 18 Jun. 1672 and enclosed notice, 24 Sep. 1672; 17 Nov. 1672; ivi b. 289, reg. 422, 14 Sep. 1672 enclosed with the document dated 25 Oct. 1672, 11 Jul. 1672, 16-18 Aug. 1672 enclosed with the document dated 28 Oct. 1672; ivi, b. 1, 13 Aug. 1672; Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 15 Dec. 1672; also in ivi I s., reg. 248, c. 172r; Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 156, cc. 199v-201r (25 Apr. 1672) and enclosed papers, and cc.336r (16 Jul. 1671 [sic] actually 1672); Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 32, c. 237v (28 Jun. 1672), cc. 243r-244r (27 Jul. 1672) and cc. 249v-251r (27 Aug. 1672).

22. Asve, BaC, b. 117, 22 Nov. 1672, 23 Nov. 1672 and enclosed statements. A similar depredation happened in the same months to another Venetian ship bound for Izmir, the *Grande Alessandro*: ivi, 22 Nov. 1672 and following dates. On the "right of *visita*" see also Greene (2010), pp. 52-64, 174-186.

23. Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 33, cc. 61v-62r (25 Sep. 1674), cc. 66v-67r (1 Dec. 1674), 91r-v (21 May 1675); Asve, BaC, b. 1, 13 Aug. 1672, 27 Aug. 1672; ivi b. 116-II, fasc. 2, 15 Sep. 1672; ivi b. 117, *passim*; ivi b. 289, reg. 422, 9 Sep. 1672, 12 Dec. 1672; ivi b. 298, reg. 21, 13 Jul. 1670, 25 Jul. 1672, Nov. 1678; Asve, Csm, I s., b. 749, *passim*; ivi II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 4 Sep. 1674, 12 Sep. 1674, 16 Oct. 1681; ivi b. 103, "Manifesti", 24 Sep. 1674, and following dates.

in Izmir, Paul Rycaut, had obtained the confiscation of goods fraudulently imported into Venice by an Armenian merchant under the English flag. The Board members' judgment had recognised Rycaut's right to collect consular dues from the merchants trading between Venice and the Levant under the English banner. This outcome had not required any manifest to be sent. Instead, when Lupazzoli sent a manifest for the same ship, claiming that it had not paid its consular fees when it was flying the Venetian flag, the affair ultimately came to nothing[24].

The Venetian consul's collection and transmission of shipping manifests did not replace interrogations of the ship's crew or local physical inspections of loaded goods, carried out on land by tax officials and at sea by privateers. Nor did any sort of sanction seem to follow the numerous vigilance reports that Lupazzoli sent on other matters, such as the fraudulent circulation of «forged» Venetian coins or the «abandonment» of their islands of origin effected by Greek-speaking Venetian subjects. The Venetian consul, for example, denounced as early as 1670 that ships equipped by Jan van Aalst, who was of Flemish origin, were fraudulently trading between Venice and Izmir. Nevertheless, in 1671 the Board of Trade certified van Aalst's good behaviour, testified by 25 years of residence in Venice and the regular payment of public taxes. The Senate thus recognised van Aalst as a *cittadino de intus et de extra* (a Venetian status that granted commercial privileges), a condition, however, subject to the licit conduct of trade. Although Luppazzoli continued to denounce the fraudulent conduct of the *cittadino's* ships and agents in the following years, van Aalst was never charged and instead kept benefiting from Venetian privileges and protection[25]. Similarly to what has been recently shown for the New World during the early modern period, the identities that consuls described locally, detailing who was a fraudster or a smuggler, were not necessarily taken into account by the Venetian institutions[26]. The identity recorded in Izmir changed *en route* to Venice.

The consul's denunciations of Venetian Greek-speaking subjects who left Tinos for Izmir in the 1670s and 1680s also never led to the prescribed sanction for these cases, namely the confiscation of the emigrants' real estate[27]. As the introduction to this essay mentioned, in 1700 the Senate was absolutely clueless about this migration. Even when sent directly by the consul to the Senate or the Board of Trade, consular vigilance reports did not seem meant for immediate or future use.

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24. Ivi, I s., reg. 247, c. 162v (3 Dec. 1670), cc. 167r-v (16 Dec. 1670); Asve, BaC, b. 113-I, fasc. 9, 1, 2 and 14 Aug. 1670.

25. Asve, Senato dispacci, Consoli, Sedi diverse, fz. 1, Izmir 5 Dec. 1671; Asve, BaC, b. 113-I, fasc. 9, and b. 117, *passim*; Asve, Csm, II s., b. 19, "Cittadinanze", 16 Jun. 1671, 8 Jul. 1671; ivi I s., reg. 157, c. 93r (6 Mar. 1673).

26. Ghobrial (2019); Buono (2020).

27. Asve, BaC, b. 113-I, fasc. 9, b. 117, b. 119-II, fasc. 8, and b. 121, fasc. 7, *passim*; ivi b. 116-II, fasc. 6, 27 Nov. 1672, 12 Sept. 1672; Asve, Senato dispacci, Provveditori da terra e da mar e altre cariche, b. 590, f. 884, n. 21 (3 Sep. 1672).

Beyond that, the archival trail from the case suggests that all of the consular vigilance reports that the Venetian institutions did respond to had been previously filtered by the court of the diplomatic representative. This is particularly true in the case of one extraordinary ambassador to the Porte, Alvise Molin (1670-1671), who seems to have used consular papers to emphasise his own previously written reports on the misconduct of Venetian trade[28]. The records of the extraordinary ambassadors are full of small clues indicating that, for reasons of post-war political insecurity, this representative kept consular letters (as well as those from other non-official informers) close at hand and had compilations of summaries prepared for quick consultation[29]. Resident baili do not appear to have used the same record-keeping techniques (such as indexes and summaries) that the ambassador employed to process such correspondence during the period analysed. Rather, many of the bailo's secretaries seem to have limited themselves to placing reference signs in the left-hand margin of the correspondence (a sort of slash) to facilitate searches for specific topics after the dispatches had been read and before they were filed in boxes. These reference signs constituted an important documentary device through which the bailo could access information, as they helped the secretaries to highlight which topics were to be communicated to him. Many paragraphs of the letters the baili received, however, are not marked. Numerous letters written to the baili are also entirely unmarked. Besides, the compilations of summaries made for the attention of extraordinary ambassadors are much richer and more helpful in terms of their further use. The bailo's court evidently continued to file away consular dispatches, but without any intention of consulting them further. The bailo's interest in the relevance of consular reports faded at a time when these were becoming increasingly abundant, while diplomatic demands became less pressing[30]. Unsurprisingly, consular attention to the migration of Venetian subjects from Tinos to Izmir, an issue of concern at a time of heightened political insecurity, was mainly echoed by the extraordinary ambassadors and only rarely mentioned by the baili.

The lack of any measurable administrative or judicial consequences stemming from the observations reported by Luppazzoli does not mean that

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28. Proof of this can be found in Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 154, cc. 10v-11r (5 Mar. 1670), c. 50r (22 Mar. 1670), cc. 82r-v (30 Mar. 1670), cc. 157v-158r (19 May 1670), c. 201v (4 Jun. 1670), cc. 210r-225v (10 Jul. 1670), cc. 351r (1 Sep. 1670), cc. 390v-391r (8 Sep. 1670), cc. 430v-441r (1 Nov. 1670), cc. 442r-443v (4 Nov. 1670) and enclosed papers; ivi, fz. 155, cc. 59v-63v (30 Mar. 1671), cc. 176r-v (29 May 1671) and enclosed papers; Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 32, cc. 97v-101r (30 Oct. 1670), cc. 103r-v (2 Dec. 1670), cc. 107v-108v (27 Dec. 1670), cc. 142r-v (6 Jun. 1671), cc. 187r-v (23 Sep. 1671). See also Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 4 Sept. 1674, 16 Oct. 1681 enclosed with the document from 3 May 1681.

29. See especially the *rubriche*, summaries, indexes and chancery notes on the margins in Asve, BaC, from b. 121-I to 125-II. For this issue see also De Vivo (2018).

30. See especially the reference signs (slashes) on the left margin of several letters in Asve, BaC, b. 117.

the content of consular information could not have a more widespread impact. Studies of other European consuls residing in Izmir or in different Italian ports over the same decades have revealed that the chronic difficulty consuls experienced in trying to obtain concrete responses from their interlocutors was a widespread phenomenon. These studies have also highlighted how consular information contributed to the institutional standardisation of bureaucratic and sanitary regulations throughout the Mediterranean basin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although rarely decisive in the decisions of government authorities, consular dispatches conveyed administrative practices and news (including false news) that could push other institutional environments to conform to them. Especially in cases of war or health emergencies, the content of consular letters could dissuade (even indirectly) some merchants from conducting their business, both licit and illicit[31]. Finally, as the following pages will show, the transmission of consular information also had another effect desired by governments: that of influencing the behaviour and attention of the consuls themselves.

2. Communication instead of control. A rewarding result

Consular correspondence constantly pointed out the merits of the consul and his family members and the services they had rendered to the sovereign authorities in Venice. Many reports of services and accomplishments testify to the fact that Luppazzoli's vigilance before and after he officially assumed the role had earned him – and allowed him to retain – the title of consul. Indeed, like other individuals later recognised as Venetian consuls in the eastern Mediterranean, Luppazzoli had employed his cognitive capacities in the service of Venice as a *confidente* (a non-official informer, someone who was trustworthy) during the earlier Candia War of 1645-1669. He and his son once again volunteered as *confidenti* during the subsequent War of Morea from 1684 to 1699. The image of *confidente* that the elder Francesco had crafted for himself and his family was rewarded with his appointment to the post of consul in Izmir in 1700. Venetian recognition of his information activity also allowed his son, Gio Antonio (previously a "dragoman", or interpreter), to inherit the same title a few years later[32].

Both the Venetian authorities and the consul perceived the act of informing as proof of diligence and loyalty. Information activity created a bond of affiliation. Members of the Luppazzoli family and other consuls in the eastern Mediterranean expected that the frequent communication of their observations would earn them the Venetian status of «loyal subject» *(fedele)*. On the side of the Venetian authorities, an expectation was also cultivated that observers would report their information. The lack of communicative service to the

31. Calafat (2015); Allain (2015); Brizay (2015). See also Beri (2013); Le Gouic (2018).
32. Signori (2016); Poumarède (2020), pp. 352-359.

Venetian authorities, on the other hand, could lead to the loss of the status of «loyal subject» that was necessary to maintain the consular title or claim other privileges[33].

Yet, so far, no study has concretely demonstrated the impact of the information gathered by these *confidenti* on the decisions taken by military leaders in Venice. The written record, particularly the *fedi* (legal documents issued by a representative's chancellery), documents their informational action, but not how and whether the information they collected was used[34]. The evidence that they carried out information activity, and not the actual impact of this activity on the decisions of the Venetian ruling class, legitimised the Luppazzoli family's claims to possess the consular title.

In practice, the award of the consular title rested *de facto* on the Luppazzolis' self-descriptions of themselves, which included the *fedi* they had gathered to testify to their service. These were usually held for the purpose only in the private archives of consular families. The transmission of these certificates, which apparently defined the objectivity of the Venetian decision to reward the most deserving informers, actually masked the scant regard that Venetian representatives had, in the long run, for the actual impact of the observations that were transmitted to them. The important thing was to keep enouraging the willingness of these individuals to provide such information, not the use that could be made of it. This communicative openness made the consuls believe that the authorities paid attention to the services and accomplishments they rendered and in turn allowed their hopes of reward to be sustained.

The Venetian representatives were also supposed to show consuls that they fulfilled their duty of diligent care and kept an eye on them when their performance was below their expectations. Since it was the consuls themselves who typically produced or selected evidence to demonstrate their zeal as informants, it was impossible for the authorities to determine whether they were objective or not. The Venetian authorities, therefore, favoured accusations, complaints, and information communicated by third parties to stimulate competition and generate vigilance between these and the consuls.

33. Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 32, cc. 59r-v (15 Feb. 1669mv) and c. 73r (7 Jun. 1670); Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 156, *passim*; Asve, BaC, b. 116-I, fasc. 4, 5 and 14, *passim*; ivi b. 116-II, fasc. 5, 1 May 1672; ivi b. 113-I, fasc. 9, b. 117, and b. 119-II, fasc. 8, *passim*.

34. Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 156, cc. 386v-387r (25 Aug. 1672) and enclosed papers; Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 28 May 1685; ivi I s., b. 749, 1 Mar. 1681; Asve, BaC, b. 119-II, fasc. 8, 29 Nov. 1664 and enclosed statements; ivi b. 386, *passim*. Argenti's hypothesis is that there was a concrete impact of the *confidenti's* information on the decisions taken by Venetian military commanders, but the supporting evidence is not convincing: Argenti (1935), pp. xxvii, lxxxviii-lxxxix. In decision-making, the correspondence of military commanders would seem to have given more importance to interrogations (called *costituti*) performed orally on merchant captains and consuls than to the intelligence activity carried out by *confidenti*. See, for exemple, Asve, Sptm, b. 900, fz. 1333 and b. 773, fz. 1129, *passim*.

The complaints filed against Luppazzoli by the French ambassador, the Ottoman authorities, Franciscan missionaries, Venetian state representatives, and various traders were not as numerous as the consular reports themselves, but did have a different political dimension. Indeed, a small number of complaints could have the same impact as dozens (if not hundreds) of letters from the consul, which explains why Luppazzoli wrote so many reports to the bailo. Although these observations were themselves heavily biased and deliberately clashed with the information conveyed by the consul, they challenged the consul's interest-laden narratives with other claims carrying their own dose of self-interest. In the late 1670s and early 1680s, this flow of observations drove the Venetian authorities to discuss whether to replace or flank the old consul with another individual[35].

From Luppazzoli's perspective, such institutional attention and watchfulness could only take the form of disciplinary measures. The consul's fear of losing his privileged status led him to supply new documentation and conform his narrative and behaviour to the state's expectations. Luppazzoli claimed ostentatiously in his correspondence that these new records proved his proper administration of the office. He claimed that his reports were true and devoid of any self-interest, unlike to the interest-laden observations of his rivals. Mainly because they conveyed his reputation far better than any source of surveillance, his claims to the objectivity of his actions nourished his image of loyalty[36]. This correspondence indicates that the vigilance generated between him and other people worked to threaten Luppazzoli himself in case of malfeasance. The magistrates, who frequently avoided investigating claims from their informers, thus succeeded in participating in the storytelling of such individuals in the eastern Mediterranean. This gave the Venetian authorities the power to use letters as a tool to monitor the good standing of their consuls and to shape their behaviour far beyond the actual boundaries of their maritime domains[37].

After his father died in the 1700s, Gio Antonio Luppazzoli, who became Venetian consul in Izmir, continued to pass on those observations that were

35. Asve, Csm, I s., reg. 159, cc. 10r-11v (6 Oct. 1677) and enclosed petition in cc. 11v-13v, and cc. 51v-54v (11 Mar. 1678) and enclosed statement; ivi II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 15 Jul. 1675, 18 Mar. 1680 and 5 Mar. 1681; Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 34, *passim*; Asve, Senato dispacci, Costantinopoli, fz. 154, cc. 430v-441r (1 Nov. 1670) and cc. 442r-445r (4 Nov. 1670); ivi fz. 156, cc. 187r-188v (28 Mar. 1672), cc. 199v-201r (25 Apr. 1672) and cc. 336v-337r (16 Jul. 1671 [sic] actually 1672); Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, reg. 32, *passim*; ivi reg. 34, c. 87r (19 Mar. 1678) and cc. 142r-v (14 Feb. 1679mv); ivi reg. 35, c. 52r (16 Mar. 1684); Asve, Collegio, Suppliche di dentro, b. 63, fz. 84, 8 Jun. 1675.

36. Asve, BaC, b. 117, b. 119-II, fasc. 8, b. 125-II, *passim*; Asve, Csm, I s., b. 749, *passim*; ivi II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 10 and 12 Jun. 1682. On this topic, see also Brendecke (2016), pp. 286-294.

37. A similar mechanism of control and influence is also documented among private merchants who employed business correspondence in the organisation of early modern long-distance trade: Trivellato (2007).

necessary to reaffirm his zeal in the administration of his office. He also obtained testimonials of accomplishments from both maritime representatives and Venetian merchants. However, between 1709 and 1710, the bailo in Constantinople accused him of lack of diligence. Relying more on consular accounting records than on shipping manifests and reports transmitted by Gio Antonio himself, the diplomatic representative charged him with embezzlement and collusion with the merchants in their fraudulent activities. The bailo eventually replaced Lupazzoli with a Venetian subject with ties to his court, the physician Giacomo Pilarinò[38]. The Venetian authorities were not merely interested in collecting attestations of loyalty. In order to enforce the behaviour of their informants, state representatives sometimes decided to punish them and deprive them of their privileges.

In the following years, in keeping with the bailo's own opinion, Pilarinò and other informers portrayed members of the Luppazzoli family in a purely negative light. According to the new flow of information, these family members were to be severely punished with expulsion because they had betrayed Venetian expectations[39].

The reasons that again led the Board of Trade not to re-elect Gio Antonio Luppazzoli as consul of Izmir in 1714 were channelled by the same bailo in Constantinople that had originally replaced him[40]. Ten years later, however, Gio Antonio succeeded in regaining the title of consul. He retained the title until his death in 1727[41]. During the Second War of Morea (1714-1718), the members of the Luppazzoli family had spontaneously offered their services to the Republic. The family's attention and loyalty to the Republic was once again rewarded with a privileged status.

The case of the Luppazzolis shows how, from an institutional point of view, consular correspondence was only one source – and note even the most important one – of observations among many others in the context in which the state had to manage an increasing amount of information. According to the Venetian institutional view, after the Morean War in 1699, Francesco Luppazzoli's possession of the title of consul of Izmir was linked only to the merits he had earned in the two wars with the Ottoman Empire. The Venetian authorities legitimised the consular status of his son Gio Antonio for the same reasons[42]. Eventually, all the information passed on by the Luppazzolis' rivals, which depicted the family members as unsuitable for holding the consular

38. Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 15 May 1708 and enclosed statement, 1 Jun. 1708, 6 Jul. 1709 and following documents. On Pilarinò, see Tucci (2007); Luca (2008); Signori (2016).

39. Asve, BaC, b. 129, fasc. 4, *passim*.

40. Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, "Smirne", 7 Aug. 1710 and following dates.

41. Ivi, 14 Jun. 1727; Asve, Bac, b. 298, reg. 35, 16 Dec. 1724, 12 Jun. 1727; Asve, Senato deliberazioni, Terra, fz. 1500, 17 Sep. 1716 and enclosed papers; ivi, fz. 1697, 23 Sep. 1728 and enclosed papers; Asve, Scuola grande S. Rocco, Seconda consegna, b. 753, fasc. 10, *passim*.

42. Asve, Csm, II s., b. 33, 21 Mar. 1699 and following dates.

title, was archived and not used in the long run. The state's collection of all sorts of information on its consuls did not directly influence decisions to reform the consular institution, trade regulations. Neither did it change the stereotypical image that the central authorities had of their informants in the Levant.

Conclusion

Even among European travellers and other Franks residing there, Francesco Luppazzoli was famed for having performed intelligence activities for the Most Serene Republic during the wars[43]. The Venetian consul often reported that if the Flemings living in Izmir depicted him as a *referendario* (indicating someone who reports something with malice), the local Ottomans regarded him as a *spia* (spy, used to indicate an enemy informant). Contrary to the positive connotations of the word *confidente*, the terms *referendario* and *spia* were used for politically and socially dangerous people[44].

It is not uncommon to find information activity described in negative terms. According to Luppazzoli's correspondence, his reputation as a spy in the Ottoman port would have meant losing his freedom, belongings, family, and even his life if he had not held consular status. Although this narrative conformed to his well-established supplicatory rhetoric, it reflected a realistic condition at a local level. In wartime, acting as an informant to an enemy sovereign authority threatened local bonds of social solidarity and loyalty to the Ottoman community. Residents in the Ottoman Empire had to know that disloyalty toward the regional power would affect them in the long run. The suspicion of being a presumed spy could therefore compromise Lupazzoli's social relations to the point of marginalising him from the local society[45].

However, control of consular legitimation in Ottoman territories always remained in the hands of the Sultan's authority. If the Luppazzoli's local reputation had had any influence on the decisions of the Porte, the family protected by Venice would never have achieved consular status[46]. Francesco Luppazzoli, instead, became Venetian consul twice, and his son, Gio Antonio Luppazzoli, achieved the same honour twice more. Things could have gone very differently for the Luppazzoli family. Their consular status was never just

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43. Asve, BaC, b. 113-I, fasc. 9, 16 Nov. 1669; ivi b. 117, 6 Feb. 1672, 28 Mar. 1673, 2 Sep. 1673, cc. n.d. (enclosed in the dispatch of 24 Mar. 1675); ivi b. 119-II, fasc. 8, 1680; Asve, Csm, I s., b. 749, 16 Dec. 1680, cc.n.n. (enclosed in the dispatch of 20 Feb. 1684), 11 Jul. 1684. See also Benetti (1688), p. 43; Magni (1692), pp. 54-55; Oyen, Epen (1889), vol. 6, p. O. 8; Olnon (2014), p. 264 .

44. Preto (2010), pp. 42-44.

45. On the protection provided by consular status, see Boogert (2005), pp. 30-32. On punishments usually implemented to repress espionage, see Gürkan (2012), pp. 31-34. On the rhetoric used in petitions, see Guéna, Mazou (2019); Signori (2019).

46 On this topic, see Boogert (2005), pp. 93-97 and 105-112.

the product of their own agency or their success in conveying their image as loyal *confidenti*. Rather, the vigilance and denunciations reported locally to Venetian magistrates in the short term could compromise the status of the consular family if it did not meet institutional expectations.

In the long term, the fact that Luppazzoli's reported his own condition of vulnerability as a consequence of his activity as an informer to the Venetian authorities effected a transformation of this activity from one inspired by self-interest (in the form of access to the consular title and other privileges) into one based on a contribution to the public benefit of Venice. Together with more traditional correspondence, the act of reporting served as an expression of loyalty and belonging to the Venetian community. At the same time, the conveyance of a privileged condition as a reward for intelligence activity was part of the state's desire to promote a voluntary flow of information from as many people as possible. In such a scenario, the Venetian authorities' project of promoting the willingness to transmit observations among non-professional informers abroad had the goal of directing the conduct of these individuals and orienting their worldviews. Consequently, the Venetian authorities could largely disregard consular information but could equally "instruct" and "correct" the conduct and expectations of informers. Venetian magistrates created and managed consular attention and watchfulness by distributing privileges and punishments among the consuls.

On a final note, the exceptional set of sources regarding the Luppazzoli case reveals that there was nothing extraordinary about the fact that the vigilance of consuls – and on consuls – during the early modern period did not necessarily lead to administrative decisions or sanctions. Unlike a surveillance system, the vigilance promoted by the Venetian authorities was not necessarily aimed at gathering information to decide, judge and punish deviant behaviour. The information that the consuls conveyed about fraud could only achieve some actual effectiveness if the members of the professional groups involved in these practices also participated in vigilance. As a result, contemporary concerns about the information transmitted by such consuls had less to do with the circulation of news *per se* than with the question of consular loyalty and trust.

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Control of marriage and (im)mobility in Venice (16th-17th centuries) in dialogue with *Cultures of Vigilance*

di Teresa Bernardi

This paper analyses the interactions between the control of marriage and human mobility in early modern Venice. It examines the role that ordinary people and local communities played in controlling migrants' mobility and marital unions. In particular, it shows the ways in which the religious authorities attempted to collect information about mobile actors in order to prevent the crime of bigamy. The research focuses particularly on the intermediaries and the networks through which oral testimonies and certificates were conveyed, both locally and trans-locally. To do so, the author uses a specific archival source, the so-called *processetti matrimoniali*: namely, pre-matrimonial enquiries aimed at attesting the marital status of foreigners, widows and widowers, and other mobile actors (i.e., merchants, sailors, and pilgrims) who wanted to get married in Venice. It is in this regard that the Venetian urban context will be analysed as a case study for discussing the historical perspectives of two recent books: *The History and Cultures of Vigilance. Historicizing the Role of Private Attention in Society*, edited by A. Brendecke and P. Molino; and *Riferire all'autorità. Denuncia e delazione tra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, edited by M.G. Muzzarelli. Using the perspective of the "cultures of vigilance", instead of the surveillance approach, will help to counter the idea that the control of marriage was simply a top-down process, or a centralized disciplinary action. It will reveal that local and trans-local communities were important means of control, able to influence the effectiveness of administrative and government practices.

Keywords: mobility, marriage, communication, vigilance, identification, widowhood.

Controllo del matrimonio e (im)mobilità a Venezia (XVI-XVII secolo). In dialogo con le culture di vigilanza

L'articolo analizza il rapporto fra controllo del matrimonio e mobilità nella Venezia della prima età moderna. Lo scopo è quello di porre l'attenzione sul ruolo degli attori

sociali e delle comunità locali nell'ambito delle pratiche di identificazione personale legate all'istituto matrimoniale. In particolare, l'autrice mostra attraverso quali strumenti conoscitivi le autorità religiose raccoglievano informazioni sulle persone in movimento, al fine di prevenire il crimine di bigamia. Per far questo, l'autrice utilizza una fonte ancora poco studiata in ambito veneziano, i processetti matrimoniali: delle inchieste attraverso le quali si attestava che i futuri sposi, in genere donne e uomini migranti, oppure vedovi e vedove, non fossero già sposati altrove prima di contrarre un'unione in città. Attraverso l'analisi di alcuni *case studies* e alla luce di uno studio più ampio condotto nell'ambito del progetto "Processetti. Matrimonio e mobilità a Venezia (secoli 16th-18th)", il saggio fa dialogare una ricerca in corso con le prospettive metodologiche di due recenti pubblicazioni: *The History and Cultures of Vigilance. Historicizing the Role of Private Attention in Society* a cura di A. Brendecke e P. Molino, e *Riferire all'autorità. Denuncia e delazione tra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, a cura di M. G. Muzzarelli. In particolare, utilizza il concetto di "vigilanza orizzontale" a discapito del più tradizionale concetto di disciplinamento, sottolineando l'importanza degli intermediari e delle reti sociali nella costruzione e trasmissione del sapere locale.

Parole chiave: mobilità, matrimonio, comunicazione, vigilanza, identificazione, vedovanza.

Introduction

This paper intends to discuss two recent historiographical categories, namely the "cultures of vigilance" and the "culture of accusation", in relation to my current research on marriage, bigamy, and mobility in early modern Venice[1]. The concept of "cultures of vigilance" was developed by a group of scholars based at the University of Munich, and concerns the relation between cognition and politics. It regards «the integration of human attention into tasks set by society, like providing security». Indeed, Arndt Brendecke and Paola Molino's edited volume, "The History and Cultures of Vigilance. Historicizing the Role of Private Attention in Society", shows that the ways in which individual attention is involved in this process change according to different cultures and particular goals and values, hence the importance of using "cultures" in the plural[2]. Thus the vigilance perspective leads us to analyse the kinds of local knowledge required in specific legal and social

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2. Brendecke, Molino (2018).

contexts, its aims, as well as the intermediaries responsible for transmitting the information[3].

This perspective is connected with the idea of the "vigilant triangle", which Brendecke explores in his previous work "Imperium und Empirie. Funktionen des Wissens in der spanischen Kolonialherrschaft". Indeed, he challenges the assumption that knowledge would automatically provide access to power, which implies that the centralized accumulation of information would increase the state's "governability"[4]. On the contrary, he claims that knowledge about an event, a person or a group of people is always the result of a process of negotiation that involves different actors and diverse corporate institutions. In light of this, we can relate the bottom-up transmission of information to acts of vigilance horizontally practiced between actors belonging to the same social reality[5].

In a world where those who controlled others' behaviour were also those who were controlled, the collaboration between authorities and subjects was in fact widespread, sustained, and remunerated. The notion of the "culture of accusation" comes from the book "Riferire all'autorità. Denuncia e delazione tra Medioevo ed Età moderna", edited by Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli[6]. It analyses the practices of denunciation and delation as tools of government, and as forms of support for the common good (*publica utilitas*). It also examines how social actors played an active role in informing public authorities about crimes or misconduct, within different historical periods and political frames. In one chapter, Ferdinando Treggiari uses the concept of "culture of accusation" to underline how the act of reporting to authorities was not only legitimised and encouraged from above, but was a structural and widely accepted practice in medieval municipal societies[7].

Inserting itself in this discussion, this article investigates the interactions between the control of marriage and human mobility – understood in both spatial and social terms – with the aim of exploring the role played by social ties within processes of migrant identification. The cosmopolitan city of Venice and its domains during the 16th and 17th centuries form the historical

3. Ivi, pp. 20, 67. On the importance of adopting an emic approach to the sources, paying attention to the normative language, historical constructions and social order of a given society, see Ginzburg (2012).

4. Brendecke (2009). This theory results from subsequent interpretations of Foucault's thinking, and from the more traditional approaches of police history to state-building processes. See this dossier's introduction.

5. Brendecke (2012), p. 256.

6. Muzzarelli (2020a).

7. Ivi, pp. 27-47. In the last few decades, various studies have analysed the interactions between public authorities and local communities in pre-industrial societies, enhancing bottom-up processes of communication and governance. See, for instance, the literature that has clarified the jurisdictional character of the Old Regime political entities: Costa (1969); Mannori (1994); Mannori, Sordi (2001); Cerutti (2003). On the Venetian institutional history, see: Cozzi (1982); Viggiano (1993). A more complete bibliography can be found in this dossier's introduction.

and geographical background of this study. At that time, Venice was one of the most populated urban centres in Europe (with about 150,000 inhabitants), and acted as a crossroads between Northern Europe, the Adriatic Sea, and the Ottoman Empire[8]. This paper will discuss a specific archival source, the so-called *processetti matrimoniali*: namely, pre-matrimonial enquiries aimed at attesting the marital status of foreigners, widows and widowers, and other mobile actors (i.e., merchants, sailors, and pilgrims) who wanted to get married in Venice. These enquiries are recorded in 340 registers (dated between 1592 and 1807) and are kept at the Historical Archive of the Patriarchate of Venice[9].

Recent studies about migration in the early modern Mediterranean have paid particular attention to the commitment of secular authorities to controlling mobility and identifying migrants. They have demonstrated how diverse port cities managed mobility and migration within their urban spaces, which included issuing residence permits and health passes, and taxing hospitality industries[10]. However, this paper shifts the discussion from the civil to the ecclesiastical institutions, and focuses on migrants' experiences and strategies, exploring the diverse ways in which mobility, along with the practice of marriage, could have more broadly affected the process of identifying migrants[11].

Following recent studies, this research also calls into question some historiographical assumptions about the phenomena of mobility and identification: the presumed clear-cut distinction between short-distance and long-distance mobility; and the assumed replacement of orality – in terms of reputation and social ties – by written documents[12]. Scholars who have highlighted the shift from oral to written culture have often overestimated the reliability and credibility of written documents. At times they have also underestimated the central role of reputation (*fama*) as a form of legal legitimation[13]. As we will see, local communities were important means of control, able to determine the effectiveness of administrative and government practices. Trans-local networks, on the other hand, blurred the distance between different places and jurisdictions[14].

The demand for identification and social "discipline" could also originate from outside of institutions, and for diverse reasons. In this regard, the perspective of the "cultures of vigilance", rather than the surveillance

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8. Chambers, Pullan (1922); Zannini (2009); Orlando (2014).

9. Archivio storico del Patriarcato di Venezia (ASPV), *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum»; Ivi, «Filciae Causarum».

10. Moatti, Kaiser (2007); De Munck, Winter (2012); Greefs, Winter (2018); Bernardi, Pompermaier (2019); Scholz (2020).

11. Bernardi (2017; 2020).

12. Herzog (2003; 2012); Brendecke (2009); Cerutti (2012); Breckenridge, Szreter (2012); Buono (2014; 2015).

13. Caplan, Torpey (2001); Noiriel (2007).

14. Vallerani (2007); Buono (2020).

approach, will help to stress the idea that even the control of marriage was not simply a top-down process or a centralized disciplinary action[15]. The vigilance perspective emphasises the ways in which individuals performed their roles in society and contributed to its functioning[16]. There is still a question concerning the issue of distance: could geographical mobility have an effect on the capacity of individuals to demand certain rights, or otherwise affect the institution's ability to verify the legitimacy of their claim?

The first part of this paper analyses the role that ordinary people and local communities (i.e., families, neighbourhoods, "national" and professional urban networks) played in controlling migrants' mobility and marital unions. It also highlights the ways in which religious authorities attempted to collect information about mobile actors – both men and women – in order to prevent the crime of bigamy. The second part deals with the issue of distance, exploring the intermediaries and networks through which oral testimonies and certificates were conveyed locally. To do so, it will focus on identification practices linked to the status of widowhood. It will explore the way in which language, gestures, and even attire contributed to how ordinary people performed (and thus fixed) their condition as widows and widowers. In the early modern period, social identities were verified by authorities through a series of documents (such as baptism, marriage and death certificates), of which migrants often had their own copies. However, they were also created and performed by individuals themselves, within local and trans-local communities of witnesses.

1. The "watchfulness of many": the involvement of ordinary people in the control of marriage

The silk weaver Giovanni d'Antiga, son of Bartolomio, had allegedly lived in Venice for many years when, in 1594, he decided to get married in the city. He was from Valmareno, a little village near Treviso, which belonged to the mainland domains of the Republic. Despite the fact that Giovanni was a Venetian subject and had lived in Venice for a while, ecclesiastical authorities would not have agreed to celebrate the marriage without evidence of his celibate status. He thus had to choose two witnesses who would testify to his past, possible movements outside Venice, as well as the continuity of his residence within the city:

I've known Giovanni since I was small because we are both from the same village, he has lived in this town since the last contagion, that could be about 19 years,

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15. Prodi (1994); Gaudemet (1996); Zarri (1996). On the role of local communities in the control of marriage and the construction of social identities see: Zemon Davis (1977; 1983); Merzario (1982). For a more recent bibliography, see the collective works on Italian marriage courts and matrimonial litigation by Seidel Menchi and Quaglioni (2000; 2001; 2004; 2007).

16. Brendecke, Molino (2018), p. 20.

continuously, it is very true that he has visited the village a number of times, but only for a few days, and usually we went there together, and we were brought up in this town together, and recently he stayed at my house for five years, where he ate, drank and slept, and worked there too as a skilled labourer (…) and I swear that he is not married in the village, nor in other places, and I know this as a result of the knowledge and practical experience I have of him, we are like dear brothers[17].

This testimony alone allows us to begin to see what elements were functional for attesting the marital status of migrants in Venice. As can be seen, the witness describes the relationship that binds him to the applicant in great detail: their common origin, their traveling together, and the fact that the applicant slept, ate and worked in his home. They are «like dear brothers», he claims, implying he would have learned about any possible marriage despite his friend's geographical mobility.

From the Council of Trent onwards (1545-1563), church leaders decreed that future spouses – especially if they were foreign-born Christians and widows and widowers – had to demonstrate their celibate status prior to marriage. Foreigners might have already been married in other places without the local authorities' knowledge; widows and widowers could lie about their spouse's death in order to get married again. The process of verification thus acted as a preventive measure. It took on diverse forms, and was applied to different categories of people in different Christian societies. In Rome and Naples, for instance, the procedure concerned the entire population, whether they were foreigners or not. In Pisa and Livorno, the obligation particularly affected those coming from outside the diocese[18].

In 17ᵗʰ century Venice, applicants in the *processetti* could be foreign-born inhabitants, people who had spent long periods of time outside the city, or widows and widowers[19]. As in the case of Giovanni d'Antiga, they had usually been in Venice for many years before asking for a free state license (*fede di stato libero*) from the Patriarchal Curia. Most of them were Venetian subjects, coming from the domains (both the mainland and the overseas territories), others were foreigners from Northern Europe, the Italian Peninsula, or the Ottoman Empire. The enquiries made in the first decade of the procedure (1592-1604) concern both men and women, with a proportion of about 77% of men and 23% of women out of a total of 2491 applicants.

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17. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 2, 23 January 1594. The original passage is as follows: «da piccolo in su io conosco il detto Giovanni perché siamo paesani, il quale habita in questa città dal contagio prossimo passato in qua, che possono esser da disnove anni in circa, continuamente, è ben vero che egli è stato al paese diverse volte ma per pochi giorni, et vi andavamo di compagnia la maggior parte, et siamo stati allevati in questa città insieme, et ultimamente egli è stato cinque anni in casa mia, dove mangiava, beveva, et dormiva, et vi lavorava come lavorante (…) et io faccio fede, che egli non è maridato al paese, né meno in altri luoghi, et questo so per la cognitione et pratica che ho di lui, che siamo come fratelli di amorevolezza».

18. Petraccone (1974); Menzione (1990); Canepari (2008); Albani (2018).

19. Chauvard (2020); Bernardi (2020), pp. 192-239.

Furthermore, the documentation attests to a number of extremely mobile actors, who arrived in Venice after multiple movements and who carried on moving inside and outside the city even after their arrival. Like today, the reasons for migration were numerous, and could concern their profession, family business, their participation in fairs or pilgrimages, captivity, banishment, and, very often, war. That likely made it difficult for public authorities to collect information about these people and thus define their social identities. Hence, there was a need to act in order to prevent possible infractions[20].

The systematic application of this procedure should be read in the light of the broader process of regulating marriage and sexual behaviour, which, from the second half of the 16th century, was strengthened by the Catholic Church. In an attempt to eliminate irregular forms of cohabitation, concubinage, secret marriages, and bigamy, the *Tametsi* decree (1563) established that, to be valid, marriage had to be announced by banns, and the couple had to be married before their parish priest and at least two witnesses. From that moment on, the union, if properly celebrated, would be sacred, indissoluble, and necessarily public[21]. Due to its public character, authorities could more easily encourage private vigilance over the legitimacy of marriages, and promote a form of policing that was in fact more about prevention than prosecution[22].

It is commonly accepted that, even after the Council of Trent, the function of ecclesiastical courts was not simply to impose a model in a coercive manner, but, more pragmatically, to resolve or avoid disputes that could threaten the social order[23]. Beyond the extraordinary investment made by the Church to increase disciplinary actions and improve the ecclesiastical administrative system, control over marital unions was mostly based on the oral memories of urban communities. Moreover, it was constantly negotiated according to families' economic and social interests[24].

Although we should not deny the compulsory and "vertical" dimension of these measures, it is equally important to note that the enforcement of the norms also depended on "horizontal" control over marriage and the bottom-up sharing of social knowledge. It is no coincidence that the person in charge of

20. Kosto (2016).

21. Lombardi (2001).

22. Ziegler (2018).

23. Vallerani (2018), p.122; Cfr. Seidel Menchi, Quaglioni (2000); Lombardi (2001); in relation to Venice: Hacke (2004).

24. Cfr. Merzario (1982); Zemon Davis (1983; 1997). For a long time, historiography has stressed the coercive nature of marriage regulations. The control of marriage has traditionally been linked to a more general disciplinary effort that would have featured a sort of turning point (in an evolutionary sense) of the way of governing "modern" states and confessional societies. This perspective has at times overshadowed forms of cooperation from below and the essential role of social legitimation for the exercise of power. There is an extensive bibliography on the discussion on social disciplining and the effort to reconsider this category. See in particular: Prodi (1994); Prosperi (1994); Firpo (1996), pp. 511-17; Alessi (1996).

celebrating marriages and of recording their memory through their official registration was the parish priest, who was at once a full-fledged member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, a spiritual guide, and an inhabitant of the parish. He was likely to have personal knowledge of the spouses and be aware of the relationships between the parish inhabitants. This made him an important point of reference both for the institutions and social actors, an "amphibious figure" able to maintain and possibly transmit the local memory of his own community[25].

Before a marriage was celebrated, the authorities' main informers were the members of the corporate groups (*corpi*) to which the applicants belonged: «the familiarity with physical space was obviously and openly at odds with the familiarity with social space»[26]. Applicants had to produce two witnesses, which could include people from their place of origin, their current neighbours, workmates, relatives, masters, hosts, and so on[27]. The analysis of the testimonies' narrative construction shows the presence of recurring elements that likely gave them more standing from a legal point of view. Since the aim of the procedure was to verify that future spouses were not already married elsewhere, witnesses usually declared that they had known them for a long time, and in a continuous manner. Giovanni d'Antiga's first witness, for instance, mentioned both their common origin and their regularly seeing each other in Venice, where they allegedly lived together («he stayed at my house for five years, where he ate, drank and slept, and worked there too»), also sharing the same profession («and worked there too as a skilled labourer»)[28].

Following the same logic, witnesses were supposed to attest to the duration and continuity of the applicants' residence in Venice. Although the testimonies often mention the applicants' movements outside Venice, witnesses likewise stressed the contingency of their mobility, also claiming to have been present during the full length of those journeys: «he went back to the village a number of times, but only for a few days, and usually we went there together»[29]. In cases concerning widows and widowers, testimonies dated the applicants' arrival in Venice just after the death of their spouse, meaning they would not have had time to get married again before reaching the city. Foreign applicants, on the other hand, were usually declared to be very young when they arrived, in order to eliminate any suspicion that they had already married elsewhere. After all, who could have known their marital

25. Lucrezio Monticelli (2012); Antonielli (2015); Buono (2018b).

26. Ziegler (2018), pp. 94-95.

27. The digitisation of the enquiries (2420 *processetti* that occurred between 1592 and 1604) has allowed for the registration of a total of 9588 social relations and for the identification of almost 30 social types. These numbers are important for measuring the relevance of social networks from a quantitative perspective. The digitisation and analysis of these data are carried out as part of the project "Processetti" and through the virtual research environment "Geovistory" (https://kleiolab.ch). The team involved in this work were T. Bernardi, J. Cossu, D. Drago and F. Zugno.

28. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 2, 23 January 1594.

29. *Ibidem*.

status better than people from their place of origin, and their workmates, travel companions, and closest friends?

Returning to the two books mentioned at the beginning of this paper, we observe that the need to resort to the knowledge of non-institutional actors was common across different historical and political contexts. "Riferire all'autorità" focuses on the period between the Middle Ages and the early modern period, while "The History and Cultures of Vigilance" goes from the Middle Ages to the present, emphasising the importance of a long-term perspective when studying this phenomenon. What is significant in the former book is the idea that bottom-up communication was fundamental in diverse centres of power even within the same urban context. For instance, in his chapter, Luca Molà shows that in the corporate world of the guilds in Renaissance Venice guild members actively participated in the fight against smuggling, even denouncing internal "enemies" to protect the entire group[30]. Another example given in the book concerns the sumptuary laws about dress codes in late-medieval Bologna that promoted the correspondence between clothing and social belonging. Legislators mobilized the whole of society, including officers, common people, and the artisans employed in making clothing, to watch out for infractions and to report them to the authorities[31].

Different scales of institutionalization characterized the actors involved in the "watchfulness of many". Some of them were officials or guards who were paid for their work as controllers and formally obliged to denounce transgressions; and others were subjects expressly nominated by the legislation as the official representatives of local communities. The latter included the aforementioned parish priests, but also the *boni homines* in the Umbrian statutes of the 13th and 14th centuries: namely citizens of good reputation who were both an integral part of the urban fabric and reliable informers for the authorities[32]. Others still were social actors who denounced their neighbors or workmates in order to access a series of social and economic benefits. As legal history has demonstrated, these practices of power concerned both lay and ecclesiastical courts and belonged to a long political and juridical tradition that had its roots in the inquisitorial procedure[33].

It is also important to look at the nature of the *processetti*. These enquiries were not aimed at investigating or punishing a crime. But the administrative process did ensure that future spouses entered into a legitimate marriage and that this legitimacy was ultimately sanctioned by the Church. As Jean-François Chauvard recently argued, the *processetto* did not lead to a proper judgment but to a form of *nihil obstat*, which resulted in a free state certificate. This document attested to the applicants' celibate status, granting them the right to get married and the priest the authorisation

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30. Molà (2020).
31. Muzzarelli (2020c).
32. Treggiari (2020).
33. Lavenia (2020).

to celebrate the union[34]. Even though witnesses were not accusers – since they were generally chosen by the future spouses themselves – they still represented an essential font of knowledge for the ecclesiastical authorities, and thus were primary actors in the procedure's jurisdictional implications.

The enquiries were based on both written documents and oral testimonies. On the one hand, ecclesiastical authorities established the necessary certificates and personal details that were to be provided as part of the proceedings, which could also be issued by distant localities (such as certificates of baptism, death, marriage, or their free state document produced in the cities of origin)[35]. On the other hand, written documents were considered not to be sufficiently reliable, or at least not always available, to prove the marital status of people, especially if the applicants had spent part of their lives outside Venice. For this reason, authorities needed to collect information through the applicants' social networks. Only then could the procedure result in the granting of a license allowing the subject to get married in a Venetian parish. It was a sort of "collective" license, since it was granted through cooperation between local and foreign institutions, with the contribution of various social actors: the notaries in charge of transcribing the testimonies, the witnesses who detailed the names, professions, origins, and movements of the applicants, and the applicants themselves.

There were also cases in which the authorities needed to investigate further, asking, for instance, for more than two testimonies[36]. However, the documentation does not distinguish the cases in which the applicant was "successful" from those in which they were not. To fill this gap, it could be helpful to compare the *processetti* with the marriage registers[37]. A preliminary analysis shows that many foreigners got married without seeking permission first. This seems to be in accordance with the nature of early modern practices of registration and personal identification, which were mostly contingent and, consequently, not always necessary[38].

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34. Chauvard (2020), p. 30; this procedure was fully in line with the functioning of the jurisdictional states. The authorities legitimized its power through first forbidding a social practice, then judging the evidence and granting a license. Cfr. Costa (1969); Mannori (1994); Mannori, Sordi (2001). This kind of procedure characterized both lay and ecclesiastical courts. In relation to the control of mobility, we could also examine the procedures for granting citizenship, residence permits or travel documents to migrants. Bellavitis (2001); Sahlins (2004); Mueller (2010); Sánchez Rubio, Testón Núñez (2018).

35. See as an example: ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 2, 5 June 1594. The witness for Giovanni, a German mercer, attested: «he cannot be married in his country, because he brought a license with him that shows the quality and status of people leaving there, and that particularly show whether people are married or not, and in the one that he carries this condition is clearly specified»; «al paese non può essere maridato, perché portò qua una fede che s'usa a fare delle qualità et stato delle persone che si partono da là, et danno conto particolare in quella se siano o no maridate, et in questa portata da lui è chiaramente specificata questa conditione».

36. Chauvard (2020), p. 41.

37. Professor Jean-François Chauvard and I are working on this comparison focusing on single parishes. The results of this analysis will be illustrated in a future article.

38. Cfr. Herzog (2003).

2. *Knowledge on the move: witnesses as intermediaries between oral and written culture*

Migration, and more broadly mobility, was a structural phenomenon of early modern societies, which certainly had an effect on marriage practices and family strategies in relation to marriage[39]. The crime of bigamy, although considered an offence against morality and the Christian faith, was a very common social practice in the early modern Christian Mediterranean. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that the condition of having more than one spouse at the same time was intrinsically connected to the constraints and possibilities related to mobility. Migration could imply a change in the economic, social, and affective conditions in which a family lived. At the same time, it could facilitate the possibility of getting married more than once, complicating the exchange of information from distant places and consequently the identification of possible bigamists[40].

Since this crime was closely linked with mobility, it is differently represented in the sources depending on whether the applicant was a man or a woman, according to the different conceptions and implications that were associated with female and male mobilities[41]. In the *processetti*, for instance, male applicants were usually foreigners who were suspected of having been married more than once as they moved from one place to another. While women appeared in the documents as "abandoned" widows, who had to prove that their spouse's death took place outside Venice in order to get married again and thus establish new alliances. In most cases, although they themselves had never left the city, they still needed to attest to their marital status due to their husbands' geographical mobility. There are many records of migrant men, especially soldiers, merchants or mariners, staying away from their families for so long that they were considered dead or missing[42].

The mediation role of social networks was even more significant when mobility threatened to result in a lack of local knowledge. As Brendecke has shown in relation to the Spanish monarchy and its domains: «an expanding political entity usually becomes more and more dependent on mediators and local knowledge from the periphery»[43]. This is because the centre could not hold all the information that was produced locally. The ability to rule at a distance, therefore, was intrinsically characterised by the adoption of a shared bureaucratic language between different centres of power, together with the support of intermediary figures. A chain of vigilance, which includes controls

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39. Orlando (2014).

40. Menchi, Quaglioni (2004); Siebenhüner (2006; 2008); Bernardi (2017), pp. 37-59.

41. Cresswell, Uteng (2008); Green (2012); Adey et al. (2014), pp. 207-226; Bernardi, Bruzzi (forthcoming).

42. Zemon Davis (1983); McDougall (2010); Orlando (2014), pp. 225-26; Bernardi (2020), pp. 210-215; Chauvard (forthcoming).

43. Cfr. Holenstein et al. (2009); Brendecke, Molino (2018), p. 26; Buono (2018a), p. 843.

that invoke other controls, enforces the idea of the institutional power as «productive» and not necessarily repressive[44]. This perspective also leads to the question as to how knowledge was effectively transferred between diverse places and jurisdictions[45].

As the ecclesiastical authorities intended to legitimize unions locally, it was necessary to shift the production of knowledge locally too. Consider, for example, the proceedings concerning the condition of widowhood. How were the migrants' deaths attested to and described? What proofs and testimonies were seen as most effective? The death of the deceased spouses needed to be attested to, especially when it occurred outside Venice. For this reason, the authorities sometimes obtained death certificates from other places, while at other times this was not possible. Even in the formal case, pre-matrimonial enquiries were often still based on oral testimonies, despite the presence of written documents. Testimonies could be *de visu*, namely when the witness was present at the death, the funeral, or the burial of the deceased spouse; or *de auditu*, that is by *fama* or hearsay[46]. This should not surprise us, since this is a period in which the increase in the production of certificates and registrations had not yet implied a decline in oral culture[47].

In this legal context, reputation (*fama*) did not only play an important role in the definition of social identities, but represented the essential evidence on which the proceedings depended. This was the situation in the case of Franceschina, the daughter of Giusto Monti from Gradisca, a little town under Habsburg possession on the border with the Republic of Venice. In September 1603, at the time of the *processetto*, she lived in Venice in the parish of Santa Maria Formosa. Her husband Domenico De Franceschi had been from the same place, and had worked as a printer in Venice for many years before moving alone to Ravenna, where he allegedly died of syphilis. When Franceschina decided to get married again, she carefully chose the witnesses who would attest to her husband's death. The first focused on the knowledge that circulated within the professional community to which Domenico belonged: «because we are very familiar with the situation of those in our profession (*arte*) who go around the world working from one city to another»[48]. Moreover, information about its members would be more reliable thanks to the combination of their being both mobile and resident in Venice: «because if he weren't dead certainly those of us that go around the world

44. Alfieri (2018), p. 34.

45. Salinero (2004); Herzog (2012); De Vivo (2019); Buono (2020); Bernardi (2022).

46. According to the gradations typical of the ancient regime's evidentiary system, the testimonies that were *de auditu* were less probative than those that were *de visu* but were anyway sufficient. See in particular Bassani (2012).

47. Borello, Rizzo (2006); Vallerani (2007); Herzog (2012); Buono (2015).

48. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 7, 29 September 1603-7 November 1603. The original passage is as follows: «perché noialtri sapemo benissimo l'essere il stato delli nostri dell'arte che vanno per il mondo lavorando da una città all'altra».

working would know where he was, but everyone knows that Domenico is dead»[49].

The second witness also belonged to a chain of vigilance that functioned trans-locally, beyond the jurisdictional and geographical borders of the city. She came from the same place as Domenico, and had met him in their hometown. The never severed bond with her origins along with her mobility outside and inside Venice, enabled her to give a very detailed description of the physical consequences of syphilis, further proving the death and her own cognition of it:

finding myself again in Gradisca having gone there to visit my parents, this Domenico was there at his father's house in the month of August, if I remember rightly. Domenico was in such bad shape due to the French illness that all off his nose had been eaten away in such a manner that he couldn't speak even if he wanted to, in fact everything that he put in his mouth to eat or drink came out of his nose where that illness had eaten away all of the upper part of his palate. And he went begging around the city keeping himself up with a stick because he couldn't stand[50].

In some cases, the necessity of principally relying on reputation was a result of the impossibility of tracing direct witnesses due to the absence of the body. This was not an uncommon situation, since the conditions in which people travelled at the time often resulted in accidents and shipwrecks. Of course, this kind of narrative was functional to avoiding further investigations, and to granting the permission for a new marriage[51]. However, the *processetti* seemed to describe the common fate of many merchants, sailors, migrants, and their families, as Lucia from Latisana's enquiry demonstrates:

Processetto of Lucia, daughter of Vincenzo, from Latisana, widow of Giacomo, mariner (1596)
(...) and never more, after the news that he was lost, was anything new heard about him, nor of the others that were in that boat because everyone drowned, as is said that they say that there was nothing left but the vessel of the boat, and that everyone who had known him took him for dead[52].

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49. *Ibidem*: «perché se non fosse morto saria forza che tanti delli nostri che vanno per il mondo lavorando saprebbero dove el fosse, ma di lui Domenico tutti sanno che è morto».

50. *Ibidem*: «ritrovandomi a Gradisca essendo andata a visitar li miei a casa mia, questo Domenego capitò là a Gradisca a casa di suo padre che l'era il mese di agosto se non mi sbaglio, il quale Domenico era talmente malconcio da mal francese che haveva tutto il naso magnato via di maniera chel non poteva parlare che se intendesse, anzi che tutto quello che lui si metteva in bocca per magnar o bere tutto gli usciva dal naso dove quel male gl'haveva magnato tutta la parte di sopra del palato. Et andava mendicando per la città tenendosi in piedi con un legno che non poteva sustentarsi».

51. Catholics could get married after about seven years from the last time they saw their spouse, while Orthodox Christians only had to wait almost five years; Orlando (2014), pp. 225-226.

52. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 3, 12 July 1596; processetto di Lucia di Vincenzo, da Latisana, vedova di Giacomo mariner: «et mai più

When attesting to a migrant's death a physical description was often also expected. The spatial distance between Venice and the place of death, together with the temporal distance between the time of death and the proceedings, made personal identification necessary. Thus the ecclesiastical authorities had to verify that the applicant's spouse was the same person to whom the witnesses referred:

Processetto of Prudenzia, widow of Giovanni son of Libero Canaroli, shipbuilder (1598)
Interrogatus de signis dicti Zanetti, respondit: he might have been 22 or 23. He was more short than anything, he hadn't yet grown a beard, he was more fat than anything and he had hair that was more blonde than black[53].

Nevertheless, the *fama* did not only concern the deceased spouse but also the behaviour and the attire of their living relatives:

Processetto of Domenichina from Crete (1594)
I didn't see him dead but I came across his relations that were in mourning dress (*vestiti di corruccio*) eight days after the death of Nicolò, to which, as their friends, we asked why they were wearing those widows weeds, and they answered that eight days ago their brother Nicolò had died[54].

Witnesses usually stated that they came to know about the death due to widows and widowers' physical appearance, referring to the clothes they wore that clearly indicated their social condition. This implies that applicants performed their celibate status even before it needed to be certified. To do so, they adopted socially recognisable languages, gestures, and attire. In this way people could "register" their social identity in the collective memory of their neighbours and friends, on which their reputation depended. We could say that widowhood was literally "worn" and thus made visible to ensure its official recognition[55]. It is also notable that witnesses, far from describing a mere garment, associated with it the term "corruccio" – or other derived words –

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doppo che venne la nuova che lui si era perso si è saputo nuova di lui, né meno degli altri che erano in detta sua barca perché tutti si annegarono, si come vien detto che se dice che non si ha havuto altro ch'il battello della sua barca, et da tutti che di lui havevano cognitione egli si tiene per morto».

53. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 5, 29 June 1598; processetto di Prudenzia vedova di Giovanni di Libero Canaroli, calafato: «*Interrogatus de signis dicti Zanetti, respondit:* lui poteva haver da 22 o 23 anni. Era più presto bassotto che altrimente non haveva ancora fatto barba, più presto grassotto che altrimente et haveva cavelli più tosto biondi che negri».

54. Ivi, Vol. 2, 11 June 1594-1 February 1595; processetto di Domenichina da Creta: «io non l'ho visto morto ma mi imbattei nei suoi parenti che erano vestiti di corruccio otto giorni dopo la morte di detto Nicolò, ai quali come amici dimandai per che causa portavano quei drappi da scorroccio, et essi mi risposero che otto giorni era che suo fratello Nicolò era morto».

55. Cfr. Merzario (1982); Buono (2015), pp. 233-234.

referring to the very performative dimension of widowhood, namely the gestures of "suffering" and "crying", pained expressions on faces and the rituality of a collective hug[56].

Processetto of Marco son of Melchiorre Portinari, tailor (1594)
(…) and Chiara started crying, so the woman said, that I heard under the porticoes, that as a sign they hugged each other and started to cry, I can't tell you who else was there, they were in hospital and now they are dead[57].

The use of these expressions should be read within the context of the consolidated juridical tradition around the rituality of marriage. Gestures such as kissing, giving rings, or touching hands represented binding practices for the future spouses, both from a legal and a symbolic point of view. In fact, they were evidence of nuptial consent since they made the couple's intentions visible to the rest of the community. After the Council of Trent, all the previous rituals related to the marriage ceremony (except for giving rings) were officially abolished. However, their performative value continued to have a specific function among laypeople for a long time afterwards[58].

In a similar way, gifts displayed on women's bodies from their future husbands were considered as signs of possession[59]. The promised brides used to wear them going to mass or attending any other places of sociability. Women, therefore, were supposed to move and behave in accordance with their condition as future wives (*incedere more sponsa*). However, when marriage was imposed by force, some women could refuse to wear these gifts[60]. The same occurred to those widows who had had an abusive husband. Even if they had not denounced the violence before (perhaps precisely because of fear of abuse), some of them refused to wear widows weeds: «and afterwards this Vittoria wore a bonnet, but she didn't dress like someone who was grieving saying: "He was such bad company that I don't want to wear it"»[61].

56. The word "corruccio" might derive from the Latin expression "cor ruptum", "broken heart", or from the verb "corrumpere", that means "to unmake", "to destroy". For the etymology and the use of the term in literary works, see: Tommaseo (1838); Tommaseo, Bellini (1861).

57. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 2, 4 March 1594-13 April 1594. Processetto di Marco di Melchiorre Portinari, tesser da panni: «et essa madonna Chiara si messe a piangere, così disse la detta donna, che mi sentii in portego, che per segnale le se abbracciarono tutte e due e si messero a piangere, non vi so dir altri presenti, le quali stavano là in hospedaletto et sono morte».

58. As Ottavia Niccoli claims, according to the analysis of the marital litigations in Bologna, the practice of kissing in public remained a way to assert marriage rights over future wives. Niccoli (2004), pp. 109-129.

59. Klapisch-Zuber (1988).

60. Ferrante (1994), p. 917.

61. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examimum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 1, 26 June 1592. The original passage is as follows: «et detta Vittoria doppo portò alcuni giorni la scuffia, ma

Conclusion

Focusing on the condition of widowhood allows us to disclose the performative value of vigilance and identification practices. Despite geographical and temporal distances, both the witnesses and applicants of the *processetti* acted as informers. The original meaning of the term helps to clarify the role of the informer: "in-formers" (from the Latin: *informare*, namely "to shape", "to give form to") were subjects who not only transferred knowledge to the authorities, but also contributed to building it from below, since they represented local power interactions and the diverse interests of the population. It is important to emphasise at this point that the aims of these social actors were not necessarily separate from those of the authorities. What emerges from the *processetti*, and from matrimonial disputes in general, is that a marital union only received institutional recognition if it was also perceived as functional by the couple, its families, and their social ties. The witness in the enquiry of Marco di Melchiorre Portinari was clearly aware of this, deciding to stress the necessity of the union with Chiara in order to preserve her honor and that of her offspring:

I am sure that if there is no marriage between Marco and Chiara, Chiara would end up losing her reputation, that she wouldn't find anyone else to marry seeing as she has already had four children with Marco that are still alive, as well as others who have died. On top of this, huge scandals could arise if this marriage does not take place[62].

Consequently, we can assume that this measure represented a means to officially corroborate a condition that had already been approved by society at large[63]. The acts of Lorenzo Priuli's Synod (1592), which determined the systematic application of the procedure in Venice, definitively clarify its main purpose:

Sometimes the foreign betrothed have cohabited in Venice for a number of years, by virtue it is almost as if they were officially resident in the city. In this case it is simpler to obtain information about them in Venice than in their home country, particularly if they left it as children. As a result, we decree that if the foreigners prove through two witnesses to have lived in our city continuously for ten years, and

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non andò vestita da corrotto dicendo 'mi ha fatto tanta cattiva compagnia che io non ho voglia di portarla'».

62. ASPV, *Sezione Antica*, «Examinum Matrimoniorum», Vol. 2, 4 March 1594-13 April 1594. The original passage is as follows: «Io sono sicuro che se non si contraesse matrimonio tra li presenti Marco e Chiara essa Chiara rimaneria diffamata, che non trovaria più in chi maritarsi poiché hormai ha havuto quattro fioli con detto Marco che sono vivi, oltra che ne ha havuti altri morti, et oltre a ciò potriano nascere gran scandali se questo matrimonio non havesse il suo effetto».

63. Brendecke (2012), p. 71; Buono (2018a), p. 845.

to have left their home country without any connection, the publications made in Venice in their own parish will be sufficient[64].

The ecclesiastical authorities certainly had to deal with people who were, in some ways, more "mobile" than others. However, they were not concerned with migration or mobility *per se*, but rather with immobility and permanence[65]. The persons involved in this procedure were in all respects "foreign inhabitants", who were likely trying to create an even stronger connection with the city[66]. This process of assimilation was already in course when they applied to get married in Venice. The Synod is clear on this point: «it is simpler to obtain information about them in Venice than in their home-country». Indeed, the condition of "foreignness" in this legal context depended not only on geographical origins but was also closely linked to presumed ignorance about their time spent outside the city, far from those local communities on which the control of marriage factually depended[67].

This paper shows how the identification of migrants and the control of mobility were produced within various centres of power and by multiple actors. Although the procedure of the *processetti* was promoted by the Catholic Church, it was not a mere form of control. Indeed, it granted migrants the possibility of getting married in a place that was different to that of their origins. That could be a crucial opportunity, considering that marital unions represented an important channel of assimilation and way of accessing urban resources. Furthermore, as Brendecke explains, the reasons for collecting information and producing licenses were not only practical, but also represented a way of affirming power[68]. In my hypothesis, the ecclesiastical authorities used this procedure to affirm its role of "guardian" over a sphere (the institution of marriage) that inevitably catalyzed the interests of a plurality of actors, such as lay magistracies, families, professional guilds, neighborhoods, and so on. Moreover, the crime of bigamy also fell under the jurisdiction of both the secular and ecclesiastical courts[69].

As the *processetti* on widowhood have demonstrated, the effectiveness of social control from above seemed to depend on its utility also being recognized by local communities. In my view, it would be useful to consider the *publica utilitas* not in general terms, but as the touch point between multiple interests that should be defined according to specific contexts. In the pre-matrimonial enquiries, the *publica utilitas* seemed to consist in ensuring the social order within the urban corporate groups, together with maintaining

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64. Chauvard (2020), pp. 34-35; (my translation).
65. Sheller, Urry (2006). For a debate around the definition of "foreigner" and "foreignness", see in particular: Cavallo (2001); Herzog (2003); Sahlins (2004); Canepari (2009); Cerutti (2012).
66. Barbot (2013).
67. Kosto (2016), pp. 290-291.
68. Mannori (1994); Brendecke (2012), p. 71; Sánchez Rubio, Testón Núñez (2018).
69. Siebenhüner (2010).

families' honour. They simultaneously enabled the ecclesiastical authorities to act as the legitimate guarantors and controllers of this order, whilst also giving the applicants and witnesses an opportunity to reinforce the relationships between each other and with the authorities. Since common people were usually encouraged to inform the authorities as well as discouraged from giving false testimony, witnesses were likely aware of both the positive social impact of their participation and the legal consequences of their statements.

The analysis of this specific practice of vigilance has highlighted the advantages of using Brendecke's perspective in relation to the control of marriage and mobility in early modern Venice. It could also enrich the debate on the category of "social disciplining" that goes beyond the surveillance paradigm. As we have seen, social disciplining is only one way of describing the power interactions involved in pre-matrimonial enquiries. Although the procedure was meant to ensure the uniqueness of marriage and the Catholic Church's control over it, to function it needed the intervention of local and trans-local social networks able to fill in the gap in knowledge about mobile actors. This paper has shown that knowledge was not only documented but also performed, and even "worn" as a garment.

This could also help us to rethink more generally about the act of reporting to the authorities. Whether the "watchfulness of many" resulted in an official complaint, as in the cases described in Muzzarelli's book, or in a testimony in favour of the applicants, the activity of control was necessarily shared between institutions and society at large. It «no longer takes place top-down, but also in a variety of de-centralized dispersed forms of monitoring that can be bottom-up, or lateral, peer to peer»[70]. For this reason, the informers (or, in our case, the witnesses) acted as intermediaries. We should thus extend the historical analysis from the content of communication to the spaces of mediation, giving importance to the diverse actors and techniques involved in the cognitive process, not just in relation to what was seen, but also what was heard, smelt and what gestures were made[71].

As Paola Molino noted in relation to early modern court libraries, intermediaries were not forces opposed to power but in fact amplified its spectrum of goals and practices[72]. They were able to create proximity due to their ability "to know", "to hear" and "to see" across both long-distances and short-distances. In the identification of widows and widowers, for instance, witnesses appeared as part of a «double horizon» that included both urban communities and places of origin, which could potentially multiply on the basis of their movements[73]. The "cultures of vigilance" and the "culture of accusation" support the idea of a common language that was shared between state entities, institutions, and local communities. This language was based on practices of communication that made things visible, thus allowing them to be

70. Brendecke, Molino (2018), p. 27.
71. Molino (2018).
72. *Ibidem*.
73. Cfr. Hannerz (1980); Canepari (2014), p. 13.

remembered by all members of society. The communities of witnesses that emerged from the *processetti* were social spaces inhabited by careful collectors and translators of oral memory, a memory that needed to be fixed, even though it was already under the «private attention» of many.

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Surveillance as a culture of vigilance: the case of Napoleonic Italy

di Stefano Poggi

This article aims to verify the concept of "culture of vigilance" recently proposed by Arndt Brendecke and Paola Molino in Napoleonic Italy, a context traditionally interpreted in the light of surveillance paradigms. What emerges from the case study of the "capi contrada" established in Vicenza in 1806 is that the Napoleonic police were ultimately compelled to resort to requesting help from individuals belonging to the local communities they wanted to monitor. The "capi contrada" soon became one of the primary sources of information for urban law enforcement. Nevertheless, this collaboration remained strictly tied to the self-interest of the "capi". This kind of "inter-hierarchical" position was not limited to Vicenza, as analogous positions existed in several other cities of the Kingdom of Italy. Thanks to this case study, it is possible to recast the development of state-driven surveillance as one of the many cultures of vigilance that coexisted in Italy at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: police, State-building, social control, vigilance, surveillance, Napoleonic Italy

Sorveglianza come cultura della vigilanza. Il caso dell'Italia napoleonica

Questo contributo si propone di verificare la categoria di "cultura della vigilanza" recentemente proposta da Arndt Brendecke e Paola Molino nell'ambito dell'Italia napoleonica, un contesto storiografico tradizionalmente dominato da interpretazioni legate al paradigma della sorveglianza. Prendendo in analisi il caso dei "capi contrada" istituiti nel 1806 nella città di Vicenza, emerge come la nuova polizia napoleonica dovette inevitabilmente ricorrere a figure espressione della stessa comunità su cui doveva esercitare la propria sorveglianza. I "capi contrada" diventarono in breve una

delle fonti informative principali delle forze dell'ordine urbane, assicurando la propria collaborazione solo quando combaciava col proprio interesse. Figure simili ai "capi contrada" furono istituite o istituzionalizzate dalle autorità napoleoniche in tutto il Regno d'Italia. Alla luce di questo caso studio, è possibile riconsiderare lo sviluppo della "sorveglianza di Stato" come una delle culture di vigilanza presenti nell'Italia di inizio ottocento.

Parole chiave: polizia, costruzione dello Stato, controllo sociale, vigilanza, sorveglianza, Italia napoleonica.

When it comes to analyses of Napoleonic Italy, it is not easy to avoid the surveillance paradigm. Most of the historiography on the period mainly sees it as a turning point in the history of the administrative state. There is no doubt that Napoleonic rule promoted modernisation both in administration and in Italian society. Between 1796 and 1814, the pro-French governments enacted reforms that profoundly modified the public sphere and everyday life of Italians[1]. Throughout the two decades of French control over Italy, state authorities actively improved the government's grip on society: they introduced pervasive personal identification procedures, new law enforcement forces, the first system of mass conscription, and new fiscal policies[2]. The power relations between state and society changed to the benefit of the former. However, while these historical transformations are evident, the myth of an omniscient and pervasive Napoleonic police force has also led historians to exaggerate the actual success of state-building in the field of social control[3]. Some have gone so far as to call Napoleonic France a "police state" or a "security state"[4]. Thus, it is not surprising that the surveillance paradigm – with its centralising features – has fomented a narrative that sees the state as the real protagonist of this period. To the present day, the modernisation paradigm remains key to the historiography of Napoleonic Italy[5].

There is another reason underlying the frequent application of the surveillance paradigm to revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy. It is precisely during these two decades that the Italian word for surveillance (*sorveglianza*) became of common use[6]. Coming from the French *surveiller*, this word was

1. For an overall overview on Napoleonic Italy: De Francesco (2011), Donato, Armando, Cattaneo, Chauvard (2013).

2. For the innovations brought by Napoleonic rule in Europe: Woolf (1991). For more specific topics: Bianco (1982), Della Peruta (1988), Di Fiore (2018), Poggi (2021).

3. Recent research is bringing to light the unhelpfulness of seeing the Napoleonic police as a panopticon, especially in the French context, where this view is much more rooted: see, for instance Le Quang (2020).

4. Hicks (2009).

5. Rao (2015). However, Rao has also noted that new research is shifting its focus towards the agency of Italian élites and, in part, to the social practices of the population and local bureaucrats. Saggiorato (2019) provides a good overview of this shift.

6. The increase in the use of the term "sorveglianza" can be ascertained via Google Books Ngram Viewer. This word only came into use around 1796, and its diffusion grew

different from the much older word *vigilanza* in that it implied a form of control performed vertically over someone. The word *sorveglianza* survived the Napoleonic system and became widespread in administrative terminology in subsequent decades. In 1839, the *Panlessico italiano* defined *sorveglianza* as a term «in use in chancelleries» (*cancelleresco*)[7]. At first, this Gallicism did not enjoy the approval of Italian intellectuals, who deemed it «unnecessary» and listed it as «improper administrative jargon»[8]. However, by the end of the century, *sorveglianza* became a fully-fledged Italian word with a meaning that diverged from that of other terms such as *vigilanza*[9]. The ultimate success of this item of Napoleonic terminology mirrored the increasing use Italian authorities made of its corresponding administrative category.

However, when we shift our perspective from state authorities to the local bureaucracy, and from modernising policies to social practices, a vigilance approach is just as useful in describing the context of Napoleonic Italy. At first, it may seem that the micro-case study I analyse in the following pages has only local relevance. However, I will show that is it representative of a broader process of change in urban policing. Once we look beyond the way state authorities promoted a certain self-representation of surveillance, it becomes clear that Napoleonic rule did indeed bring about a change in the culture of vigilance. Yet I argue that this change was much more reliant on the population's cooperation than the surveillance paradigm has led us to think.

In the winter of 1805, the Napoleonic troops entered Vicenza, a small city in the Venetian countryside, retaking it from the Habsburg Empire. In the following years, the new authorities developed a series of institutions to govern local society without having to rely on intermediate bodies[10]. State judges took charge of justice, municipal officials started to manage administrative affairs, and a prefecture ruled over all political matters in the newly reinstated department of the Bacchiglione[11]. Furthermore, in early 1807 the Napoleonic authorities established a police commissioner's office, entrusted to Angelo Braschi and directly dependent on the departmental prefecture. This police office was created as an instrument through which the state authorities could directly control urban society, following a model that tended to strip police duties from jurisdictional bodies and assign them to the executive branch[12]. As in many other European cities, many different institutions had traditionally managed police functions in the urban context[13]. After the French Revolution, the new model of policing had instead sought to

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steadily until 1812 (Google Books Ngram Viewer, accessed 17 January 2022 < https://books.google.com/ngrams>).

7. *Panlessico italiano* (1839), vol. II, p. 1612.
8. Del Buono (1845), p. 355, Ugolini (1848), p. 179.
9. Tommaseo, Bellini (1872), p. 1022.
10. Franzina (1980), pp. 591-623; Zironda (1989).
11. Antonielli (1983); Pagano (2007).
12. Napoli (2003). On the professionalisation of police forces in the Italian context: Mori (2017), pp. 16-33.

replace these traditional law enforcement forces with professional police bodies directly embedded in the state bureaucracy[14]. At first sight, it would be easy to see this innovation as a mere step toward a surveillance system. As Brendecke argues, surveillance paradigms assert «that knowledge provides the key to power and that accumulating information in a central place [...] increases the chances of imposing one's will»[15]. The centralisation of policing activities in a single body controlled by the state was indeed a way to accumulate information. However, the vigilance approach highlights how the creation of knowledge naturally involves a plurality of actors[16]. In this way, this approach tries to decentralise not only knowledge, but also power. In the following few pages, I use the archival collection of the Vicenza police to reconstruct precisely how the local Napoleonic police collected information on a daily basis.

For its purposes, the police office could rely on four employees and a few guards[17]. Considering that Vicenza had an urban population of about 25 thousand people, it is clear that capabilities for effective control were quite limited[18]. To overcome this chronic lack of resources, the Napoleonic authorities resorted to a new figure: the neighbourhood chief (*capo contrada*)[19]. The *capi* had to report any situation that might disrupt the good order of their neighbourhood to the police office. These included instances in which blood was spilled, immoral activities, or simple infractions of hygiene laws. In practice, the *capi* were responsible for a continuous flow of information to the police office. As a matter of fact, their reports were the primary source of information for the urban police, alongside the complaints brought by injured parties. The departmental prefect nominally appointed the *capi*, even though, in practice, they were chosen and managed by the police commissioner. However, they could not be considered police agents. Since they were first and foremost members of the communities for which they were responsible, it is not surprising that, from time to time, they presented petitions on behalf of their district. For instance, in 1808 the *capo* Vicenzo Conformini petitioned for his community to have the use of a private church when flooding isolated his neighbourhood from the parish church[20]. At the same time, *capi* could collect social demands from their neighbours. In August

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13. Antoniellli (2002).

14. Boudon (2017); Denis (2020).

15. Brendecke (2018), p. 25.

16. Buono (2018a).

17. Vaccari (1996-1997), pp. 19-20.

18. According to official statistics, the municipality of Vicenza numbered 29.918 inhabitants in 1807. However, this amount also included the population of several rural villages that were inside the municipality's jurisdictional boundaries: *Raccolta delle decisioni* (1809), p. 169.

19. Several regulations regarding the *capi* can be found in Vicenza state archives, Commissariato di Polizia di Vicenza (henceforth Visa, Commissariato), box 1, folder 73.

20. Visa, Commissariato, box 14, folder 136.

1808, Benedetto Dal Lago, *capo* of the San Faustin neighbourhood, reported that six local craftsmen had complained to him that their sleep was disrupted by an inn in which «even after three hours past midnight people sing, clamour, curse, throw rocks at the balconies»[21]. The *capi* were at the same time part of two different hierarchies of legitimisation: one coming from below, from their own community; the other coming from above, from the apparatus of control embodied by the police office. They can thus be seen as belonging to the long history of "inter-hierarchical roles"[22].

The close ties that the *capi* entertained with their local district are representative of this double-faced nature. Every *contrada* was centred around a single parish church, a testament to the link between the local church and territorial belonging. Even if the Napoleonic government abolished several of these parish churches throughout the years, the number and layout of the *contrade* never changed. The *capi* continued to refer to the territories of the abolished parish churches[23]. Accordingly, when the authorities realised that a *contrada* was too large for a single *capo*, they never split it in two. On the contrary, they appointed a second *capo* for the same neighbourhood[24]. By the same token, a *capo* was immediately replaced when he moved away from his *contrada*[25]. It was not a service that could be performed from a distance. This strict relation with the *contrada* was certainly linked to *capi*'s function as reporters of crimes and other incidents. They had to be an active part of their neighbourhood community, or their effectiveness would have been severely reduced. Contrary to the police agents who saw themselves as being outside and above urban society, the *capi* were efficient precisely because they were part of the community they were supposed to report on.

The use of *capi* was not the local innovation it may at first seem. Due to the loss of the prefectorial archives, it is impossible to know exactly when and how the system was established in Vicenza[26]. However, it is not difficult to trace its ultimate origins to the old Venetian *capi contrada*. In Napoleonic Venice, the *capi* fundamentally had the same roles as their counterparts in Vicenza. Their history was nevertheless much longer. Established during the Middle Ages, the Venetian *capi* historically carried out a large set array of duties: they managed wells, they controlled the quality of bread, they reported sudden deaths and dog bites, they drew up a monthly list of the homeless

21. «Anche tre [ore] dopo la mezzanotte si canta, si strepita, si bestemmia, si gitta sassi per li balconi». Visa, Commissariato, box 7, folder 777.

22. Buono (2018b).

23. In several reports, the *capi* referred to their *contrada* as «of the abolished (*decessa*) parish of (…)». For instance: letter from Emanuel Caprotti to the commissioner (14/04/1808), box 11, folder 73.

24. Notes of the commissioner (n. 2853, 24/12/1809), *ibid*.

25. Notes of the commissioner (05/12/1809), *ibid*.

26. Neither the city archives nor the local historiography mention *capi contrada* in the previous centuries (Franzina, 1980). However, it cannot be excluded that this kind of figure already existed under another name or that their lack of institutional legitimacy made them almost invisible in archival sources.

people in their neighbourhood[27]. They also had to report all the violent incidents that took place in their *contrada* to the *Consiglio dei Dieci*. The Venetian *capi* maintained this function even after the end of the Republic of Venice in 1797[28]. During the Napoleonic period, the Venetian *capi* reported directly to the local police office – just like the ones in Vicenza[29]. It is not surprising, then, that in 1808 it was precisely to his Venetian colleague that the mayor of Vicenza wrote to ask for clarification on the roles of the *capi contrada*[30]. In the former capital, the local administration surely had much more experience in managing this figure.

In exchange for their service, the Vicenza *capi* enjoyed some privileges. They were exempted serving in the local National Guard[31]. They were entitled to keep a certain amount of the money they levied with petty fines[32]. On top of this, the authorities guaranteed them generic forms of assistance and protection. These symbolic and practical reward were often not enough to compensate them for their services. On several occasions, they resigned from their position, either as a group or individually. In April 1808, nine of the fifteen *capi* resigned en masse. They justified their resignation by citing practical reasons, such as their advanced age or the incompatibility of their duties with their day-to-day occupations[33]. The police commissioner always accepted these resignations because otherwise – he pointed out – their «forced service would be useless»[34]. Indeed, it was not uncommon for appointed *capi* to reduce their activity level of activity until they became completely useless. In these cases, the police commissioner was ultimately compelled to replace them with more willing citizens[35]. These resignations and substitutions –

27. For the list of their duties in the field of health care see Vanzan Marchini (1995), vol. 1, pp. 334-337, which collects the decrees of the *Magistrato alla Sanità* stored in the Venetian state archives.

28. During the brief pro-French municipality, the *capi* remained in operation. See, for instance, *Raccolta di carte pubbliche* (1797), p. 5.

29. See the several designations of *capi contrada*, listing their duties, in the Venice state archives, Direzione della polizia di Venezia (from now on Vesa, Direzione), atti, box 7.

30. Letter from the mayor of Vicenza to the mayor of Venice (22/06/1808). Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, Archivio Storico del Comune di Vicenza (from now on Bertoliana, Comune), box 2141.

31. Regulations (01/03/1808), Visa, Commissariato, box 14, folder 136.

32. Notes by the mayor of Vicenza (20/02/1808), Bertoliana, Comune, folder 2141; letter from the mayor to the commissioner (22/02/1808), Visa, Commissariato, box 1, folder 73.

33. Nicolò Faccioli, who had been *capo contrada* in San Faustino for two years, resigned because he was «beholden without pause to my work as watchmaker, to the care of two daughters abandoned by their mother and of a sister [who is] from a long-time idiot and imbecile»: letter to the commissioner (26/04/1810), Visa, Commissariato, box 15, folder 239.

34. Draft of a letter from the commissioner to the prefect (22/06/1809), Visa, Commissariato, box 1, folder 73.

35. For instance, in January 1809 the commissioner recommended the substitution of three *capi*: notes by the commissioner (12/01/1809), *ibid.*

alongside the small compensation they received for their service – further show that the *capi* did neither saw themselves or were seen as police or state agents. Their reports on neighbourhood events were based on a voluntary vigilance of their peers, not on the authorities' desire for surveillance. When they did not have enough of an interest to report crimes and incidents, they simply stopped doing so.

An analysis of the one-hundred-and-six reports sent by the *capi contrada* between November 1807 and October 1808 reveals more details about the nature of their vigilance over their neighbourhoods[36]. The reports rarely exceeded one page in length, and cut straight to the chase:

<div style="text-align:center">

Kingdom of Italy
Bacchiglione department
To the police officer
First September 1808[37]

</div>

A certain Sebastian Massignian from Montecchio Maggiore, a bricklayer by trade, who lives in the Contrada di San Francesco n. 1542, is a heckler that generates disquiet in the neighbourhood day and night, as Gaetano Cavagion, and Luigi Rossetto, and his wife Maria Rossetta can state, since he has insulted them with improper words on the public road in recent days. This is what I could observe and this I report to this Royal Commissariat.

<div style="text-align:right">

Nicolò Faccioli chief
Contrada of San Faustino[38].

</div>

This report, like dozens of others, briefly stated the reported fact and clearly identified the guilty party. Moreover, it listed the injured parties who could act as witnesses of Massignian's improper behaviour. Unlike the usual communications between Napoleonic bureaucrats, it did not waste ink on conventional pleasantries. It was a form of practical communication.

On average, the police office received reports from *capi*'s every three days. Thirteen of the fifteen *capi* sent at least one report during the year I have analysed. However, they displayed different levels of eagerness. The *capo* of Santa Barbara sent just one report during the whole year, while the one in San Marco – by far the most active – sent twenty-two reports in the

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36. Visa, Commissariato, boxes 1 to 8.

37. Usually, the header was limited to the sole recipient and, less often, to the date. The layout of the reports changed from *capo* to *capo* - and frequently the same *capo* changed it from time to time.

38. «Un certo Sebastian Massignian da Montechio Maggiore di professione muratore abita in contrada di S. Faustino al N.° 1542 è un disturbatore che tiene inquieta quasi tutta la contrada tanto di giorno come di notte, come lo può asserire Gaetano Cavagion e Luigi Rossetto e la di lui moglie Maria Mantovana Rossetta, avendo con li medesimi ne giorni scorsi ingiuriati con parole improprie nella pubblica strada. Questo è quanto o [sic] potuto rilevare, che rassegnio a questo Regio Commissario». Report from Nicolò Faccioli to the commissioner (01/09/1808), Visa, Commissariato, box 8, folder 875.

same period, at a rate of one every fortnight. As already mentioned, the *capi*'s actual efficiency in generating information could not be taken for granted. Their will to report evidently varied according to their motivation. Even if we do not know which reasons could lead a *capo* to be particularly efficient or not, we might assume that self-interest played a central role. Given the minimal practical benefits that came with the position, the more active *capi* were probably those who enjoyed the most from a position of pre-eminence in their neighbourhoods, such as shopkeepers and merchants.

Tab. 1 – *Reports by subject*

Subjects	#
Injuries	29
Insults	11
Thefts	10
Morality	9
Disturbance	7
Quarrels	6
Sudden deaths	6
Hygiene	5
Unruly children	4
Threats	4
Other	14

The subjects of the reports show which events the *capi* were more likely to report (*tab. 1*). Almost one-third of all the reports mentioned injuries generally provoked by fights, which were among the main issues reported. Fights and quarrels often led to reports of insults and threats, or of the disturbance of public order. These fights frequently involved people who were neighbours or entertained business or family relations. The second kind of reports focused on acts that implicitly or explicitly broke the moral order of the community. Illegal prostitution and children who mistreated parents were sanctioned by the *capi*, who reported cases that would have probably gone unnoticed, given the condition of the involved parties. Finally, the reports on sudden deaths or matters of public hygiene show that the *capi* were also involved in medical surveillance. This activity matched the interests of their community. What is striking about this list is the very low frequency of events involving actors from outside the neighbourhood, such as thefts. Such crimes were probably reported directly to the police office. The vigilance exercised by the *capi* was generally only concerned with ensuring a smooth running of everyday social life.

Tab. 2 – Reports by outcome

Outcomes	#
Reprimand	33
Justice of the Peace	24
Dismissal	12
Executive authorities	9
Inquiry	8
Arrest	7
Conciliation	6
Court of Justice	2

The outcomes of the reports are consistent with the subjects I have analysed. In more than one-third of the cases, the authorities intervened only to admonish the actors involved in the reported events. If we consider these cases together with those whose outcomes were conciliatory, it becomes clear that the authorities were indeed interested in maintaining good neighbourly relations in the city but were aware that repression was not the answer to the social demands channelled by the *capi*'s reports. The number of cases dismissed suggests that the simple act of reporting was integral to the solution of some of these. A substantial number of reports resulted in the dossier being forwarded to the local Justice of the Peace, who was in charge of adjudicating less severe cases[39]. Significantly, only two reports resulted in the involvement of the Court of Justice that dealt with cases involving criminal law. These outcomes witness how the *capi*'s reports were primarily a tool for the self-regulation of neighbourhood communities. They implied the intervention of the authorities, but only to restore good order at a local level.

The use of intermediate figures to sustain the surveillance of state authorities was common well beyond the walls of Vicenza. As we have seen, *capi contrada* in Venice were also tasked with keeping the peace in their neighbourhoods. In the former capital, their usefulness must have been such that the creation of such figures was extended to other municipalities in and around the lagoon. In June 1809, the police commissioner of Burano wrote to superior in Venice suggesting the appointment of six «principled and honest people» – one for each *sestiere*, the traditional division of the municipality – to help him maintain the peace in town. The Burano police officer pointed out that, despite his «constant surveillance», the urban structure of his densely populated municipality made it almost impossible to obtain timely information on criminal activities[40]. Once again, Napoleonic

39. Viaggiano (2011).
40. Letter from the Burano police commissioner to the departmental police commissioner (26/06/1809, n. 347/164), Vesa, Direzione, atti, f. 7.

police's ambitions of direct control structurally necessitated the cooperation of individuals from the communities themselves. To be aware of what was going on, they needed to involve the local population in the process of information gathering. The proposed *capi di sestiere*, eventually, were not established in Burano. According to the departmental police commissioner, it would have been impossible to find any reliable citizen among the ranks of the «ignorant and poor» population of Burano. In his opinion, they would certainly have abused of their power, generating obstacles to police activities[41]. While the limitations of the police force were undeniable, the involvement of the vigilance of local citizens in surveillance activities was much more debated. In the eyes of state authorities, any co-optation of ordinary people in the surveillance system implied a potential loss of control of urban policing. Thus, such practices could encounter opposition, as they did in Burano.

Something similar happened in Milan, where the Napoleonic authorities used the *anziani di parrocchia* (parish elders), traditional inter-hierarchical figures like the Venetian *capi*, as police informers[42]. Surprisingly enough, the pro-French authorities of the Cisalpine Republic had actually abolished the *anziani* a few years earlier, as they were considered to be untrustworthy. The later choice to reinstate them and scale back the professionalization of the police did not bring about the advantages the state hoped for. As the Milanese chief of police later recollected, the *anziani* never carried out their duties of informing the local police on neighbourhood events[43]. In Milan, as in Vicenza, these figures could comfortably avoid becoming part of the police's flows of information if they did not have enough of an interest in doing so. Despite the surveillance inefficiency of the Milanese *anziani*, similar figures were also active in the same period in other Lombard cities, where their services were crucial for police control of the urban society. The prefect of Cremona once admitted that it would have been impossible to «answer of the police matters» without them[44]. Police surveillance in urban contexts was apparently very much reliant on the voluntary vigilance provided by ordinary citizens.

As Arndt Brendecke has pointed out in his remarks on the 'pastoral power' model, «the center of an expanding political entity usually becomes more and more dependent on mediators and local knowledge from the periphery»[45]. The political project of the Napoleonic police implied a vertical conception of surveillance over society. Theoretically, the police forces had to be capable of autonomously seeing and knowing all the main events that

41. Draft letter from the departmental police commissioner (26/06/1809), *ibid.*

42. On the *anziani* see Antonielli (2015).

43. Letter from the prefect of police of the Olona department to the president of the Italian Republic (undated, c. 1802-1805), quoted in Mori (2011), pp. 106-107.

44. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 108.

45. Brendecke (2018), p. 26.

took place under their jurisdiction. However, this surveillance project could not be implemented with the existing human and economic resources that they were allocated. As the case of Vicenza shows, local authorities chose to meet unachievable expectations with practical solutions. To have a better surveillance of urban society, they implemented forms of voluntary collaboration from the local population. In Vicenza, as elsewhere, they created new intermediate figures that were only partially under their control. Where these figures already existed, as they did in Venice and Milan, the Napoleonic authorities involved them in their surveillance system. It is evident that without reports from the *capi* and similar figures, the police forces would not have known about a large number of events. However, the results of this process of creation and co-optation of figures of vigilance varied quite a lot. The inter-hierarchical nature of the figure of the *capo* meant that he was beholden both to the power of the executive branch and to the community he belonged to. The *capi* also acted in their own self-interest. Their vigilance action could be exploited in surveillance terms only when it coincided with personal or social demands. Otherwise, their cooperation could become erratic – if not insignificant.

During the Napoleonic period, Italian cities certainly experienced developments in state surveillance. New police forces were established and started to work on behalf of the executive bodies. Codifications of their duties and procedures made policing less fragmented. However, if we move our perspective – as Brendecke suggests – from how institutions developed to how individuals contributed to the functioning of society, it becomes clear that these changes were heavily reliant on the cooperation of the population[46]. In this sense, the development of state surveillance implied a change in the culture of vigilance. Indeed, the establishment of state police transformed the structure of private attention. It channelled and coordinated people's vigilance towards the newly established law enforcement forces. In so doing, it tried to exploit people's vigilance for its own interests and goals, but invariably ended up compromising with the interests and goals of the people themselves.

As Brendecke and Molino argue, «vigilance is not a kind of leftover from ancient times with weak institutions and technologies»[47]. While state authorities developed their system of surveillance over society, they were forced to rely on people's vigilance. In these terms, surveillance was just one of the many different cultures of vigilance that coexisted in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was a state-driven culture of vigilance, but one with a very promising future.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
47. Brendecke, Molino (2018), p. 12.

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