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The weapons of the weak: the discursive power of corruption and environmentalism in one transport development project in northern Italy

This paper deals with the planning and implementation of one rail transport development project in northern Italy. The Lyon-Turin fast railway connection is part of the wide TransEuropean Transport Network, sponsored by the EU. The project has encountered a fierce opposition in the Susa Valley around Turin, leading to the creation of a number of local and translocal civic organizations. The aim of the paper is to analyze the social dynamics underpinning environmental activism as well as the language used to stir public participation. Moreover, investigation of the link between political abuses and allegations of corruption with the forms of activism will contribute to establish an analytical framework for addressing more general issues such as forms of social protest, public resistance and legitimacy. I argue that through accurate discursive strategies attempt to balance power and access to decision-making processes is mediated and eventually transmitted at the different levels of political interaction.