

**Universidade de Lisboa**

**Instituto de Ciências Sociais**



**Social Movements Related to Alter-globalisation in  
Portugal: Identities, Praxes and Mobilisations**

**Cédric Bernard Masse**

**Doutoramento em Sociologia**

**Especialidade: Sociologia das Desigualdades, das Minorias  
e dos Movimentos Sociais**

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**Tese orientada pelo Prof. Doutor José Manuel Sobral**

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## Resumo:

Esta investigação em sociologia lida com a problemática da génese e formação dos movimentos sociais. Estes últimos são abordados através do estudo de movimentos sociais alter-globalistas portugueses, e mais precisamente via um ênfase nas suas mobilizações, praxes e identidades.

Neste sentido, exploro, aqui, as condições ou possibilidades dos movimentos sociais (o seu contexto sócio-cultural e histórico assim como as suas estruturas – o como dos movimentos sociais), o sentido da acção militante (motivos e razões de activistas – o porque dos movimentos sociais), e a ontologia dos movimentos sociais (identidades colectivas e individuais, alteridade, e a sua co-relatividade – o que e quem dos movimentos sociais).

Para esta finalidade, segui o que chama-se a “sociologia qualitativa”, ou seja, optei para uma sociologia *in-situ*, *multi-situ* e *in actu*, ou para uma etnografia dentro de três movimentos portugueses, em Lisboa, entre 2010 e 2012 (mas mais particularmente em 2010). Esta metodologia levou-me a fazer entrevistas com activistas, a observar diversas praticas, considerar discursos orais e escritos “emicos”, a realizar o que foi conceptualizado pela teoria e práxis antropológica, a saber a “observação participante”. Assim, segui uma certa abordagem idiográfica centrando-me sobre as pessoas que compõem os movimentos sociais. Esta idiografia é irreduzível às idiossincrasias, à ipseidade individual ou à subjectividade. Pelo contrario, permite de observar características colectivas ou trans-subjectivas, ou seja a sua dimensão objectiva.

Este trabalho empírico foi necessariamente completado por um estudo teórico para realizar uma análise do fenómeno social considerado. Quatro principais modelos teóricos são habitualmente reconhecidos dentro da sociologia dos movimentos sociais, nos quais, como é o caso na maioria dos modelos teóricos, existem diferentes posições entre os investigadores ainda que partilhem também proposições comuns. Cada modelo não forma um tudo homogéneo embora haja linhas de pensamento similares entre os seus respectivos representantes.

Para resumir, estes modelos teóricos são: As teorias das mobilizações dos recursos e o modelo do processo político (McCarthy e Zald, McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly), as teorias dos novos movimentos sociais (Touraine, Melucci), marxismo (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci), e as teorias do comportamento colectivo (Blumer, Smelser, Gurr).

Na presente investigação, a perspectiva teórica escolhida inclui e supera estas teorias tradicionais. Embora estas teorias contribuíssem a esclarecer o fenómeno dos movimentos sociais, são parciais e consecutivamente devem ser completadas por um paradigma mais amplo, notavelmente para lidar com a problemática da acção colectiva militante actual. Neste sentido, parece necessário de considerar mais principalmente a sociologia da acção (Weber, Bourdieu, Boudon, Habermas) e da identidade (Simmel, G.H. Mead, Berger e Luckmann, Sobral).

Em relação à primeira pergunta do nosso estudo, como os movimentos sociais são formados?, basicamente, são formados, antes de tudo, a partir do seu capital social, ou seja, desde a organização mais ou menos formal de um certo número de pessoas que decidiram de juntar-se para alcançar uma certa mudança social, e correlativamente, graças à criação e/ou integração, por estas pessoas que tornaram-se nestes processos mais ou menos activos militantes, de redes (virtuais e reais) que, por sua vez, abrangem pessoas adicionais (elas mesmas convertidas em mais ou menos activos activistas através destas dinâmicas económicas de inclusão), assim como organizações e redes adicionais.

Dentro destes processos, a função das pessoas é fundamental, e mais particularmente, a função dos actores chaves que, pela sua natureza (são *brokers*, facilitadores, mediadores, “executivos”, “empreendedores”, organizadores ou porta-vozes), precisamente promovem a formação de capital social e *in extenso* a dos movimentos sociais. Para falar como os economistas, o capital humano com o seu capital cultural (cognição, conhecimento puro, saber científico, ética, estética) é então determinante para o estabelecimento do capital social.

Estes três tipos de capital permitem, até certo ponto, de compensar a falta, dentro dos movimentos sociais, de outros tipos de capital que são também centrais para a mobilização social e obter poder, nomeadamente o capital económico e o capital político/simbólico. O primeiro corresponde ao dinheiro e às infraestruturas materiais, o segundo, ecoando Bourdieu, ao reconhecimento, crédito, prestígio, à notabilidade atribuídos pelos actores políticos aos actores políticos e *in extenso*, seguindo os primeiros, por uma grande parte da sociedade aos actores políticos. A falta destes dois últimos tipos de capital dentro dos movimentos sociais explica em grande parte porque ocupam uma posição inferior no campo político e do poder.

Ademais, a formação do capital social pelos activistas é facilitada pela sua natureza “pós-moderna”, “pós-estrutural”, inclusive libertaria, de muitos movimentos sociais actuais na esteira dos “novos movimentos sociais” que emergiram nos anos 1960 e 1970 na maioria dos países ocidentais, ou seja, pelo facto que muitos deles são antes de tudo pequenas entidades locais com alguns activistas permanentes e muitos militantes e simpatizantes intermitentes

que podem ser mobilizados em certas circunstâncias, que são descentralizados, horizontais, federados entre eles além da distância geográfica, das fronteiras nacionais e dos seus interesses específicos (o que conta para eles), que são lábeis e fluidos.

A formação do capital social é facilitada também pelos media, pela recente emergência e consolidação das novas tecnologias da informação e comunicação, especialmente a Internet, apesar dos seus defeitos que fazem que a militância real ou a militância *tout court* não pode ser substituída pelo ciber-activismo ou a militância virtual.

Em relação à segunda pergunta, por quê os movimentos sociais são formados?, são formados por grupos de pessoas para responder aos seus interesses individuais e colectivos, os da sociedade (rações instrumentais ou teleológicas), para saber (rações cognitivas ou epistémicas; as razões dos militantes são Razão). O conhecimento do conhecimento dos movimentos sociais mostra que o seu conhecimento é lógico, teórico, científico (os activistas actuam para conhecer o mundo e eles mesmos, para perceber e explicar o mundo social, encontrando e mostrando as causas dos fenómenos sociais). Este saber é também ético-prático (os activistas actuam também a partir de valores, o saber sendo um valor central entre outros para eles; são razões axiológicas). O seu conhecimento é estético (utilizam a arte e apresentam um conhecimento sensível), político e comunicativo devido à importância dada à discussão, ao debate, diálogo, à reflexão, reflexividade e crítica colectiva em público sobre temáticas públicas – o que chama-se a esfera pública, ecoando Habermas – (os activistas actuam também por causa de razões comunicativas). Finalmente, os militantes actuam a partir de tradições que são geralmente re-apropriadas, modificadas e actualizadas por eles em função dos seus interesses (o que é importante para eles), assim como a partir de emoções que não podem ser completamente separadas das e opostas às razões para a acção; na realidade, as emoções podem inclusive ser percebidas como sendo “boas razões” para a acção ou ligadas às boas razões de actuar, ecoando Boudon.

Finalmente, lidamos também com a questão ontológica “o que é isso?”. Nosso caso, mais precisamente, que são os movimentos sociais? Ligada ao que dos movimentos sociais, há a questão do quem são os militantes? Os movimentos sociais são primeiro o que as primeiras pessoas interessadas, os próprios activistas, pensam e dizem sobre eles e consecutivamente sobre eles mesmos como colectivo. As apercepções – as percepções conscientes de si por si, uma forma principal e adicional da cognição – são centrais na definição das suas identidades. Assim, no nosso caso, por exemplo, consideram-se, mais ou menos explicitamente, como “pensadores”, “resistentes”, “intelectuais”, “jornalistas”, “cientistas”, “artistas”, “artivistas” (artistas e activistas).

Colectivamente, os activistas efectuem sínteses de apercepções; as identidades individuais e as apercepções subjectivas contribuem então a definir as suas identidades colectivas e apercepções objectivas. Assim, no nosso caso, são “precários”, conceito sintético que abrange pessoas de todas as idades, pessoas de tudo o mundo, “trabalhadores, desempregados, aposentados”, “homens e mulheres”, “trans-sexuais”, trabalhadores do sexo, empregados dos call centres, “pessoas com contractos a termo”, “vítimas dos falsos recibos verdes”, “informais”, “pessoas sobre-exploradas”, estudantes, sub-empregados, etc. São “alter-economistas” e “ecologistas”. Finalmente, são alter-globalistas, a mais alta abstracção – o *terminus ad quem* nocional – que compreende todas as categorizações intermediarias anteriores que são menos gerais e mais particulares, ou seja, as ideias de “precários”, “alter-economistas”, “ecologistas”, e os seus respectivos conceitos subjacentes entre outros que pertencem à identidade de movimentos específicos adicionais.

Estas sínteses de apercepções não são só ideais ou abstractas e levam a sínteses materiais, a associações concretas entre as pessoas e os grupos sociais. Estas identidades colectivas e apercepções objectivas, por sua vez, influenciam as identidades individuais e as apercepções subjectivas. Assim, os movimentos actuais são trans-classes. Abrangem “operários”, “explorados”, “desempregados”, “excluídos”, “marginais”, “informais”, “precários”, “sub-empregados”, “indigentes”, assim como uma parte da pequena e mediana burguesia, uma parte das classes meias tendo um alto nível de educação e sabendo utilizar com talento os media, as novas tecnologias de informação e comunicação. Os movimentos contemporâneos compreendem esta ampla gama de membros porque os interesses em jogo (o que tem valor) frente ao capitalismo actual são ambos materiais e pós-materiais; os movimentos actuais transcendem então, aqui, a tradicional dicotomia entre os “velhos” e “novos” movimentos sociais. Brevemente, um movimento social é antes de tudo as acções reciprocas, interacções ou o *give-and-take* entre os seus membros, ecoando Simmel e G.H. Mead.

No entanto, os movimentos são também definidos pela dialéctica ou pelo dialogismo entre as apercepções e as atribuições exteriores que aparecem durante o tempo. Um movimento social é também o que os outros, as pessoas e os grupos sociais situados fora dele, pensam e dizem sobre ele e os seus membros. Um movimento social é também as acções reciprocas, interacções ou o *give-and-take* entre os seus membros e actores individuais e colectivos externos. Esta dialéctica ou este dialogismo é geralmente conflitual. Os movimentos sociais têm necessariamente um caracter agonístico dado que são inevitavelmente implicados na luta e na contestação, que procurando uma certa mudança

social devem necessariamente encarar resistências à mudança e oponentes no seu caminho.

Os activistas identificam os outros – especialmente os adversários –, se identificam eles mesmos, são identificados pelos outros – notavelmente pelos oponentes –, identificam os outros e eles mesmos levando em conta as identificações externas – e antes de tudo as dos antagonistas. Em resumo, há um verdadeiro jogo de identificações ou atribuições recíprocas que são alternativamente catafáticas e apofáticas. Neste sentido, os activistas são figuras positivas ou, pelo contrário, negativas, segundo a posição axiológica que alguém escolhe. Na primeira alternativa, são “libertadores” ou “pacíficos”. Na segunda, entram nas categorias sociais dos “anormais” ou “patológicos”.

Ademais, é a dialéctica entre os movimentos sociais e os outros que faz o social. Os movimentos sociais são sempre situados, não existem dentro de um vazio social; por isso, a importância do contexto histórico, sócio-cultural onde aparecem também para uma ontologia completa dos movimentos sociais. Contudo, devido às interacções activas e contínuas no tempo dentro dos movimentos sociais assim como entre eles e os actores externos, o social e correlativamente as identidades colectivas não podem ser reificados ou hipostasiados, o que impede também *in extenso* todas formas de sociologismo ou determinismo social.

**Palavras-chave:** Movimentos sociais – alter-globalização – mobilizações – praxes – identidades



## **Abstract:**

This sociological research deals with the problematic of the genesis and formation of social movements. The latter is approached through the study of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements, and more precisely via an emphasis on their mobilisations, praxes and identities.

I explore the conditions or possibilities of social movements (their socio-cultural and historical context and their structures – the how of social movements), the sense of militant action (activists' motives and reasons – the why of social movements), and the ontology of social movements (collective and individual identities, otherness, and their co-relativity – the what and who of social movements).

For this purpose, I have followed what is habitually called “qualitative sociology”, that is, I have opted for an ethnography carried out among three Portuguese movements, in Lisbon, between 2010 and 2012. This methodology led me to conduct interviews with activists, to consider their diverse practices, oral discourses and “emic” writings, to engage in “participant observation”. Thus, I have followed a certain idiographic approach by focusing upon the people who compose social movements. This idiography is irreducible to subjectivity. On the contrary, it allows one to observe collective or trans-subjective features of militant actions and representations, that is, their objective dimension.

This empirical work has been necessarily complemented by a theoretical study, which have conduced to an analysis of the social phenomenon in question. The chosen theoretical perspective comprehends and goes beyond the main traditional theories in the sociology of social movements. Whilst these latter theories offer significant insights, they remain limited in their explanatory potential. Consequently, they have to be completed by a larger paradigm, notably to tackle the problems posed by current militant collective action. It therefore seems necessary to consider the contributions of the sociology of action and of identity in more depth.

**Key-words:** Social movements – alter-globalisation – mobilisations – praxes – identities

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# Introduction

## *Prolegomena: Globalisation, alter-globalisation, and social movements:*

The study of alter-globalisation obliges us to first consider the phenomenon of globalisation itself. Social scientists who address this topic are mainly divided into two camps.

In short, some academics who study globalisation (in addition to many social activists, and political and economic commentators), argue that globalisation results from the end of the Cold War. They believe it arose with the implosion of the Soviet Union, and is symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The disappearance of a bipolar world, which emerged in the wake of the end of the Second World War, meant the victory of the United States over the Soviet Union, capitalism over communism/socialism, Market over the State, one hegemonic ideology over another, one dominant model of society over another. Facilitated by the deep transformations of communications that have become more widespread, cheaper and faster, the model of society defended by the United States, which triumphed over its main adversary, has logically spread all over the world since the 1990s. “The end of history”, as it was stated in Francis Fukuyama’s eponymous book (1992), actually meant the beginning of the history of the globalisation of the market economy. Some sociologists such as Anthony Giddens (1990, 1999) have stressed these features by considering the totalising effects of capitalism and the market. For him, the world has come to be a unique social system under the formation of a network of very close social, political, economic and cultural ties among the different parts of the planet and beyond the national borders. It results from these reciprocal relations, from processes of mutual conditioning and interdependence on the world scale. But, to the

extent that these processes are also diverse according to the areas and actors, globalisation, perceived as a recent product of “modernity”, has not led for all that to political integration and the reduction of international inequalities in relation to wealth and power.

By contrast, other social scientists as Immanuel Wallerstein (2000, 1980, 1979, 1974) affirm that globalisation, in reality, has a more limited social influence, given that its origins would be actually more distant. Wallerstein has traced the development of a world economic system from the sixteenth century. In a similar vein, Roland Robertson (1992) stated that globalisation is not at all a direct consequence of modernity insofar as globalisation actually refers to long historical processes that started to exist several centuries ago and that still continue today, even though the term itself began appearing in the early nineteenth century.

However, beyond the debates in social sciences on the origins, nature and influence of globalisation, what remains a fundamental fact is that this phenomenon is at the source of or is accompanied by many contemporary social movements.

Parallel to economic globalisation, which is often perceived as a globalisation “from above” built by political and economic elites, other types of globalisation, “from below”, from people around the world, have appeared in opposition to the former. These alter-globalist social movements criticise what they identify as a process of the “globalisation” of most aspects of life (economy, politics, culture) which to them represent a danger towards their own existence and for humanity in general. Among the most important events in the history of the alter-globalisation movements, one may first refer to the Zapatist uprising in 1994, and the subsequent organisation of the “first humanity’s meeting against neoliberalism” in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1996. In the following years, there were the demonstrations in Seattle, United States, in 1999 against the WTO (World Trade Organisation) summit, the inauguration of the first World Social Forum at Porto Alegre in Brazil and the demonstrations in Genoa in Italy against the G8 meeting in 2001. Thus, imaginative responses to globalisation have increasingly developed across the world in a short period of time.

And, many contemporary social movements are therefore linked to the phenomena of globalisation and alter-globalisation.

More broadly, social movements represent a privileged object of study in sociology. According to Alain Touraine, the study of social movements is more than a specialisation in this discipline. For him, the sociology of social movements is even sociology *tout court*. In any case, the theorisation of social movements has been especially well accomplished by sociologists among the whole of social and human scientists. If the sociology of social movements today represents one of the main branches of the discipline, this is due, to a great



extent, to the contributions of “resource mobilisation theories” and the closely related “political process models” that have been developed since the 1960s and 1970s, most particularly from the United States, as well as to the “new social movements theories” that have been more influential in Europe from this same period. Alain Touraine was one of the main architects of these latter theories.

More widely, what is the sociological literature on social movements? How has this social phenomenon been defined and interpreted out of sociology? Or, how have sociologists explained, understood this phenomenon?

Actually, one can assert, following most of scholars studying the topic, that four main classical theoretical models in the sociology of social movements are usually put forward, models within which, as is usually the case with most theoretical models, it exists different positions among the authors albeit they also share common propositions. Each model does not therefore constitute a homogenous whole although there are significant lines of common thought among the respective representatives. In addition to the aforesaid theories, there principally exist collective behaviour theories and Marxian and Marxist theories. Until the 1960s, the sociology of social movements was mostly represented by these two latter schools of thought.

Collective behaviour theories, essentially put forward in the United States, are not homogeneous, but, despite their differences, as we have just said, they share some common features. They focus on emotions, feelings, beliefs for explaining the formation and existence of social movements. Nevertheless, some proponents were accused of seeing social movements either as deviant forms of social action or including as mainly violent groups. Strongly influenced by Gustave Le Bon’s *Psychology of Crowds* (2003 [1895]), some acceptations used to consider social movements as uncontrollable masses and crowds that were mobilised in a spontaneous and irrational manner by their members. The formation of masses tended to appear as an irrational, spontaneous, and unpredictable phenomenon, potentially dangerous for the social order and/or social stability. Social movements were sometimes perceived as sorts of “pathological aberrations” and “anti-systemic eruptions” (Oommen, 2003: 179).

Three of the principal theorists of this line of thought, Herbert Blumer, Neil Smelser and Ted Gurr, tended to follow this perspective beyond their divergences and oppositions.

For Blumer (1955 [1939]), a key representative of the Chicago School’s symbolic interactionism, social movements result from social unrest that is a state of tension or dissatisfaction, the subjective feeling that one is inadequately rewarded for his/her social

actions and functions. Social movements are kinds of “elementary interactions” where behaviours are more unstable and unpredictable, emotions and creativity are stronger, the actors’ capacity for self-reflexion and self-control diminishes.

For Smelser (1962), influenced by Talcott Parson’s structural-functionalism, social movements are consequences of problems or tensions within social systems and thus are expressions of anomic tendencies within society. This is what he calls “structural strain”. He also identified five other factors that favour the emergence of social movements: social systems’ opportunities and constraints (“structural conduciveness”), the formation of a “generalised belief” among activists, “precipitating factors” or particular events of tension that stimulate the association of people, “the mobilisation of participants for action”, and the level of social control exercised by entities as the police or the media.

According to Gurr (1970), inspired by psycho-sociology, social movements, which seem only violent in his exposition, initially result from “relative deprivation” or “frustration” among their members, that is, from a negative difference between actors’ expectations and representations of their situations. If one follows these theses, it appears that there is a mechanical relationship between strains and social movements. The former works as a central stimulus of the latter.

Marxian and Marxist theories, more significant in Europe, in the wake of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and, later, of Vladimir Lenin, and, then, of Antonio Gramsci, considered the worker movement as the main social movement in capitalist society, which is principally divided into two antagonistic social classes: the capitalist class and the proletarian class. These social conflicts are chiefly material and economic (Crossley, 2002). Some positions adopt a certain class utilitarianism by stressing the importance of class struggle and class interests in the formation of the worker movement whereas others give special attention to the structures (infrastructure – material and economic substratum of the society – and superstructure – ideal, cultural and institutional dimension of the society) as sources of this movement.

From the 1960s and the 1970s, two other major models, resource mobilisation theories/political process models and new social movements theories, have begun to dominate the sociological landscape of social movements. Both aimed to explain the emergence and the development of social movements that seemed to be different at this time from social movements preceding them as well as to call into question some of the fundamental assertions of the prior theories.

Resource mobilisation theories, initiated and developed in the United States, are influenced by the utilitarian paradigm. In this sense, social movements are created and activated, not so much because of strains, as collective behaviour theorists affirm, but because individuals are rational and see social movements as an effective means to reach their objectives. These theories therefore claim the rationality of social movements that contrasts with collective behaviour theories' emotionalism. In this sense, they are no longer perceived as disordered associations but as structured social organisations. Thanks to these theories, social movements have come to be perceived as composed by rational individuals who have decided to unite in order to reach clear goals, who are moved by personal and collective interests. Collective action appeared in this sense as the result of a sum of individual and reflexive decisions.

For McCarthy and Zald (1977), two of the main advocates of this approach, social movements work as commercial companies acting with a variety of resources within markets in which different social movements compete. In line with a Schumpeterian perspective, they are run by political entrepreneurs who offer their social movements' services to respond to their members' demands.

Parallel to an economic perspective used to explain social movements, these theories have been developed through a more politically-orientated approach. Sidney Tarrow (2003 [1998], 1989) along with others, such as Peter Eisinger (1973), Charles Tilly (1978), Doug McAdam (1982) and Donatella Della Porta (1995), have underlined political opportunity structures through political process models, that is, mainly, in their view, it is necessary, beyond considering the resources mobilised by movements, to take into account the possibilities and the threats presented in the polity systems to explain their emergence and dynamics until their fall.

For their part, new social movements theories, largely advanced in Europe, emphasise the links between the transformations of industrial societies and those of social movements.

For Alain Touraine (1978, 1973, 1969), in the 1960s, industrial society became a "post-industrial" or "programmed society", which is characterised by its capacity to act on itself. In this new society, the aim of social struggles is no longer the appropriation of economic capital, the proletarian movement's goal, but it is the control of historicity, that is, the model of society, the society's organisation and action, the process of constitution of this capacity of action, which is therefore the objective of the new social movements. The latter contest less for matters of economic interests than the appropriation by the dominant class, rulers and technocrats who compose the State, of the cultural model, of the mode of organisation and

administration of society. These movements are less composed of class actors than of individual actors who define a collective identity for themselves (principle of identity), a common conscience of opposition to a dominant cultural model (principle of opposition), and another project of society (principle of totality).

According to Jürgen Habermas (1988 [1973], 1987 [1981], 1981), structural conflicts within current societies and consequently new social movements result from “the colonisation of the life-world” and “cultural impoverishment”. He sees the former as a process of invasion carried out by the State via the “juridification” and “bureaucratisation” of life – private and social spheres are more and more regulated by legal organisms and the political system –, as well as by the Market, the economic system, through the “commodification” of life. “Cultural impoverishment”, linked to the anterior factor, is a consequence of the growing specialisation and differentiation of knowledge and of the cultural bases of the society, which are accomplished by a complex and differentiated bureaucracy. New social movements have therefore appeared to oppose to these dynamics.

Following this perspective, Alberto Melucci (1996, 1989) stressed the fact that the new social movements have emerged to oppose to intrusion of the State and Market into social life, to defend, before this growing invasion, identities, individual identity, the right for each individual to determine his/her private and affective life. In other words, they have appeared to preserve or enhance autonomies, to protect private and affective spheres threatened by the penetration of the State and Market. Contrary to the worker movement, these new movements do not seek material gains. They do not wish an increase and improvement of the welfare-state to ensure social security and social welfare. Instead, they question the ideas of politics and society, they resist against the expansion of the politico-administrative intervention in the daily life.

As we shall see in more detail throughout this study, these theories hold some shortcomings, notably in regard to the clarification of current social movements in general and of the alter-globalisation social movements that appeared in the 1990s. And, one of the ambitions of this research is to overcome these shortcomings by proposing new theoretical references and new analyses in the field of social movements, what also ought to contribute to renew the comprehension and explanation of social movements.

***Problematic: The how, why and what of social movements:***

Globalisation, despite the myriad of studies on this topic, remains a complex and opaque phenomenon, to a large extent because of its great scope; this is a macro- or supra-phenomenon *par excellence*. Thus, a study from the perspectives of social movements and their alter-globalisation, that is, from micro-levels that may be more easily accessible for and understood by the human mind, ought to contribute to enlighten this former and wider phenomenon in which they are core components. I therefore put forward a first principle according to which the micro is a privileged way to penetrate, understand and explain the macro. In this study, both levels will be articulated.

Alongside this general ambition – clarifying globalisation through the clarification of alter-globalisation and contemporary social movements – and that of transcending lacunae stemming from principal sociological theories on social movements, what are, more exactly, the research objectives in this study, objectives that partly (but not only) aim at replying to the aforesaid ambitions?

Our study seeks to reply to three main questions: How are social movements formed? Why are they formed? And what are they or who are militants?

These three core questions entail in turn three sets of underlying questions, which together therefore form the problematic of our research that focuses on the genesis and formation of social movements.

First, in regard to the how of social movements, what is their context? What is the structure of social movements and their environment? How are social movements mobilised? What are their conditions or possibilities?

Then, concerning the why of social movements, what are the beliefs (ideologies), the social behaviours, and the actions of individuals-subjects composing social movements? What are their praxes? What is the sense of their actions? Why?

*In fine*, in relation to the what and who of social movements, what are their identities? Who are these individuals-subjects?

It is evident that these questions are strictly interrelated. To know what social movements' subjects think and do, and why (second set of questions), it is also necessary to know who they are (ultimate set of questions). And to fully know these previous facts, it is indispensable to situate social subjects in their context and to elucidate the latter (the first set of questions).

More precisely, I shall respond to the diverse mentioned questions from the study of social movements related to alter-globalisation in Portugal, a context that has not been sufficiently addressed by social scientists yet. The first part of this study will deal with the how of social movements, the second one with the why and the last one with the what/who.

Why do we choose these questions? What does it justify the choice of this problematic? The choice is not at all arbitrary and the response rests upon epistemology, philosophy of sciences and sociologists' reflections on their own discipline – what is usually called reflexivity.

According to Raymond Boudon (2009b), the ultimate objective of science is to explain; explaining phenomena (what appears) that seem enigmatic, and, in the case of social sciences, it is about explaining social or collective phenomena, that is, phenomena that imply more than one person and at least two – a dyad, a triad, and so forth, to speak with Georg Simmel (2010 [1908]: 81-159). Explaining, this is to find the causes or to reply to the question why?

Actually, since Auguste Comte's positivism, a further core question has also regarded social sciences, the how? or the question of the relations among phenomena.

The “why” and “how” are the two central questions to which major theories of social movements have sought to respond; some theories focusing on the why of social movements, others on the how of these collective phenomena, others on more or less both. According to Alberto Melucci (1982), resource mobilisation theories deal with the “how”, while new social movements theories are concerned with the “why”.

My study, unlike these two latter theories, simultaneously pays attention to these two main questions in order to tackle the problematic of social movements in its totality. My theoretical approach differs from common approaches in the sociology of social movements. This approach, which we shall see in more detail in the following pages and throughout the study, is elaborated with regards to an empirical work that was carried out in the context of Portuguese social movements related to alter-globalisation, a context little explored by social scientists, as we have just said. This association between a new theoretical approach and an original empirical context should allow us to offer new insights into the core problematic of social movements in social sciences, or to the questions of the why and how of social movements.

In addition, alongside the determinant questions how? and why?, the ontological questions what? and who?, which concern definitions, categorisations, classifications, are also fundamental in science and cannot be ignored either.

### ***Praxeologic paradigm:***

What are the paradigmatic influences to reply to these questions? By paradigm, I refer to a set of rules or principles which allow or help to construct explanatory or analytic theories about studied social phenomena. In other words, a paradigm is a meta-theory that possesses an axiomatic, or a set of axioms, principles that scientists may use to build their own theories and analyses in relation to phenomena and to criticise other theories. In short, a paradigm works as a sort of guide, with core lines for conducting a scientific research. Paradigms refer to epistemology, that is, to theories on the conditions of possibility and validity of the scientific propositions in particular and of knowledge in general. More fundamentally, they refer to scientific ontology, that is, to the question of *what is*, to the criteria of truth and reality. This definition is also that of Boudon who has shown that the concept of paradigm has several synonyms or, at least, it is close to other notions commonly present in the literature on the philosophy of sciences and on human and social sciences.

Hence, as Boudon and Renaud (2004b [1969]) have indicated, the concept of paradigm, especially as launched and promoted by Thomas Kuhn (1962) – indeed, this concept has become imperative within sciences (and *a fortiori* inside social sciences) above all in the wake of its analysis by this philosopher and historian of sciences –, can be equated with the notion of “programme” employed by Imre Lakatos (1970) or that of “point of view” mentioned by Georg Simmel (2010 [1908]: 42-43, 2009a [1900]: 15). Boudon himself prefers to use Lakatos’ concept of programme or alternatively the notion of methodology *lato sensu*, which, for him, are more representative of the ideas that they express.

In my answers, I shall be particularly influenced by the praxeologic paradigm. This is a large paradigm in sociology and social sciences that literally concerns the study of praxis. According to Jacques Herman (1983), praxeology, a core language of sociology among other central *koines*, gives a particular importance to social and human action, to social actors.

More precisely, within praxeology, I shall focus on three main types of approaches. Each of them will help me to respond to the three main questions of this study and their three underlying sets of questions.

A first type of approaches is what is usually named the comprehensive approaches and the related rational approaches. Here, they will be employed particularly to respond to the question of the why of social movements (seen in second part of the text).

A second kind of praxeologic approaches will be what is called interactionism. It will

concern the ontological question of the what and who of social movements (the third and ultimate part of the research).

And finally, the last praxeologic approach will regard action field and will examine the first question of the how of social movements (made up of the first part of this study).

### ***Praxeology, comprehension and rationalities:***

In relation to the comprehensive and rational approaches, the latter have their origins in Max Weber's theory of science (1995 [1921]) according to which the objective of social sciences is to "understand by interpretation" (*deutend verstehen*) social activity. That means that social scientists must find the sense (*sinn*) of social activity for the proper actors of this activity given that they give themselves a sense to their actions and that this sense in large measure explains them. This sense or meaning is not necessarily and objectively true or correct, but, according to Weber, this should not matter for social scientists since they must only observe empirical activity.

More recently, one of the key theoreticians in these approaches is philosopher and sociologist Raymond Boudon who prolonged to a large extent Weber's epistemology. In his view, if social scientists' work essentially consists in reconstructing the sense of social subjects' actions, beliefs and behaviours according to the own representations and evaluations of the latter in order to understand and explain these social actions, beliefs and behaviours, this sense is generally based on reasons that depend on subjects' historical and socio-cultural context. In other words, according to this historical and socio-cultural context, social subjects often have some reasons for doing what they do, for believing in what they believe and for behaving in the way that they behave (Boudon, 2009c [1995]).

Comprehensive and rational approaches are not exclusive to sociology and are present in other social and human sciences, notably within its close discipline, anthropology. In the latter discipline, there is what has been called interpretive anthropology, which was particularly developed by Clifford Geertz. For him, the most important role of anthropologists is to attempt to interpret the most significant symbols of each culture, which Geertz defined as a complex intertwining of systems of symbols or signs built by people or as a sort of set of texts. For this interpretation, anthropologists must, more precisely, uncover the sense of actions according to the studied people, access their conceptual world, elucidate their



symbolic constructions and “texts” that can appear at first glance as strange and opaque things. In other words, anthropologists ought to observe the different layers of meaning of a cultural phenomenon, to explain in more detail the reasons that exist behind the actions of the social subjects situated in a particular historical and socio-cultural context as well as, at the same time, to take into consideration in a reflexive fashion their own understanding of things – what Geertz named “thick description” in contrast with “thin description” (Geertz, 1983, 1973).

***Praxeology, interactionism and action field:***

Regarding interactionism, the second kind of praxeologic perspectives, Georg Simmel may be considered as a pioneer. In his eyes, the objective of social sciences is the study of forms of reciprocal action (*Wechselwirkung*) among individuals, that is, the forms of socialisation or sociation. These forms are forms of interactions that put individuals into relations, and these interactions are at the same time society. Thus, society is defined and composed by a plethora of complex individual interactions that are always in motion. Social structures appear as mere crystallisations of interactions among individuals, such as the family. His formal sociology asserts that the form of interactions can be theoretically divided from their content, what makes that different interactions with different contents may have the same form, and vice-versa, in spite of spatio-temporal differences (Simmel, 2010 [1908]).

Inspired to a large extent by Simmel’s writings, Chicago School’s symbolic interactionism underlines joint action as a substratum of society. It emphasises social interaction at a micro scale, which generates senses for actors about things toward which they act. In a continuous, dynamical or processual fashion, social actors interpret, re-interpret and define through the use of symbols and meanings their actions and the others’ actions – “the Generalised Other” according to George Herbert Mead’s phrase (1967 [1934]) – with whom they enter into relationship and communicate inside a singular social context that is also itself interpreted (Blumer, 1969).

Here, again, interactionism is not at all exclusive to sociology and it is transversal to several disciplines in social and human sciences, notably anthropology. Methodologically close to the Chicago School, the Manchester School and its founder Max Gluckman have stressed the centrality of case studies that entail the detailed analysis of particular instances of

social interaction. They have above all developed the issues of conflict and reconciliation within organisations and micro-societies, and the topics of tension between, on the one hand, individuals' associations and, on the other hand, social structure (Gluckman, 2004 [1963], 1955). In some way, Georges Balandier's dynamist political anthropology has been also influenced by this paradigmatic approach (2004 [1967]).

Besides this, because social subjects are both autonomous and heteronomous or since it is impossible to understand and explain social action without situating it in its context, it is therefore necessary along with the study of social action to focus on the action field as well. The analysis of action field was particularly well developed by Pierre Bourdieu's sociology and anthropology of practice (Bourdieu, 1994; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), which will be addressed in the first part of this study.

### *Dialectical paradigm:*

Alongside the praxeologic paradigm, this research is also influenced by the dialectical paradigm. By dialectic, I primarily refer to the consideration and confrontation of different and opposed elements (ideas, facts) in the present discussion, to the importance ascribed to the movement rather than fixed states in the analysis, to criticism of theories.

The proper structure of the present text follows a dialectical model; it is divided into three parts, which are themselves each divided into three chapters. The first chapter of each part is a theoretical chapter wherein a sort of state of art and hypotheses related to some issues are put forward. In other words, in these chapters, I confront in a critical way the main theories concerning the topics that are approached in the part, and then I situate my own theoretical perspective in relation to these theories. Secondly, each of these theoretical chapters is followed by an empirical chapter, primarily centred on three Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements. There, I relate in a descriptive way the principal observations that have derived from my empirical study. And, thirdly, a synthetic chapter written out of the confrontation between the previous empirical data (the second chapter of each part) and the theoretical hypotheses and propositions (the first chapter of each part) concludes each part.

Thus, my reasoning will be built from oppositions and diversities of thoughts (within the different theoretical chapters that introduce each of the three parts of the study), and the diverse theories with my own hypotheses will be discussed from the empirical field in order

to reach a synthesis and some conclusions that reply to our problematic.

Additionally, by dialectic I mean that this research is inspired by critical sociology inasmuch as sociological theories in general and approaches regarding social movements in particular will be addressed in a critical way.

The concept of criticism is taken here in a Kantian meaning, and can also be equated with artistic criticism (like literary and musical criticism). I shall evaluate sociological theories in general and those of social movements in particular by showing some of their qualities and defects in terms of explaining social phenomena in general and social movements in particular from criteria of science or more specifically from sociology, in the same way as artistic criticism aims to determine the strong and weak points of an artistic work according to criteria belonging to the concerned domain of art. Accordingly, here, criticism is both positive and negative, but always constructive. The progress of knowledge and of scientific knowledge relies, to a large extent, on the criticism of existing theories (Boudon, 2003a).

In any case, in this study, it will be less a matter of exegetic asceticism or scholasticism (to speak with Pierre Bourdieu) that would consist in rigorously interpreting what the different authors have really said than a matter of knowing if their theoretical propositions are heuristically fecund. Hermeneutics is a complex exercise because it is seldom that a thinker has only and uniquely one thought or one point of view. On the contrary, as any individual, he/she is characterised by what may be termed a “multiple self”, and this has necessarily repercussions on his/her ideas.

Furthermore, the review of the theoretical literature does not pretend to be exhaustive. More modestly, I have tried to present and analyse those scholars' works that seem the most important in their domain of study and vis-à-vis my topic. Obviously, this exercise implies choices and selections made in relation to the researcher's specific scientific objectives and in order not to appear as a litany. Necessarily, some works (and without doubt some notable works) will therefore be missed. But, the aim of a scientific research is not to create an encyclopaedic work (albeit this is an indispensable and useful genre, notably for the research), this is about bringing elements of responses to a problematic or a set of defined and unresolved questions. It is therefore the task in which I am involved.

### ***Methodology stricto sensu:***

What is the methodology *stricto sensu* of this study? If methodology *lato sensu* corresponds to the postulates that serve to orient research, as we saw above, by methodology *stricto sensu*, I refer to the practical art of leading scientific research, that is, to techniques of observations and of collecting information and data that constitute the empirical or emic material from which scientific or etic analysis may proceed. In other words, this is the *modus operandi* (the method, the mode of operation) that leads to the *opus operantum* (the work of the workers), echoing Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant (1992: 7).

For that purpose, I have obeyed what can be named “qualitative sociology”. In this sense, I have opted for a sociology *in situ*, *multi-situ* and *in actu*, or for an ethnography or sociography carried out among three Portuguese social movements related to the phenomenon of alter-globalisation, my approach being also comparative. More precisely, this entails carrying out fieldwork among these movements at a certain place and during a certain period of time. Thus, I carried out this fieldwork in Lisbon – to the extent that these latter movements were primarily situated in the Portuguese capital – between the years 2010 and 2012 in an irregular or discontinuous fashion, that is, according to movements’ agendas and socio-political occurrences, but I have to admit that it was more intensive over the first year, in 2010.

At the empirical level, qualitative sociology is an idiographic and narrative perspective. Thus, in this study, I have focused on relationships among actors, on their deeds, statements, conversations, debates, strategies, decisions, the processes of construction of the social reality by them, the mechanisms of social co-ordination.

For José Manuel Sobral (1999: 30), fieldwork means the collection of local information that can be oral or written, but it is also the learning, by the ethnographer, of local modes of lifestyle in order to know the local praxis. I have tried to follow these basic teachings in this research.

I have analysed documents written by the studied social movements. Here, the main sources have been diverse written productions such as web sites, paper documents, different kinds of publications intended for the public, projects and reports, notes, statutes, and so forth. Moreover, I gave particular importance to oral testimonies, to formal and informal discourses, to private and public talks. Actors’ practices and statements have been central to understand alter-globalist social movements and to allow me to put to test the different theories which

exist about them.

“Participant observation”, the ethnographer’s central strategy to perform his fieldwork, obliges the researcher, as the expression indicates it, to participate in the social life that he studies. Because he cannot be totally “neutral” or “disengaged”, the researcher must manage to remove the barriers that separate him from his informants in order to install a certain communication or a dialogue, which will be the source of empirical materials with individual observations. The researcher must openly assume his position of researcher, but he must also use other justifications for his presence, as Sobral (1999: 29) recommended. These justifications, as the latter said, must be better understandable for the local populations in order to arouse their interests for his scientific preoccupations. Before being able to know the others’ lives, he is often obliged to tell his own story, what allows him to create a certain climate of confidence. After all, during the fieldwork, it is the ethnographer who is the stranger, this unknown other, whereas the balance is inverted once he leaves the field and goes back home, in his original environment, to analyse his materials. In this second step of the scientific approach, the Other to be understood is no longer the ethnographer but the populations that he observed. Sobral (1999: 29) talked about “exchange relations” between the ethnographer and the studied populations, each one having to talk about oneself at a certain time. As he added (1999: 28), participant observation can only be done if the ethnographer manages to integrate the society or the social group that is the object of his research. According to him, this condition implies a sort of empathy toward the other that can even turn into friendship in some cases. Nevertheless, the researcher’s participation must be limited. He cannot become partisan, especially when there are internal conflicts, because with this political position some potential informants, having diverse and opposite positions, can decide to close their doors to him (Sobral, 1999: 29).

Bearing these points in mind, during my fieldwork, I have used “participant” or direct observation through my presence at meetings, in social movements’ diverse places, via my participation in different demonstrations, mobilisations and actions, often by doing some tasks of volunteers (to the extent that the latter both contribute to legitimise the presence of the researcher before activists as well as they allow him to be more present in the field), through my conversations with activists. Indeed, I have established more or less informal conversations with some actors. I carried out free and partly-oriented interviews with some people belonging to the studied movements, key militants as well as less visible activists, what also refers, to a certain extent, to individual and collective memories, to the mnemonic dimension.

To preserve so far as possible the anonymity of the people and their movements, protagonists' names have been deliberately changed, even though some persons who could read this text would be able to recognise them.

In a workshop on *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* organised by Donatella Della Porta (2013) at the European University Institute (Florence, Italy) in April 2013, to which I participated as a visiting scholar of this Institute, I suggested to her, through a short positional working paper commenting on some presentations made during the workshop, that my own methodological point of view actually embraces most of the techniques of qualitative research that had been shown over this academic event and that are strictly related, even overlap. Thus, my perspective is to some extent “pluralist”, following Donatella Della Porta who mentioned here and elsewhere (Della Porta and Keating, 2008) this notion, as well as that of “eclecticism”, for qualifying the methods used by social scientists in order to study social movements. In this event, it was also about fieldwork, participant observation, comparative research, interviews, frame and discourse analysis (in my study, I have used the method of frame analysis even though I will also present a criticism of this method), on-line research, the study of images (in my research, I have described and analysed icons, symbols, signs; I have sought their meanings), grounded theory (the methods of fieldwork and participant observation necessarily entail a form of grounded theory; all together, they give a special emphasis on the sense of things attributed by the proper studied actors in the field). On the whole, there is a link among all these aforementioned methods, a link that may be precisely subsumed into the generic concept of quality, qualitative research or qualitative sociology.

The methodology of qualitative sociology is akin to the classical methods of anthropology. It fundamentally differs from what can be considered as “armchair sociology” or experimental sociology in “laboratories”. On the whole, this methodology particularly permits to reply adequately to the objectives defined in this research and to the chosen paradigmatic and theoretical orientations, what gives it *ipso facto* a heuristic validity.

Besides this, comprehensive and rational approaches will be particularly useful to face the challenge of the researcher's position in relation to his/her object of study. By its own nature, the topic of social movements is a highly political topic in which it is about morals and ideologies. *Ipsa facto*, it is necessary that scientists studying this theme maintain a certain critical distance or, if we prefer, that they adopt an axiological position that is possibly the most neutral, even though, as we have just aforesaid, it is impossible to be completely neutral during the fieldwork through participant observation. It is easy with this kind of subject to fall

into ideologisation that can lead either to a sort of panegyric, hagiography or sublimation of social movements or, on the contrary, to their depreciation, or even to their negation. Thus, these ideologisations are judgements of values that are, by their nature, far from criteria of validity of scientific assertions. Science and politics, science and morals are distinct human activities, although they can be related. Indeed, science can and must deal with politics and morals, or more largely with values – these are “the links to values” that science must objectively create, echoing Weber –, but it cannot, in any case, be assimilated or confused with these latter domains of human activity – here, to the contrary, this is about “judgements of values”, to speak again with the German sociologist. Science is not about affirmation of values, it is about study of values. Although I have my own personal convictions, as any human being, and I have a certain leftist sensibility in general, as many social scientists, this study will not be therefore a militant study on militancy or an ideological research on ideologies. I shall try to follow the Weberian principle of “axiological neutrality” or “ethical neutrality” by ignoring as far as possible my own judgements of values, or, at least, by dealing with them in a reflexive fashion (Weber, 2011 [1922], 1992 [1922]). This principle is more easily applicable via comprehensive methodology, inasmuch as what is taken into consideration for understanding and explaining social phenomena is the sense of their actions for the concerned social subjects, that is, their own beliefs, representations, judgements of values, and not those of the observer who must, according to this methodology, follow the positions of the “observed” people.

To conclude this introduction, I would like to mention that, although they are different, there is a continuum between this present research and previous studies on social movements, non-governmental organisations – more commonly known by their acronym NGOs –, and, more generally, on collective action and civil society (Masse, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2011a, 2011b, 2010a, 2010b, 2007, 2005).

## **Part I**

### **Mobilisations: Structures and social movements**





# Chapter 1

## **Sociological perspectives on the organisation, actors and context of social movements**

In this first part of the research, I shall consider the question of the conditions of mobilisations or the factors that make the emergence, maintenance and end of social movements actual. In other words, I shall pay attention to the “structures” of social movements, what implies more in detail to observe the organisations, actors and their context (socio-cultural and historical). The further objectives of this study, the elucidation of the sense of action for and *a fortiori* the rationalities of the activists (what are their praxes? Why?), on the one hand, and the proposition of an “ontology” of social movements (what are the collective and individual identities? Their relations?), on the other hand, will be treated respectively in the second and last parts.

In this chapter, I shall explore the principal theories in the sociology of social movements regarding this specific problematic of the conditions of mobilisations. These theories refer to the resource mobilisation and political process perspectives. They also belong to Marxism or form part of collective behaviour approaches (in their structural-functionalist variant). Moreover, we shall see that it can be interesting from a heuristic point of view to make reference to the works of Pierre Bourdieu even though he was not properly a theorist of social movements. These are precisely his larger analyses on different “fields” of the social, to use his own language, which provide theoretical tools that can come to be applied to face

some lacunae presented by the aforesaid theories and *a fortiori* to contribute to the interpretation of the observation data.

Precisely, the following chapters two and three will deal respectively with the presentation of the empirical data and their analysis in relation to the “structures” of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements.

### **1.1: Resource mobilisation theories and political process model:**

Resource mobilisation theories and the related political process model, like every important theoretical perspective, are composite despite the common characters that precisely allow to unify these theories under a single approach. In this sense, given the extent of the authors and the theories that may be located in this approach, we shall consider here only some of the most representative scholars as well as their principal ideas, namely Mayer Zald, John McCarthy, Hanspeter Kriesi, Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow and Doug McAdam.

McCarthy and Zald generally appear as the main initiators of this school of thought that has come to dominate the sociological theory of social movements in the United States since the 1970s and to exercise a great influence beyond its borders.

In a core article, they posed some of the principal concepts and propositions of this approach. Briefly, they showed the diversity and “sources of resources” that social movements may have. They underlined the links between social movements and other central collective actors within society such as the media and authorities. Then, they especially emphasised the inner structures of social movements, their relationships among them and consecutively their inclusive character from a horizontal and vertical point of view. Thus, social movements form “movement organisations” “(SMOs)”, which, in turn, integrate with other SMOs that share similar objectives or “preferences” a “social movement industry (SMI)” that finally enters itself with the rest of SMIs into the “social movement sector (SMS)” – the latter comprehends the whole of SMIs within a society regardless of their differences and usually has to compete with other societal sectors for obtaining members and resources such as religious organisations and diverse voluntary associations. Similarly, SMIs and SMOs must compete among them given the limitation of the available means. McCarthy and Zald defined social movements as more or less organised groups of people aiming for a certain social or structural change.

Less succinctly, first of all, social movements absolutely need resources in order to exist and to lead their collective actions toward their “target goals” or the satisfaction of their preferences. These resources are essentially money, facilities and labour (volunteers and/or paid labour), the same factors of production (capital and labour) identified by classical economics. *De facto*, as we shall see in the following paragraphs, this theoretical approach has greatly espoused a language and concepts that originally belong to economics above all. Hence, the birth and durability of movements depend upon the “aggregation” of these resources. At the same time, movements must already have a certain formal organisation in order to be able to manage and cumulate them. SMS and its components are likely to receive more resources during periods of economic growth than during times of crisis given that SMS is not the most priority sector within society and can only hope to recuperate a set of the surplus produced by other sectors and industries. Unlike collective behaviour theories, McCarthy and Zald asserted that the main support of movements does not necessarily come from the “aggrieved populations”. “External supports” through what they called “individual and organisational conscience constituents” are likely to be determinant in the provision of resources. Hence, according to the situations, social movements may especially depend on either the aggrieved people and “presumed beneficiaries” or these outer “supporters”.

Alongside “the constituents of a SMO” who bring it resources, McCarthy and Zald identified the antithetic figures of “nonadherents” and “adherents” of a social movement within society: “*Adherents* are those individuals and organisations that believe in the goals of the movement”. Adherents are a figure prior to that of constituents. Unlike constituents, their support is only moral or ideal and it is not concrete or material yet. Thus, one of the primary tasks of mobilisation regarding social movements normally consists in attempting to move people and organisations from the category of adherents to that of constituents and to make this constituency perennial in order to obtain and keep resources in the long term. Similarly, a previous step is probably to transform the nonadherents (who are not opponents but are solely mere neutral “bystander publics” of social movements) into adherents. Some adherents and bystander publics are likely to be direct “potential beneficiaries” of SMOs’ activities. In this sense, SMOs often claim vast objectives like that of “a better society”, which are sorts of “secondary benefits” for everyone, in order to potentially reach a large group of people. Alongside adherents who can also be beneficiaries, there are the “conscience adherents” who do not receive any direct advantages. In a similar vein, conscience constituents do not hope for any profits, albeit they contribute to the material sustenance of SMOs (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1212-1224).

Furthermore, more precisely, McCarthy and Zald identified several types of participants within SMOs. Always inspired by managerial and business terminology, they first highlighted the key role of “entrepreneurs” or “cadres”, those who make decisions and run the organisation. “Professional cadres” work full time for their SMO in exchange for some incentives, contrary to cadres *tout court* who dedicate less time to it and consequently do not have the same proportion of personal benefits. The professional cadres are accompanied by the “professional staff”. Like them, they are involved full time by means of some form of compensation in return but, unlike them, they do not participate in policy-making. Finally, some participants, who are only active in the organisational work from time to time like the non-professional cadres but, contrary to them, do not make decisions, are what McCarthy and Zald named the “workers”. Some of them may form a “transitory team” led by some cadres in order to carry out some temporary and particular organisational activities while other workers will have a more prolonged commitment in relation to their tasks. These kinds of participants, contrary to the other constituents, are very close to SMOs through their regular organisational work and consequently are supposed to receive more advantages – “solidary incentives” or “selective benefits of a nonmaterial sort”. A social movement may opt for a sole local organisation or to have various and federated “local units” (*idem*: 1227).

Kriesi has identified several types of structures that contribute to the mobilisation of social movements. Following McCarthy and Zald, he has first referred to SMOs, then, he has mentioned local networks (“kinship and friendship networks”, “informal networks among activists”, “movement communities”), diverse allied formal organisations that do not directly participate in the activities of mobilisation or protest but which bring some support. More specifically, among the whole of these structures, he has established four main kinds of formal structures: First, obviously, SMOs again, then, “supportive organisations”, “movement associations” and “parties and interest groups”.

By their nature, SMOs evidently aim to mobilise their members or “constituency” in order to pursue a militant collective action in the face of authorities, that is, to reach some political objectives that will confer them “collective goods” or suppress some group problems. In other words, SMOs are first of all directed toward “political mobilisation” and against authorities. For this purpose, they call for “direct participation of their constituency”. Supportive organisations are “service organisations” and these allied formal organisations or “halfway houses” as “friendly media, churches, restaurants, print shops, educational institutions” and so on, which provide important elements for the life of social movements and their organisations but without acting personally in their protests. By their orientation,

these latter organisations are strictly and diametrically opposed to the SMOs. Indeed, following Kriesi's taxonomy, they respond to activists who are considered as sorts of "clients", instead of acting against power holders, and they do not require the direct involvement of them. Kriesi defines movement associations as "self-help" or "altruism organisations" such as "voluntary associations", "clubs" or "mutualities". They aim to satisfy the everyday needs of their members. Contrary to supportive organisations, these associations are not external to the movement but they are in fact formed by the proper activists. And, unlike SMOs, their action is not primarily oriented toward the exterior, toward the confrontation with power holders but it is focused upon the immanent dimension of the movement. If, eventually, these internal associations help SMOs and thus contribute to the collective protest and outer mobilisation, their first concern regards the inner mobilisation or "consensus mobilisation", notably through the formation of an inherent clientele. In the same way as supportive organisations, parties and interest groups are external to social movements (at least in theory) and give them some support. In their concrete case, they especially bring them a political and institutional support that can facilitate access to spheres of official political power.

The whole of SMOs within a particular social movement represent its "SMO-infrastructure (SMI)". Then, in an ascending way or *in crescendo*, all the SMIs of the totality of social movements belonging to a certain polity form the "social movement sector (SMS)". Here, Kriesi literally recuperates the structural model of social movements put forward by McCarthy and Zald. To the extent that SMOs are only a type of "mobilising structures" among many others for social movements, the SMS also appear as a part of a larger set that comprehends diverse sorts of entities within society (Kriesi, 1996: 152-154).

Social movements are likely to follow over time four types of evolution that correspond to the four kinds of formal structures stated by Kriesi. Hence, SMOs may become more "radical", the activities of protest taking a stronger weight than the other ones. To the contrary, the process of "commercialisation" means that social movements essentially convert into service organisations or "business enterprises" by offering almost exclusively external services and goods. The phenomenon of "involution" shows that the given social movement ends up focusing on itself, its members and immanent activities. Finally, a last form of "organisational development" is the "institutionalisation" of social movements due to overly strong links with political parties and interest groups and, more generally, with the official establishment. In this way, they are likely to be transformed into new political parties and interest groups or to be absorbed by those already in existence. These evolutions depend upon

internal and external causes, that is, on dynamics intrinsic to movements and environmental shifts at the economic, cultural or/and political levels (*idem*: 154-158).

Charles Tilly (1978) put forward the idea of the “polity model” for studying collective mobilisation and revolution, a model composed of the following elements: “a population”, “a government”, “one or more contenders”, “a polity”, and “one or more coalitions”. A contender is a group that from time to time seeks to exercise an influence on the government by means of some resources and for their interests. Contenders concern both challengers and members of the polity. But, contrary to challengers, the members, precisely owing to their quality of actors participating in the polity, are close to the government and, in this way, they may benefit from institutional privileges and other official particular advantages. Tilly defined polity as being simply “the collective action of the members and the government”. Coalitions, by contrast, not only regard the associations between some members and the government but, more generally, the more or less long unions among some contenders or between contenders and governments (Tilly, 1978: 52). All contenders seek to gain or conserve power and consequently resources via struggles and coalitions among them, through oppositions against and/or alliances with governments, the challengers mainly wishing by their actions and strategies to enter into the sphere of the polity whereas the members want above all to remain in it. Any variations at the level of the possession and exchange of resources and any modifications in the coalitions generate changes within the structure of the polity, with new members (ex-challengers) and, *a contrario*, new challengers (ex-members) (*idem*: 54).

In addition to the polity model that presents the general panorama wherein militant collective action takes place, Tilly also proposed the related “mobilisation model”, which allows to study more particularly “the behaviour of a single contender”. This model rests upon five variables that together determine contenders’ mobilisation: “interests”, “organisation”, “mobilisation”, “collective action” and “opportunity”. Obviously, mobilisation depends on the interests or power at stake that have to concern the contenders. Their mobilisation is also a function of their organisational capacity. It needs a certain material unity or structure. More precisely, in this sense, the concerned people must fulfil two basic conditions: On the one hand, they have to form a clear “category” – a distinct group with common and shared features, acknowledged by themselves and the others – and, on the other hand, a “dense network” in order to be able to generate an organisation and consecutively a mobilisation, what Tilly named “catnet”; a neologism that fuses the two words “category” and “network”. He summed up this idea through the following mathematical formula: “catness x netness = organisation”. The variable “mobilisation”

invariably means resources in Tilly's language. The more the collective possesses some resources, the more their mobilisation is feasible. Conversely, the lack of resources necessarily prevents any type of mobilisation and their loss leads to demobilisation if mobilisation was already actual. Alongside resources, potential costs (like state repression) are determinant as well. Like an increase in resources, a decrease of the costs "facilitates" mobilisation, and vice versa. Collective action regards the force of "the joint action". Finally, opportunity stresses the possibilities offered by the environment of contenders to make their mobilisation effective, environment that is essentially shaped by the behaviours of the other contenders and governments, that is, by the polity and the diverse challengers for it. Instead of opportunities, the environment may also present, on the contrary, threats that paralyse possible mobilisations. In short, any fluctuations in each of these five variables positively or negatively affect collective action or mobilisation (*idem*: 54-55, 62-63, 76, 81, 84, 97-98).

According to Sidney Tarrow, "contentious politics" is set in motion when new "political opportunities" appear as beneficial to some social groups by offering them some resources like the access to some institutions or when "political constraints" are removed such as repression whereas in other circumstances these groups do not have sufficient means to engage in any sort of activism. Tarrow talks about "cycles of contention" to point out that moments of socio-political calmness are punctuated by "periods of turbulence", which are then, in turn, followed by "periods of realignment" that finally lead to the socio-political peace and quietness again. The length of contention is a function of the extent of "social networks" or "connective structures" that support militant collective action. The denser grassroots associations are and the more they give birth to a sustained social movement, the more contentious politics is long and strong (Tarrow, 2003 [1998]: 2-8, 18-20).

Most of the current social movements continue to have the same features as those of the new social movements. The 1960s and 1970s marked a rupture in the forms of social movements. As Tarrow noted, since this period, social movements have tended to become small and localised units that are run by some permanent professionals, capable of mobilising a huge number of people, when they need, for sporadic campaigns and demonstrations, and that are related among them via "loose, decentralised networks", which are at the basis of national and transnational alliances. These alliances can work technically, to a large extent, thanks to the progress of the media and transportation links that have become in a few decades more widespread, more available, cheaper and faster. Social movements can also have access to more resources for their functioning and are helped in their political activities by a plethora of associated organisations (*idem*: 207-208).



Particularly close to Tilly and Tarrow, Doug McAdam has advanced the “political process model” to study social movements. Summarily, this model stresses that “protest activity” or “social insurgency” relies on three linked factors: “political opportunities”, “indigenous organisation” and “the shifting social-control response of other groups to the movement”, a response that can either enhance or, on the contrary, undermine its initiatives (McAdam, 1982: 2).

The “structure of political opportunities” regards the situations that exist within the “political establishment” and may encourage challengers (groups excluded from the “established polity membership”) to engage in activism against the *status quo*. Any occurrences or socio-political dynamics that may destabilise to some degree the current socio-political order of things – like “wars, industrialisation, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, widespread demographic changes” – are likely to become positive incentives for challengers’ collective action (*idem*: 40-41).

Nevertheless, favourable opportunities alone are not sufficient to ensure an actual militancy, and even though they are significant. Indeed, for McAdam, following again the previous theorists, alongside opportunities, potential challengers necessarily must have an organisation, or, in other words, resources – what he calls the “organisational readiness of the aggrieved population”. Without any organisation or resources and even if the socio-political opportunities that appear are extremely in their favour, no collective commitment from them is possible. They can use the opportunities presented to them only insofar as they have the means to do so. In this sense, the presence of organisations or networks that are already constituted within communities and serve ends other than militancy are a fundamental intermediary that may thereafter help the proper militancy of these communities or parts of them. The birth of social movements is facilitated by the pre-existence of community associations. The former often emerge from the latter and tend to federate them. These pre-existing entities especially provide four kinds of essential resources for social movements: “members” – the members of social movements are mainly recruited among the members of community organisations –, a system of pre-established “rewards” – groups’ incentives may be redirected toward militant collective action –, “communication network” or social nexus – the existing solidarity within community organisations is transferred toward social movements that rest upon them and this is in large measure the extent of the actual social bond that determines the expansion of social movements –, and, finally, a last core resource, “leaders” or “organisers” – leaders of community organisations are often those who initiate a militant collective action and *a fortiori* also tend to become the leaders of the new social

movements they have contributed to form; their social recognition, prestige, organisational abilities, used in local organisations, are re-applied within social movements (*idem*: 40-48).

Notwithstanding, if at the beginning of social movements, local pre-existent organisations are decisive, in the long term, activists have to create their own structure – what obliges to own and invest resources again – in order to ensure the continuity of their movements because community organisations have not been constituted for sustaining these movements and in this way their support can be only temporary. In fact, the necessary formation of movement organisations is not free of risks that may affect the nature or even the existence of social movements – what McAdam terms the “dilemma of movements”. Indeed, first, it can lead to “oligarchisation”. As Max Weber (1995 [1921]: 290-301, 371-380) pointed out it in his study of bureaucracy and parties, and especially as Robert Michels (1911) showed, notably with his famous statement, “the iron law of oligarchy”, McAdam states that the creation of movement organisations can conduce to the institution of an elite within the movement, and this new upper class, in order to conserve or improve his social position, may be more interested in maintaining the movement organisations than pursuing the ideals and objectives of the movement. The preservation of these organisations can become an aim in itself, and even the central aim to the detriment of the first and specific goals of the movement. Then, a second risk indicated by McAdam is that of “co-optation”. Because activists probably need further resources to sustain their organisations, they are likely to cooperate with some institutions or other organisations in order to get them. This situation may provoke an interference of the approached organisations in the movement’s policy, interference that will depend on the degree of allocated means. Finally, these two dangers, oligarchisation and cooptation, can engender a third threat, the “dissolution of indigenous support”. Indeed, by these processes, it seems likely that most of activists no longer identify with their movement and subsequently abandon it; the elite and outer organisations’ goals and interests being no longer those of the “mass” of people (McAdam, 1982: 54-56).

## **1.2: Some insights from Marxist approaches and structural-functionalism:**

In fact, some observations (often iterative) put forward by the previous theories were already highlighted to a certain extent by Marxist approaches like the centrality of organisation, the conflictive character between social and political groups, the decisive importance of some key actors within these groups.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels stated that “the motor of history”, for all society, is class struggle. Any society consists of social classes, which are determined by the specific economic mode and relations of production, by the division of labour and the related relations of ownership that exist in the given society. These classes are in opposition or conflict because their respective interests are divergent and antagonistic. In capitalist societies, class struggles fundamentally take place between the bourgeoisie or capitalist class, which owns and controls the whole of the means of production and the means of subsistence, and the proletariat or working class, which is theoretically free but in fact constrained to sell its labour force to the capitalists to survive, inasmuch as it solely owns this as exchange value or merchandise that interests the latter as a factor of production. Furthermore, the labour force is not paid according to its fair value, the capitalists keeping for themselves a surplus-value, the non-remunerated part of labour, in order to make profits and increase their own capital, what leads to an exploitation and domination of the working class by the bourgeoisie. The former receive from the latter a salary that corresponds to “the indispensable minimum” in order to ensure “the conservation of their life” and their reproduction as social class to the extent that it is fundamental in terms of labour force for the continuity of capitalism. This situation leads to the “alienation” of the proletariat that is more and more numerous and pauperised before the ongoing and growing concentration of the capital that stems from hard competition among capitalists – alienation meaning at large that the human being is no longer himself, he no longer belongs to himself. Here, the immanent contradictions of capitalism stand and logically, according to Marx and Engels, they will ineluctably provoke its fall in the near future. Following a teleological or eschatological conception of history, the working class appeared for them as the subject of history, essentially because they “have nothing to lose but their chains”, or except the exploitation and domination of the bourgeois class. The proletarians would be the collective agent of the transformation of the capitalist system into the communist system, which would be without classes because it would be without private ownership and therefore truly democratic, what would mean the end of history. In their

revolutionary action, the whole of the workers, whatever their specific nationality, had to unite in order to seize power and realise a transitory “dictatorship of the proletariat” before the advent of a society without State and socio-economic divisions (Marx, 1996 [1932], 1993 [1867], 1975 [1849]; Marx and Engels, 1998 [1848]).

According to Lenin, communist revolution must necessarily be led by the political party of the proletariat, a professional revolutionary vanguard composed of an intelligentsia, professional Marxist intellectuals who have to provide or teach to the working class a true revolutionary class consciousness before the advent of “the dictatorship of the proletariat”. In this sense, the socialist party, conscious expression of the working class movement, has to challenge and suppress trade union consciousness that is spontaneously generated by workers and merely reformist (and not revolutionary) by seeking to improve in an irregular way the social situation of the working class within the capitalist system, that is, by wishing an accommodation of workers with the latter instead of attempting to abolish it. Ultimately, trade unionism aims to integrate or incorporate workers into capitalism through pressure on employers and the State to gain better pay and conditions at work, and advantageous policies of social welfare and labour law. Furthermore, trade unionism stimulates divisions – “sectionalism” – among different sectors of activity and professions within the working class and consequently nourishes the formation of “a labour aristocracy” at the expense of the rest of workers and *a fortiori* of the development of communism. Through the importance that Lenin gave to the leading, organised and disciplined party of the working class, he also advocated the “democratic centralism” – in a vertical or pyramidal way, lower party and state organisations are subordinate to higher ones, with the power remaining in the hands of the party in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Lenin, 2010 [1916], 1966 [1902]).

Antonio Gramsci also gave a particular importance to the organisation of workers. More precisely, he advocated the centrality of workers’ autonomous councils within factories (*commissioni interne*) against trade unions. In his view, unlike trade unions, these councils, akin to the model of Soviets in Russia, ought not to be reformist and focus upon the improvement of wages and working conditions that favour the formation of “the labour aristocracy”, but, more amply, they should run, in addition to the factories and *in extenso* the productive and economic sector, the political and cultural spheres of society, thereby being the basis for a true workers’ direct democracy, without State, and a serious challenge to the capitalist system. These ideas, which he especially expressed in the newspaper *Ordine Nuovo* (New Order) that he founded with other young socialist militants and intellectuals in 1919, were especially based on his observations and experience of this kind of organisations that

emerged during and following the First World War in the factories in Turin and Milan. In this sense, he was opposed to bureaucratic centralism claimed notably by Lenin, Trotsky or Stalin, essentially because, for him, this kind of organisation inevitably leads to authoritarianism and the excessive use of force.

Gramsci also stressed the importance of networks and associations among diverse “subaltern classes”. In this way, he claimed the necessity of the alliance between the working class that was mostly situated in Italy’s industrial north and the peasantry that essentially composed the population living in the rural and farming south, *mezzogiorno*, in order to constitute through these “two immediate revolutionary forces” “a genuine mass base” for the Italian communist party (PCI) and achieve socialist revolution in this country – this conception diverged from the orthodox Marxism at that time, which in a universalist fashion focused exclusively upon the working class without taking into account the rest of subordinate social groups. Gramsci defended a “philosophy of praxis” (or Marxism) that has to be critical, self-reflexive and based upon the historical and geographical realities. In this sense, this philosophy must seriously consider the specificities of national and local contexts in order to efficiently serve the revolutionary cause by proposing analyses of situations that are close to what concretely happens and occurred – the world before being changed has to be understood in all its diversity and complexity to make this change possible. According to Gramsci, socialist revolution did not take form in Italy (on the contrary, the country gave place to fascism) to a large extent because of the endemic separation between northern workers and southern peasants. The need for their alliance found expression in Gramsci in the creation of *L’Unità* (The Unity), the “newspaper of workers and peasants”, in 1924, the year where he became the general secretary of the PCI and was elected member of Italian Parliament.

Finally, Gramsci insisted upon the significance of the intellectuals as a key figure within the working class movement. He distinguished two fundamental classes of intellectuals, understood as social function: On the one hand, there exist, *stricto sensu*, “the traditional professional intellectuals” (scientists, writers, artists, etc.) who appear as linked to some social classes albeit they are to a certain extent a social category separated from the actual “fundamental social classes” (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat), which has crossed without significant transformation the historical contingencies, and, on the other hand, there are, *lato sensu*, “the organic intellectuals” who have emerged out of and belong to each of the fundamental classes, that is, who are intrinsically linked to either the ruling class or the working class. Unlike the traditional intellectuals, the organic intellectuals are less

characterised by their profession insofar as they can exercise any type of job that distinguishes their social class and their main social role consists in expressing the ideas of their class.

For Gramsci, everyone potentially has the capacity to become an intellectual, understood as social function, since *de facto* every human being has the faculty of thought. The intellectual differences among individuals are functional or statutory, and of degree rather than of kind. He stated that, thanks to an appropriate democratic educational policy, a large proportion of people would be able to develop their cognitive capacities and actually become intellectuals according to the common or functional sense of this word. Thus, in this way, a significant part of people belonging to the subaltern classes may be transformed into organic intellectuals and consecutively participate in the leading activities of the PCI that can no longer be solely held by a small privileged elite in order to create a solid nexus between the grassroots and the top of the workers and peasants movement. Contrary to Lenin, Gramsci therefore claimed that intellectuals must not solely be drawn from the intelligentsia, the professional intellectuals, they must not only form part of the vanguard revolutionary party, but also they have to emerge within and expand throughout the whole of the subaltern classes.

Following a humanistic perspective within Marxism, Gramsci considered that a “battle of ideas”, a conflict between two ideologies – on the one hand, the “hegemonic” ideology of the dominant social classes (northern industrialists and southern landowners) and, on the other hand, the revolutionary one belonging to the subaltern classes (northern workers and southern peasants) – has to operate in what he called a “war of position” within society or “civil society”, principally inside key educational and cultural institutions such as the school, churches, family, trade unions, political parties, in order that the revolutionary or Marxist ideology become in turn the new influential ideology at the expense of the actual and bourgeois one, a necessary victory to form a new “historical block” prior to the “war of manoeuvre”, the “frontal attack” led by the vanguard revolutionary party against the State or “political society” controlled by and associated with the ruling classes. In his view, the seizure of the State by the working class movement may be fully and definitively realised if and only if the working class beforehand succeeds to ideologically conquest the support of the society. And first of all, in this process, workers have to transform their own consciousness and abandon their “consent” to the hegemonic ideology of the actual ruling classes in favour of their sole class ideology. In this task, the role of the intellectuals and organic intellectuals, backed by newspapers and other theoretical organs for the expression and diffusion of Marxist ideas, is determinant to the extent that in the struggle between antithetic ideologies they are primarily confronted with intellectuals who defend the *status quo*. Gramsci’s

newspapers work in this direction. Thus, for him, the continuous domination of the capitalist class does not depend solely upon the relations of production or economic factors but also upon the support of the State through the use of coercion if necessary to maintain order and above all upon an ideological system ensured and diffused by institutions of civil society to obtain and keep over time the consent of the dominated classes. By stressing the political, cultural and symbolic aspects, what Marxists have usually named the superstructure, Gramsci distanced himself vis-à-vis the strict materialism of orthodox Marxism that especially paid a particular attention to the infrastructure, the economic basis of society (Gramsci, 1999 [1971]).

Alongside Marxist theories, structural-functionalism is another significant paradigm in the sociology of social movements.

Influenced by Talcott Parsons' structural-functionalism (1952), Neil Smelser (1962) identified four types of collective behaviour, each of them corresponding to an element of the vertical social systems. A social system, in their view, reflects institutionalised relations and is ordered according to four hierarchical levels of integration. At the top, there exist values. Then, at a lower level, one finds norms (or rules of social behaviour) that are defined out of values that occupy the highest hierarchical position in the scale of a social system. In turn, these norms determine the roles of actors, define the relations among these roles and establish incentives and sanctions in order to encourage the actors to follow their roles. This third level of a social system from the top that regards the social roles is what Smelser called "motivation" or "organisation". The last systemic level, situated at the bottom, concerns "situational facilities", that is, it is about actors' competence, knowledge, dispositions, which allow them to follow their respective roles. These are the main integrative and vertical elements that characterise every social system that appears as a unity of formal, organised and institutionalised relations, such as the school, companies, for instance, or society at large that is perceived as a sort of meta-system encompassing the whole of the systems.

Thus, similarly, for Smelser, collective behaviours strictly obey this taxonomy. First, following the same descending order, from the most abstract level to the most concrete and particular one, he considered that there are social movements oriented towards values, that is, there exist movements that seek to solve or relieve problems or tensions within social systems – what Smelser named "structural strain" and appears for him as the principal factor of the emergence of social movements or other forms of protest – by calling into question some values or the whole of the values that bear the given system. They are generally the most radical movements given that they attack the core of the system, the values being its highest

value, what sustains it. To a lesser degree, Smelser defined norms-oriented social movements, those that seek to ease tensions by transforming, this time, not the system of values of a system, but the normative structure of a system. These movements are therefore less extremist than the previous ones to the extent that their members consciously or unconsciously accept the underlying values of a system but reject some of its norms that paradoxically derive from these same values. In other words, they contest the material or concrete expression of the Idea through normativity, but not the Idea (values) in itself. Then, to a lesser extent, at the level of the “organisation”, he identified hostile and explosive disruptions or “outbursts” wherein an individual, a group or a particular institution are the targets because they are perceived by disrupters as being the source of their problems. Finally, at the bottom of the hierarchy, regarding “situational facilities”, situations of panic or euphoria (or “craze”) that create large crowd movements may disturb the immediate situation of the actors following given tensions or problems.

### **1.3: Pierre Bourdieu: Fields and social space:**

The concept of “field” (*champ*) is one of the core concepts of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology and anthropology alongside the related notions of “capital” and “habitus”.

According to Loïc Wacquant, by the use of the concept of field, which is also replaced sometimes by that of “space” (*espace*), Bourdieu operated an “epistemic shift” (*déplacement épistémique*), he distanced himself from the notion of structure – albeit he continued to employ it – and the diverse and associated variants of structuralism (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 9). Or, if one prefers, the notion of structure associated with that of field has acquired a semantic change within Bourdieu’s sociology. In this sense, history occupies a core position in Bourdieu’s studies insofar as he insisted upon the “dynamism”, “historical malleability” and a certain level of “indetermination” of every field in opposition with the “dehistoricisation” and “rigid determinism of classical structuralism” albeit he also highlighted some transhistorical and universal regularities or principles, determinations specific to the fields, and he did not fall at all within a sort of radical historical relativism. In other words, the concept of field allows to overcome the traditional opposition between structure and history by integrating both the dynamics of conservation (resistances to the change) and those of transformation or “subversion” (resistances to the *ordo rerum*) that enter



into a dialectical relation and define the configuration of a given field at a given time (*idem*: 25, 58, 66-69). In addition, Bourdieu's theory is less theoreticist than that of Talcott Parsons, for example, the paroxysmal form of the "theoreticist theory" in sociology, given that it essentially relies upon empirical materials.

Similarly, as vis-à-vis the notion of structure, by applying these concepts of field or social space, he removed the empty and vague notion of "society". He considered that "differentiated societies" or "social cosmos" consist of a set of structured microcosms (or field or space) – relatively autonomous each other, with their own rules, values, game (*jeu*), and issues and stakes (*enjeux*), each of them with their particular logic and necessity, albeit they are linked and share some common features – rather than as a single unified "totality" that would follow "a sole societal logic" (like "capitalism", "modernity" or "post-modernity") and that would be systematically and systemically integrated via common general functions, a shared culture, global struggles or a transcendent authority (*idem*: 24-26, 72-104).

Hence, for Bourdieu, more precisely, a field is "a set of historical objective relations among positions" whose determination depends upon the possession, in quantity and quality (or in volume and nature), of some kinds of capital (or powers or specific properties) by the "agents" (individuals or more or less institutionalised groups) that occupy these positions and are therefore involved in the "game" of a given field. Thus, "the structure of a field" rests upon "the structure of the distribution of the particular types of capital that are active" or "efficient" in this field.

The fields are also and especially spaces of competition, struggles or conflicts among the involved agents – each field possesses its own dominants and dominated, its "orthodoxes" and "heretics". And the game of a field, collectively acknowledged and played by some given agents (*collusio*), and the "investment in the game" ("*illusio*") at large consist for the concerned agents – according to the combination of their position in a field, their dispositions (resulting from their social origin and trajectory) and "the space of the possibilities" (*l'espace des possibles*) or "the space of the possible stances" offered by the structure of the field and "the space of the actual stances" – in struggling either for the maintenance of their position and correlatively of the structure of the objective social relations that characterises a given field – notably via "strategies of sociodicy" (*sociodicée*) that permit to rationally justify and legitimise their social domination by making it natural and fair and correlatively to refute antinomic arguments showing the opposite – or, to the contrary, for changing their position and consecutively affecting on their behalf the social configuration of a field through

“strategies” that obey the immanent logic of the game of a field or, *a contrario*, that question *eo ipso* the economy of the game (*idem*: 24-26, 31, 72-104).

In these struggles, social agents engage their respective types of capital, try to increase or maintain them, attempt to modify or support the distribution and the importance of the kinds of capital in play in order to gain or conserve the “monopoly” of the types of “efficient” and “specific capital” that confer the authority and supremacy in a given field. Bourdieu mainly distinguished four kinds of capital: economic capital (the same as that defined by economics), cultural capital (information, knowledge, skills), social capital (“resources” that stem from “an enduring network of relations and contacts”), and symbolic capital (social recognition, prestige or credit) that can be associated with each of the previous types of capital according to the field and the social importance that is ascribed to them in the field. For instance, in the economic field, this is obviously and above all the possession of economic capital that confers symbolic capital whilst, in the artistic field, this is especially the cultural capital that gives acknowledgement and status. Consequently, the relative importance of these sorts of capital and consecutively the hierarchy that is established among them depend upon and therefore vary according to the field and its evolution over time following the balance of power and confrontations among the agents.

In Bourdieu’s terms, the limits of a specific field stop when its effects stop, that is, when its immanent logic ceases to have repercussions on the social life to the extent that the borders of the fields are “dynamic” and “open” because the space of game that constitutes the fields is itself dynamic and open and since the borders of the fields are also themselves an issue of struggles within the fields among the agents. The effects of other fields on a field, or, more generally, the external determinations on a field are always modified or retranslated in this field – effect of “refraction” and not of mere “reflect” or copy – according to its own logic; the effect of refraction depends on the degree of autonomy, or, conversely, of heteronomy, of the given field in relation to other fields, and in particular the power field (the political and economic fields). The more its autonomy is high vis-à-vis other fields, the more the capacity of refraction or “retranslation” of external forces and constraints that possesses a field is high, and vice versa.

The concept of habitus makes reference to ways of being that are more or less enduring or permanent and transposable, to a set of “mental and somatic schemes of perception, appreciation and action” that corresponds to “a set of historical relations “deposited” (*déposées*) within” and interiorised by “individual bodies”, what therefore entails a homology between the cognitive or subjective structures and the external objective structures. In other

words, the habitus is “the social incorporated”, “a set of dispositions”, socially and historically acquired, which allow the agents to enter into the game of a particular field, to follow there a precise social trajectory, to know its principles of regulation and what is at stake – the “interests” taken in a wide meaning, that is, what is important following the Latin etymology, and not merely in an economic signification –, to develop, consciously and unconsciously, appropriate strategies or adequate modalities of behaviours and actions in order to move to their advantage in a given field. The habitus is therefore a “structuring and structured structure”, structured by some social fields and structuring inasmuch as it allows the agents to understand and know in practice these same fields, and eventually to act within them.

Thus, *in fine*, Bourdieu explained agents’ stances in a field, *les prises de position*, from the other stances in the field (the actual stances that constitute “the problematic” of the field), from their position in the same field and the space of positions (or their “point of view” from the point they occupy in a field, what makes reference to the objective structures of the field or the state of the distribution of the fundamental kinds of capital – the “phylogenesis”), from their dispositions (habitus) that are more or less adjusted to their position and the space of dispositions (the mental structures and corporeality that stem from their social origin and trajectory – the “ontogenesis”), and from the space of the structural possibilities (or “the system of objective potentialities”, the possible stances, given by the field) (*idem*: 24-26, 72-115).

During his scientific career, Bourdieu studied several fields and sub-fields, notably the school field, university field, scientific field, artistic field, literary field, economic field, political and power fields. We are not going to present here a sort of summary of the whole of these studies since this would oblige to overcome the mere limits of a single chapter. We shall examine rather his analyses on the scientific, literary, political and power fields; these two last fields being particularly significant in relation to our study although the whole of the fields in general share some common properties among them, as we saw it in the aforesaid definition, what give them an interest for our research, a heuristic quality, whatever their specific realm.

Within the university and scientific fields, Bourdieu considered that they are the place wherein two kinds of capital and power essentially enter into opposition: On the one hand, there exists a “university capital” that is a sort of “temporal” institutional (and institutionalised) capital or political capital relying upon the occupation of core positions within scientific institutions and allowing control over “the instruments of production and reproduction” of the academic field, and, on the other hand, he pointed out the “meritocratic”

capital that corresponds to the scientific ability recognised and accredited by the other scientists, both peers and rivals; consequently, the latter is a type of symbolic capital that is efficient in the scientific field. Albeit the forms of this opposition diverge according to the local and temporal situations, there is a fundamental tension between these two sorts of capital whatever the contexts given that the primacy of one of these kinds of capital tends to be realised at the expense of the other because they fundamentally follow two antithetic logics, and this is often the authority of the power and bureaucratic capital that is achieved to the detriment of the specific and scientific capital. Indeed, political capital obeys social, economic and political influences that are exterior to the scientific field, what makes it heteronomous and dependent on other social fields like the economic and politico-bureaucratic fields. By contrast, specific and scientific capital or the sole pure scientific competition among arguments and reasonings is constitutive of the specificity and autonomy of the scientific field. The latter may be hindered, and even prevented, by the former, that is, by exogenous forces and constraints. Moreover, specific and scientific capital entails invention and innovation, the progress of reason and knowledge, new forms of applications, what also implies ruptures and changes in relation to current presuppositions, whereas the temporal and temporary administrative capital tends to underlie a certain stability and routine in the representations and practices of the scientific field and the subsequent reproduction of current assumptions (Bourdieu, 1997, 1984; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 55-56).

In fact, in Bourdieu's view, the aforesaid general economy of the scientific field concerns under different degrees, but not of kinds, the whole of the fields of "cultural production", and notably the artistic field and its literary sub-field.

Indeed, the fields of cultural production are the places wherein "two principles of *hiérarchisation*" enter into conflict, "the heteronomous principle" versus "the autonomous principle". Consecutively, following these two principles, they are respectively divided into two principal sub-fields: a sub-field of large-scale production and a sub-field of restricted production. In the former, the agents or the producers have an important quantity of economic capital due to their strict connections with the external economic and political fields and, by contrast, little symbolic capital. Thus, economically and politically, temporally and temporarily, they dominate or aspire to dominate the fields of cultural production as a whole. The value of their economic capital depends upon their commercial and mundane success and the nature of their links with representatives of the economic and political powers, but, in any case, their compromise with the power field represented, in this situation, by the "non-professional cultural producers" has a price that is the loss of credit or prestige within the field

of cultural production because this compromise calls into question the major principle that runs the field and that is its *raison d'être* as autonomous field, that is, the principle of the “pure” culture, free from external interference, and the underlying “interest in disinterestedness” (“*l'intérêt au désintéressement*” – or the non-economic interest in economic disinterestedness that is linked to cultural and symbolic interests and profits, but also and paradoxically, at the end, even though its advocates do not always recognise it, to material benefits that remain, in any case, subordinate to the aforesaid interests and profits), and, in the case of the art, the principle of the “pure” art or “*l'art pour l'art*”. There is therefore an inversion of the interest between the field of cultural production and the power field. And, this is through what the advocates of *l'art pour l'art* or “the place of art as art” call “*l'art bourgeois*”, “commercial art”, or “social art”, depending on the type of the external power with which art is in collusion, that forces and constraints of the power field penetrate the artistic field. The autonomy of an entire field of cultural production is affected by its sub-field of large-scale production that, according to its properties, lacks autonomy. This explains why the fields of cultural production are always subjected more or less strongly, according to their degree of autonomy or the extent of their sub-field of restricted production that can impose its norms on the sub-field of large-scale production, to the power field that encompasses them. For this reason as well, cultural producers occupy a dominated position among the dominants within the power field. Contrary to the sub-field of large-scale production, within the sub-field of restricted production, the degree of autonomy is therefore higher and can be measured by the fact that the agents have little economic capital and *a contrario* a lot of symbolic capital; their products are strictly intended for their peers-competitors and their success solely depends upon them and their recognition, and not upon “*le grand public*” as applied to large-scale cultural producers. In this sub-field, there is also a hierarchy that is established according to the quantum of symbolic capital possessed by the agents. Among the artists who claim *l'art pour l'art*, at the top of the scale, there exists “the consecrated Avant-garde”, and, at the bottom, “the Bohemian Avant-Garde” that tries to challenge it (Bourdieu, 1998 [1992]: 207, 355-363).

A further and significant field wherein symbolic production and struggles are central is the political field. Within it, “political goods” or “products” are formed through the competition among the committed agents who have different powers or types of capital, that is, these goods are intellectual products that put forward “problems, programmes, analyses, comments, concepts, events”, and so forth. Like every field, the political field is both a place of balance of power and of struggles to determine the balance of power that gives to a given

field its structural configuration at a given time. In the same way as in the field of social sciences and the journalistic field, what is essentially at stake in these struggles is the clarifying and imposition of discourses, that is, of particular “principles of vision and division of the social world”, principles or ideas that have to become legitimate, good, so universal, and determine the actual or material structure of the society. In the case of the political field in particular, this imposition of singular principles, after a “competition for the monopoly of the legitimate manipulation of the political goods” or principles, is achieved, to a certain extent and during a certain period of time, once some agents take the state power insofar as, following the rules of the game of the political field, the seizure of state power concludes to some degree political struggle. On the one hand, the force of these principles relies on their veracity – like in social sciences and science in general, they have to be verified by factual truths or correspond to reality –, but especially, on the other hand, contrary to science (at least in principle), on their capacity to mobilise people – the force of “*idées-forces*” –, features that make the political character of these principles. In France, for instance, Bourdieu noted that the classical and dominant dichotomy between “the rich people” and “the poor people” that prevailed in the political field and through it in the whole of the social space had been substituted by another major taxonomy and opposition, that between “the national” or “French people” and “the foreigners”, with the emergence and affirmation of the *Front National* party (an extreme rightist party) in the political landscape, a phenomenon that appears, without doubt, to differing extents, in most of Western democracies.

The political field increasingly tends to withdraw into itself. Albeit politicians are regularly accountable to their constituents, especially during periodic elections that determine their presence in politics, the political game is above all realised among politicians, or, more generally, among political agents, a wider social category that includes all type of political professionals like political journalists (especially from television) and pollsters alongside politicians. This is the antinomy of “the political representation” or “delegation” that shows that the political field, a particular microcosm, follows its own logic, possesses its specific issues and interests, has a certain autonomy, alongside its heteronomous dimension that stems from its periodic dependency on the social space in general or “social macrocosm”; dialectic, as we have observed, characterising most of, if not all, the fields according to Bourdieu. Thus, the distance and separation between political agents, known and acknowledged, converted into a class of professionals on its own, and the mere citizens, who have not the means, skills and are not accepted to enter into the political game orchestrated by the former, become deeper and deeper even though the rupture cannot be total insofar as the existence of

politicians in Western democracies still rests upon the vote of their constituents. The political production has come to be the privileged and exclusive realm of the political professionals, the mass of citizens having to settle for “consuming” predefined products, for choosing among a finite range of available options pre-established by the former, with all possible “misunderstandings” that increase with the rise of the distance between political producers and consumers. And, if some citizens attempt to play the political game, their actions are likely to be judged as “irresponsible” by the professionals in politics and, through their social influence, by a part of the other citizens. This “concentration of the means of political production” by a class of professionals, completely dedicated to politics and trained in specific schools like Sciences Po. or ENA in France, therefore entails the political “dispossession” and “alienation” of the majority of ordinary citizens who do not have the sufficient competence to form part of the political field. In this sense and through this “symbolic power” or “violence” that the professionals in politics seek to monopolise and impose as legitimate, the political field is akin to the religious field in which there is “a tendency to the concentration of the access to the means of legitimate manipulation of the world vision” by a small group of clerics excluding the mass of laypersons.

However, people, notably through the organisation of social movements, regularly contest the political game of the political field, attempt to participate in it and, consequently, to expand its limits and definition by trying to integrate it. This is done despite the potential and probable accusations of irresponsibility, “Poujadism” and “populism” that their acts attract because they are not admitted by the relatively close circle of the professionals of politics (a further core issue of struggles in the political field regards its borders that are never definitively fixed). In these occasions, they call into question the principles of vision and division of the social world promoted and imposed by the institutional and official political agents and try to put forward and consecrate their own principles, to realise “a revolution of principles” (or at least to change them to some degree) with the material consequences that these transformations entail at the level of the space of positions of the political field and within the organisation of the social space in general. A transformation of these principles generally leads to a new economy of the distribution of the positions that structure the political field with social repercussions in the other social fields. In this case, this may notably generate a certain social ascension of the social movements in the political field in particular and the social space at large. Within these symbolic and political struggles (symbolic because the agents use signs, ideas to reach the legitimate right to manipulate symbols and ideas, and eventually to have the monopoly of this manipulation, and political since the used and

manipulated ideas are not solely mere pure ideas and true ideas but are *de facto* thrusts – “*idées-forces*” –, ideas that entail the mobilisation and action of people, a certain societal organisation and social stratification), the force and finally the more or less intense success of social movements depend on their possession of “social resources” that are unevenly distributed among the actual and potential agents of the political field. Among these resources, political capital is a determinant type that can be ensured, to a certain extent, by professionals of politics or spokespersons (“*portes-paroles*”) who have integrated these movements and work as mediators within their movements, and between these movements and the institutional and official political field thanks to their knowledge of this field and their social recognition, to some degree, by this same field.

But, generally, social movements lack political capital, the capital that is efficient and active in the political field, a type of symbolic capital that rests upon the fame and reputation of the agents or upon the way to be perceived, known and recognised – notability –, to a large extent, this is because they do not have adequately “competent” professionals of politics or spokespersons on their side, that is, the latter do not have strong enough political capital (or good fame and reputation) or, at least, they are relatively unfamiliar with the journalistic and political fields and consequently are unable to generate actions and create events that have really positive political effects within the mediatico-political fields from the point of view of activists (for Bourdieu, an agent exists in a given field if and only if he has effects on this field by his acts). This situation also explains why social movements occupy a position of dominated in the political field when they are not simply excluded from it.

Nevertheless, more recent social movements have compensated, to some extent, for this lacuna with another significant capital albeit it cannot completely substitute political capital. Indeed, these movements have the particularity to own a lot of cultural capital, the paradigmatic instance being the American students social movements against the war in Vietnam in the 1970s, movements that had little political capital but, thanks to their strong cultural capital that visibly appeared in the media through their rich repertoire of demonstrations, notably by the quality and intensity of their artistic and symbolic expressions, they succeeded in gaining the support of a large part of the American people and beyond, and eventually contributed to the change of the US foreign policy and the end of the war (Bourdieu, 2000: 14-24, 39-40, 55-74).



#### **1.4: Presuppositions and conclusions:**

I shall accept in the present research the generic definition of social movements proposed notably by McCarthy and Zald, that is to say, I shall consider social movements as more or less organised groups of people seeking a certain social change. This is a quite large definition but precisely in this sense it has the main merit of not being too restrictive or exclusive. It prevents from excluding *de jure* groups that *de facto* form part of social movements. However, it is not at all lax and therefore poses a certain limit by not including the whole of social groupings. Only those that aim for some societal transformation are taken into account, given that if every social group was a social movement, ultimately, nothing would be social movement. This is therefore the elementary criterion of social movements that we have chosen here and will be developed over this study, notably through the “structures” (following chapters of this part), the praxes (part II) and the “ontology” of social movements (part III).

Moreover, I shall also apply in the following pages at the level of the analysis of the empirical material some concepts put forward by the previous theorists like those relative to the determination of actor types.

Gramsci’s theses on the formation of the intellectuals – the potentiality and actuality of “organic intellectuals” within every social class and the related capacity for everyone to be an intellectual – form part of theories that have highlighted cognition among people in general and among militants in particular, some of these theories will be examined in the following parts II and III, parts that will give a special emphasis on this concept of cognition given its saliency to understand and explain social movements but also more generally most of social phenomena. Nonetheless, as we shall see in the part II on the praxes of social movements, the Gramscian and Marxist conception more globally tends to focus on instrumental or utilitarian reason. Indeed, in this view, people essentially act and think or must act and think according to their class interests or socio-economic position – a type of knowledge that, despite its importance according to the social situations, inevitably leaves aside other fundamental cognitive aspects. This same criticism may be addressed to the metonymic representation of rationality advocated by resources mobilisation theorists and political process modellers, representation that also considers rationality from the strict point of view of teleological rationality.

The concept of field or space, such as it is put forward by Bourdieu, is more flexible and labile; it can adapt more to the reality of contingencies (beyond the necessities) and of temporal-spatial or situational variations than the concept of structure (such as it is promoted by Parsons and Smelser's structural-functionalism) that is *a contrario* more rigid and that often seems to give the imperfect idea of an immutable, inert or fossilised reality that does not undergo any significant changes over history.

However, the notion of field such as it is employed by Bourdieu tends to highlight the relations of domination, social hierarchies, conflicts and vertical links at the expense of the horizontal relations, bonds of association and solidarity, alliances or social networks, which are so essential in the field of social movements that are irreducible to links of struggles and oppositions even though, by definition, the latter are also determinant given that, as aforesaid, social movements seek a certain social change and through this objective they ineluctably face adversaries on their way. It is therefore important to integrate both the agonistic relations and the non-agonistic links in the description and analysis of social movements and their social space or field.

Moreover, I prefer to use the concept of actor, subject or individual rather than that of agent preferred by Bourdieu to the extent that, as mentioned above, I start from the assumption, which will be above all verified in the two last parts of the research, that the reflexive and cognitive aspect is essential to understand and explain collective actions of the members of social movements. In other words, the idea of agent gives less space for auto-reflexivity or self-knowledge than those of actor, subject or individual because it places greater stress on the dependence of the action of the acting agent vis-à-vis a transcendent authority; an agent, by definition, acts above all on behalf of others (individuals or institutions) and consequently his action is less determined by his own will and thought.

In a similar vein, close to the notion of agent, the concept of habitus, being defined as a set of agents' dispositions to think and act that are determined by the social milieus wherein they are situated, points out that agents' subjective, mental or cognitive structures, their schemes of perception and appreciation, are fundamentally shaped by the objective structures in which they are inserted. This concept, like that of agent, therefore leaves less room for the reflexive and critical part of the own actors.

Within the political field and in a more abstract way or more generally inside the power field, social movements and their actors occupy a position of "dominated", they are located at the bottom of the heap of these fields, contrary to the established political institutions (inter-state and state institutions, public local administrations, political parties) that obviously

occupy in order of importance the dominant positions and against which they enter into conflict more or less overtly due to their divergent positions and “interests” (taken in Bourdieu’s sense).

Social movements’ actions, to speak with Bourdieu, are perceived as “irresponsible”, “Poujadist” and “populist acts” carried out by “laypersons” excluded from the official and institutional political game or the political field in the eyes of “the professionals of politics” (and through them, the influence of the political field and its *doxa* in the eyes of a large part of the common *doxa*), who are sorts of “clerics” wishing to keep for themselves the “sacred” (made sacred and regarded as sacred) and relatively close space of the political field, thereby contesting any intrusion, judged as “illegitimate”, in the field from “the uninitiated people”.

Social movements’ actors, in Bourdieu’s language again, are “heretics” who call into question dominant political agents’ “orthodoxy”; they refute their “principles of vision and division of the social world” and oppose them their own principles, their “*nomos*” or “fundamental law”.

Activists of social movements have essentially two kinds of capital they use to attempt to change or improve their position, to transform on their behalf the structure of the objective social relations: cultural capital, especially under the form of knowledge (this is what we shall explore more largely in the two last parts of the research by showing the importance of cognitive praxes and rationality within social movements), and social capital that expresses and stems from a broad set of social relations, or, if one prefers, it represents and is a result of social networks or nexus. Notwithstanding, they especially lack economic capital (*id est* money, material equipment, infrastructures) and political capital, the type of specific and symbolic capital that is efficient or active in the political field (and more exactly, under the form of social status or political credit acknowledged by the actors of the political field and the rest of society). Precisely, in part, the struggles of social movements through the use of the main sorts of capital they have at their disposal, cultural and social capital, aim to increase their economic capital (and some movements also seek to improve in part wages and material conditions of the labour and *in extenso* of the life alongside material profits for their organisation) and politico-symbolic capital (for these same movements, more narrowly, this is also necessary to improve the social status of their members and beneficiaries of their actions, to allow them to have a more socially valorised work, and, at large, for them and the other movements, it is determinant to realise “a revolution of principles” and impose their political ideas, pure ideas, true ideas and *idées-forces* – through political and symbolic struggles against other political actors of the political field and via the mediation of professionals in

politics or spokespersons – regarding the economy of the City, the *polis*, on the society); the improvement of these two latter kinds of capital has to lead to an ascendant mobility within the political field and consecutively the power field beyond the direct and immediate advantages for militants. This accumulation of capital (in quantity and quality) and the related change of positions on their behalf within these fields are likely to generate new sorts of capital and a new improvement in the scale of the positions. This is the case, for instance, when some social movements convert into political parties, like some ecologist movements in Europe that have become Green parties.

However, as we shall observe in more detail in the last two parts of this research, the search for these two kinds of capital and for other powers that are pertinent in relation to their field, the search for the transformation, on their behalf, of the space of positions wherein they are located and of the linked objective social relations, and more generally, as we said, instrumental or teleological rationality do not explain, albeit they are central, all actions, behaviours and beliefs of activists; other dimensions of rationality are also determinant and will be thus explored alongside a-rational motives.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The organisation, actors and context of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements**

#### **2.1: The context of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements: Brief social history and structures:**

According to Boaventura Sousa de Santos (1984: 17-22), the Carnation Revolution in Portugal – 25 April 1974 – was immediately followed by the “explosion” of the “largest and deepest” “popular social movement”, not only in the history of Portugal but also in Europe after the Second World War. This event is therefore a core date in the social history and history of social movements in Portugal. This movement that lasted with such a magnitude until November 1975 was very heterogeneous and “complex” in its composition and reached a wide range of diverse sectors of Portuguese social life. Among its most important members, there were “the urban proletariat (especially from the industrial periphery of Lisbon), the small wage-earning bourgeoisie situated in the big and medium-sized cities and the rural proletariat from Alentejo”. It focused and impacted on a wide array of realms within Portuguese society: “local administration, urban housing, management of companies, education, culture and new modes of life, land reform, relations of domination and subordination in the country, etc., etc.”. It greatly participated in the definition of the new political system, notably by challenging and thwarting to a certain extent the plans of the

“industrial-financial bourgeoisie”, which aspired to consolidate its “hegemony” in the new government.

Notwithstanding, nowadays, according to some scholars, associations, political commitment and social movements would remain weak in Portugal in relation to other European countries.

For Elísio Estanque (2007), Portuguese associationism would be particularly low, one of the worst in Europe. Moreover, it would have followed an inverse trend in comparison with most European countries. Indeed, in Estanque’s view, while since the beginning of the 1990s associative and political participation would have increased in many European countries, in Portugal, by contrast, it would have relentlessly decreased. He explains this Portuguese peculiarity by the “mentality” of Portuguese people, peculiar as well, which he qualifies of “anachronistic” because it would remain “marked by the traces of servility and the fear of power”. This would be about “a mentality not very open to the search for autonomy and risk taking”. Because Portuguese people would still be affected by the period of Salazarism, democratic and civic practices, notably direct social participation in politics, would be moribund or not really active in Portugal (Estanque, 2007: 200). Whereas at the time of the re-emergence of democracy social movements were particularly dynamic and greatly contributed to this resurrection, from the consolidation of the republic, social action would have largely diminished, the exercise of citizenship would have been centred almost exclusively upon the exercise of voting during elections. Nonetheless, even this latter democratic practice, the most conventional one, would tend itself to be in jeopardy because of growing absenteeism (*idem*: 205). In brief, for this author, social movements in Portugal are therefore “weak and rare”. Apparently, according to his own words, only the labour movement among the whole of the movements in Portugal would have been the most active since the last decades, but, including this movement would be very fragile today. Furthermore, it would not be really a citizen movement because it would be strictly controlled and used by political parties. Thus, the gloominess of current Portuguese social movements would radically contrast with the vitality of the past movements which followed the Carnation Revolution (*idem*: 206, Estanque, 2006).

Moreover, until 25 April 1974, the so-called “new social movements” (that is, all the movements that are not the labour movement and that emerged and expanded in the Western countries in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the ecologist, feminist, peace movements) were, by contrast, “non-existent” or, at best, extremely rudimentary in Portugal given the political situation of “persecution” and “repression” of social movements (“old” and “new”) under

Salazar's regime. With the 25 April, it was mainly the "traditional" or "old social movements", the workers' movement and the democratic movement, which became visible on the national political landscape, thereby effectively converting themselves into the "new social movements" in Portugal instead of the "true" new social movements that have spread in other Western countries. In addition, following the Carnation Revolution, most of the collective actions of protest tended to be recuperated and exploited by different political parties for their own objectives, a tendency that still affects many forms of such actions today (Estanque, 1999: 102-103).

According to Marinús Pires de Lima and Cristina Nunes (2008a, 2007: 128-130, 2004), the first significant alter-globalisation mobilisation in Portugal occurred in June 2003 during the organisation of the Portuguese Social Forum, a national and local version of the emblematic and media-related World Social Forum, by various social movements and associations, namely "feminists, ecologists, homosexuals, farmers, trade-unionists, groups of human rights, associations against financial speculation and for the regulation of capital flows, young people and intellectuals". In the same way as for the World Social Forum, the main watchword of the Portuguese initiative was that "another world is possible". Nonetheless, the Portuguese version added a local component by also claiming that "another Portugal is possible". The main objective of this forum was therefore for the organisers and participants to think about the links between neoliberal globalisation and the Portuguese context. Although in theory it was open to the whole of the public, in practice, this event was especially attended by young and highly trained people (aged between 19 and 35 and with diplomas of higher education), occupying a qualified job. A second Portuguese Social Forum was organised only three years later, in 2006, unlike the World Social Forum that is held every year, because of the "immaturity" and "weaknesses of Portuguese social movements", features that are linked to a large extent to the continuous attempts at appropriation and instrumentalisation of these movements by leftist political parties and trade unions according to Lima and Nunes, and features that did not therefore allow the establishment of an annual forum. Besides, the second meeting was much less attended than the first one: According to the figures put forward by these authors, there were "237 organisations" in 2003 whilst in 2006 only 100 organisations were present.

Furthermore, Lima and Nunes (2008b) assert that the alter-globalisation movement in Portugal cannot be really considered as a social movement because it would not be a "historical or political movement" yet to the extent that it would solely have a "critical

function” and it would lack a “positive meaning” linked to a clear and shared vision of a realistic project of society.

However, contrary to the aforesaid propositions, one of the aims of this study is to show that Portuguese social movements, and correlatively citizen participation in social and political life in Portugal, are not so weak, low, the worst or other devaluating epithets and predicates, especially from a qualitative point of view. In this sense, the empirical work, in the following pages and other chapters of this research, will allow us to observe the positive dimensions and richness of Portuguese activism, including by mainly focusing upon three concrete social movements through a fieldwork or an ethnographical approach.

## **2.2: “Another world is possible”, “another ECON is possible”:**

ECON is “an association of non-partisan and global political intervention”<sup>1</sup>. In December 2002, Portuguese militants organised the first national meeting of the movement in which its statutes and action programme were conceived.

According to its legal statutes, the Portuguese platform is “a non-profit association, with an unlimited number of associates, undetermined capital and indefinite duration”.

In these same statutes, the different types of associates or members are defined. There, three kinds of associates are identified: “*Associados efectivos*” (effective associates), “*associados beneméritos*” (benefactor associates) and “*associados honorários*” (honorary associates). The first category concerns “individual persons who or collective entities that enjoy the rights that ECON confers through the payment of the regularly overdue membership fees”. The benefactor associates are “individual persons who, for services or important gifts, are considered as such after deliberation by the General Assembly and following the proposal by the Executive Committee”. The last mentioned category refers to “the individual persons who, for significant services accomplished in connection with the purposes pursued by ECON, deserve this honour, after deliberation by the General Assembly and following the proposal by the Executive Committee”. From a strictly statutory point of view, these three sorts of associates do not seem to have the same rights and duties before the association. During the study, it was not possible to quantify the number of associates or members; this

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<sup>1</sup> ECON’s texts.



information was not given by the association, partly because it was considered as a confidential and strictly internal datum, but especially because the association itself did not have a clear and exact measure due to its own structure that is labile as we shall see thereafter.

These statutes also regulate the admission requirements, that is, the way to become an effective associate. In fact, the requirements are not so restrictive, the conditions of eligibility are rather open. Restrictions on entry only regard some specific organisations. Thus, “effective associates can be every individual who or collective entity that agrees with ECON’s statutes”, except “political parties, organisations that defend economic interests of the capital or organisations with a religious character”. Concretely, to become an effective associate, the candidate or his legal representative has to apply for admission to the Executive Committee, an application that must be accompanied by a proposal stemming from an associate “in full exercise of his rights”. The General Assembly, after deliberation, has to decide to accept or refuse the admission within a maximum period of one month. The candidate receives the response in the following fifteen days. In case of refusal, the candidate always has the possibility of appealing to the following General Assembly.

ECON is divided into three “social organs” if one still reads its statutes: The “General Assembly”, “Executive Committee” and “Audit Committee”. Alongside these core and permanent organs, the members of the movement may establish organisational structures that are related to a geographical area, topics or projects. In this sense, among the most significant organisational structures, one may mention the “Scientific Council” that was created by the Executive Committee after deliberation, the “Advisory Body of the Collective Associates” composed of all the collective entities that are members and that have to obligatorily meet at least once a year, diverse “working groups” or “special commissions” formed by the General Assembly or the Executive Committee for a limited duration in order to carry out some specific tasks.

The General Assembly, beyond being composed of all the associates, owns a “*Mesa*” (board) that comprehends four members: A president, vice-president and two secretaries. This social organ is responsible for the policies of the movement – economic, social, cultural policies –, that is, it defines ECON’s actions and ensures its statutes and rules are respected. It also elects and dismisses the members of the social organs by secret ballot. Its meetings are “ordinary” or “extraordinary”. The former regularly take place at the end or beginning of each year. The latter are exceptionally organised after convocation from the president of the *Mesa* and following the demand of the Executive Committee, Audit Committee or at least 5% of the associates. Decisions are usually taken by simple majority of votes.

The Executive Committee must have between eleven and seventeen members. Regularly, they have to meet at least once every two months. It is in charge of the general administration of the movement. The Audit Committee that is formed by three members has the function of controlling the decisions and actions of the two other organs in order to check that they respect requirements that are internal and external to the movement.

Notwithstanding, if its legal statutes seem to give the image of a movement that is very structured, ordered, institutionalised, with a well defined division of labour, in practice, the members of the movement do not strictly follow their own first normativity, firstly, because of material constraints, that is, essentially because the movement does not sufficiently have permanent members to cover all the positions of its formal entities that they have themselves created. The theoretical economy of their movement or the formalisation *de jure* is not therefore realised *de facto*, what actually leads them to carry out a re-elaboration of its economy as well as to reinvent their system of organisational values and norms, their immanent policy.

Indeed, during the ethnography, the principal permanent activists of ECON Portugal composed the Executive Committee of the movement and among them there were especially Basilio, Helena, Eduardo, Victor, and Sofia. Basilio is not only a key actor in ECON Portugal, he is also active in other movements. Helena, alongside ECON Portugal, is involved in parents' movements that defend public school because, as she claimed, she has children and grandchildren and therefore has a direct interest in the matter<sup>2</sup>.

Practically, the central organ that runs the movement is therefore the Executive Committee, which is composed of the main and most active members. The policies and actions of the movement rely in large measure on this section and their representatives. There are a few individuals involved. The members of the Executive Committee normally change every two years, they are not always the same ones. There are regularly new elections that imply a turnover of executives. Alongside the permanent members of the Executive Committee, there are effectively the whole of the associates who are more or less involved in the movement, notably through the regular organisation of assemblies or gatherings. In this sense, Basilio stated that:

**In ECON, we hold general meetings regarding the decision-making and the policy of the movement. Not all the associates really participate in them; some of them tend to give only, from a strictly official point of view, their obligatory economic contribution of membership. In practice, at the level of ECON's management, these are only the nine**

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Basilio and Helena, 25 March 2010.

**members of the Executive Committee [this number is less than the number that appears in the legal statutes as we saw above] who are constantly active. They are the permanent members of the movement – in reality, eight members because there is one who is ill and stays at home all the time. We nonetheless have regular and sporadic general meetings with all the members, or with almost all the members of the movement. The sporadic meetings tend to occur when some particular events crop up<sup>3</sup>.**

He told me that, for this purpose, ECON members were expecting the opening of new premises because until now they did not have a permanent place to stay. It was forecast to open on 16 April 2010<sup>4</sup>.

Alongside its permanent and intermittent effective members who run the movement, ECON has also sympathisers who are not effective members of the movement, who are not officially associated, but they are constantly informed of its activities via its newsletter sent by e-mails and they can participate in most of its actions, like during sit-ins or demonstrations. Formally situated outside the movement, they are people who approve its philosophy and praxes and can easily and unofficially integrate into it on various occasions. None of them, associates and sympathisers, are direct beneficiaries of its actions.

If militants of ECON consider that “another world is possible” – their main motto, the same one that is advanced by the alter-globalisation movement on the whole –, they also claim that another related change can be achieved, an immanent change that can contribute to the realisation of the former that is transcendent. Thus, as they said in their “programme 2009-2010”, “another ECON is possible – we are going to build it!”.

According to Basilio, ECON Portugal was very strong when the war in Iraq broke out. In his view, the movement was very active at the beginning of its existence, principally between 2001 and 2003, with big mobilisations, significant demonstrations, but after these first “golden years”, it has lost its intensity and militancy has to some extent decreased within it. He wished, along with other “*companheiros*” (companions), to give more strength to the movement<sup>5</sup>.

In the aforesaid programme written by the associates elected to the governing bodies, it was acknowledged that the movement had suffered somewhat from “a mobilisation crisis” since a few years. To face this relative “crisis”, they highlighted the necessity of reinforcing the collective, doing more actions as a group, fostering close relationships with the associates,

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<sup>3</sup> Interview, 24 April 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 25 March 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Idem.

what implied more effectively integrating all activists who did not occupy positions in the Executive Committee into the activities of the movement.

In addition, to face and compensate for their lack of permanently active adherents, the actual members of the movement work above all in network, both with other movements belonging to ECON and with others that are external to it.

In the “programme 2009-2010”, they also emphasised the obligation to come closer to ECON’s international network and take part in common actions, and the duty to encourage links with national networks wherein different movements participate, essentially in order to “mobilise people without draining the human resources of the Executive Committee”.

Alongside these pragmatic reasons – finding practical solutions to respond to the challenges created by the lack of constant associates –, according to them, their movement does not strictly follow its own legal statutes because of political values as well. In their eyes, this is “a new organisation, structured in accordance with the idea of network and not in line with the vertical principle of hierarchy, existing thanks to the diversity, accountability and autonomy of its activists”. They claim that “another world is possible” but for such a change they stress that “it is necessary to multiply local struggles and globalise resistance”<sup>6</sup>. Thus, functioning in networks is not only a practical solution to the lack of permanent militants, this also obeys inner ethical principles.

In this sense, ECON is close to several Portuguese local movements with which it regularly participates in several common actions and maintains links, such as, among the most significant movements, PRECC, SOS, the LGBT movement, VERDE. PRECC, SOS and VERDE will also be studied in the present research.

The movement nowadays shares its premises with the critical and leftist newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique Edição Portuguesa*. Finally, after several months searching and expecting, ECON members found a physical place where they could permanently establish their movement. The forecast date to enter in the new premises was, as we said before, 16 April 2010, but, in the end, ECON moved into the building in the following month of May. The movement has become closer to its partner as a result of the move<sup>7</sup>.

*Acampada*<sup>8</sup> *Lisboa*, in which ECON participated, stemmed from an international initiative that simultaneously united a wide range of social movements all around the world, essentially during Spring 2011, as the *I Manifesto do Rossio* (I Rossio Manifesto) written by

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<sup>6</sup> ECON’s texts.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Basilio, 1 June 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, this word means accommodated in a camp.

*Acampada Lisboa*'s activists stated it: "We therefore join those who today struggle around the world and outside for their rights".

For the militants of ECON, their movement is "at the core of the alter-globalisation movement" (*movimento altermundialista*), it has "the vocation of alter-globalisation association of non-partisan political intervention"<sup>9</sup>.

Elsewhere, they also stressed that economic and social change may occur thanks to the actions of social movements and their association at the world level: "Only through social movements, well internationally articulated, we can build a world economy immune to the successive crises" as it appeared in ECON Portugal's tracts, especially in those seeking to get new members. In these same tracts, the solidarity among social movements was emphasised with the reproduction of Pablo Picasso's painting, *Two Women Running on the Beach (The Race)*, which was chosen by Basilio for its esthetical and symbolic qualities. In this famous painting, as the title suggests, one can see two women who are running hand in hand. In the same way, by analogy, social movements should "run" together, and the whole of activists, hand in hand. Hence, ECON is involved in larger "citizenship movements", it "participated in the animation of the Portuguese Social Forum and in the global struggle against the invasion of Iraq in 2003"<sup>10</sup>.

Basilio told me that ECON Portugal has less direct relations with the original movement, ECON France, and its members have especially developed some contacts with ECON Spain within "ECON World"<sup>11</sup>.

ECON was first created in France in 1998. Thereafter, what its members name "a network of platforms" has been constituted in various countries all around the world. Indeed, the movement, after its birth, quickly expanded around the world in few years, what converts ECON into one of the main alter-globalist social movements in many countries, and it now constitutes a large social network spanning the world. This is not due only to the expansion of ECON but also to the social nexus that the movement has succeeded in creating with other alter-globalist social movements. The Portuguese ECON platform appeared one year later, in 1999. ECON Portugal therefore forms part of "ECON's international network". All the national platforms share the same primary values and objectives albeit their common positions do not prevent them from pursuing and developing their own specificities – actions,

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<sup>9</sup> ECON Portugal's tract especially aiming to gain new support and adherents.

<sup>10</sup> ECON Portugal's tracts.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, 6 September 2010.

discourses, short-term goals – according to their local context. In other words, this internationalisation has not impeded each national ECON to have their autonomy.

In this sense, its Portuguese members may state that “ECON is an international network, existing in more than forty countries, and intended to act at the world level, claim that is not solely a matter of ambition of an universal idea, but that is actually a matter of fact”<sup>12</sup>.

The Internet appears as a determinant tool that contributes to build, develop and maintain these networks. It is considered as a primary instrument of communication and information that can help to establish and consolidate actual or physical networks among the social movements and their diverse allies all around the world as well as to invent virtual networks essentially existing through itself and also all around the world. If it is a practical tool that is necessary for the formation of social networks, and, *in fine*, for militancy and social change, militants of ECON nonetheless acknowledge that it is not sufficient and that it is even less an end in itself. Following their reasoning, nowadays, there is no longer or there can no longer be militancy or activism without the use of the Internet’s potentialities by militants, activists or related social groups and entities – where there are political and social mobilisations, now, there is normally to some degree different forms of collective applications of the Internet that have come to be a social condition, more or less determinant according to the circumstances, of these mobilisations –, but, nevertheless, for all that, the Internet alone is not the be all and end all for political and social militancy or activism.

Thus, the governing bodies’ “programme 2009-2010” pointed out the decisive importance of the Internet in order “to stimulate discussion”, “to actualise, translate and diffuse actions and documents stemming from the international network”, “to present specific contributions of national specialists, academics, trade unionists, and so forth”, namely all of this occurs through ECON’s blog, Facebook in which there is “a group of international ECON with more than 2500 members”, and Hi5. Notwithstanding, if ECON’s activists stressed “the will to explore the wide space of the Internet” that “offers a huge potential”, they also acknowledge that these “virtual communities” or “forums” “cannot substitute other methods of communication, more present”.

To show more the role of the Internet, and, more generally, that of the media, the centrality of networks, key actors in this movement and elsewhere, as well as the necessity of continuously searching for new militants and resources, I may quote the following examples that I personally experienced in an active way, by doing “participant observation” following

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<sup>12</sup> ECON’s texts.

the concept shaped by the methodological theory of anthropology, and not only as a mere distant scientific observer.

I registered to ECON's newsletter during March 2010. I soon received an e-mail from it announcing the organisation of a popular dinner (*jantar popular*), on Thursday 25 March 2010, at the social centre (*centro social*) situated at this time in the quarter of *Mouraria*, by the ecologist and social movement VERDE with the participation of ECON Portugal.

In the e-mail, it was stipulated that they were seeking volunteers for helping to prepare the meal. The usual policy is who helps does not pay. Those who pay because they could not help pay only three euros.

I replied to the e-mail sent by Basilio, one of the main leaders of ECON Portugal as we said before, and I committed myself as a volunteer. We arranged a date for 4.15 p.m. at *Praça Martim Moniz* in front of a police station (it seemed strange that a social movement's militant proposed such a place as meeting place). The popular dinner was planned to start at 8.30 p.m. and we had to be at the social centre from 4.30 for being able to help in the various defined tasks. This day, I arrived at the meeting point on time. However, as by 4.20 p.m. Basilio had not yet arrived, I decided to call him. He replied that he was coming by car and that the meeting point had changed. It was no longer in front of the police station of the area but a few steps in front of the shopping centre. Some minutes later, I was there and in the middle of the traffic, a car stopped on the right-hand side. The front door opened and I quickly jumped inside the vehicle without thinking. It was by this unexpected and amazing way I met for the first time Basilio, in his thirties. He was driving and at the back seat, behind him, there was Eduardo, a doctor, in his fifties. While we went to VERDE's social centre, we introduced ourselves and exchanged a few words. Basilio had a black and thick beard and wore a jacket. ECON and VERDE are movements that have come to be closer. They sometimes organise social events together. Almost every Thursday, Basilio and his girlfriend Rosa went to have a dinner in VERDE's premises<sup>13</sup>.

As a volunteer in the popular dinner, I had to cut a plethora of vegetables during some hours, my unique activity and that of other volunteers at that moment like Basilio. Mara and Anna, two core activists of VERDE, dealt with the cooking of the diverse and numerous vegetables, which were placed into big pots.

On 22 April 2010, ECON's members organised a sit-in in front of the post office located in *Restauradores* in order to publicly send letters to the Prime Minister at this time,

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<sup>13</sup> Interview, 22 April 2010.

José Socrates, asking him not to privatise the post (*correios CTT*). The publicity of the action was principally made through ECON's newsletter, which is regularly sent by e-mail to those who want to receive it, such as associates, sympathisers and others. Television cameras were present during the event and an activist, the head of communication within the movement, was interviewed by a TV journalist. Basilio and his girlfriend Rosa were the main activists who distributed letters, addressed to Socrates, to the people who passed on the street or entered and exited the post office, who sold them stamps and then invited them to send their letters to the Prime Minister. The rest of the few present activists were more passive. They discussed together and especially waited for the moment when Basilio was going to tell them to post in group their letters in front of a television camera. At the end of the protest, not all the letters were sent. A large full box remained. The militants divided up these letters among them to distribute later. Basilio voluntarily took the biggest pack.

*In fine*, there were therefore few members of ECON and participants. As Basilio said, "in practice, ECON is a small structure"<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, despite this characteristic of ECON that was reflected for example in this protest, Basilio remained anyway satisfied with the event and more particularly with its sequence, notably thanks to the presence of the media and more precisely of the television, which contributed to make the movement and its actions known by broadcasting them on the evening news or the day after.

Publicity, this is what is sought by Basilio and ECON's members in general because this publicity thanks to the media may give more weight and scope to their movement and actions. This can compensate to a certain extent for some of the limits they face, such as the reduced number of constant effective militants.

During this same event, Basilio told me that two policemen, who watched the sit-in, asked him when he was distributing letters to bystanders if he and the other people present formed part of the organisation that was authorised to be here, that is, ECON Portugal. He replied yes and the policemen immediately congratulated him and approved this initiative by claiming that in their respective home village the local post office was already closed because of the beginning of its process of privatisation. Basilio remained pleasantly surprised of this happening. In some situations, the social control, the agents representing the institutions responsible for the social order and owning the power and monopoly to use "legitimate violence" if they judge that this social order is socially threatened, to speak with Max Weber, can convert themselves, conversely, into social support, not always active but at least

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<sup>14</sup> Interview, 22 April 2010.



sympathising, for militancy and eventually for social change that ineluctably contests to some degree the *status quo*.

On 24 April 2010, in pre-25 April a sit-in organised by various social movements in the square at the *Miradouro São Pedro de Alcântara*, militants of these movements installed their “*banca*<sup>15</sup>” (stall) close to each other. Basilio prepared his small stall and put on it the usual objects that serve to promote ECON vis-à-vis the public: tee-shirts, badges, bags with ECON aphorisms and logotype, prospectuses explaining what ECON is, on the organisation of the big protest against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit in Lisbon in November 2010, and so forth. The tee-shirts cost five euros, the badges one euro and the bags two euros. There was also and importantly the famous bottle of *ginjinha*. The glass cost 0,9 euro (the price can change depending on the social circumstances). In fact, this day as other days, Basilio brought several bottles. Basilio was the unique member of ECON present. He installed himself and his stall near a bench in the shade of a tree. In general, Basilio tends to remain all the time behind his *banca*, during the afternoons and evenings of social gatherings. In front of him, a few steps, close to another bench, there was another social movement, PRECC and SOS.

More generally, Basilio, in all the events where he participates in the name of ECON that do not imply a walking and are therefore realised in a same limited place, concretely installs and manages the stall of ECON. The stall is here a core window on movements from the outside. However, when ECON members have to move and change places permanently, like during demonstrations, they generally use flags with the colours (red and white) and the symbols of ECON as principal signs of recognition. ECON’s stall is a table covered by a tablecloth with the same pattern as that of the flags. On the table, Basilio places different objects, as we have just said: He displays goods with ECON slogans and symbols intended to be sold to the interested public who stops before the stall like tee-shirts, badges, handbags, glasses of *ginjinha*; he also advertises writings, like tracts, prospectuses, pamphlets. Some pamphlets are free, generally the smallest ones, whilst others, principally the biggest ones that contain more information and have been more worked, have a price. As just mentioned, Basilio sits down behind the table and can remain there for hours, practically during all the event that incited the installation of the stall. When ECON participated in the VERDE’s popular dinner, on 25 March 2010, Basilio who put his stall in the entrance of the dining room before dinner time remained sitting down behind it all the evening and ate there when he was

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<sup>15</sup> Several Portuguese activists use this term “*banca*” like Basilio, which may be translated in English by the words “stall” or “stand”.

not talking with a person potentially interested in ECON and its actions. Basilio had his money-box on his stall, in which he put the money stemming from the sales.

Going back to 24 April 2010, thereafter, Basilio had to move his stand from the *Miradouro* to the *Largo do Carmo* where there was also, on this day, an important gathering of Portuguese social movements and associations. In this operation, he was only helped by his girlfriend Rosa and me – and I have to point out that I am not and I have never been a militant in ECON despite my voluntary tasks, but as I was there and I was talking with him for my fieldwork, I finally gave him a hand. More precisely, I carried, on foot, Basilio's bottles of *ginjinha* between these two places.

This is an example, among many others, of what is called “participant observation”. It shows that this is not only a theoretical concept used by social scientists, and particularly by anthropologists, to define in abstract what is or what should be fieldwork, but that this is also and perhaps first of all an empirical concept that concretely describes a reality of the fieldwork.

When Basilio arrived at the *Largo do Carmo*, he remained unpleasantly surprised because he had to face a tense and potentially conflictive situation that illustrates well the constant need for social movements to seek and find material resources, a need that may lead to a certain competition among them for the appropriation of these resources. Thus, as Basilio stated:

**When we arrived at Praça do Carmo, our seat was occupied by SOS Racismo that had its stall close to ours. They had spread at our expense. This is because of that or in order to avoid this kind of unpleasant situation, I wished in fact to come here earlier. We are a small structure. We could only rent one table while SOS Racismo had already three tables and in addition they took ours. It is necessary that we have more money to be more present<sup>16</sup>.**

Zé, an ex-member of the Executive Committee, who was present on this day at the *Largo do Carmo* and went to meet Basilio to greet, did not want to watch and manage, for a short time, ECON's stall while Basilio and Ângelo, the only two members present at the time, wished to have dinner and asked him if he could do it during their absence. Even if Zé has maintained ties with ECON activists, notably those forming the Executive Committee, and participates sometimes in the actions of the movement, he is not as active as before when he was officially a member of this committee. His departure from the latter has entailed a certain withdrawal or

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<sup>16</sup> Interview, 24 April 2010.

a commitment more or less random and sporadic. This day, Zé came with his girlfriend Sara without the intention to participate in the activities of ECON, but only to see the festivities. His companions' call did not change his evening plans. Here, again, I had to convert myself into a volunteer. Instead of Zé and because there was no other militant available at this moment to do it, I watched and managed ECON's stall – and I sold some glasses of *ginjinha* – while Basilio and Ângelo could finally go to have dinner.

More generally, in various occasions, I participated in a diverse range of ECON's actions because, in a certain sense, as I was there with militants, I was obliged or, at least, I felt obliged to help them when they asked me to do some concrete things or when the situation seemed to require it. In some way, it was a manner of returning to them the given information, but also, in a pragmatic sense, a mode to get further information, essential for a better understanding of my object of study.

Above, we have examples that indicate that, without Basilio, ECON Portugal maybe would be more apathetic given that his presence and his activism are fundamental for the vitality of the movement as his permanent commitment shows it.

### **2.3: “An opportunity to create networks”:**

From a juridical and historical point of view, VERDE is an association that was founded in 1996 in Lisbon by a group of university students and may be considered as “an ONGA” (*Organização Não-Governamental do Ambiente*, Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation or a NGO specialised on the subject of the environment). According to its legal statutes, this is “a non-profit association with indefinite duration”.

In these same statutes, one may identify several classes of members. We see “Student associates” – this class encompasses students and unemployed people –, “ordinary associates” – individual persons –, “collective associates” – collective entities –, “effective associates” – these are the people who are active in the association during more than one year; in this sense, ordinary associates automatically become effective associates if after one year their membership fees are still paid –, and finally, “honorary associates” – individuals or groups appointed for this category by the General Assembly of the association due to their significant contributions for the goals and actions of the movement.

Like ECON, this association comprehends three “social organs”: “The General Assembly”, “Executive Committee”, and “Audit Committee”.

The General Assembly is formed by the whole of effective associates and owns a Board composed of a president and two secretaries. Basically, this organ must “deliberate on all the questions that do not directly depend on the other social organs”. The Executive Committee, with a maximum of nine members, elaborates and makes propositions of actions and “projects”, “coordinates the national and international activities”, aims to maintain the internal organisational links as well as those with the exterior, with other associations, institutions and social movements, to facilitate the communication and circulation of information among them, and, more generally, deals with the daily administration of the association. The last organ, the Audit Committee, has functions similar to those of ECON’s Audit Committee.

Notwithstanding, despite this formal and institutional character, the members of VERDE claim that their NGO or association is also a social movement “with a strong activist component, resorting to non-violent and creative direct actions”. VERDE is thus defined by its militants as “a non-partisan and non-hierarchical association” that “promotes work from the grassroots”, that seeks to “stimulate citizen autonomy, self-training and participation”. In this sense, they emphasise that “the organisation is basically run by volunteers following a non-hierarchical, cooperative structure” and that, “regardless of the official statutes, VERDE has always maintained a horizontal structure, by accepting new activists, their projects and ideas, by facilitating their realisation”. More generally, they consider that their movement forms part of libertarian or anarchist movements<sup>17</sup>.

According to their own figures, over the ethnography, the movement had about four hundred members who were between 18 and 35 years old. The most active ones among them were about forty and were above all involved in the urban areas of Lisbon and Porto.

VERDE acts at the national and regional levels. During a part of the ethnography, including Lisbon<sup>18</sup>, it had three “regional nucleus” in “*centros sociais*” (social or community centres). The other two locations were in Porto<sup>19</sup> and in Aldeia das Amoreiras (Alentejo). At the beginning, VERDE resulted from “a university nucleus exclusively dedicated to environmental matters”. Then, “after three years of activism, within and outside the

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<sup>17</sup> VERDE’s texts.

<sup>18</sup> In Lisbon, VERDE, following its activists’ own words, has been “homeless” since August 2010. After having been located in a social centre in Mouraria during four years, its members were obliged to leave these premises.

<sup>19</sup> In 2013, according to the proper activists, the nucleus in Porto was no longer active and VERDE welcomed activities, projects and campaigns to be developed there.

University, its members realised that the matters that the association defended were too important to be subjected to the limitations of an association of students”. Consequently, in 2000, VERDE became legally and more largely a “*Associação Juvenil*” (Youth Association), officially independent from the University. Its militants consider that this acquired independence allows them to expand the extent of their actions and to make deeper their intensity, notably by extending its social basis that is no longer reduced to a small group of students and that integrates, for example, local communities (such as in the management of the popular *hortas*): “The fact to become independent has permitted an active participation on the themes of climatic alterations and globalisation at the grassroots level and with a degree of social criticism that is uncommon in other environmental non-governmental organisations”<sup>20</sup>.

According to the legal statutes of the association, the latter “carries out its activity with full independence and autonomy. This is an association free from any economic, religious, political, racial supervision”.

VERDE’s advocates criticise the institutionalisation of ecological movements to the extent that the price to pay – the loss of freedom of expression – is too high in relation to the gains – the proximity with the political power: “The main environmentalist organisations have come to choose the path of institutionalisation, as a tool for a major influence alongside the political elites. However, this institutionalisation is accompanied by an impoverishment of the discourses on the current policies and, above all, by the dearth of radical critical reflection on contemporaneous ecological problems”<sup>21</sup>.

In addition, by refusing funds stemming from corporations that would not respect its ethical principles related to the protection of the environment or to the social welfare, the movement avoids contributing to the “greenwash” effect, that is, to the attempts of washing non-ethical corporate images through actions that are apparently made for the environment. More generally, by keeping or seeking to keep its autonomy, it therefore avoids being instrumentalised by other organisations.

In 2004, VERDE changed its juridical status again and came to be officially this time an environmental NGO, a larger juridical category than those it had previously<sup>22</sup>.

Alongside the national and local action levels, this movement also “works with other Portuguese associations and forms part of various European networks... VERDE also strongly

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<sup>20</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>21</sup> Idem.

<sup>22</sup> Idem.

invests in the integration and influence of other social groups, thereby transforming the task of lobby and cooperation into strong points of the work it carries out”<sup>23</sup>.

Following its juridical statutes again, it is pointed out that the movement, for achieving its goals, must be in large measure affiliated to “federations, confederations and other institutions” in Portugal and abroad that are in line with these same goals and its actions.

Consequently, it appears that “this is essential to create means of articulating networks of resistance<sup>24</sup>”. Associated with other national and international movements, VERDE fosters horizontal, active, pluralist, critical and non-partisan social participation. The movement follows the principles of “participative management and consensus”<sup>25</sup>.

In this sense, its advocates share the political values of the peasant movements present all around the world, but more particularly in the economically disadvantaged regions of the globe, like in Latin America, Africa or South-eastern Asia, which are mobilised “against the farming model imposed by the Green Revolution”, which “also fight against the dispossession of targeted lands”. Among these movements, for example, they make reference to *Via Campesina* that remains one of the most emblematic international peasant movements, but also one of the main alter-globalisation social movements<sup>26</sup>.

In addition, VERDE takes part in actions developed by other movements; ecological movements like with those that have launched the project of planting trees and forests all around Portugal, peace movements such as with the Portuguese anti-war and anti-NATO movement – an anti-militarist movement that have joined the international campaign “No to War, No to NATO” –, and so forth.

It has been affiliated to the European Youth For(est) Action (EYFA), the Youth and European Environment (YEE), the *Confederação Portuguesa de Associações de Defesa do Ambiente* (Portuguese Confederation of Associations of Environmental Protection), the *Plataforma Transgénicos Fora* (Platform Transgenics Away), among several other networks.

Furthermore, by defending the places that explicitly refuse the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their courtyards, VERDE’s activists claim that the support and the empowerment of these resistant localities notably necessitate the creation of nexus and of more formal networks among them and at the European level given the growing importance of these zones from a strictly quantitative point of view all around the continent.

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<sup>23</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>24</sup> Idem.

<sup>25</sup> VERDE’s texts.

<sup>26</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

Quantity, links and networks would constitute, in their views, strong means to oppose to GMOs<sup>27</sup>.

To illustrate again the importance of networks of actors (individual and organisational), I may quote the following example that we have partly developed in the previous section regarding the movement ECON.

Thus, on 25 March 2010, in the *Mouraria* area, at VERDE's former social centre, before the popular dinner, Basilio, Eduardo, another ECON's militant, and I helped some VERDE activists, as Mara and Anna, two central protagonists of VERDE, to prepare the cooking for the night. It was not the first time that ECON's members participated in this important activity for VERDE. They have known one another for some years. They have participated together in various actions in the same way as other social movements had taken part in the regular popular dinners. VERDE's militants managed with other associations a *horta* (vegetable garden) at the centre of Lisbon, which provided an important part of the food served during the dinners.

More generally, popular dinners were organised every Thursdays evenings in its social centre<sup>28</sup>, a huge building composed of several rooms and floors. Within a room, one could find exposed portraits of the kings of Portugal and that of the current family, the pretender to the throne. Alongside this room that appeared as a museum room, by contrast, there was a playroom with a table-football, a billiard table and video games. The latter was usually fuller with people than the former. In the dining room, the portraits of the most famous *fadistas* in Portugal were hung on the wall. In another room, there was a small kitchen in which the dinners were prepared. It was close to a workroom equipped with computers and rest rooms with bookcases. The building was shared with a café.

Following the own words of VERDE's activists, the popular dinners, one of the principal activities of the movement during the ethnography in 2010, were "open to everyone, vegan and free from GMOs". They emphasised that this was "an initiative entirely auto-managed by volunteers belonging to the social centre". Before the dinners and from the afternoon, people who wanted to collaborate in the diverse tasks – cooking, preparing the dining room or cleaning – were simply invited to appear in the movement's premises. They pursued by asserting that this was "an autonomous and auto-sustainable project". In addition,

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<sup>27</sup> VERDE's pamphlet.

<sup>28</sup> At least until August 2010. Thereafter, as we said, VERDE's activists, according to their own words, were obliged to move and leave this social centre in *Mouraria* because their tenancy agreement expired and was not renewed by the owners. They had to find new premises, but they do not have really managed to do it until today

“the receipts of the Popular Dinners represent the working capital of VERDE’s community centre that can thus maintain its autonomy”. As we said before, the meal usually cost three euros and it was free for the people who had participated in the different tasks prior to the dinner. But, in any case, people who could not pay were not excluded. As they said, “None goes without eating for not having coins”. Finally, the popular dinners were “an opportunity to create networks”<sup>29</sup>.

This day, on 25 March 2010, my task of volunteer consisted, as we said before, in helping to prepare the meal, that is, concretely to peel and cut vegetables (courgettes, aubergines in my case). There were above all the main representatives of ECON and VERDE in the kitchen to make dinner. Other members of VERDE prepared the dining room by cleaning it and by installing the tables. Basilio and Eduardo cut onions and potatoes. Mara and Anna took care of cooking. Between 4.30 p.m. and 7 p.m., we therefore peeled and cut vegetables. Basilio brought a small bottle of *ginjinha* to motivate the workers. After having toasted once collectively, the atmosphere became more friendly and the job easier and more pleasant. In most of ECON Portugal’s events, he usually carries his *ginjinha* to encourage himself first and then the *companheiros* (companions). But, his intention is also in these occasions, as we saw, to sell glasses of *ginjinha* to the public in the same way as the other goods exposed in his stall of ECON. The glasses of *ginjinha* have often more success than all the other products sold by ECON Portugal.

In this sense, the concept of “*tertúlias*” (meetings with friends) is central among the activities of VERDE. These meetings are not esoteric and exclusively reserved to the strict members of VERDE. On the contrary, VERDE’s activists emphasise their exoteric or open character insofar as they aim at being the most strongly inclusive by “encouraging the start of many more”. Other Portuguese ecological organisations take part in these friendly meetings, but not only. There are also other kinds of associations, individuals without significant associative links, and son on.

VERDE published a magazine during the ethnography in 2010, which was “totally developed by volunteers and friends of VERDE”<sup>30</sup>. Given that the movement had few economic resources to publish and diffuse its magazine and to the extent that its members did not want to depend on another entity to get more money, they above all rested upon their own voluntary involvement, potentially upon that of sympathisers, and their social networks,

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and they have been constrained to share some places with other social groups, they are without one determined space, they are “itinerant”, following their own terms.

<sup>29</sup> VERDE’s texts.

<sup>30</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.



actual (immediate physical and social environment) and virtual – through the mediation of new technologies (information technology, the Internet):

**In this issue number 3, and because we have always had budget difficulties to put this zine in circulation, we have decided to count, and each time more, on a *Do it yourself (D.I.Y)* [this expression is in English in the text] logic. In other words, in order to gain autonomy and overcome economic difficulties of production, we have become totally responsible for the production of this project, by reducing costs and making informal all the process of creation of this publication, what involves the choice of the topics, the writing and editing of articles, the printing in photocopies, until stapling the sheets before moving *Erva Daninha* [Weed. This is the name of the magazine] in your hands. And because stapling and distributing is not easy, if you believe that the contents of this *Erva Daninha* are interesting, help us to publish it and disseminate it... Diffuse *Erva Daninha* as far as possible, in your network of friends, by disseminating the online pdf version that is available in our website in order to infest the Internet, and, if you want, print it (only in recycled paper) and put *ervas daninhas* [weeds. This is a pun that makes reference to both the name of VERDE's magazine and the proper undesired wild plants] in your school, in local associations and in the places that you attend... Help us to propagate this idea!!<sup>31</sup>**

The work of publishing is central and in this sense the movement relies upon the media, its own media through the publication of its limited edition magazines, the design and distribution of its flyers, the use of the Internet with its website, newsletters and mailing-list, but also through the external media such as the traditional newspapers.

More generally, the involvement of militants is particularly active through the Internet. As they said, “a considerable number of members participate in the discussions/debates through the mailing-list, which has come to be very dynamic and enriching in terms of content”<sup>32</sup>.

Activists from other ecological movements also participate in the writing of texts and articles intended for VERDE's publications.

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<sup>31</sup> VERDE's pamphlet.

<sup>32</sup> VERDE's texts.

## 2.4: “Movements of new forms of organisation and struggle”:

PRECC appeared for the first time in Milan in 2001 before expanding quickly in several cities across the world. PRECC Lisboa was born in 2007. Two years later, in 2009, PRECC Porto emerged. Over the ethnography in 2010, PRECC was also situated in Portugal in the city of Coimbra.

The PRECC movement in Portugal forms part of the EuroPRECC. Created in 2004 in the wake of the organisation of the European Social Forum held in London, it is an European network of militant groups united around the theme of precariousness.

PRECC is therefore a movement composed of diverse movements – a movement of movements, a sort of meta-movement – all of them related specifically to the topic of work and life precariousness.

During the ethnography, PRECC Lisboa did not have its own physical structure where its militants could meet. Contacts, communication and the diffusion of information were above all carried out through their blog on the Internet and their mailing-list. The movement is especially visible on the first day of May, Labour Day, where its militants organise their most important annual demonstration in the streets of Lisbon. Then, they establish sporadic gatherings over the year that are generally announced via their blog. In fact, most of the time PRECC exists through the movements that regularly generates it, particularly through SOS and other precarious people movements, which remain more or less active all the year, in the same way as these latter movements were initially inspired by PRECC’s initiative<sup>33</sup>.

Hence, as the members of SOS said, the latter movement “is one of these movements and directly a result of PRECC’s experience, the meeting point wherein we discovered wills for a permanent intervention”. They added that “SOS path coincides with that of PRECC in various senses” and that “we sound the alarm to think about a meeting point that challenges resignation”<sup>34</sup>.

Unlike PRECC, SOS is a social movement that owns a juridical existence in the same way as the two previous studied movements, ECON and VERDE. More precisely, according to its legal statutes, this is an association or “a non-profit collective entity” that is “established for an indeterminate period”. They also stress that it is an association “independent of any political-partisan forces, economic groups and religious confessions”.

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Catarina, a central activist of SOS, 15 September 2010.

<sup>34</sup> SOS texts.

Three categories of associates are defined: “*fundadores/fundadoras*” (founders), “*ordinários/ordinárias*” (ordinary associates), and “*honorários/honorárias*” (honorary associates). The founders created the movement and/or were actively involved in it until its juridical formalisation through the statute of non-profit association. Ordinary associates may be any individual persons who agree with the movement’s policies. Honorary associates, individual persons or collective organisations, are appointed by the associates during general assemblies inasmuch as their involvement against precariousness and for the actions and aims promoted by the movement has been considered as “relevant and exceptional”. As with ECON, but unlike VERDE, it was not possible to measure the number of associates or members in SOS, on the one hand, and in PRECC, on the other hand. This time, the difficulty especially resulted from the nature or form of these movements, as we saw above regarding PRECC and as we shall observe below in more detail concerning SOS, a nature or form that is fluid, transversal, labile, what complicates any estimation.

Like ECON and VERDE, there exist three “social organs”: “The General Assembly”, “Executive Committee” and “Audit Committee”. The first organ is formed by the whole of the ordinary associates. Its Board is composed of a president, a vice-president and a secretary. Mainly and *grosso modo*, the Assembly has the capacity of making decisions. Most of them are usually taken by simple majority of votes like in ECON. The Executive Committee, run by eleven associates, manages the association. And the Audit Committee is the supervisory body. It especially checks the association’s accounts and the reports presented by the Executive Committee as well as it controls that the statutes are respected.

However, despite this organisational formalisation, in the same way as for ECON and VERDE, this movement works in practice in a mode that is not at all rigid and stratified. In this sense, for instance, the institutional power is above all given to the Assembly of the associates, the main organ of the association wherein each associate has a right to one vote.

In addition, the militants of this movement emphasised the centrality of networks, inclusiveness, and solidarity among the people to allow mobilisation and consecutively to make social change possible:

**We are still today confronted with the same challenge: breaking the isolation of the exploited people, creating bridges that permit visibility and protest, enabling mobilisation, even though it seems unlikely or difficult. In the struggle against precariousness, what is at stake, above all, is that this is a fight against the increasingly broader exclusion of sectors of the working class. Without rights, without capacity to respond and without hope, the whole of women workers and men workers are eventually condemned to assist in the intensification of exploitation, an easy target of**

**various blackmails. Precariousness individualises and divides, uses the weakest ones in order to circumscribe everyone, takes advantages of our despair and weakness<sup>35</sup>.**

These militants therefore define precariousness as a global problem that implies a solidararian response among all the people affected by it, a union among social movements and beyond borders in order to solve it.

According to SOS legal statutes again, this movement must “actively establish links with national and international movements, associations, trade unions, workers commissions” as well as “with movements, associations, public and private entities that struggle against any kind of discrimination and oppression”. In this sense, it must “support movements, public and private entities’ initiatives that are in line with its own objectives”.

Catarina and Sara were two of the leaders of SOS with whom I had established some contact during my fieldwork. According to Sara, SOS shared a place with an artistic association in Lisbon close to *Belém*. The members paid what they could according to their means in order to have access to this space following Sara’s own words. She said that everyone paid out of their own pocket. She added that the members of this movement gathered together there from time to time to discuss, prepare initiatives, such as that of *Vamos* and speakers’ corner action, normally on Sundays. Nonetheless, she stressed that they make contact, communicate and agree above all through the Internet and e-mails<sup>36</sup>.

For Pedro, another militant, “the media are conditioned and speak very little of social movements, politicians take little account of the movements’ claims”. In his view, “here, in Portugal, more people still have to rally to scare politicians, to appear in the media”<sup>37</sup>.

SOS forms part of an “International Precarious Band” in which movements from several European countries take part. One can mention, for instance, among these movements, *Le Réseau Agir contre le Chômage et la Précarité* (The Acting against Unemployment and Precariousness Network, France), *Génération Précaire* (Precarious Generation, France), Chainworkers (Italy), *Comando Precario* (Precarious Commando, Spain), *Precarias a la deriva* (Drifting Precarious Women, Spain), and so forth.

In the views of SOS militants, the movements that resist against the process of precarisation and the phenomenon of precariousness are “movements of new forms of

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<sup>35</sup> SOS pamphlet.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Sara, one of the leaders of SOS, 23 September 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Pedro, PRECC activist, 1 May 2010.

organisation and struggle”. They added that “we affirm the emergency of organising the struggle for our lives”<sup>38</sup>.

Hence, according to them and, more generally, the advocates of PRECC, “the current movement of workers” no longer identifies with the traditional forms of workers’ organisations – namely, trade unions and political parties – due to the recent and profound transformation of the nature of labour. These traditional organisations are indeed perceived as being unable to deal with the new growing “ultra-deregulation” and precarisation of work insofar as they were designed to defend a type of work that is vanishing, that is, stable work. These structural changes require, in their views, “the reorganisation of the precariat”. In this sense, PRECC and SOS must be new organisations of workers that respond to the current state of work in its hegemonic form. As they claimed, they aim “to be a space in which new forms of organisation of the precariat are debating and deepened”, and they stressed “the emergency of the organisation of all the workers against exploitation and the blackmail of the crisis”. This notably entails to create new structures whose properties are opposed to those of the old organisations of workers: “We reject executive management, by deciding everything in assemblies; we therefore give a political signal of horizontality”<sup>39</sup>.

One of the apophthegms painted in PRECC’s banners during a demonstration said: “Organising to resist, resisting to exist”. It was also represented in the same banners a multitude of small fishes that formed together a big fish and was chasing a big fish *sui generis* to eat it. The whole of these small fishes united into a big fish symbolically referred to the people who, mobilised and organised together, face and threaten the big fish that is the economic and political elite.

Now, in the following chapter, we shall analyse in more detail the aforesaid empirical utterances by partly using some theoretical propositions that we have observed in the previous chapter in order to verify the hypotheses that we have put forward in this same previous chapter as well as to respond to the posed questions related to the social conditions or possibilities of social movements.

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<sup>38</sup> SOS pamphlet.

<sup>39</sup> Idem.

## Chapter 3

### Synthesis: The social conditions of social movements

#### 3.1: Actor types:

The studied social movements, as many others, have few economic resources to exist. To compensate for this material shortcoming, they tend to utilise another kind of capital than economic capital, which may be named, if we still adopt a *koine* stemming from economics and management, human capital. Human capital refers to the people who offer, generally freely or without wages in compensation, some kinds of work for the movements.

In other words, social movements continuously search for new activists. More precisely, activists can be volunteers who give a part of their time and energy to accomplish some activities on behalf of the movement, like people who regularly participated in the cooking during VERDE's popular dinners.

Among them, among this task-force or “factor of production”, there are some key actors who are determinant in the search for and mobilisation of people, and more largely for the economy of the movements.

These key actors are mainly what can be named “cadres” or “entrepreneurs” – a concept that was first emphasised by Joseph Schumpeter within the framework of his economic theory (in *The Theory of Economic Development*) and thereafter by Zald, McCarthy, other resource mobilisation theorists and political process modellers regarding the analysis of the economy of social movements. They are those who make decisions and run the movement at large.

They may also be called “organisers” or “spokespersons”, leaders who are not sorts of “oligarchs” or “elites” because of the inner structure of the social movements as we shall see below. In the concrete case of ECON, they are the permanent and active activists who compose the Executive Committee.

Then, there exist those who carry out most of the tasks – “the staff”, “the workers”, “the team”, to speak again with resource mobilisation theoreticians. Again, in ECON, they are these same permanent and active militants as well as the intermittent militants and sympathisers who give from time to time a hand.

These core actors are also “facilitators”, “mediators” or “brokers”, that is, intermediaries who facilitate, thanks to their specific skills (such as the knowledge of several koines, their militant experiences, their oratorical qualities, their social nexus), the mediation or connection among different actors (individuals and collectives).

This term of broker was particularly used in the sociology and anthropology of development to name these trans-cultural and “cosmopolitan” figures who are located at the interfaces among different actors composing the configurations of the development industry or field (grassroots organisations, northern and southern NGOs, public organisms, and so forth), who permit their social relationships and to transcend to some extent their conflicts. They foster “bridges” among diverse entities and the definition of common and shared policies.

Within the field of social movements, brokers assume more or less the same roles, have more or less the same features or abilities. Thus, they are often situated at the interfaces among several actors forming together the positions of the field of social movements, *stricto sensu*, and those of the political or power field, *lato sensu* (i.e. among different social movements, the media, political parties, trade unions, and so on). They allow to a certain extent their contacts and links.

These are often the same persons within a given movement who simultaneously assume these different but related social functions. Basilio in ECON, for instance, belongs to this kind of multipurpose and skilful persons. Indeed, he is a political entrepreneur by being a member of the Executive Committee and one of the main organisers of the movement. He is always present in the field, in all the actions of ECON. During popular dinners in VERDE, only Basilio stayed sitting down behind the stall of ECON. He was there all the evenings when ECON participated in the popular dinners. He ate there alone while the other members of the movement were seated near the other participants at dinner.

In addition, some militants, generally the most active ones who occupy the most salient social positions within social movements, are transversal actors, that is, they do not only dedicate themselves to one movement and are therefore implicated in two or more movements, which are often close to each other. In our study, Basilio again epitomises this type of militant by being a key member of ECON Portugal and other close social movements.

All the members within ECON are what can be termed moral militants since none of them are direct beneficiaries of their actions and because correlatively they support their costs without receiving in return any immediate individual and collective material benefits. Or maybe, on the contrary, they are rather all beneficiaries, or better said, all potential beneficiaries of their praxes in the same way as all the members of the society since their policies and actions aim to transform society for the common good of all its members and not only for that of some social groups or classes within it.

By contrast, the militants of VERDE and PRECC/SOS are more explicitly direct and immediate beneficiaries of their own actions albeit they are not the unique ones insofar as their actions concern other people as well, even the rest of the society.

### **3.2: Organisation:**

All the studied social movements have a certain organisation that is more or less institutionalised, have adopted a certain legal structure in order to formalise their existence and to comply with the law and state requirements.

All of them have “legal statutes”. ECON is a “non-profit association” from a juridical point of view. VERDE was first an association of university students, then a youth association and finally it has become a NGO or “a non-profit association” like ECON. Similarly, SOS is “a non-profit collective entity”.

Nevertheless, this relative institutionalisation *de jure* or before the State does not prevent activists to have simultaneously *de facto*, in practice, in their inner field – within their movements and with the other social groups that are akin to them – an organisation that is no longer institutionalised in order to follow, this time, their theoretical and practical principles that are away from institutionalisation and state requirements.

Social movements therefore have a double organisation, an official and institutionalised one intended to the State and its organs of social control in order to satisfy them and



consecutively to publicly exist without legal problems – this is what we can term their exoteric organisation –, as well as a non-institutionalised or latent one intended to themselves and their peers – which can be called their esoteric or acroamatic organisation.

The inner structure of the studied social movements shows that the phenomenon of “the iron law of oligarchy” has not occurred, at least until the end of the empirical research. Within the studied movements, there are not “elites”, “oligarchs” – as we aforesaid – or an upper class, bureaucrats, technocrats but rather mediators, brokers, entrepreneurs, organisers, spokespersons who are not chiefs or bosses *stricto sensu* and whose authority and position depend a lot on the consent of their peers, the other members of the movement.

The influence of the leaders is all the time subjected to the control of the whole of the members who give a particular importance to horizontality. In this sense, their power, even though it is latent, is always minimised to avoid authoritarian drifts and preserve what can be termed “multiple leadership”. In ECON, the members of the Executive Committee are regularly changed by the General Assembly after deliberation to prevent the tendencies to oligarchisation.

More generally, the studied movements work above all by assemblies in order that their members collectively take political decisions, and the latter give a special importance to this mode of collegial structural functioning.

We may remind that ECON is “a small structure”. It is a “platform”, organisation that conveys the idea of horizontality; this word etymologically stems from the French word “*plateforme*” that literally means “flat” (*plate*) “form” or “layout” (*forme*). Its members – permanent, intermittent activists and sympathisers – regularly organise gatherings or meetings. They are against “the vertical principle of hierarchy” and simultaneously give a particular importance to their “diversity, accountability and autonomy”. We can also recall that VERDE is “a non-hierarchical association”, a “cooperative structure” that is run by volunteers, that has “a strong activist component, resorting to non-violent and creative direct actions”, that “promotes work from the grassroots”, that claims “citizen autonomy, self-training and participation”. Its militants strongly consider that, despite the official statutes of the association, they have “always maintained a horizontal structure, by accepting new activists, their projects and ideas, by facilitating their accomplishment”. VERDE is “pluralist”, “open”, “critical” and its economy rests in large measure on the principles of “participative management and consensus”. They also assert that their movement is a libertarian or anarchist movement. In SOS, this is effectively the Assembly of militants that holds the political power. They notably claim “new forms of organisation and struggle” of

workers that contrast with the traditional workers organisations like trade unions and political parties. In this sense, they refuse all kinds of “executive management”, “decide everything in assemblies” and consequently advocate “a political horizontality”.

In many aspects regarding organisational structure, contemporary movements look like the new social movements observed in the 1960s and 1970s in most Western countries. The studied movements, like many others, are small local units with a few permanent activists and many intermittent militants, they are microcosms instead of being big national mass movements as the previous workers movements; what partly explains their lack of media visibility and why one can wrongly consider that they do not exist or that they are not important. They are fluid and flexible instead of being rigid, disciplined and bureaucratic like the latter movements. They are horizontal and decentralised, and power is diffuse rather than vertical and hierarchical. They are plural rather than homogeneous. They are open and integrative instead of being close and exclusive.

Thus, the particularities of many alter-globalist social movements are their structural fluidity, flexibility, plurality, their horizontal and decentralised organisation, their small size, their permeability.

The structural features of the new social movements were influenced by post-modernism, post-structuralism – philosophies that were dominant in the 1960s and 1970s in most of the Western countries –, by the New Left, feminism, environmentalism, and by libertarianism or anarchism. These philosophical doctrines are related and tend to nurture each other. Thus, together, they are deeply anti-authoritarian, anti-systemic, anti-hierarchical, anti-holistic. They claim the decentralisation of powers, self-management, self-control, politics open to everyone and not solely to a small elite, horizontality, the search for general consensus. They advocate the primacy of the basis or locality, their autonomy, the differences, flexibility, peace and non-violence.

Until today, in many aspects, these philosophies continue to influence the economy of social movements. There are still doctrinal affinities among present-day anarchism, feminism, environmentalism and postmodernism. In this sense, contemporary anarchistic conceptions recuperate ideas belonging to these latter moral and theoretical doctrines that are relatively recent.

In some way, we can state that many current social movements would be therefore “post-structural”. More generally, they would be “self”: Self-determined, self-centred, self-organised, self-managed, self-governed, self-regulated, self-realised, self-updated, self-satisfied, self-expressed, self-defined, self-help, and so forth.

Hence, the morphology of social movements is isomorphic, the same organisational form for all the movements, or better said, it tends at least to be isomorphic; their associative forms are relatively close to each other. One may therefore note a certain structural homology among them.

Furthermore, one of the properties of social movements' morphology and isomorphism is isonomy, the same laws, or rights and duties, for everyone who participates in them, an egalitarianism that nonetheless tends to respect and defend the differences.

This principle of isonomy refers to the Ancient Greek polity. Within the cities-states or Greek *polis*, the living together, the community of citizens or free men relied on the law (*nomos*) and the principle of isonomy (*isonomia*) that ensured the equal participation of everyone in the public affairs of this community or in the political life of the city – or better said, that ensured the equal participation of the sole free men; being excluded the other social categories such as women and slaves.

In other words, one of the foundational principles of the Athenian democracy rested on the idea that a just city is the one in which its members would have equal rights, an idea that was precisely named isonomy. As a result, in theory, everyone (but, in practice, the sole men who were recognised as citizens, that is, a small minority of the Athenian population on the whole) could participate in the conduct of public affairs regardless of the diversity of their competences and the inequality of their material conditions of existence.

Besides, anarchism does not necessarily mean anarchy, as isonomy does not necessarily entail anomie. The power of all and the lack of central authority does not signify a total lack of authority and organisation, but this implies rather the authority of all members. Similarly, the same laws for everyone does not inevitably lead to the lack of laws, but rather to their levelling.

Thus, for some activists, anarchism requires organisation, more organisation than any other political doctrines, leftist or rightist, to the extent that the latter have chosen traditional organisational forms that have the advantage of the simplicity of the pyramidal structure to manage social agency. It does not claim the abolition of all kinds of social organisation. On the contrary, it advocates the establishment of social organisations that are different from most of existing social organisations because the latter are judged as oppressive. Generally, it positively considers voluntary associations of people with a horizontal economy, autonomous small-size structures that are nonetheless voluntarily federated among them.

Anarchism entails, according to these same militants, “individual co-responsibility” and *in extenso* “collective responsibility”. It stresses both the individual – the “Unique Self”, the

“sovereign-individual” in the wake of theoretician Max Stirner and his “individualist anarchism” (in *The Ego and Its Own*) – and the collective – following, here, more Pyotr Kropotkin and his “anarcho-communism” or “collectivist anarchism” (in *The Conquest of Bread*) –, while two other great traditions of the socio-political theory tend to privilege only one of these two dimensions. Liberalism tends to make apologist arguments for the individual to the detriment of the social group and, conversely, Marxism ideologically tends to advocate the collective at the expense of the individual.

Anarchism, as these activists said, is not therefore “a strange thing” that is synonymous with “chaos”, “disorder”, “violence” or “terrorism”, unlike received ideas. As paradigmatic past experiences, they have notably in mind the libertarian and proletarian organisations that formed anarcho-syndicalism – workers trade unions belonging to all the associated workers – at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in Spain until the Civil War (1936-1939), or, in Portugal, mainly during the First Republic (1910-1926) through the *Confederação Geral do Trabalho* (CGT). At this time, anarchists privileged trade-union action as main form of social and political action, as principal instrument of anarchist practice and for social change, whereas terrorist actions, which are still predominant today in the popular imaginary, were in reality and in comparison minor.

And more recently, one of their organisational models are the squatters’ movements that are often highly organised as well, contrary to common preconceptions. They have a “political structure without chief” in which decisions are collectively taken, and they have positive “results”. They would have achieved to build “autonomous and grassroots power spaces”, “digressions within the established power” through the appropriation, in the city or countryside, of abandoned premises and/or fields that are converted into public social centres, residences, spaces for alternative practices and socio-political gatherings. They oppose the right to housing to private ownership, urban speculation and elitisation. For some of these militants, these movements are even “the future of anarchism”<sup>1</sup>.

Since their origin, ECON, PRECC and SOS have been more militant than service-oriented, self-help or political parties/interest groups-oriented, if we follow the taxonomy proposed by Kriesi. Over time, until today, and despite the appearance of some forms of institutionalisation, these movements have remained militant, that is, if we are still in line with Kriesi’s conceptualisation of militancy, they have always been primarily oriented toward the outer “political mobilisation”, often against the State or other forms of political authorities

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with some militants in VERDE, April 2010.

(such as international or multilateral organisations), in order to satisfy some political and public objectives. In this sense, the organisation, mobilisation and “direct participation” have been a constant concern for their members. However, at the same time, their militancy has never been converted into “radicalism” or any forms of excessive activism that would imply some kinds of physical violence.

By contrast, even though the militant dimension has always remained central in VERDE’s actions since its beginnings, this movement has been more self-help than other things. In fact, its members have developed a kind of militancy that is different from that theorised by Kriesi, that is to say, they have elaborated a militancy or an activism that is not primarily oriented toward the exterior, the public scene against the State or authorities but that is rather intended to themselves and potential constituents, that is oriented toward the interior with, for example, their *hortas*, popular dinners, social centres. In sum, until today, it is less exoteric than esoteric even though there is not a strict “involution” either.

Indeed, unlike what some “new social movements” theoreticians advocate, the studied movements (including VERDE) like many other current movements do not exclusively focus on their own sphere, civil society, and correlatively they also aim at the political society. They are to a certain extent “offensive” and not only “defensive” or withdrawn into themselves.

In their actions, the studied movements have been helped by organisations that belong to the category of “supportive” or “service organisations”, which have provided them some necessary goods or services for their activities. For instance, the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique Edição Portuguesa* has acted in many occasions as a theoretical organ for these movements by diffusing “friendly” news and allowing some of their activists to regularly publish articles. Indeed, some activists can find a space within this newspaper where they can diffuse information and express their ideas in relation to topics that interest them and their movement and that are not usually treated, or treated in their ways, in other important newspapers and magazines. For example, PRECC and SOS activists have had the opportunity of publishing in it articles related to the issues of labour and precariousness. More generally, *Le Monde Diplomatique* is supportive of alter-globalisation and its various movements to the extent that it has greatly contributed to their emergence. ECON Portugal shares its premises with *Le Monde Diplomatique Edição Portuguesa*.

The media and publicity through the former play a core role in the field of social movements. This refers to the importance of symbolic mediations as Ted Gurr (1970) suggested or to the social control of the media as Neil Smelser (1962) stated. The media can amplify a given movement and its actions by granting them publicity. They can therefore

contribute to make it significant to both the public (civil society) and politicians (political society) even if its organisation is paradoxically and *de facto* small and the number of its members is limited. Thanks to this amplification, the concerned movement can get a pressure capacity before the entities that can satisfy or contribute to respond to its claims despite its structural shortcomings. Thus, it can eventually succeed in relation to its objectives or to some of its aims. In this sense, the advocates of ECON used the media and above all the television to give visibility to and *in extenso* to amplify their action and their movement when they protested against the privatisation of the Portuguese post in front of a post office in the area of *Restauradores*, in Lisbon.

### **3.3: Field and social space:**

The studied movements have not been “co-opted” by political parties or interest groups, at least, again, until the end of the ethnography. Since their respective origins, they have remained “non-partisan”, as their members claim themselves. They have succeeded to avoid the tendencies of excessive institutionalisation that characterise some other movements, a process that is notably accomplished through the mediation of and integration within an already existing outer political party/interest group or a new one created by the proper movement. Thus, they have managed to preserve to a certain extent their autonomy from heteronomy furthered by external actors such as the members of the political Establishment. These dynamics explain in large measure why the studied movements still have few economic resources, have a low political capital and correlatively a low symbolic capital in relation to the other political actors (we remind that political capital – recognition, credit, prestige, notability attributed by the political actors to the political actors and *in extenso*, following the former, by a large part of the society to the political actors – is the symbolic capital in the political or power field because this is the specific kind of capital or power that is particularly active and efficient in this field to gain a significant power and position). Thus, they also contribute to explain why social movements occupy a position of dominated or marginal in the political/power field, why their members are considered by the “dominants”, the “clerics”, the “orthodoxes” or the power-holders (and following them by an important part of the society), as “laypersons”, “populists”, “Poujadists”, “irresponsible” “heretics” that do not know the game in politics and consecutively that should not be admitted to participate in it.

To face in part these difficulties but also by ideology, social movements work in network even though there can exist a certain competition among them in some occasions, notably in regard to the search for and appropriation of resources (we can refer, for example, to the tense situation between Basilio and representatives of SOS Racismo at the *Largo do Carmo* because the latter occupied the space normally reserved to ECON). This functioning in network can be termed social movements' connectionism, if we borrow this concept from the eponymous theory in cognitive sciences that basically considers that the human brain works in network.

We remind that ECON's followers state that their movement is "an association of global political intervention", "a new organisation, structured in accordance with the idea of network". In practice, it is associated with the other movements composing together on the world scale International ECON – "a network of platforms" – as well as with other Portuguese movements, such as those that are also addressed in this study, and with broader "citizenship movements", like the *Acampadas* movements. VERDE takes part in various European networks and works with other Portuguese movements and social groups. It aims at integrating national and international "federations", "confederations" and "networks of resistance". The concept of "*tertúlias*" (meetings with friends) is there central as we saw. PRECC is already in itself a movement of movements. SOS aims at "breaking the isolation of the exploited people", "creating bridges", it struggles against the processes of individualisation and division that weaken the former. In this sense, it notably takes part in an "International Precarious Band" that gathers diverse European movements.

The "post-modern", "post-structural" or libertarian features that appear at the level of the organisation of a single movement are replicated at the level of the "connective structures" or "social networks" among several movements. Thus, the networks of the studied movements as for many others are "loose" and "decentralised" in the wake of the new social movements.

Nevertheless, some current movements, like those that have been addressed in our research, also espouse some Marxist conceptions linked to the formation of networks.

For Marx, workers' solidarity had to become international. It had to transcend nationalisms and patriotisms that are, in his view, ideologies used by the capitalistic state to divide the working class<sup>2</sup>. Solidarity had to be cross-border, and social revolution as well as socialism had to be global. Workers' solidarity therefore aspired to free itself from national

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<sup>2</sup> Marx's position vis-à-vis nationalism could appear more ambiguous in some of his writings (Singh, 2001).

and state borders and constraints. The famous conclusion of *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written in 1848 by him and his friend Friedrich Engels in order to establish the programme of the first Marxist party, The League of Communists, an organisation that was resolutely international and created one year before, “Workers of all countries, unite!” shows well the importance ascribed to socialist internationalism. The first International Association of Workers, known as well with the name of The First International, created in 1864 in London, was one of the pioneer organisations of the international workers’ movement, which influenced later the constitution of further global workers’ structures of social and political militancy. Thus, workers, in the nineteenth century, formed some of the first trans-national organisations among other social groups such as the growing anti-slavery movements. For Gramsci, subordinate classes have the capacity of creating a “historical block” within civil society that is “counter-hegemonic” thanks to their alliances or coalitions that overcome class specificities.

Similarly, current movements related to alter-globalisation, with its differences and particularities, seek to create cross-border, international networks and solidarities, to form a “block” within civil society that is “counter-hegemonic”, to generate alliances or coalitions beyond singularities, localisms and nationalisms. They aim at a certain internationalism. The workers aphorism “Workers of all countries, unite!” is recuperated, in some way, in the current alter-globalist maxim “Another world is possible!” launched, for the first time, in the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001. The “new internationalism” is no longer reducible to the exploited working class but embraces, this time, the whole of the people and nations that are subjected to the powers of globalisation.

More largely or in a more abstract way, the network is a structural form. This is usually a more or less regular assembly of several structures that are more or less similar. In the nature, the paradigmatic models are these geometrical forms that repeat several times the same initial pattern such as the beehive or crystals. The network is therefore, by definition, extendible and open; it may include more or less easily new parts, new structures that are relatively akin to each other, thereby increasing its global structure. In theory, a network could extend to infinity, integrate and reproduce identical or close structures without limits.

The network as a structure is fundamentally different from the structure described and analysed by structuralism that developed in the post-World War II, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, even though one may identify some common features between them such as the capacity of organising initially separated elements and of creating a set with shared properties. Structuralism *grosso modo* conceives the structure as an organised and relatively finite totality



in which each part is differentiated, each element owns a particular function or role, according to specific laws of division of labour, that serves less these elements taken alone than the totality on the whole. The structuralistic structure has therefore an organic character; its elements follow inclusion laws that are more or less strict and defined following their particular nature or contribution for the whole of the entity that works as a system more or less close. The totality is the centre, the structure has a form of centripetal expansion and the different parts do not count in themselves and for themselves.

By contrast, the different parts of a network are structures in themselves and for themselves that do not solely or largely exist for the viability of a meta-structure that encompasses them. Albeit they are not necessarily and strictly homogenous and they may conserve specific differences that can be used for all the network, their integration does not rest above all upon a particular function or role that would serve the totality. The latter is no longer the core of the system, each part has a value in itself and for itself, what makes that a network has not really a centre, has a strong capacity of centrifugal expansion, it is more open and interacts more with its environment, and its borders are not clear and definitive. The network is a dynamical and fluid structure; it is less rigid or static than the structuralistic structure even though it may also have some inflexible and restrictive aspects. In this sense, it has a certain pre-formal character. It furthers the relations and circulation among all the elements and not only among some of them. Any element, whatever it is, may enter into contact with another one, contrary to the structuralistic structure that creates sorts of micro-groups necessarily connected with some ones and detached from some others. The network is a supple spatio-temporal organisation or system that allows the movement or mobility. With this kinetic character, it is open and adapted to changes, it may be deformed and has the tendency to auto-regulate itself. Through the whole of these features, this is also an inchoative form inasmuch as it is a place that furthers, stimulates and diffuses novelties and inventions (Moulin, 2006 [1999]).

Accordingly, one may note that the general features of the network fit into the general traits of contemporary social movements organisations: lack of rigidity, dynamical and inclusive character, openness, centrifugal expansion, horizontality, lack of centre, fluidity, suppleness, and so forth. This structural homology, this organisational equivalence or correspondence may explain why activists prefer to use the modality of the network in a scale that transcends their immediate social movement organisation.

Besides, less abstractly and more concretely, or more pragmatically, networks allow social movements to expand their actions, to be more important in regard to the volume

before the State and other opponents, to consequently have a better capacity of pressure and negotiation before the latter, while a single, isolated and small-size movement could not have any influence on them and the society. They also permit to obtain and share resources such as experiences, practices and information. Furthermore, by integrating networks, the inner organisation of movements may be reinforced. There can be what may be termed a “boomerang effect”: The insertion of a movement within structurally powerful networks can thereafter facilitate its inner structural “empowerment”.

Protests against globalisation have therefore given birth to new organisational forms of solidarity when, at the same time, the traditional forms of organised labour (notably trade unions) have declined, such as, for instance, the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre that unite world-wide civil society actors and are an antithetic response to the World Economic Forums held in Davos, Switzerland, and which gather the world economic and political leaders.

World Social Forums have been one of the main spaces for building trans-national associative alliances. For many activists, they are still global events of meetings organised by and for “southern” civil society. They would be alternative forums held in parallel with forums launched by governments and international organisations. According to Francisco “Chico” Whitaker, one of the co-founders of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001, this forum is an “open space” that allows reflection and debate on alter-globalisation, its application and its challenges. In this sense, the structure of the Forum in 2008 would have been conceived in order to better embrace its principles, to abandon some usual counter-schemes and achieve a genuine political and social internationalism. Indeed, it would have been less centralised and less localised in a single point in relation to the prior organisations. According to “Chico”, for example, it was programmed at the same time “a big fair” at São Paulo in Brazil on the issue of the world change, “a big festival on the beach” at Rio de Janeiro, diverse social forums in Spain, France, Maghreb countries, and so forth. Thus, this Forum should continue to be a less unique and exclusive organisation<sup>3</sup>.

Some criticisms, most of them stemming from the proper participants in the Forum and civil society actors, had already pointed out its relative lack of opening due to its inaccessibility for the majority of concerned people, thereby making it intended only for “alter-globalist elites” who are able to take the time and to pay the travel and accommodation as well as to some local people who have the good luck to live close to the area wherein it is

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<sup>3</sup> See Sérgio Ferrari, “FMS: *Promover la esperanza en que otro mundo es posible*”, Adital, 24 September 2007, [www.adital.org](http://www.adital.org).

held. This elitist tendency that constitutes a serious obstacle to the construction of a real other globalisation could eventually transform this kind of forum into a forum akin to those that militants criticise, such as the World Economic Forums in Davos or the G8. Hence, the simultaneous organisation of several centres at the world scale could facilitate the integration of many more people into the event, make the Forum more dynamic and grassroots. Thus, autonomy and trans-nationalism are not at all perceived by many activists as being two fundamental antithetic ideas. On the contrary, they can be associated and become complementary. In this sense, we can recall that for ECON's activists, "it is necessary to multiply local struggles and globalise resistance" in order to make another world possible. The globalisation of alter-globalisation ECON has not prevented each national or local ECON to maintain a certain autonomy within their world networks.

### **3.4: Cyber-space, cyber-militancy and militancy:**

One of the main means used by activists to build networks among social movements and other organisations are the media, especially the new technologies of information and communication or the Internet.

The question of the significance of the media in general and of the Internet in particular in contemporary societies may be addressed, notably, by induction, through the description and analysis of the role that the latter take within current social movements.

If one follows some propositions put forward by advocates of post-modernism, capitalism would have entered into a new stage since the 1960s and 1970s. More precisely, it would have come to belong to the era of services and knowledge. It would have reached a "post-industrial" and "post-material" dimension that would have been accentuated since the 1990s and 2000s due to "the computer revolution". Nowadays, economies would be "dematerialised". The service economy would have supplanted the industrial economy. The latter had replaced, in turn, agricultural economy at the time of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century. Economies would therefore produce more signs, images, icons, information, "grey matter", in other words, "texts", language and discourses, than material goods inside a more and more compressed space-time. This new period would be less dominated by materialism and political economy than by symbols, design, marketing, advertising. In addition, this new stage of capitalism would be also more the age of

consumption than that of production. Traditional relations of production would therefore disappear in favour of social relations of consumption within civil society (Meiksins Wood, 1996: 21-23; Morris-Suzuki, 2000: 66-68). We would live in the time of the *Homo Mediaticus*, a period that would be dominated by the means of mass communication and information, that is, the period of the *mass media* (McLuhan, 1964), “the information age” (Castells, 2004 [1997], 2000 [1998], 2000 [1996]).

Today, the Internet forms part of these media. This is therefore a *medium* or an intermediary. Thus, it is necessary, more precisely, to wonder about the importance of this instrument of mediation or inter-mediation in our current societies. Some answers may be made to this question out of the study of contemporary social movements wherein the Internet seems to be, at first glance, a determinant variable for their existence.

The rapid expansion of the Internet in the 1990s would have allowed the spread of social links. It would create social capital – the whole of the resources that an individual or a group may acquire out of his/its social relations – that, in turn, would create, if we follow Robert Putnam’s idea (1995, 1993), one of the principal theoreticians of the concept of social capital in the United States, “understanding”, “mutuality”, “trust”, “reciprocity”, “social harmony”. The Internet would have contributed to the formation, expansion and consolidation of local and international social networks. It would be a means of protecting associationism from “social decapitalisation” and *in extenso* from “social atomisation” and “disintegration”. Individuals, both information transmitters and receivers, would become via the Internet significant producers, diffusers and consumers of communication.

According to Smith (1998) and Minkoff (1997), cyber-space has greatly contributed to reduce the constraints linked to the creation of associations and networks of associations. For these latter authors, tangible relations, the “face to face”, which require iterative and important trips and limit the possibilities of a construction of a global solidarity, are nowadays less necessary and may be substituted by immaterial relations, that I propose to name the “screen to screen”, which have broken the obstacles of the geographical distance. Virtual or immaterial relations would further instantaneous and immediate social relations but also they would permit to maintain and reinforce them. Cyber-space would facilitate the rapid and constant diffusion of numerous ideas and practices all around the world. It would build “synergies” useful for the consolidation of social groups and societies (Schuler and Day, 2004: 155-156). Social movements and their political actions would benefit from these dynamics as well.

In this sense, some militants of the studied movements were connected almost all day and all night through the Internet in order to place some news in their movement's website or blog, to seek information, to contact through e-mails other activists from the same movement or from other ones, members of other social groups, belonging to diverse socio-cultural contexts: Lisbon, Portugal at large, other European countries and beyond. We can remind here that, for the members of ECON, the Internet "offers a huge potential", allows "to stimulate discussion", "to actualise, translate and diffuse actions and documents stemming from the international network", "to present specific contributions of national specialists, academics, trade unionists, and so forth". On the Internet, they added that there exists "a group of international ECON with more than 2500 members". In VERDE, it is considered, as we saw, that many activists take part in the discussions/debates that are launched on-line, what makes these spaces "very dynamic and enriching in terms of content".

The Internet helps to encourage, without doubt, debates and exchanges among movements and militants, debates and exchanges that are sources of creativity, innovation, "progress". Thus, social movements and their causes may acquire a larger and better public visibility. They can gain a certain credibility and legitimacy. They may be strengthened from an institutional point of view in their struggles against rulers and their policies. Albeit they can have only a small size or be solely a virtual reality, that is, they exist only on the web, the Internet allows social movements to cover vast territories, even the entire world. It would help them to grow and its use would permit to avoid that some of them, more particularly those stemming from "poor" or "southern" countries, remain isolated and marginalised with high risks of disappearance (Cullen, 2005). It would also work as a reservoir of collective memory and consequently it would help social movements not to repeat past mistakes. The Internet, from a cosmopolitan perspective, would contribute to the formation of a "global civil society" or "global citizenship".

Through the Internet, some activists of the studied movements frequently launch appeals in order that their members and sympathisers participate in diverse public demonstrations, marches or sits-ins, protest campaigns. The mailing-lists, in which militants and sympathisers from different socio-cultural contexts are registered, allow the latter to be quickly informed, to instantly communicate and to act immediately. In ECON, sympathisers, alongside permanent and intermittent militants, are constantly informed of the movement's actions via its e-mail newsletter, what facilitates their integration during sits-ins and demonstrations among other activities. The same thing occurs within VERDE, PRECC and SOS.

In this way, the Internet, which is first a major sign of cultural globalisation and globalisation of capital, is converted, by the use carried out by socio-political movements, into its opposite, that is, into a core expression of the denunciation of these forms of globalisation at the global level. Through the Internet, the militants of these movements, in particular those of the alter-globalisation movements, criticise current globalisation and put forward new global forms of social organisation. They recuperate one of the central tools of the production of messages that serve globalisation in order to redefine it according to ideals opposed to the principles that currently regulate it. Echoing Castells (2004 [1997]), the Internet becomes here less one of the mirrors of globalisation claiming the homogenisation of identities and cultures than a counter-image of it that promotes, on the contrary, a certain global social unity from local, cultural and identity diversities.

Thus, the Internet becomes a veritable identity variable in itself, a new characteristic that distinguishes most of the current social movements from the “new social movements” identified in the 1960s and 1970s and, *a fortiori*, from the prior “traditional” movements associated with the workers movements. Have we therefore entered into a new historical stage of collective action, that of the “new” “new social movements” due to the Internet?

For some social scientists, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a “global associative revolution” unprecedented in the history of humanity would have emerged, similar to the appearance and consolidation of modern nation-states which took place in the nineteenth century (Mayo, 2006). The Internet would play a key role in this associative revolution. For instance, both the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico and the World Social Forums owe in large measure their rise to the Internet.

If the Internet creates capital, this is a determinant strategic resource for many movements. It is a resource that allows them to accumulate other resources, like economic resources (grants, gifts and legs stemming from constituents or supporters, on-line sales of products and services, and so forth), human capital (new associated members), cultural capital (knowledge, skills) (Clark, 2003; Olaseinde, 2004). The possibility of consuming the Internet is an “added value”. It would permit social movements to reduce their costs, to be more flexible, to better achieve their objectives. In this sense, through the Internet, some activists may seek public and private funding for their movement and without being obliged to physically move a lot.

Notwithstanding, the new technologies of information and communication or the Internet – the media as means for the creation of virtual networks – are not without shortcomings.

If the Internet is today a core element or a central resource for political activism and the identity affirmation of many movements, it is not, nonetheless, a panacea. Indeed, it presents some limits: This is neither a solution to all the problems of social movements nor a substitute to their classical “material” actions, especially as it is a source of new paradoxes.

One of the main criticisms addressed to cyber-militancy would be its ephemeral, uncertain and fragile character. Even though the Internet allows thousands of people from different areas of the world to simultaneously, quickly and easily involve themselves in different political causes, these commitments would have the tendency to only exist on the virtual world of the Internet and they would be short-lived. They would be seldom followed by concrete actions on the field, in the real world. This disjunction between these two universes, the virtual and the real, would weaken the influence of political demonstrations that need to exist in the actual world in order to be really effective. Virtual commitment, according to this criticism, should remain an instrument that serves real commitment and not be an end in itself, otherwise, under this sole former modality, political commitment is likely to become marginal or to even disappear. From the virtual, this “walled” world that is more tranquil, convenient and safer than the real for militants, the possibilities of significant transformations, ends of all political militancy, which must be necessarily, in their case, real and not virtual, are more reduced.

For example, the strong repression of public demonstrations in Iran against electoral fraud that led to the re-election, in 12 June 2009, of the president Mahmud Ahmadinejad, supported by Ali Khamenei, The Guide of the Islamic Revolution, caused the death, highly diffused in the media, of the young student Neda Soltan. This tragic event was at the basis of several initiatives of large-scale contests at the world level and in the cyber-space. However, these virtual protest campaigns were not followed with the same scope in the actual world<sup>4</sup>. Ahmadinejad remained in power and repression against the opponents of the political regime had continued.

In the studied movements, the virtual appeals launched by some activists to protest in the actual world are not followed all the time, notably this is observed at the level of the numerical quantity. This fact is often the core object of discussions among militants during assemblies and gatherings of their movement, and it is even sometimes at the source of controversies, tensions and disputes. Some militants have claimed, for instance, that it is impossible to be interested and involved in all the actions of their movement, to positively

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<sup>4</sup> Monica Hesse, "Causas políticas no Facebook e no Twitter. Ativismo num simples clique na Net acontece e logo desaparece", *Público*, Saturday 4 July 2009, p.15.

respond to the whole of the appeals that are too numerous and diverse. Others, to the contrary, have advocated the necessity for all the activists to take part in all demonstrations in order to form “a common body” that constantly resists. Others have highlighted that political militancy for social transformation cannot only exist in texts, discourses, notably via the Internet; otherwise it disappears in the acts<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, cyber-militancy may create a sort of “self-limited radicalism”, a commitment limited by the militants themselves. Cyber-militancy, when it is not accompanied in fact and on the field by a real militancy, often leads to minor changes, even no change at all. Robert Putnam stressed that only physical human relations, close relations, may produce social capital, generate associationism. In this way, relations under the modality “screen to screen” – as I have called them above – cannot replace relations under the form “face to face”.

In addition, even though the Internet has been largely “democratised” to the extent that more and more people can have access to it, these are not, nonetheless, all the sectors of society that have the means to use it. As a resource, like any other resources, some social actors may acquire it and others not according to their socio-economic position and incomes. It is at the origin of a further division in the society, between the actors who own it and/or may employ it and those who do not have it and cannot browse the web, between those who are publicly visible thanks to it and those who are not and remain in oblivion, between those who can integrate world networks and those who are more excluded, between who can have access to new resources and develop and those who are set aside.

The Internet is therefore a resource that is not accessible to everyone. Its acquisition and consumption are a “comparative advantage”. Its mode of appropriation is in large measure akin to the way of appropriation under general market laws, the rules of capitalistic private appropriation, or the “natural” encounter between supply and demand, hinted solvent, what cancels the numerous demands that are not. Here, the Internet is indeed a consumer good as any others, it becomes again a sign of global capitalism that faces social and political movements contesting it.

Access to the Internet is still limited in “poor” or “southern” countries, like in many countries of Latin America, Africa or Asia, while in Western countries, access tends today to be widespread. Hence, the Internet becomes a further expression of socio-economic inequalities between the so-called “northern” countries and “southern” countries, inequalities that are reflected between “northern” and “southern” social movements. Far from dissipating

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<sup>5</sup> I had the occasion to observe these situations and conversations over several assemblies and gatherings in ECON, VERDE, PRECC and SOS between 2010 and 2012.



them, one may find through the consumption of the Internet the traditional divisions in terms of wealth (economic and material) between “The North” and “The South”, and within the latter. In the era of information and communication, the latter, whatever the medium, have become a core merchandise. One of the pillars of the globalisation of capital that makes it possible are the new technologies of information and communication in which the Internet occupies an essential place. Besides, the dynamics of capitalisation within social movements, notably with the help of the Internet, place activists before the ethical problematic of commodification of beings and things within their own movement, processes against which most movements are in principle opposed. “Grassroots globalisation” or “globalisation from below” out of the Internet is therefore relatively jeopardised in these circumstances.

In sum, the Internet generates social capital, fosters communication among activists and their information, creates resources that serve the political activism of contemporary social movements, activism that is intertwined with the identity and cultural construction and diffusion of the latter.

Notwithstanding, the Internet, if this is unavoidably a fundamental element of contemporary movements for political activism, cannot be all political militancy, as it is also recognised by the proper activists. ECON’s militants know well that “virtual communities or forums cannot substitute other methods of communication, more present”.

Cyber-militancy must therefore accompany real-militancy. This is a necessary supplement but it is not an end in itself because cyber-militancy alone can easily lead to non-militancy, especially as the Internet is a type of merchandise that is not accessible for everyone yet.

Thus, we have here a dialectical contradiction, this latter concept meaning in this case movement of the reality. Cyber-militancy or virtual militancy reinforces real militancy, can make it possible by preceding and following it, but virtual militancy can also paradoxically produce the negation of militancy, if it exists without any actual militancy. Virtual militancy may be the first principle from a temporal point of view, it can indeed pre-exist to real militancy to thereafter make it more effective, but it becomes a secondary principle from the point of view of the importance of the militant dimension. Indeed, what counts, first of all, this is the real dimension of political activism, the sole one that is veritably able to produce the effects and changes expected by militants. In other words, to a certain extent, militancy on the Internet – cyber-militancy – remains a sort of potential activism, a form of uncompleted and partial activism, which becomes “absolute”, if we can say, only once it becomes actual, when it actually appears on the real field and not on the virtual one (Masse, 2010a).

### **3.5: Conclusion:**

How are social movements formed? What makes them possible? What are the social conditions or possibilities of social movements? How do people mobilise? How do they become activists or militants?

The possibility and power of social movements rest above all on their social capital, which especially comprehends their organisations, networks, key actors (human capital) who foster the social links within their movement – they work for the organisation – as well as between their movement and other social groups – they act in the direction of networks. Their cultural capital – cognition, pure knowledge, scientific knowledge, ethics, aesthetics – is also determinant and will be addressed mainly in the second part of the study and to a lesser degree in the last part. With these types of capital, they try to overcome the lack of economic capital and political/symbolic capital that are also determinant in the political and power field to achieve mobilisation and gain power.

Contrary to the so-called “old” social movements, an expression that mainly refers to the traditional workers’ movements, which are or were generally big and centralised mass movements with a pyramidal organisation, contemporary movements, since the 1960s and 1970s, have come to be “post-modern” or “post-structural” movements, that is, movements whose principal and particular properties are to be small local entities, decentralisation, to have activities in network, horizontality, organisational lability and fluidity. These last features have been ultimately intensified for material causes – the current configuration of available resources collectively exploited by activists (like the development of new technologies, especially the Internet despite its shortcomings) as well as the opportunities and threats of the context wherein their main actions take place –, but also for ideological or axiological reasons that are strictly related to the previous causes – beyond pragmatism or utilitarianism, beyond the search for adaptation to their environment or to the social system for strategic reasons and to ensure the survival and continuity of their movement, the choice of the current organisational structures by militants is a function of dominant values and norms that exist among contemporary social movements, values and norms notably inspired by the post-modernist and post-structuralist culture and a certain re-actualisation of anarchism. These latter doctrines share, as we saw, many ideas among them.

In other words, current movements are still akin to the “new social movements” that appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, but their features have become more marked under the effect of the mass media that have grown up since then, the increasing opening of borders, and the new ease and speed of travel. More precisely, they have become more decentralised, their social links are more informal, they work more and more through national and international networks. Current movements like the “new” ones and unlike the traditional movements are no longer huge mass movements characterised by their rigidity, unity or homogeneity, centralisation and hierarchy, established in the long-term, but, on the contrary, they are rather small structures with few members who are really active in a continuous way. Notwithstanding, they have at their disposal a mass of intermittent activists and sympathisers who may be mobilised during some demonstrations. They work like small local units having a reduced number of permanent professionals (paid but most of the time voluntary), units that are related or federated among them, what constitutes networks that overcome national borders and the particular topics of protest from each movement. Current movements are therefore marked by their pluralism and federalism. This federalism allows to compensate to some degree for the lack of militants in a single local unit during demonstrations by the fact that diverse movements gather together and provide the necessary demonstrators. In some way, current movements are close to anarchist movements that are also, most of them, localised and federated and that were one of the two main models of movements, alongside mass movements of workers (big centralised movements), which dominated in Europe over the nineteenth century. The whole of these propositions regarding the organisational nature of contemporary movements were notably put forward by Tarrow (2003 [1998]).

With these “new” features, contemporary social movements mediatically seem less visible, but this does not at all mean that they do not exist or that they are not important, and other depreciative or nihilistic epithets, including in Portugal, contrary to what some sociologists think.

Are there or are there not social movements in Portugal? Does alter-globalisation exist or not in Portugal? Some Portuguese sociologists studying social movements and alter-globalisation assert that neither the former nor the latter are significant in this country, thereby often giving the nihilistic impression that they do not exist. They often state this by comparing the current context with the revolutionary period in the 1970s. It is obvious that these are two close periods of time, nonetheless, they remain quite different, with diverse socio-political actors, another social, economic, political and cultural context. Current social movements and past movements are also different albeit it exists a certain continuity between them rather than

a clear rupture. They were surely more intense yesterday than today but this does not mean that nowadays they are no longer. Currently, their nature, like their environment, has simply changed.

They have simply modified their form in relation to the “old” movements, what makes more difficult their observation in a spontaneous fashion and what requires, on the contrary, a more in-depth and developed approach in order to fully account for their nature, their potentiality and their actuality.

In other words, the more diffuse, fragmented (but linked in an informal mode) and horizontal character of current Portuguese social movements, features that follow the tendencies observed by Tarrow among other scholars regarding current social movements in general, in the wake of the “new social movements”, is likely to make them more difficult to detect for researchers, especially if they do not move in the field among the movements, but this difficulty does not cancel them for all that. On the contrary, their current strength, their duration or continuity rests in large measure upon these organisational characteristics.

In sum, the phenomenon of social movements, in the same way as the whole of complex social phenomena, requires a veritable cognitive sociology, that is, a sociology that seeks to elucidate, know, understand and explain the profound and actual nature of social phenomena – *id est* sociology *tout court* –, and not a “spontaneist” sociology that is simply limited to describing some surface effects and that is therefore led to ineluctably miss what things are effectively as well as to put forward biased interpretations about them.

Besides, I have preferred to use the concepts of social space, field and capital advanced and analysed by Bourdieu to analyse my own empirical data in this first part of my research to the extent that they allow to show a more flexible and dynamic reality than the rigid categories put forward by Smelser or Parsons. Consecutively, they better correspond to the labile nature of current social movements, therefore to the reality itself.

However, Bourdieu’s sociology of practice does not really take into consideration the actor in all his complexity and it is fundamentally focused upon the action field that determines the actor as his core concept of habitus – structures of pre-established dispositions that condition throughout the processes of socialisation the way of thinking, acting, and behaving of the people over their life – emphasises it. A look at the actor alongside his context is therefore required albeit both in reality remain strictly related. This is what we shall do in the rest of this work.

Furthermore, resource mobilisation theories and the linked political process perspective have essentially shown the social, economic and political conditions – the how of social

movements – that greatly contribute to the formation, the existence and finally the end of social movements. Notwithstanding, if the elucidation of the mentioned conditions are necessary to explain the phenomenon of social movements, it is far from being totally sufficient. These perspectives are limited, especially as they stress in their analyses only one type of rationality, instrumental rationality. As we shall see in the following part two, instrumental rationality is a form of rationality among others and not necessarily and automatically the most significant one. In any case, it is seldom the sole type within social movements in particular and social action at large.

Thus, for these reasons, the study of social movements cannot be reduced to this kind of theoretical approaches. They are a phenomenon that is more complicated and cannot be understood and explained by the sole responses put forward by these theories. To complete them, it is important to understand the sense of the action for the concerned social subjects and to know the underlying types of rationalities. Furthermore, in addition to the question of the meaning of the action, it is essential to analyse the sense that the actors have about themselves, that is, identity within social movements. Those are these related aspects we shall consider in the rest of the study.

In other words, the study of social movements is irreducible to the study of their conditions or structures. Albeit the study of the economy of social movements is necessary in order to understand how social movements are formed, it is not sufficient for the study of social movements at large. The origins or causes of social movements, another central aspect of this study, are irreducible to an economy. Significant dimensions would be otherwise omitted. Essential explanatory aspects would be thus missed. To cover the “field” of social movements, it is also necessary to treat questions related to their praxis and identity – the why and what (or who) of social movements –, questions that we are going to see in the following parts of the research. This therefore requires further theoretical developments, other empirical observations, and, *in fine*, new analyses. The *explanandum* cannot generally content itself with a sole kind of *explanans*, especially within social and human sciences.

## **Part II**

### **Praxes: The rationalities of social movements**



## **Chapter 4**

### **Social movements, social action, sense and rationality from sociological approaches**

The two-fold central question of this study is: Why and how are social movements formed? One of the principal sets of underlying questions is: what are the beliefs (and by extension the ideologies), the social behaviours, and the actions of subjects composing social movements? Why?

Thus, I am going to bring elements of responses to this set of questions in this second part of the research by examining what subjects belonging to social movements think and do, and why. The perspective of this study enters into what is usually called the sociology of action. In this way, I put forward the hypothesis that the sociologist has to find the sense of action for the concerned social subjects in general, and, more particularly, the rationality of social actors forming social movements in order to understand and explain their actions or their praxes, intellectual and material.

Hence, this second part is divided into three chapters in the same way as the two other parts of the research are. In the first chapter (chapter 4), I shall explore some principal theories in sociology on social movements, social action, meaning and rationality. From this overview, I shall conclude this chapter by advancing some conjectures and preliminary conclusions. In the following chapter (chapter 5), I shall focus on the observation of intellectual and material praxes of some Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements. Finally, in the last chapter of this part (chapter 6), I shall confront the empirical data from



chapter 5 with the hypotheses put forward in chapter 4 in an analytical way in order to elaborate a synthesis and to give elements of responses to the set of questions formulated above, that is, what are the beliefs, the ideologies, the social behaviours, and the actions of people forming social movements? Why?

*Ipsa facto*, these elements of responses will allow to elucidate in part the main problematic of this research, that of the genesis and formation of social movements.

#### **4.1: Framing, frames:**

In English, the term “praxis” (praxes in plural) is usually synonymous with “practice”, “custom”, “practical exercise”. Etymologically, this word comes from Ancient Greek in which it means “action”, “deed”, “activity”. According to some scholars, one of the main activities or praxes of social movements is the doing of discourses, texts, narratives, and via the latter, of knowledge and meanings (Gamson, 1996 [1995]: 85; Fine, 1996 [1995]; Johnston, 1996 [1995]; Eyerman and Jamison, 1996 [1991]).

The frame analysis model allows to study the construction of meanings within social movements. In Anglo-American sociology, and within the sociological literature written in English in general, it is currently the main model that focuses on this aspect. Thus, one can say it is a sort of mainstream in this domain of study. It has been particularly promoted and developed since the 1980s by David Snow, Robert Benford and Scott Hunt, among other sociologists.

The frame perspective adapted to the study of social movements by Snow and his collaborators is partly inspired by Erving Goffman’s dramaturgy model, and more particularly, by his *Frame Analysis* (1986 [1974]).

According to this text, the concept of “frame” corresponds to “definitions of a situation” elaborated from “principles” that organise social experiences (or events) and human participation in these experiences. In order to understand events that appear in their social scene and to make them meaningful, individuals use one or several “frameworks” or “schemata of interpretation”. The latter differ according to their level of articulation or organisation: Some frames are more structured than others, some frames work as ordered systems of propositions whereas others are less arranged. But, regardless of their structuration, every frame allows the subjects who refer to them to give a sense, to name and

to categorise “occurrences” that emerge in their life. Elementary frames can be modified by individuals, the “keying” processes that create new interpretative frames from the former. In turn, these new frames can be “re-keyed”, and so on (Goffman, 1986 [1974]).

Snow and his associates follow Goffman’s definition of frame by considering it as interpretative schemes that allow people to understand and organise their world in some way, and to behave and act within it according to a certain direction (Snow *et al.*, 1986: 464; Snow and Benford, 1988: 214; Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). A scheme is a form of “organised knowledge” on objects, persons, events (Snow, 2001: 37).

In the case of social movements, they consider that frames are simple and condensed interpretations of world elements and that they are always oriented, as in a battle, to get new recruits or allies and to defeat opposition, what they call “core framing tasks”. Frames are elaborated for action, they mainly serve to invent and justify the latter. As such, they work as cognitive resources that orient social movements’ activities and generate further frames. A particular frame is the result of framing activities, that is, of the creation of senses. Alongside the diffusion of ideas and beliefs, social movements “produce” and “maintain” meanings over time for a particular public that includes advocates, adversaries, and mere spectators. Thus, meanings are constantly constructed and arranged through continued dialogical interactions among situated actors. They are not definitively determined *a priori*. They do not consist of symbolic structures already “out there” that are merely recuperated and incorporated without transformation by social movements’ members. In consequence, social movements are active “signifying agents”, as are other central social institutions, namely the media and the State. With them or against them, they are involved in “the politics of signification” that operates in society. In this sense, Snow and Benford prefer to use the concept of “frame” at the expense of that of “ideology” because, for them, the former better translates this idea of process and interactions, while the latter implies the existence of a large set of fixed and permanent beliefs. Nonetheless, frames in general and “collective action frames” in particular, those regarding social movements, can be constructed from existing ideologies and through processes that modify the latter. The result may be frames that expand, combine ideologies, amplify some points of them, or that are opposed to them. Thus, ideologies can become “cultural resources” or “cultural constraints” for the framing actions (Hunt *et al.*, 1994: 191-192; Benford and Snow, 2000: 613-615; Snow, 2001: 27-39; Snow and Benford, 1988: 198; Snow and Benford, 1992: 136).

From the central concepts of “frame” and “framing”, these theorists have elaborated and defined a range of compound concepts to analyse the processes of construction of meanings

within social movements. Among the key concepts in this approach, one can note the following ones: “diagnostic framing”, “prognostic framing”, “motivational framing”, “counter-frame”, “frame disputes”, “re-framing”, “master frames”, “frame alignment”, “frame bridging”, “frame amplification”, “frame extension”, “frame transformation”, and “frame resonance”.

They divide social movements’ “core framing tasks” into three main activities: “diagnostic framing”, “prognostic framing”, and “motivational framing”. Diagnostic framing consists in observing and defining “some problematic condition or situation” that must be changed and solved in consequence as, for example, “injustice”, which becomes “injustice frames” for several socio-economically and politically-oriented social movements. The problem affects some “victims” and exists because of some entities or facts. Accordingly, during the diagnostic stage, the identification of a problem is accompanied by the identification of the “victims” and of the causes and responsible elements that are “blamed”. The latter is what they name the function of “attributions”. Prognostic framing, linked to the diagnostic framing, aims to propose solution(s) or alternative path(s) that must be followed in order to resolve the identified problem. It includes a “plan” of actions: “strategies”, “tactics” and “targets”. If there can be a certain “consensus” among social movements’ members about the type of problem, by contrast, there can be simultaneously inner divisions concerning its causes. For example, Benford has observed this situation in the case of the nuclear disarmament movement in the United States during the 1980s. In this case, almost all activists shared a common vision about the identified problem that was seen as “the nuclear threat”. Nevertheless, there was an important split concerning the causes of this problem. Some activists considered “technology” as the central factor of the nuclear threat while others attributed the problem to political causes. Internal divergences can also appear at the level of prognostic framing: Alongside disagreements on the causes of a problem, tensions regarding the best solutions can become visible. Thus, advocates of technological determinism proposed solutions in relation to technology whereas exponents of political determinism found political responses. Motivational framing or “the function of justification” is the action of finding arguments, “rationales”, which persuade people to act against the problem and the causes, and on behalf of the movement. In this frame construction, activists are conducted to elaborate pertinent “vocabularies of motive” (Benford, 1993a; Hunt *et al.*, 1994: 190-191; Benford and Snow, 2000: 615-617; Snow, 2001: 40-41; Snow and Benford, 1988: 199-204; Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). Here, Snow and Benford use a concept that was firstly put forward by Charles Wright Mills (1940).

For Mills, “vocabularies of motive” are the words that are available and appropriate in particular “societal situations”. They enable people, within these situations, to interpret their behaviours and actions, and those of other people by explaining or justifying them, and according to the given social conventions. They help people, confronted to the others in their everyday life, to orient their ways of being and doing, and to have a certain control on their social relations (Mills, 1940).

For Snow and Benford, “vocabularies of motive” work as persuasive “accounts” inciting people to participate in the social movement that activates them (Benford and Snow, 2000: 617). From the study of the nuclear disarmament movement, Benford (1993b) has proposed four sorts of vocabularies of motive: “vocabularies of severity”, “urgency”, “efficacy”, and of “propriety”. The first set of vocabularies stresses the gravity of the nuclear threat. The second one appeals to change quickly this situation and in consequence to create a world without nuclear. Through vocabularies of efficacy, activists emphasise the power of now conscious people to reverse the current nuclear situation. And, finally, by vocabularies of propriety, Benford refers to the vocabularies that underline the necessity to make people conscious about the perils of nuclear and nuclear war for definitively abandoning this energy. All these vocabularies permit to justify and foster social movements’ actions.

Collective action frames necessarily face opposed frames or counter-frames as when, through diagnostic framing, activists directly and overtly identify entities that provoke an unbearable problem or as when these frames indirectly disturb other frames belonging to some social sectors (for instance, other social groups, other movements, the elites, the media). According to Benford and Hunt (2001), opponents can counter-frame thanks to four processes: “Problem denial”, “counter-attribution”, “counter-prognostic”, and the politics of “discrediting” the movement, its members and actions. By the first process, opponents simply reject the existence of the problem identified by a movement. Through the second process, this time, the presence of the problem is acknowledged by adversaries but the latter refuse to accept the causes and to recognise the culprits that are put forward by the movement. They also propose other explanations of the problem. The actions of counter-prognostics can accompany the previous counter-framing. By this way, opponents contest the solutions proposed by the movement and suggest other paths for remedying the conflictive situations. By the last process, the most used and effective, contestants directly call into question the legitimacy of the movement in itself. Frame challenge also occurs within a movement, what Benford and Snow term “frame disputes”. These conflictive interactions affect the nature of the frames, which are constantly reshaped, the “re-framing” processes, to face, counter or

dissolve oppositions (Benford, 1993a; Benford and Snow, 2000: 625-626; Snow, 2001: 27). Confronted with counter-frames, social movements' replies may take five forms: "Ignoring", "keying", "embracing", "distancing", and "counter-maligning". The first one is an active strategy that consists in pursuing its activities by pretending not to know the criticisms in order not to give them saliency. When a social movement is "keying" counter-frames, they are transforming their meanings, that is, they are changing their senses by inverting, neutralising or undermining them. A further tactic, "embracing", is, firstly, to accept the criticisms and recuperate the counter-frames in order to better transform them (keying) for the second time. By distancing, a movement rejects external imputations and promotes other features from the latter. Embracing and distancing strategies are usually mixed. Through counter-maligning answers, a movement denounces the methods used by opponents by showing their amoral character (Benford and Hunt, 2001).

Collective action frames differ according to their level of "flexibility" and "inclusiveness". Some frames may be characterised by their lack of flexibility or a certain "rigidity", and their "exclusiveness". In this situation, frames are "inelastic" and relatively closed, specific to a single movement. By contrast, at the other extreme point of the scale, some frames can be seen as being highly malleable and inclusive. In other words, here, they are "elastic" and "open", capable of embracing an array of topics and interpretations. These latter kinds of frames are likely to become "master frames", that is, frames that unite several and diverse social movements' frames and that consequently function as meta-frames. Thus, Snow and Benford differentiate the concept of "master frame" from that of "central", "primary" or "organisational frame", which, unlike the former, does not assemble various collective action frames and only corresponds to the principal frame of a singular movement (Benford and Snow, 2000: 618-619). A master frame, which is produced by the first social movements at the beginning of a particular "cycle of protest", influences the following movements that join later this cycle. The content of frames and the room for manoeuvre in the framing depend on the moment of the movement's entrance into a cycle of protest. The late comers have to adopt the original master frame that orients action. The oldest movements work as "progenitors of master frames" for ulterior movements' frames. These latter movements must build their own frames from these master frames. There can be some differences but their principal aspects have to converge, except if happenings of some events come to call into question such master frames. Attempts to modify a master frame by new movements can generate conflicts with the "conservative" and the first movements that absolutely wish to maintain it. These conflicts may provoke separations among movements

(Snow and Benford, 1988: 211-212; Snow and Benford, 1992; Snow *et al.*, 2000: 159; Snow, 2001: 35). According to Mooney and Hunt, social movements can select more than a single master frame and usually have a “repertoire of interpretations”, formed by various master frames, at their disposal. These latter authors define two types of master frames: On the one hand, the “constitutive master frame” is the frame that is at the core of a repertoire of interpretations, the most important, at a given time and space, in comparison to other master frames composing such a repertoire as well. This is the master frame from which many social movements establish their own frames. On the other hand, “ancillary master frames” are all these secondary master frames that support the primary master frame within a repertoire of interpretations (Mooney and Hunt, 1996).

Snow and his collaborators define “frame alignment” as “rhetorical strategies” that facilitate the close association between individuals’ representations and social movement organisations’ conceptions. In other words, it implies a certain agreement at the level of ideation. For these authors, frame alignment, continued processes of interactions, is a decisive factor for creating resources and of commitment within a social movement.

They distinguish four types of frame alignment: “frame bridging”, “frame amplification”, “frame extension”, and “frame transformation”.

Frame bridging is the process by which two or several “ideologically” close, but “structurally” distinct, frames are put together. This process, which is the main frame alignment carried out by activists according to its exponents, can principally operate either among unconnected social movement organisations within a movement industry but sharing the same frame concerning some subjects, or between a movement organisation and people who are, before this linkage and despite the existence of common thoughts, outside it.

Frame amplification consists in “clarifying” and “(re)invigorating” frames. By this process, activists’ leaders try to (re)-valorise or give weight to some values or beliefs they consider that they are salient for a great part of the population they want to mobilise in favour of their actions.

Frame extension is the activity of expanding the social movement’s frames by incorporating external and different frames belonging to other movements, social groups or sectors of the population in order to manage to incite them to participate in the actions of the former.

And, finally, frame transformation corresponds to the action of changing aspects of a frame or including an entire frame in order that it can appear congruent with another or other frame(s). Originally distant or opposed, frames can become quite equivalent by this

modification. The aim of the activists carrying out this process remains the same as that of the previous kinds of frame alignment: Increasing the basis of a movement or its supporters for then achieving its ultimate objectives (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Hunt *et al.*, 1994: 191; Snow, 2001: 29-31).

A further concept, strictly related to that of frame alignment, is “frame resonance”. It signifies the capacity of a frame to cover a certain audience. From this definition, Snow and his colleagues have established the following law: The more a frame “resonates” or reaches a large public, the more the frame should be effective in attracting new followers. Benford and Snow equate “resonance” with “effectiveness”. Frame resonance depends on two related factors: “frame credibility” and “frame salience”. In turn, frame credibility is a function of what they call “frame consistency”, “empirical credibility” and “claimsmakers’ credibility”. Frame consistency implies a certain harmony or logic among ideas, assertions and practices of a social movement. Incoherence or discontinuities jeopardise this consistency. Empirical credibility means some correspondence between frames and reality. People must believe that what a frame says is true. Spokespersons’ credibility or their capacity of persuasion is linked to their social position and their knowledge of treated themes. For its part, frame salience also results from three elements: “centrality”, “experiential commensurability”, and “narrative fidelity”. By centrality, Benford and Snow refer to the very importance of ideas expressed through frames for social sectors. By experiential commensurability, they assert that a frame, in order to work, also has to reflect “experiences” of some people regarding their world. And, finally, social movements’ narratives and those of a certain public must correspond, there must be a narrative fidelity (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988: 205-211; Benford and Snow, 2000: 619-622).

A first criticism we can offer is that Snow, Benford and their collaborators propose many related concepts to analyse frames and framing within social movements, which sometimes give the impression of a certain repetition, and including of some confusion. Their wide conceptual compartmentalisation may appear excessive and not really necessary, heuristically, for observing and interpreting empirical data. Moreover, their works are more theoretical than empirical, not all the concepts that they advance have been systematically applied and verified in the field, as they recognise themselves (Benford, 1997; Snow, 2001: 43). Their studies actually more closely resemble various research plans or programs than deep investigations as their diverse articles and chapters in books tend to suggest. It seems they leave this research field, which has not been really explored yet, from their numerous concepts to other sociologists.

Then, if, without doubt, social movements are great doers of discourses, it is not their unique activity contrary to what some social scientists tend to suggest by focusing almost exclusively or exclusively on this praxis dimension such as the exponents of frame analysis. The study of social action implies to study the sense(s) of social subjects' actions. For this purpose, the study of social action must focus not only on the discursive logics of actors, that is, their rationalities expressed through narratives (oral and written), but also on the concrete social practices. The latter also contain senses that permit to understand, at a further level, social movements. In short, it implies for sociologists, alongside the description and analysis of the narratives and meanings that actors allocate to their practices, to observe and comment their proper deeds.

#### **4.2: Instrumental rationality:**

However, the main criticism we can put forward is that frame analysis exponents tend to focus on a single type of rationality, that is, instrumental rationality, and more specifically, on the utilitarian conception of instrumental rationality.

Thus, following this conception, people principally make choices according to their interests and the utility of their actions for them. The frame analysis model is close to the rational choice theory that is a dominant approach in Anglo-American sociology and that has strongly influenced resource mobilisation theories, notably through the works of Mancur Olson. Hence, resource mobilisation advocates and their close collaborators from the political process approach are strictly associated with those of the frame analysis model.

The rational choice theory has recuperated principles belonging to neo-classical economics and applied them to sociological questions. In this sense, it espouses a utilitarian vision by presenting individuals as *Homo oeconomicus* that are moved by egoist interests. Individuals follow a type of actions only if the latter are useful for them, that is, if they enable them to have profits with a low cost, or no cost at all. George Homans and James Coleman are two central representatives of this theory.

Deeply influenced by economics and behavioural psychology, Homans (1961, 1962) conceives human behaviours as a “social exchange” or “transactions” among individuals who rationally measure the costs and benefits of their potential conducts before engaging.



More precisely, individuals, during their interactions, exchange “goods” that can be either material, as help or services, or immaterial (symbolic), as “esteem” or “prestige”. For instance, in the office, Homans notes that competent clerks exchange their advice or help for the esteem or social approval of less qualified clerks. In the process, each individual usually has to support a cost, what he gives, and normally has a reward in return, what he receives for what he gives. Skilful clerks give their time but get social recognition in compensation. Less experienced clerks can improve their capabilities, but they must recognise their professional inferiority. The difference between reward and cost is the profit for the individual, which results from the social exchange. Individuals seek to maximise their personal profit and at the same time they do not want the other individuals within their social group earn more than them. The cost and value of exchanged goods are a function of the quantity of these goods. Scarce goods exchanged in social groups have a high price while common goods have a lower cost (for the receiver) or value (for the giver) in the same way as goods that are exchanged within the market place between an available supply and a solvent demand. If there are only a few clerks who are experienced within an office, their help will be greatly appreciated by the less qualified ones and consequently the former will benefit from a high social prestige. Thus, for Homans, social behaviours in everyday life reflect the elementary laws of economics, that is why, sociologists must apply the theoretical principles of the latter in order to explain the former. Moreover, he gave to economics the status of the most advanced social science (Homans, 1962).

James Coleman considers that when social scientists affirm that an action is “non-rational” or “irrational”, *de facto* it is often the case because they do not discover, or including they do not attempt to discover, the actors’ reasons. What seems bizarre or extraordinary for the external observers can be, in reality, completely *sensé* or meaningful for the concerned actors. Social scientists must overcome their first and often biased personal appreciation and attempt to find “the actor’s point of view” who often gives a sense or reasons to his/her actions in order to understand individual actions, and consequently social organisation, which stems from the latter. As Homans, Coleman is largely influenced by economics in his conceptualisation of social theory. Indeed, he mainly relies the latter on the concept of rationality derived from economic theory. Here, rationality signifies that an actor accomplishes only useful actions for him/herself but also that he/she carries out actions that have a maximum utility for him/her. Thus, he conceives actors as being mainly self-interested and seeking to grow to the maximum the realisation of their interests. As Homans, he considers that actions imply social exchanges. These exchanges concern resources. An actor,

who controls some resources and who is interested in other resources controlled by another actor who is, in turn, interested in the resources of the former, will exchange with him his resources in order to fully satisfy his interests. Hence, what principally distinguishes rational choice theory from other theoretical perspectives in sociology is the principle of “optimisation” (Coleman, 1990; Coleman and Fararo, 1992: xi).

Mancur Olson, originally an economist, forms part of these theorists who have also underpinned the rational choice theory. He is best known for having applied its propositions in the collective action field. He considers that the social group’s interests are not equivalent to those of the individuals who form this same group. From this basic axiom, he formulated “the paradox of the collective action” and the correlated idea of “free rider” (or “free ride”): As the individuals belonging to a social group know that they all will benefit from the gains that will be got through the group’s action, regardless of their personal participation, rational and self-interested individuals will seek to avoid engaging in the collective action in order not to support the costs and the risks and to have only the advantages. In other words, it may be that the necessary collective action for obtaining a “public good” (that is, a good that is known by and profitable for all the members composing the collective) does not happen if each member has the interest of letting the other members participate alone and of not participating towards achieving this good themselves. This situation especially appears when the size of the group is significant because in this case social control is more complicated to exercise, and when there are not corrective mechanisms as sanctions and/or rewards (“selective incentives”) that motivate the individual action. Beyond collective advantages, individual sanctions and/or rewards, that is, individual costs and benefices, are decisive factors of the individual action and, additionally, of collective action (Olson, 1978 [1966]).

Olson is considered as a central precursor of resource mobilisation theories. He influenced the main exponents of the latter as Anthony Oberschall (1973), William Gamson (1975), John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1977). Through these theories, social movements have come to be perceived as being composed of rational individuals who have decided to unite in order to reach clear objectives, who are moved by personal and collective interests. The collective action appears in this sense as the result of a sum of individual and reflexive decisions. These theoretical positions contrast with the previous collective behaviour theories that saw social movements above all as a spontaneous and irruptive phenomenon stemming from people’s emotions, and not from their reason.

Several authors from the resource mobilisation theories and the political process model, its close parent, have integrated in their works the contributions of those who defend the

frame analysis model (Gamson and Meyer, 1996; McAdam, 1996; McAdam *et al.*, 2001; McAdam *et al.*, 1996; Oberschall, 1996; Tarrow, 2003 [1998]: 106-122; Tarrow, 1992; Zald, 1996). In turn, frames analysts have also incorporated the concepts and theories of the former.

Thus, David Snow, Robert Benford and their colleagues associate the frames approach with the resource mobilisation theories. They see these two perspectives as being related and complementary, rather than opposed. In this sense, they also use notions that characterise these latter theories. For instance, they refer to and integrate into their frames perspective the concepts of “SMO” or “social movement organisation”, of “movement industry”, “resources”, which have been particularly developed by McCarthy and Zald (1977). Thus, frames appear as symbolic or cultural resources, a particular and central kind of resources, which enable to generate other types of resources and contribute to recruit new activists. If for traditional resource mobilisation theorists, it is the organisation that is the main resource of social movements, indispensable for their emergence and continuity, it seems that frames become this principal resource in the case of frames analysts. Thus, the material resources, as the organisation, promoted by resource mobilisation theorists have come to be completed by the cultural resources, the frames, advanced by frames exponents, what permits to create a full resource mobilisation paradigm.

Framing actions and consequently the construction of meanings mainly appear as strategic and calculated actions. This narrow focus on the strategic dimension of the elaboration of meanings has been also criticised by authors, the French counterpart, who work with Snow and have recuperated in part his theories for their own analyses of collective action, which are more centred on the constraints of “grammars of the public life” in the definition of frames – these grammars are unavoidable institutionalised rules within specific “public arenas” in which multiple actors interact and have to conform to the former (Cefaï and Trom, 2001: 13; Cefaï, 2001: 51-52, 68-69). Thus, from this strategic vision, social movements’ leaders, as business entrepreneurs or marketers, manipulate meanings through framing principally in order to convince people of the relevance of their movement and actions, and finally of the necessity to participate in it through money, manual tasks or other services. It seems that they frame, adapt and align their convictions with those of a part of public opinion, the largest one if it is possible, almost only for instrumental reasons, that is, for gaining support and defeating opponents, for the viability of the movement and the achievement of its goals. Thus, activists would essentially resonate in terms of efficiency and efficacy of their actions. They would try to pragmatically choose the better means or, more specifically in this theoretical perspective, the better frames, those corresponding to those of a

large or the greatest population, to reach their ends (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000).

If these aspects are undoubtedly present within social movements and it is important to take them into account, nonetheless, social movements, their actions, the meanings of their actions cannot be reduced to instrumental reason, and *a fortiori* to utilitarian reason, as they tend to be through the frame approach adapted to the study of social movements.

#### **4.3: Rationality from two classical approaches: Max Weber and Ludwig von Mises:**

Earlier, social theorists considered dimensions of rationality other than the instrumental one, such as Max Weber and Ludwig von Mises – though this latter author, as we shall see in the following pages, has in reality a paradoxical position vis-à-vis the concept of rationality.

Weber was one of the main founders of sociology and, more particularly, of comprehensive sociology. He defined sociology as a science intended to “understand by interpretation (*deutend verstehen*) social activity”. An activity is a “human behaviour” to which the concerned “agent(s)” give a “subjective sense”. An activity becomes social when this activity, according to its meaning for the agent(s), is in relation with another agent’s activity or other human behaviours, and when it is meaningfully oriented from the latter. Understanding is synonymous with explanation and it basically consists in finding the sense of significant social activity or, in other words, the meanings that agents, who are “singular individuals”, subjectively attribute to their social behaviours. This sense (*sinn*) is not necessarily and objectively “true” or “just” but these latter characteristics, unlike “dogmatic scientists”, do not concern sociologists who are attached to empirical activity. This sense can be rational or irrational. More precisely, in his taxonomy of “fundamental concepts of sociology”, Weber identified four elementary “motives” or “determinants of social activity”: “rationality in purpose” (*zweckrationalität*), “rationality in value” (*wertrationalität*), “affects” (*affekte*), and “traditions”. The two first determinants or motives are rational and the two last ones, by contrast, are not.

A rational activity in purpose exists because one or several agents have “expectations” and methodically act in order to reach ends that have been previously and extensively thought out. For this purpose, they use means that they consider appropriate as other agents’ expectations. Hence, agents act according to ends, means and further effects. They also

compare between them the end and the means, the end and the additional consequences, and they contrast the various potential ends between them. By its definition, this type of rationality equates to instrumental rationality.

A rational activity in value is carried out because one or various agents believe in the inner and absolute value of a particular kind of behaviour, without regarding its consequences. The nature of this value may be ethical, aesthetic, religious. In other words, agents act in a way that is for them indispensable or according to strong normative beliefs, which may concern “duty”, “dignity”, “beauty”, “good”, “religious directives”, “piety”, or “the greatness of a ‘cause’”.

Weber asserted that, compared to rationality in purpose, rationality in value is less rational because the consequences of the activity are not an important criterion for the agent’s decision making. The inherent value of an action and the result of an action follow an inverse reason: The more this value is pure and absolute for the agents, the less the effects of the act are taken into account by them. Consequently, the more the value of an act is determinant, the less the act is rational in comparison to acts that are strictly commanded by rationality in purpose.

A significant social activity can also be motivated by affects that are emotions, passions or feelings. Weber enumerated the following examples of affects: “fear”, “anger”, “invidiousness”, “jealousie”, “love”, “enthusiasm”, “pride”, “the desire of vengeance”, “compassion”, “devotion”, and any types of desires.

The difference between a rational activity in value and an activity guided by affects relies on the fact that in the former agents consciously and methodically define and perform their actions whereas in the latter agents tend to act by “reaction” to some unusual stimuli. Nonetheless, for both types of activities, their sense is not based on their effects that are external to them – unlike rational activities in purpose – but on themselves. In other words, they are carried out for their proper nature. It is about the activity for the activity and what the activity represents or expresses: values in the case of rational activities in value or feelings in the case of affectional activities.

And, finally, a further source of comprehensive social activity are traditions, that is, rooted customs.

The strict separation among these latter determinants is more theoretical than real, as Weber underlined. For the needs of sociological comprehension, they correspond to “pure ideal-types” that are conceptually constructed and isolated, and toward which practical cases tend more or less according to their nature. Moreover, Weber did not pretend to establish an

exhaustive taxonomy of types of social activities but only he sought to underline and specify the most salient forms.

Thus, the frontier among these ideal-types is thin. An activity oriented by affects can become a conscious task to respond to feelings and therefore tends toward a rational activity in value, or in purpose, or both. As we have just observed above, activities relying on affects and those that are rational in value share a similar sense, which does not depend on the result of the activity but on the activity *per se*. In the same way as affectional activities, activities motivated by traditions are originally mere reactions, but this time, not to unusual stimuli but to common or well-established “excitations”. Similarly to activities moved by affects, traditional activities can also be carried out more or less consciously and hence be closer to the two types of rational activities. Furthermore, a same agent may act both rationally in purpose and rationally in value, that is, for instance, he can make a choice among different ends according to convictions (rationality in value) and in order to reach the selected end he will think about the appropriate means (rationality in purpose). In this situation, the rationality in purpose operates only at the level of the means. Here, the end is determined by strong beliefs on what must be, or rationally in value. Empirically, the ideal of a social activity that would be strictly oriented by a rationality in purpose is non-existent. More generally, concrete social activities seldom obey a single type of determinants. As we have seen above, the determinants of social activity are ideal-types by which actual activities are directed more or less, and in this orientation the latter usually associate several types. This association of types varies according to the proper characteristics of social activities.

Inspired by Ferdinand Tönnies’ conceptual distinction between “community” (*gemeinschaft*) and “society” (*gesellschaft*) (Tönnies, 1957 [1887]), Weber considered that social activity according to its determinants generates two main forms of social relations. On the one hand, “communalisation” (*vergemeinschaftung*) is a type of social relation in which social activity is led by affects or traditions. These latter determinants give the concerned agents the “subjective feeling” to form a same community. On the other hand, “sociation” (*vergesellschaftung*) is a form of social relation where social activity is rationally established from a “compromise” or a “coordination of interests”. This compromise or coordination is decided on the basis of rational motives that can either rely on values to follow or on purposes to reach. One can obviously deduce from this categorisation that Weber assumed the former is an irrational social relation while the latter is a rational one according to their respective motives. Furthermore, he specified the principal types of sociation. First, it can be “exchange” (*tausch*), which is formed rationally in purpose and from “free agreement on the market”

among people who are both rivals and partners. Then, a further form of sociation may be “determined purposive association” (*zweckverein*), which is also constituted on the basis of voluntary agreement. But this time, the agreement aims to create a “continued activity” whose goals and means must serve participants’ “material interests (economic or others)”.

As we have shown above, these forms of sociation are particularly underlined by the rational choice theory and the frame analysis model adapted to the study of social movements. As we have noted, through the works of George Homans and James Coleman, the former theory especially stresses exchange as type of rational social relation. For their part, David Snow, Robert Benford, Scott Hunt and other social scientists belonging to frame analysis focus more on determined purposive association. These two types of sociation are determined by rationality in purpose or by what we can also call instrumental rationality. If these types were also emphasised by Weber, nonetheless, for him, they were not the unique ones. Indeed, he presented and defined a further central type of sociation that is motivated by rationality in value and that seems forgotten or, at best, loosely considered by rational choice and frame analysis theorists. This sociation is “association based on convictions” (*gesinnungsverein*).

The latter is created rationally in value by agents in order to obligatorily “serve the ‘cause’” or to respond to their strong normative beliefs, and not to their interests. Religious associations epitomise this kind of sociation.

In the same way as the motives and the types of social activity that we have observed before or as most of the concepts put forward by Weber, the concepts of communalisation and sociation are pure ideal-types that are strictly differentiated and elaborated for helping sociologists to analyse empirical cases. But, *in concreto*, most cases are more or less close to some types, without being totally assimilated to one of them, and tend to mix elements of several types. Hence, a same social relation can contain elements belonging to communalisation and others belonging to sociation as a same social activity can be oriented by rational motives (in purpose or/and in value) and/or by irrational motives (affects or/and traditions) (Weber, 1971 [1921]: 3-59).

Ludwig von Mises, one of the most prominent representatives of the Austrian School of economics in which Joseph Schumpeter was also situated, criticised, in his theory of human action or in his praxeology, the Weberian distinction between purposive-rational action and value-rational action. In his view, the purpose of an action is a value as the value of an action is a purpose. Hence, through his demonstration, end and value become strongly intertwined. He pointed out that the exclusion of purpose from value and reciprocally the separation of value from purpose imply that the ends of an action are only considered as material ends or

interests in the same way as the utilitarian paradigm. Mises pursued his criticism by deconstructing the rest of the Weberian typology concerning the determinants of social activity. Thus, he also called into question the exclusion of both traditions and affects from the sphere of reason to which purposive action and “valuational” action belong. Indeed, an individual can attribute an important value to a tradition, thereby acting in order to reach this valuational purpose. The same thing can occur with affects. A particular emotion or feeling may occupy a high position in the scale of an individual’s preferences or values, and accordingly an action can be oriented by this affect that is also at the same time a determinant value and purpose. Actually, for Mises, all human action is rational and accordingly irrationality has no really its place in it.

Nonetheless, one can observe two main inconveniences with Mises’s approach. First, his general criticism about the Weberian typology of the motives of social activity, which is necessary, nevertheless muddled the conceptual clarification established by Weber for analysing social action. Then, his definition of rationality finally remained narrow despite the fact it seemed extensive at first glance. Indeed, rationality, after all, is essentially, for him, a matter of individual choices among a range of available options to achieve wished ends, which can be interests, values, traditions or affects.

Thus, Mises’s perspective is quite paradoxical. On the one hand, it seems that he espoused a large vision of the concept of rationality, larger than that of Weber, by integrating within it not only the concepts of purpose and value, as Weber did it, but also the concepts of traditions and affects, which were, by contrast, excluded from rationality by Weber even if the latter concepts maintained, for him, strong interrelations, not in theory but in practice, with the former. But, on the other hand, this large conception of rationality seems to be reduced at the end to a specific rationality, that is, the instrumental rationality or the purposive rationality inasmuch as Mises equated rationality with the mere choice of means to reach wanted ends. Everything becomes purpose (value, traditions, affects) and the idea of rationality essentially relies on the choice of means and not really on the purpose that can have any nature. Maybe this ultimate reduction, after a first significant extension, of the concept of rationality is due to his academic profile. As an economist, more than as a sociologist, he finally resonated as an economist even if initially he could wish to overcome the economic reductionism that tends to consider all rationality under the sole and narrow conception of instrumental or purposive rationality. In a certain sense, Weber and other sociologists wanted and want to go beyond this reductionism to fully interpret social reality that cannot be limited to economic laws or principles as if it was only an economic reality (Mises, 2003 [1933]: 71-98).



#### **4.4: Rationality: Some approaches from modern sociology:**

More recently, some social theorists have also insisted on other aspects of reason. Among them, we can refer to the works of Siegwart Lindenberg, Michael Macy, Antonio Damasio, Raymond Boudon, and those of Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, and Jürgen Habermas.

Lindenberg (2006 [2001]) has confronted the idea of “social rationality” with that of instrumental rationality or, as he has called it, that of “rational egoism”.

By social rationality, he stresses that rationality must be regarded as a range of human traits that partly rest upon the social context. More precisely, these traits, whose nature is influenced to a certain degree by social elements belonging to the subjects’ environment, are the capacity of defining and pursuing goals, of expecting, evaluating, and of attributing meanings to the things and occurrences. No trait can be considered as superior to the others. Thus, unlike theories based on the idea of instrumental rationality, such as those related to the rational choice model, the trait of determining and aiming for objectives cannot be the unique trait of rationality or a feature that dominates and eludes the others.

Michael Macy affirms that the concept of “emergent rationality” must replace the concept of “purposive rationality” that is at the core of rational choice theory. The main advanced reason is that rational choice theory or “the interest paradigm”, via the concept of rationality in end, asserts that actors know all the consequences of their action and accordingly choose the appropriate means while unexpected effects, which are real and influence actors’ decisions and actions, are not or are loosely taken into account. Thus, in Macy’s view, given these unexpected results, this is less the actors’ aimed purpose or the future outcomes than the repetition of situations or the actual knowledge of past and present outcomes that orient them toward a type of action. From this reiteration that enables actors to know specific situations, a rationality for action *emerges*. Emergent rationality is a gradual and dynamic process that follows the evolution of occurrences. Thus, it is adaptable and oriented toward the improvement, and not toward optimisation or maximisation as in the case of purposive rationality defended by rational choice theory (Macy, 1997).

Antonio Damasio is actually a neuroscientist, neurologist and psychologist, not properly a sociologist, but he has offered insights on reason that are interesting for sociological thought

about this topic. From observations on patients, he has asserted that emotions, reason and body are strictly interrelated.

Hence, he has refuted the traditional and prevalent conception within Western thought that sees reason and emotion as two antithetical dimensions of mind, which considers emotion as necessarily having a negative influence on reason, and he has contested the rooted idea of pure reason free from all emotional penetration.

From his point of view, emotion actually forms part of the sphere of reason. Its influence on reasoning process is not given *a priori*, unique and its functions in it are actually multiple. Hence, it may have both positive and negative effects on reason, and, when its influence is positive, its support is determinant. Moreover, reason appears as an “extension” of emotion. Indeed, emotion permits human beings to act and react quickly without having to think quickly in situations that may concern their proper survival. Reason allows human beings to think quickly before acting quickly. Reason and emotion produce the same thing, that is, an act. The unique difference is that through reason a human being accomplishes an act consciously. But, in all cases, reason cannot exist without emotion: Without the participation of emotion in the reasoning process, reason appears imperfect, worse than when the influence of emotion is negative, as neurological cases studied by Damasio have demonstrated it. Nonetheless, Damasio informs the reader that he does not mean by this that emotion is more important than reason and consequently that we should adopt an opposite vision to the current hegemonic one. His intention is only to show the interconnection between reason and emotion. This interconnection is what Damasio names “the somatic marker hypothesis”.

Thus, he has also questioned the Cartesian vision that consists in separating mind (*res cogitans*) and body (*res extensa*), and in giving more importance to the former to the detriment of the latter because it is considered as the fundamental part of the being. This vision continues to dominate the Western thought, notably within sciences in general and medicine in particular.

On the contrary, biologically, within the human brain, the levels that command reason, emotion and body functions are strictly interwoven. Furthermore, for Damasio, René Descartes’ famous *cogito ergo sum* is not verified by the facts: Before thinking, human beings are. Finally, this scientist has proposed an integrated vision in order to understand the human mind by taking into account the human being in his/her totality – the idea of “embodied mind” that he has opposed to the Cartesian idea of “disembodied mind” – and his/her physical

and sociocultural environment in which and with which he/she interacts (Damasio, 2006 [1994]).

#### **4.5: Raymond Boudon and the “good reasons”: Cognitive rationality, axiological rationality, and instrumental rationality:**

Raymond Boudon is one of the main current sociologists who focus on the problematic of rationality. He has proposed exhaustive, systematic and critical studies on the principal theories of rationality. After having shown the advantages and the limits of each theory – namely rational choice theory, limited rationality theory among the most prominent of them – he has advanced his own – ordinary rationality theory or, what he also calls, general rationality theory or the cognitivist theory of rationality (Boudon, 2009b, 2009c [1995], 2007a [1999], 2007b, 2003b).

Thus, as we have observed above, rational choice theory is based on an axiom that states that the individual selects the means that are the most appropriate for getting his ends. This axiom easily implies a further one: The individual thinks in terms of calculated costs-rewards, that is, he opts for the actions that allow him to maximise the difference between rewards and costs or his profit (Boudon, 2009b). This axiomatic tends to easily give a caricatural image of the human being by presenting it as being substantially cynical and pharisaic.

In part, to face this simplified representation of social subjects, limited rationality theory was particularly developed by Herbert Simon with his concept of “bounded rationality” (Simon, 1997; Simon *et al.*, 2008 [1992]). The core premise of this theory is that, in the same way as for rational choice theory, the individual chooses the means that are the best to achieve his purposes, but, and this is here where there is a difference between these two theories, the individual makes his choices according to the information and his capabilities to deal with it, both being necessarily by nature *limited* (Boudon, 2009b).

One can easily observe that the difference between these two latter theories is of degree rather than of kind. In effect, both are versions of instrumental rationality. If limited rationality theory seems more moderate than rational choice theory by putting limits or bounds to the human rationality that cannot be total in practice, nevertheless, the former remains in the strict loop of the latter.

Instrumental or “teleological” rationality – which is defined at large as the verified or objective correspondence between the means used by the actor and the purposes that he aims – is only a particular form of rationality even if many sociologists and economists assimilate this mere form to rationality in general, thereby giving the biased idea that this is the sole form of rationality. This metonymic representation of rationality, that is, where the *holos* is expressed by the part, where rationality *tout court* is merged with instrumental rationality, implies, and this is questionable, that actions where employed means are inadequate in relation to the ends and actions that are not accomplished for purposes – as those based on beliefs since the action of believing is not necessarily carried out for an end – are irrational actions. Thus, by this definition, and this is problematic, a wide range of human actions become irrational unlike the common sense of rationality, what creates a hiatus between theoretical abstraction and empirical reality. In these conditions, theories of rationality under the strict idea of instrumental rationality can hardly give an account of many concrete situations. Hence, they tend not to respect a fundamental criterion in the philosophy of sciences that allows to verify the scientific validity of theories, a criterion notably formulated by Karl Popper and which states that scientific theories must be congruent with reality. Rational choice theory and bounded rationality theory can be only and correctly applied to particular cases, and *ipso facto* they cannot pretend to universality. They cannot be general theoretical models that explain all social phenomena unlike what their respective exponents tend to affirm and although these theories allow to elucidate some important social facts.

Other theories that enter into the category of instrumental rationality and utilitarianism are more particularistic. Boudon refers to neo-Marxist theories in their individualist variants and to theories inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy.

This neo-Marxist sociology states that social actors pursue aims, they use the most adequate means for this and seek to maximise their interests, but this time, these interests are a peculiar category of interests, that is, these are class interests.

Nietzschean sociology rests upon the conceptual couple “will to power” and “resentment”. Social subjects act in order to optimise their interests, these interests being defined by the will to power. Frustrations of their will to power generate their resentment and consecutively actions against the causes of these frustrations.

Curiously, as Boudon has pointed it, there is a convergence, here, between theories inspired by neo-classical economics (rational choice and limited rationality models) and theories founded on Marxist and Nietzschean sociologies, these influences being usually diametrically opposed.

Boudon also identifies a more general theoretical model than utilitarianism, and *a fortiori*, than rational choice and bounded rationality models within the category of instrumental rationality: Functionalism in a certain aspect. In other words, social subjects believe in what they believe and do what they do because they think these beliefs and actions serve the collectivity, the social system or the society, allow the latter to *function* or work well. In fact, here, the difference between utilitarianism and functionalism is thin. For functionalists, an action and a belief is considered (positively or negatively) – and consequently accomplished, approved or not – according to its consequences (positive or negative) for the general interest. But, unlike utilitarianism, this general interest does not necessarily concern subjects' personal interests, and *ipso facto*, the search for the collective interest does not automatically imply the quest for the maximisation or the satisfaction of “egoist” interests whatever they are – individualist, of social class or position, or linked to the will to power.

Functionalism in this acceptance is close to another important movement of ideas: Pragmatism such as it was conceived by William James and John Dewey. For pragmatists, what is good or true is what *succeeds* (Boudon, 2009c [1995], 2003b).

The rational model put forward by Boudon – the ordinary rationality theory or the cognitivist theory of rationality – leans upon a core axiom: Individuals adhere to a belief or decide to do an action from *reasons* or cognitive mechanisms (Boudon, 2009b).

These reasons are not only and are not always instrumental. They may also be founded on values, as Weber showed as well. In any case, Boudon proposes a broad representation of the notion of rationality or reason that is equated with cognition. But, this insistence on the rationality of human actions does not neglect the role of traditions and affects. On the contrary, the latter are combined with subjects' reasons and together explain their social behaviours.

Thus, people follow and continue to follow traditions because in many circumstances they have no reason to abandon them and have reasons to accept them.

Likewise, affects can have an important role in the configuration of the individual's cognitive systems. Emotional reactions are often based on reasons and then, in turn, sometimes generate other reasons of acting. This conception is far from Vilfredo Pareto's emotionalism for whom normative beliefs and actions that do not rely on instrumental reasons are only caused by emotions. The reasons employed by social subjects are, in these cases, mere justifications or “rationalisations”, that is, false reasons – and not the real causes of believing and acting – intended to cover these emotions or “sentiments”, and to ascribe an

objective and rational character to these beliefs and actions (Pareto, 1968 [1916]). This Paretian meaning of rationalisation rejoins Sigmund Freud's sense about this concept (and after him that of psychoanalysis in general), a meaning that completely differs from that attributed by Weber. The latter equates it with "intellectualisation", "theorisation" or the continuous search for "logical coherence", the development of science being a major sign, but not the unique one, of this process (Weber, 2009 [1919]; Boudon, 2007a [1999]). Boudon agrees with Weber on this point in the same way as he is in line with him concerning the most salient propositions of his epistemology, as we shall observe in the following paragraphs.

If Boudon recognises that social phenomena cannot be always explained from actors' reasons, he asserts, nonetheless, following Weber and Popper, that social scientists should start their analysis from the principle that social phenomena result from actors' reasons because many social phenomena can be explained and are better explained from theories based on rational causes of these phenomena. These latter theories are often more congruent with reality. And this is via these theories that sociology can explain social phenomena that seem at first glance, for the common opinion or external observers, bizarre or mysterious, and therefore irrational, whereas they have in fact their reasons or make sense for the concerned social subjects. Thus, sociology can bring real contributions through these theories by overcoming the common opinion that, here, hardly differs from theories based on irrational or non-rational or a-rational causes of social phenomena. He considers that it is only if social scientists cannot explain social phenomena from actors' reasons, because they discover there are in fact no reasons, that they can then opt for these latter kinds of explanations. Borrowing the Paretian terminology, the latter can only treat "non-logical actions".

Nevertheless, they generally insist on the effects of interiorisation and socialisation, which conduce individuals situated in a particular social milieu to follow "mechanically" and under the social constraint the beliefs, the conducts and the actions corresponding to their milieu. However, if the factor of interiorisation, in several circumstances, can initially explain adhesions to beliefs, modes of behaving and acting, it is not sufficient to explain their persistence over time, a persistence that can only lean on actors' "solid" reasons of believing in their certainties, of behaving and acting as they do (Boudon, 2009c [1995]).

In any case, Boudon remains critical of tendencies toward social determinism and, its corollary, sociologism – which tends to replace sociology –, and toward theories founded on the idea of the a-rational *Homo sociologicus* such as theories inspired by Durkheimism, structural-Marxism, structuralism, culturalism among other influent holistic movements of thought within the scientific ethos (Boudon, 2009a [1979]).

He rejects the common assumption that confines sociology to the task of determining the irrational causes of social behaviours, an assumption that has not been furthermore followed before him by important classical sociologists such as Weber or Alexis de Tocqueville.

A-rational causes are often presented as “forces” by the diverse holistic theories, forces that people do not control, that act beyond their volition and on them, that is, that impose themselves to them. These forces can be biological, social, cultural or psychological. Depending on the movement of thought, some types of forces are more underlined than others. For example, culturalism insists on cultural forces, Durkheimism on social forces, psychoanalysis on psychological forces, and Darwinist evolutionism on biological forces in the determination of social phenomena and human behaviours. As Boudon has observed, one does not know how but only social scientists who talk about these “forces” seem to be able to detect them. Beyond this mystery and despite this apparent and peculiar capacity, these forces remain opaque and their mentions are often very conjectural or hypothetical, their existence not being always rigorously and sufficiently demonstrated from empirical reality. For Boudon, “collective concepts” associated to these holistic forces are, in most cases, “black boxes” that provoke unresolved supplementary questions or that are not taken into account like the question of the origin of these forces, what makes these concepts enigmatic and arbitrary. They tend to obscure more than to illuminate social phenomena and they are, in any case, less explicative than descriptive.

In the rational approaches of causes in which reasons are equated with causes, social subjects and their behaviours are the causes of social phenomena while, in the a-rational approaches of causes in which reasons are simply eluded, they become the mere effects of these phenomena.

Thus, Boudon stresses that, in most cases, in relation to their context, individuals have “strong” or “good reasons” to believe in what they believe (regardless of the fact that these beliefs or certainties are actually true or wrong), to behave as they behave or to act as they act. In other words, their beliefs, their behaviours or their actions have a sense for them. This proposition can also be translated by the following sentence: “people have reasons to believe in it (even if their beliefs are wrong), to behave like this or to act in this way *because...*”. Wrong ordinary beliefs are not less rational than wrong scientific beliefs when they are founded on reasoning, on a system of arguments. Indeed, a scientific belief is not judged as irrational when it is wrong. Accordingly, as Boudon wondered, why may the other types of beliefs not be estimated in a similar manner? By contrast, theories based on a-rational causes

of social phenomena may be summed up in this way: “people have not reasons to..., but...” (Boudon, 2009c [1995]).

Thus, parallel to social action and behaviour, Boudon’s rational or cognitivist approach allows to understand and explain all types of beliefs, like normative and axiological collective beliefs (the normative is in fact a category of the axiology), which refer to *what must be* and *what counts* (evaluations, judgements of values, or axiological certainties), and like positive collective beliefs that concern *what is* (truths, judgements of facts, or positive certainties).

Boudon’s distinction between what can also be termed appreciations or prescriptive ideas, on the one hand, and representations of the world or descriptive ideas, on the other hand, reminds us of Immanuel Kant’s distinction between practical reason, which regards morals and the rules of human conducts, and pure reason that concerns knowledge.

Actions and beliefs are generally “public” or “trans-subjective” insofar as individuals, in many circumstances, do not consider their actions or their beliefs as something that is purely personal but as being shared by other individuals. This belief in shared beliefs and actions makes their reasons “communicable” and collective for social subjects. This collective character expresses the solidity of these reasons. The more the reasons are objective, the more a belief based on these reasons is shared and collective. The first proposition is a cause of the second one, and not the contrary. This is the objectivity and the solidity of reasons (what makes them “good” or “strong”) that create consensus, and not the opposite.

His conception of rationality actually permits to analyse many empirical and complex situations inasmuch as most actions generally rest upon beliefs and as the different types of beliefs are, in practice, interrelated and not separated. Thus, in his conception and in the facts, there is not a strict distinction between the rationality of beliefs and the rationality of action unlike certain theoretical tendencies within social sciences. Furthermore, beliefs are often both normative and positive beliefs, the normative character being generally constituted, in many circumstances, from the positive dimension of beliefs. *Le devoir-être* derives from *l’être*. An individual may think that the things must be in this way because he thinks that these same things concretely create some situations.

Hence, many religious beliefs have both a dogmatic side where truths on the world are established and a moral side that defines the principles to be followed by the believer in his daily life. It is also the same thing about political beliefs. They contain positive certainties and axiological certainties on the social, economic and political organisation of the City.

Positive and axiological collective beliefs are founded on argumentative systems or theories whose subjects are more or less conscious. The difference is that the systems of



argumentation or of reasons regarding axiological and normative beliefs contain, at least, one proposition about values while those of positive beliefs have not imperative propositions and have only indicative propositions.

Inference rules or the mechanisms of thought are identical. There is a *continuum* between the axiological and the positive rather than a discontinuity or a rupture that was notably formulated by positivist historicism – Auguste Comte’s “law of three states” (the evolution of the human spirit must successively cross three great stages: the theological or imagination stage, the metaphysical or abstract stage, and finally the scientific or positive stage) –, or by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl’s idea of pre-logical *Primitive mentality* (2010 [1922]) (Boudon, 2009b, 2009c [1995], 2007b, 2003b).

Ideologies are beliefs for Boudon. The term was invented at the end of the eighteenth century by Destutt de Tracy who had the intention to create a new science, the science of ideas, intended, in the context of Enlightenment, to contribute to found a new political and social order based on Reason, and correlatively to criticise Tradition – concept that served to subsume institutions, ideas, and structures belonging to the existent social system inherited from the feudal system. But the word “ideology” took a pejorative connotation when Napoléon Bonaparte accused with contempt the “ideologues” (Destutt de Tracy and Volney), because the latter criticised his imperial policy, to provide doubtful speculations and abstractions that do not objectively take reality into account. It is, to a large extent, this latter meaning that remains within common language today. Within the academic literature, the concept was especially used by the Marxist thought. It is polysemous, including within Marxism. For Marx and Engels (1967 [1845-1846]), ideology means deformed representations of reality – the famous metaphor of the *camera obscura* – specific to each social class. This deformation stems from actors’ social position within the mode of production, their class interests and their role in the class struggle although each social class thinks that its representations of reality are true. With Lenin (1966 [1902]) and unlike Marx and Engels, ideologies are no longer linked to the representations of right and wrong and they become mere doctrinal tools used by each social class in their struggle. Because of the polysemy of the word and because of its strict affiliation with Marxism, classical sociologists, such as Durkheim, Weber or Pareto, avoided mentioning it although they dealt with similar problematics that can be regrouped under the more general phenomena of beliefs.

Hence, if ideologies are beliefs, they are a particular type of beliefs for Boudon. First, they are a kind of axiological collective beliefs, which refers to social and political

organisation and to the future of societies (*le devenir*). Unlike religious beliefs, ideologies do not make reference to notions of sacred and transcendence.

Then, and more significantly, they are beliefs that are also related to the criteria of the truth and the error, that is, this is about positive collective beliefs (accordingly, ideologies are these political beliefs that I mentioned above). Indeed, according to Boudon, at the core of most of ideologies (major and minor, leftist and rightist), there are scientific theories, which explain, to a certain degree, their genesis and social diffusion. In modern societies, the authority of knowledge relies on science while in other historical or sociocultural contexts this authority is rather based on exegetic theories, which consist in interpreting what the Authority has really meant – for example, hermeneutics of the Bible in past European societies served to argue on behalf of philosophical, theological and metaphysical beliefs. This Authority can therefore be a book, a text, an author, a person, a group of reference, institutions, entities, etc.

In Boudon's terms, the scientific character of ideologies, more than their political nature, explains, to a large extent but not exclusively, why an ideology appears, why people believe in it, and why it can reach a large amount of persons. Because they have a scientific basis and since science is the source of legitimate knowledge in our modern societies – or, if we prefer, as it is the guarantee of the “true” knowledge and as people in general search for or wish to lean upon “truth” in their daily life –, social subjects have reasons to believe in them. Thanks to their scientific origin, ideologies are normally perceived as being credible and objective. Thus, to a great extent, the power of ideologies depends on the power of their scientific theories that varies according to ideologies.

Nevertheless, scientific theories are generally partial within ideologies. Currently, Marxism is the unique ideology based on a totalising theoretical system. It has continued to be intellectually influential despite its political collapse since the end of the Soviet Union (the main “ideocratic State”) and even if this intellectual influence has diminished since this fall. This case shows, for Boudon, that ideas are not always adjusted to material reality. In a certain Hegelian or Platonist sense, they have therefore their own reality that can survive historical contingencies.

Moreover, in many cases, scientific theories within ideologies are reinterpreted, misinterpreted, simplified, misunderstood or are simply wrong. The original scientific argumentation tends to be substituted or, at least, modified and completed by rhetorical and exegetic argumentations, in Boudon's view. These processes make ideologies wrong or excessive in their beliefs and their representations of reality. If ideologies concern the criteria of the right and the wrong – positive collective beliefs –, they tend to be wrong or exaggerated

because of these theoretical “derivations”, to speak with Pareto. But these derivations, unlike Pareto, do not imply that they are not rational. Erroneous scientific theories in the academic sector – and there are a myriad as the history of sciences shows – are not considered as being irrational by scientists. It is the same thing about erroneous scientific theories within ideologies. There are no reasons to consider them differently and the opposite choice seems to be rather arbitrary for Boudon. Furthermore, ideologies always conserve a certain scientific basis despite the processes of derivations, a basis that continues to give them a certain legitimacy. In any case, they are always founded on reflection or a system of argumentation. The latter, as we have just seen, combines, in a variable way, scientific, rhetorical and exegetic arguments, what makes ideologies *a fortiori* rational.

Thus, major ideologies are founded on scientific theories, and their power is linked to the solidity of these theories. Marxism (mentioned above), political and economic liberalism, and conservatism largely owe their social and political influence to the strength of their scientific bases.

Marxism was reinforced in the twentieth century by the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas), structural-Marxist sociology (Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas, the young Manuel Castells), and critical sociology (Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant).

Liberalism has been particularly sustained by economics (or, better said, a part of economics) and by scientists such as Friedrich von Hayek or Milton Friedman.

Conservatism found support through a certain classical sociology. As Boudon has pointed out, Durkheim, Weber or Pareto by giving a scientific relevance, for instance, to the notions of “authority”, “charisma”, “social hierarchy”, “status”, “solidarity” or “traditions” indirectly allowed to fortify some conservative views, which tend to positively insist on these same notions.

One can add further examples to those mentioned by Boudon. Thus, for example, Gustave Le Bon’s theses in his best-seller *Psychology of Crowds* – theses that especially asserted the irruptive and uncontrollable features of crowds, and their dangerous character for social order, which found a large audience within political and economic elites at the end of the nineteenth century – contributed to argue for conservative policies against the “masses”, and in particular the working class, and on behalf of the *status quo* (Le Bon, 2003 [1895]). A certain anthropology participated in European imperialist projects, notably Lévy-Bruhlian theses allowed to give a scientific basis to the European colonial projects by presenting Western societies as being dominated by the “modern mentality” and thereby as being

superior to traditional societies, considered dominated *a contrario* by the “primitive mentality”. History and more precisely a certain official historiography were also mobilised to consolidate conservative and reactionary ideologies and correlatively authoritarian political regimes such as Salazarism in Portugal (also influenced by nationalism, the Church’s social doctrine, Frédéric Le Play’s sociology, among other elements) or Hispanism and Francoism in Spain.

Further examples could be cited and they do not only concern major ideologies, but also minor ones. Hence, as Boudon stated, in the domain of development, developmentalism is based on socio-economic theories labelled as modernisation theories with authors such as the economist Walt Rostow who schematically assert that foreign aid and investments will permit “underdeveloped countries” to reach economic growth, to “take-off”, to “modernise”, and finally to become as “developed” as Western countries. *A contrario*, thirdworldism, the opposed ideology, states that foreign aid and capital in particular and Western countries in general are not the solutions to the problems of third world countries’ development but the causes because through the so-called development policies the West exercises a new domination on these countries after having dominated them under colonialism. Thirdworldism is founded on what is termed dependency or *dependencia* theories with thinkers as the economist François Perroux, the Brazilian sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the sociologist and historian Andre Gunder Frank or the economist Samir Amin among other eminent social scientists, themselves influenced by Marxism.

In short, for Boudon, *Homo ideologicus*, far from being irrational, is also and more significantly animated by reasons (cognitive and axiological), and not only or essentially by passions (Boudon and Bourricaud, 2004a [1982]: 295-301; Boudon, 2003a, 1992a [1986]).

The main task of sociologists studying beliefs (like behaviours and action) and supposed to explain (and understand) social phenomena is to uncover or “reconstruct” their reasons or the system of reasons and of argumentation (their theories) that generate them and that are not necessarily obvious or seem absent at first glance but that actually exist in most cases and rest upon the context of the actors (their time and place). For Boudon, the unique manner to fully embrace the complexity of social situations is to consider rationality as the actors’ reasons.

His rational conception of beliefs and more broadly his sociology of knowledge are also and inevitably a criticism of relativistic positions in social sciences that reduce beliefs to illusions or to false consciousness, the latter concept having been popularised more or less

explicitly within the Marxist literature in social sciences and more or less implicitly beyond this same literature (Boudon, 2009c [1995]).

From this view on reason and by the influence of German comprehensive sociology, notably Weber, Boudon has developed his conception of sociological epistemology and ontology that are founded on methodological individualism.

Thus, he considers, by methodological individualism, that social phenomena are consequences of individuals' actions, and that these actions are above all motivated by reasons (Boudon, 2009b).

Against the tendencies to reify and hypostatise society like the holistic conceptions within social sciences that see society as a person – idea admirably summed up by the expression of “society-person” –, Boudon opposes the convincing affirmation of the “society of persons” in the same way as Karl Marx (1973 [1847]) in his *Poverty of Philosophy* did vis-à-vis Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* (2002 [1846]). Similarly, Emile Durkheim “personified society” whereas Max Weber and Georg Simmel did not see an entity more important than the individual (Boudon, 1998: 94).

Individualism, in its methodological meaning, is not synonymous with “atomism” or psychologism. It does not lead to solipsism. Individuals are not in a social vacuum. They belong to a social milieu. Beyond their personal idiosyncrasies, they are social beings insofar as most of their beliefs, behaviours and actions are “exoteric” or “trans-subjective”, and not “private”. The collective dimension is therefore central and social phenomena are explained from the sense of their actions, beliefs and behaviours for the concerned actors (Boudon, 2009c [1995]).

In these conditions, it is obvious that methodological individualism cannot be merged with ideological or politico-moral individualism, notably promoted by the liberal and neo-liberal philosophy. I think it is important here to underline this point insofar as some sociologists tend to amalgamate these two different types of individualism, and thereby making a profound mistake of appreciation at the theoretical and epistemological level.

It also differs from the sociological individualism identified by Durkheim (1998 [1893]). In an evolutionist, biologist and organicist conception, he asserted that the passage from traditional societies to modern and industrial societies was accompanied by the transformation of “mechanical solidarity” into “organic solidarity”, these two forms of solidarity characterising respectively the social organisation of the two former kinds of society. While mechanical solidarity relies on a certain uniformity of the social group or on a certain similitude among the elements that compose it – individuality being therefore

rudimentary –, organic solidarity, on the contrary, is defined by a more pronounced and complex specialisation and division of labour, what creates complementary activities, social interdependence, and finally a developed individualism.

In brief, Boudon proposes a model of general rationality, a scale divided into various postulates, into diverse theories of rationality that go from the more general to the more particular. The first postulate is what defines methodological individualism: Social phenomena result from a range of individual actions, beliefs and/or behaviours. This postulate combined with that of “comprehension” – that is, each individual action, belief or behaviour can be normally understood because they have usually a meaning for people who carry out or endorse them according to their sociocultural context – define Weber’s comprehensive sociology (*Verstehen*). The latter principles associated with that of “rationality” define Boudon’s general rational model put forward in order to understand and explain most of social phenomena. By rationality, Boudon means social subjects have reasons, in relation to their context, to adopt such an action or to be convinced of the validity and objectivity of such a belief. Thus, without neglecting the possibility of a-rational causes, he suggests that in most cases the meaning of an action, of a belief or of a behaviour depends on reasons that are more or less clearly perceived by the concerned subjects. These reasons can be instrumental (the search for a purpose and the adequate use of means for that), but they may also be cognitive (positive theories found actions, beliefs and behaviours) and, by derivation, axiological (evaluative theories explain actions, beliefs and behaviours).

From these three core axioms – individualism, comprehension, and rationality –, several axiomatics, which can be only applied to some more specific situations than the previous ones, have been developed and enter into the particular domain of instrumental rationality. First, functionalism, in a certain variant, appears by mixing the three former core axioms with the consequentialist or instrumentalist one – actors’ reasons rely on the perceived effects of their actions and beliefs, and these effects must allow the social system, judged important by the actors, to work correctly. The rational choice model adds two more principles to the former: Individuals act or believe according to the consequences of their actions and beliefs (principle of instrumentalism), these consequences involve them personally (principle of egoism), and, for this reason, they seek to maximise the positive effects of their beliefs and actions for them and their relatives (postulate of maximisation or optimisation). Bounded rationality theory modifies the latter postulate and substitutes it by that of satisfaction. Instead of seeking to maximise their personal interests, social actors simply want to satisfy them according to their capabilities and the available information. Neo-Marxist sociology in its

individualist form and Nietzschean sociology add, each one, an ultimate axiom after that of optimisation. For neo-Marxists, social subjects pursue the maximisation of their class interests (axiom of class interests) while, according to theorists influenced by Nietzsche, people wish to optimise their potency or power and the failure in this aspiration leads them to act and behave by resentment.

Hence, for Boudon, these are the main axiomatics that have been developed from the principle of methodological individualism and that define, for a large part and *in decrescendo* (from the more general to the more particular), the principal sociological theories of rationality (Boudon, 2009b, 2009c [1995], 2007a [1999], 2007b, 2003b).

#### **4.6: Cognitive praxis:**

Boudon's cognitive theory on social action is in line with Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison's conceptualisation of "social movements as cognitive praxis". By cognitive praxis, the latter mean that social movements' members are knowledge makers, the production of knowledge being seen as a kind of social action and the principal distinctive sign of movements among them and in relation to other social phenomena. The sense of knowledge, taken here, is broad. It is about original kinds of knowledge as well as syncretic knowledge, that is, knowledge constituted from the combination of various existent and separated types of knowledge. It includes diverse forms as formalised and informal knowledge, ideologies, everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge, which vary according to the movement and its sociocultural context, its time and place.

For instance, environmental movements are particularly concerned with formalised natural and technical sciences and they have participated in the theorisation and the empirical research within the domains of ecology and technology. For its part, the American civil rights movement was more oriented by informal knowledge, more precisely, by religious, spiritual and moral knowledge, as well as by juridical sciences.

Fundamentally, social movements articulate between them popular knowledge and scientific or professional knowledge, allow the former to enter into the latter category, and, to a large extent, reinterpret the latter from applications. In any case, Eyerman and Jamison assert that social movements, by their intrinsic cognitive praxis, largely contribute to the progress of human knowledge.

Social movements favour the learning and understanding of things, mainly through the practice or the experience that they have accumulated over time. This experience is based on the collective memory of past movements' actions, on current and anterior interactions within movements and among them, and, significantly, on current and previous interactions between movements and the rest of the society, and principally opponents like State institutions.

Hence, social movements are spaces for collective intellectual and creative activities, spaces in which people, converted into intellectuals, give rise to innovations, concepts, ideas, theories, experimentation, criticisms. They generate cosmology (worldviews), ethos, ideals and specific problematics, along with new political and social identities, and whatever the movement's nature, "progressive" or "regressive". They reinvent traditions, (re)-formulate beliefs and aims, (re)-define society projects, and advance new forms of social roles and relationships.

Their cognitive praxis may be also carried out through artistic creations and expressions, as through music composition and diffusion within and beyond movements to reach, including, large sectors of the society, thereby shaping wide cultural and social dimensions of some contexts. The main illustration of this happened in the United States where there was a close interdependence between music and militancy from the 1950s, mainly with the American civil rights movement and its "social gospel" and "freedom songs" performances, to the 1960s, principally via the peace and student movements and their rock and roll and folk music, which have fashioned Western culture and beyond by rallying the youth of the time and subsequent generations.

Thus, social movements are "movement artists" and "movement intellectuals" – people within and from the movement collectively become these figures of the artist and the intellectual. This latter conception on the character of the intellectual is inspired by the writings of Antonio Gramsci and György Lukács and it differs from the old Marxist assumption (especially Leninist) stipulating that some individuals external to the proletarian movement must integrate it and are the intellectuals in it by carrying consciousness to the unconscious workers about the philosophy of history.

Social movements are places that resemble "social laboratories" in which new thoughts, modes to manage them, the proper conception of the intellectual role, and new social functions and praxes emerge and then influence other segments of society like the established academic world or the institutional political sphere. Some scientific theories and including certain scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines have first appeared from there. Eyerman and Jamison have shown that scientific knowledge has historically relied on social movements. In



the seventeenth century, British religious movements contributed to the birth of experimental science. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the diversification and specialisation of sciences were in part an effect of social movements that participated in putting at the core of human preoccupations issues regarding nature and society. Social theories, notably Marxist theories, found both a field for their application and a source of inspiration within the working-class movement. New social movements from the 1960s to the 1980s, such as women, ecological, peace, and ethnic movements, were also open to scientific experiences, to new paradigms, and to scientific criticisms and criticisms of sciences regarding nature, humankind, society, and social positions and relationships. By criticising sciences, movements properly make contributions to scientific methodology and epistemology or philosophy of sciences.

Finally, the contributions of social movements that nurture change may cover every societal level – political, economic, social, and cultural – including a long time after the disappearance of these movements that, in any case, will inspire future mobilisations.

Through their conception of social movements as cognitive praxis and through the strong influence of Frankfurt School and especially of Jürgen Habermas, Eyerman and Jamison see social movements as “public spheres” in which “communicative reason” can take form thanks to dynamic, creative and intellectual interactions among militants and between militants and other actors as opponents.

Actually, in Eyerman and Jamison’s view, according to their social circumstances, the rationality of activists alternates between instrumental or strategic rationality – this rationality is determinant especially when movements have to face opponents, want to conquer power or get satisfaction of their demands vis-à-vis some institutions such as the State – and expressive or communicative rationality – this is particularly the case when social movements are public spheres oriented toward the collective generation of knowledge, which is, at the same time, a vector of collective identity.

If this latter cognitive praxis can serve strategic ends and it is also built from interactions between militants and adversaries, nonetheless, communicative rationality cannot be reduced and assimilated to instrumental rationality. The former constitutes a central dimension of rationality in itself even if it is also related to the latter.

If one may observe a certain resemblance between the theory of frames and framing that we have seen above and here the theory of cognitive praxis – both principally regard the production of knowledge within social movements – nonetheless, they essentially differentiate from one another by the central fact that the former fundamentally sees this

knowledge construction as movements' means to achieve their purposes and therefore it restricts itself to instrumental rationality, while the latter does not primarily consider this cognition as an instrumental rationality – though it concedes that this can be the case in some particular circumstances –, but in a way that first places it in the register of expressive or communicative reason (Eyerman and Jamison, 1996 [1991], 1998).

#### **4.7: Public sphere and communicative reason:**

We said before that Eyerman and Jamison in their conceptualisation of social movements as public spheres were particularly influenced by Habermas. Indeed, the latter is one of the main theorists who have developed this concept of public sphere.

In a historical and sociological study that contrasts with his later more abstract and theoretical works, Habermas (2010 [1962]) has traced the evolution of the public sphere (*öffentlichkeit* – this German term also means “(the) public”, “publicity”, “publicness”). The latter emerged in seventeenth-century Great Britain through the spread of reading societies. In the following century, this expansion increased with the proliferation of coffee houses in Great Britain, of *salons* in France, of *tischgesellschaften* (table societies) in Germany. These places, centres of literary, artistic and cultural criticism, generated the development of novel periodicals, moral weeklies and literary journalism. Hence, the public sphere first appeared in the world of letters – the literary public sphere (*literarische öffentlichkeit*).

*De facto*, the public sphere described and analysed by Habermas was the bourgeois public sphere (*bürgerliche öffentlichkeit*) that relied on two related criteria of admission: owning property and being “educated”. Indeed, at this time, only those who owned the economic means were able to access education – albeit, as the sociology of education has shown (Bourdieu, Boudon), the democratisation of education by expanding the social basis of those who can receive educational services has not eliminated until today inequalities of school opportunities and success, which in large measure lean upon socio-economic inequalities.

And, at the same time, it was necessary to have a certain education in order to be able to participate, firstly, in the literary public sphere, and then, in the linked political public sphere (*politische öffentlichkeit*). The appearance of the public sphere is therefore related to the

development of the market economy and the associated socio-economic ascendancy of the bourgeoisie in early modern Europe.

From the literary public sphere and a related literary self-consciousness and criticism, the bourgeoisie developed a political self-consciousness and criticism that allowed the formation of the political public sphere, which remained narrowly intertwined with the former public sphere. Thus, they gave rise to political journalism that spread along with literary journalism and the original and traditional journalism based essentially on the diffusion of international commercial news and administrative rules for merchants.

The public sphere was a sphere situated between the State and civil society, or more precisely, between the State and the private sphere – that of the world of economy and businesses, that of social reproduction along with the intimate sphere (*intimsphäre*) of the conjugal family house.

The public sphere was a sphere composed of private persons (bourgeoisie) who decided to join together – thanks to their private experiences accomplished around the intimate sphere of the conjugal family house and oriented toward the public through activities of literary criticisms – in order to form a public, to use their reason in group (*öffentliches rasonnement*). Indeed, there, people debated publicly, rationally and critically. They sought to found a “reasoned agreement”. It was a sphere where the best argument, and not socio-economic status, governed. It was a space for critical public reflection and informed discussion concerning issues of general or public interest. In this way, private interests linked to particular economic interests did not have their place there and were left behind in the realm of the private sphere, that of economy and social reproduction marked by the competition of diverse businesses.

The private persons composing the public sphere were politically active. They systematically opposed the opaque, secretive and bureaucratic practices of the Absolutist State. They claimed to rationalise political power by making its policies and actions transparent and thereby by submitting them to the rational-critical discussion and approval of the informed people. They were animated by the will to submit the prince’s sovereignty (*voluntas*) to reason (*ratio*). This implied converting “representative publicness” (*repräsentative öffentlichkeit*) – which characterised the public sphere of the feudal system inherited from the Middle Ages and which merely consisted in the display of their spiritual and socio-political power by the dignitaries (clergy, the nobility, princes and monarchs) *before* the people who had to limit themselves to acclaim them – into a “political public sphere” in which the State power or the authorities had to be publicly controlled via informed

and critical discourses *by* the people. Along with this principle of publicity, the public sphere leaned upon that of universal access, of openness to all human beings. The bourgeoisie tended to merge itself with humanity in general.

These wills and the continued political opposition against absolutism created an active public sphere and finally contributed to the establishment of the liberal constitutional State based on the principle of publicity formulated by the liberal or bourgeois public sphere.

At the top of its development in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Europe under its liberal or bourgeois form, the public sphere – its nature and function – has been nevertheless deeply transformed between the middle nineteenth-century and today, under the effects of the development of industrial capitalism, of the mass media and of the modern State. Within this new structural context, the public sphere lost its previous features and roles. The idea and the practice of the “public” were reshaped. They lost their active role within the political realm.

If the public sphere was reserved to the bourgeoisie, nevertheless, the idea of public sphere formulated by the same bourgeoisie also rested upon principles – the principles of publicity and of universality of access to the public sphere – which allowed to go beyond the mere bourgeoisie as exclusive social category for integrating within it, from the liberal and bourgeois constitutional State that emerged in the nineteenth-century, wider social sectors. Nonetheless, this integration contributed to convert the liberal constitutional State into the social-welfare State, and finally and paradoxically to undermine the proper public sphere. Accordingly, the bourgeois public sphere contained in itself dialectical or contradictory elements that led later to its own dissolution.

The public sphere, by incorporating a wide range of social sectors according to its principle of universality of access and under the pressure of capitalism’s expansion, has become a place of competition among diverse and opposed economic and private interests that were previously confined to the realm of the private sphere and remained outside the former.

This competition has generated the growth of conflicting organisations representing these diverse interests. This representation realised in interactions with the State and the other competing organisations has taken shape at the expense of the active participation of the “represented” people. Habermas asserts that this process has permitted a certain “refeudalisation” of the public sphere by going back to a sort of representative publicness to the detriment of the political public sphere – a sphere where private persons joined together in

order to rationally and critically debate on public issues – which prevailed in the era of the bourgeois public sphere.

Besides, from a State based on a liberal constitution, the State has become a social-welfare State (albeit today its social-welfare role is increasingly diminishing). The social-welfare State, by intervening increasingly in terms of social rights to face social discontent provoked by capitalism's expansion, has acted as an arbitrator among the different interests emerging within the public sphere, and it has sought a certain equilibrium among them in order to ensure the *ordo rerum*. The public sphere extended and included popular social strata that were systematically disadvantaged by the rules of the free market. Accordingly, they have oriented themselves via representative organisations toward the State in order to get compensation and regulation on their behalf.

The transformation of the media also had an impact on the public sphere. By following capitalism's expansion as well, the press has come to be oriented toward profitability and big oligopolistic companies have been formed. Literary and political journalism carried out by the bourgeois just for literary and political motives, for helping public information and debate, and not for monetary reasons, have been substituted by the culture industry and mass media (press and broadcast media) that work as instruments for shaping public opinion, managing the passive, a-critical and a-political consensus of the people, and for developing consumer and leisure culture. Thus, “a culture-consuming public” has replaced “a culture-debating” one and publicity has become mere advertising.

In short, state interventionism (in contradiction with the liberal idea of monitoring State authority from the public) along with the passage from a literary and political journalism to mass media and culture industry (through which people can no longer discuss together publicly, rationally and critically), the spread of competition among conflicting private interests (that before characterised exclusively the private sphere), and the related expansion of organisations representing particularistic interests (representative publicness being the mark of publicity under the feudal system and in total opposition with the bourgeois public sphere) within the public sphere – dynamics that have implied an increasing reciprocal permeation between the State and the society, which has also reached the intimate sphere – contributed to weaken it and to the disappearance of its liberal or bourgeois form.

The solution put forward by Habermas to allow the public sphere to re-establish its anterior virtuous characteristics – that is, a sphere in which private persons join together to form a public and make rational-critical debates – does not consist in going back to its bourgeois form by once more restricting access to the public sphere and thereby reserving it

only to an elite because this would undermine one of its core principles that affirms the universality of its access. He instead proposes to keep the representative authorities in democratic societies (political parties, interest associations) under public monitoring and control by opening them, that is, by allowing a real intra-organisational and intra-institutional participation, from below, *by* the people assembled to rationally and critically discuss about public matters.

Richard Sennett (1976 [1974]) emphasised that since the nineteenth century the public domain has been eroded on behalf of the private realm, in large measure because of the growth of capitalism and the process of secularisation of the society. The latter factors implied that the organising principle of life was no longer the transcendence of Nature but rather the immanence of individuals. To face existential questions, they no longer rest upon exterior and superior entities and are nowadays oriented toward their inner Self, their own psyche, their particular “personality”.

Thus, parallel to the rise of the private realm, the *res publica*, a place in which impersonal relations, social links among people not belonging to the same intimate space take shape, that is, the space of polity, has vanished.

These changes have political and social consequences. Political leaders are not chosen according to their programme or their political ideas but rather following their personality in private life, their ipseity. Democracy is in this sense affected. Modern societies would have therefore entered into the “culture of personality” that nowadays would govern social relations.

Alexis de Tocqueville (2010 [1835, 1840]), after his travel in the United States, attested that the social state of this country was characterised by the equality of social conditions. On the whole, Anglo-American people occupied social positions that were more or less similar, they had a same average level of education. Their social conditions in general therefore tended toward the middle. Before this observation, the central problem that preoccupied Tocqueville was to know to what extent social democracy – equality of social conditions – could be realised without prejudicing political democracy, that is, freedom.

According to Tocqueville, the equalisation of conditions, an irreversible process of history, covers all domains, the social, and then, the political. However, the equalisation of conditions in the political realm may provoke two antithetical consequences, two possible alternatives in relation to freedom: Either everybody has the same political rights and participates in power – the people’s sovereignty –, or, on the contrary, no one governs – this signifies the people’s subjection to a despot. It seems that, for Tocqueville, Anglo-American

people chose the first path, that of political freedom and of the people's sovereignty against servitude. This political freedom was made possible in large measure thanks to two related kinds of freedom: Freedom of the press and freedom of association.

Nonetheless, he indicated that not all democracies are protected from despotic drifts and threats that endanger freedom. The most important danger for democracies, in Tocqueville's view, is that of the growth of the private life to the detriment of public affairs. As we observed above, this is a theme that was later explored by authors as Habermas or Sennett. For Tocqueville, in a democratic society, activities belonging to private life increase because more people can and want to carry out things for their pleasure, their well-being, for achieving some personal ambitions. By dedicating more time and energy to their private life, people have *a fortiori* less time and energy to dedicate to the public affairs. This withdrawal from public affairs risks opening the way for an absolutist power that would seize exclusive control.

Going back to Habermas, in what is considered as his *magnum opus* (Habermas, 2006a [1981], 2006b [1981]), he developed the concepts of "communicative action" and "communicative rationality" that prolong to some degree his earlier concept of "public sphere".

In Habermas' view, communicative action is about speech acts, the use of language, the formulation of verbal utterances within the framework of social interactions. Communication in general and communication pursued in order to get agreement or consensus in particular allow to coordinate people's social activities. Communication via language permits social actors to understand each other, to reach shared interpretations, to give way to common definitions of situations without coercion or the use of force. These dynamics imply the existence of a rationality within communicative action. People use reasons or grounds to access intersubjective recognition concerning claims whose validity can be criticised. They put forward propositional truths, they define the rightness and the appropriateness in a reflective manner. They claim what is legitimate, sincere and authentic according to shared values and social norms, and from modes of argumentation. They contest, criticise and revise claims, and they defend themselves with reasons.

Communicative action takes place within the "lifeworld" (*lebenswelt*) – that is, drawing on Edmund Husserl, Alfred Schütz and phenomenology in general, within the world of everyday action and beliefs, the world of human activity and everyday sociability, the realm of shared intersubjectivity relying on shared knowledge, which is also equated, more broadly by Habermas, with the public sphere and civil society.

The lifeworld is opposed to the world of “systems”, political and economic systems, in which instrumental reason – the equation between means and ends for strategic actions following Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno’s criticism – dominate. The political system is defined by the installation of an imposing administrative State while the economic system is characterised by the expansion of productive forces, market and money.

Systems follow a logic of expansion that permanently threatens to invade or colonise the lifeworld by submitting it to the teleological rationalisation. This process generates tensions and oppositions from the lifeworld and through “new social movements” like the ecology, antinuclear, peace, women, gay movements, and so on. The latter are therefore committed against the colonisation of the lifeworld by the market and money and by the bureaucratic and technocratic power. They act to save, defend and re-establish threatened ways of life, or in order to implement new ways of life, what Habermas names “the grammar of forms of life”.

The role of critical thought and communicative reason is to protect the lifeworld from these penetrations by acting as a mediator between the two levels of the society (the lifeworld and the systems), or by providing a link or a balance between everyday action and expertise.

#### **4.8: Hypotheses and concluding remarks:**

To conclude this chapter and from the presentation of sociological theories on social movements, social action, sense and rationality that we have carried out above, I can now put forward some hypotheses regarding our proper study.

In short, I conjecture that the frame analysis model, such as it is adapted to the study of social movements, is a necessary model, which proposes some interesting concepts for analysing movements’ meanings as the concept of frame itself, the related concepts of framing, master frame, and so on. By focusing on the construction of meanings by the actors in a dynamic and processual way, this model allows to overcome the tendencies to reify meanings by considering them as being merely static or crystallised things.

But, the pertinence of the analysis in terms of frames relies especially on the importance that its exponents attribute to the facts of consciousness in the same way as phenomenology did before them for example. Hence, frame analysts counterbalance influential traditions of thought within the social sciences, which, inspired overtly or implicitly by positivism and



scientism, neglect these latter facts because they evoke the pretext they cannot be directly observable. But this main argument is easily thrown into question by an objection. Indeed, as facts, facts of consciousness cannot be ignored if the objective of sociology is to be scientific. All sciences, if they want to merit their status, cannot dispense with or elude facts and do as if the latter do not exist only because it is convenient for them. Moreover, facts of consciousness, if they cannot be directly observable, can nevertheless be rebuilt or re-found indirectly as Boudon (2009c [1995]) has rightly indicated.

Nonetheless, if I recognise that the frame analysis model is necessary, I cannot state it is sufficient to understand, and eventually to explain, the social movements' senses. Analysis in terms of frames allow to show the significance of the ideal in the explanation of social movements and their actions. But, it tends to focus exclusively on the instrumental dimension of the facts of consciousness. Thus, I also conjecture that this model, and the related instrumental and utilitarian paradigm, must be encompassed by a large vision of the concept of rationality in order to fully elucidate the actors' meanings. Instrumental and utilitarian reason, as it appears through the frame analysis model and rational choice theory, is only a variant of the reason that needs to be treated in all its complexity or forms, as several sociologists have shown. In this sense, as we have observed above, Lindenberg has promoted the concept of "social rationality", Macy has developed the concept of "emergent rationality".

Thus, social movements are irreducible to the pursuit of interests. Of course, there are movements that are mainly created for achieving collective interests that serve social systems (like society) as some variants of functionalism or pragmatism state it. Others are formed in order to maximise (rational choice theory and frame analysis model) or, at least and more modestly, satisfy (bounded rationality theory) the specific interests of their members. Others are constituted to optimise the class interests or the social position interests of their members. Obviously, here, Marxists essentially refer, but not only, to the proletarian movement. For Nietzschean sociologists, others appear because their members, animated by the will to power, have developed resentment against what they see as powerful institutions and dominant structures, or vis-à-vis those they consider as the "privileged people", the "dominators", the "rich", the "power holders" at the source of their state of powerlessness. But, all these movements motivated by the pursuit of a particular kind of interests are specific movements and are not all the movements. In fact, movements are generated by a combination of several classes of reasons (instrumental and not instrumental) whose modulation varies according to the movement, their members and their sociocultural context. Including, the proletarian movement, the most emblematic movement for Marxist sociology

and beyond, is not only and exclusively animated by class interests in practice. Social movements' militants do not limit themselves to instrumental reasons whatever the nature of the latter. It is also the case of the traditional workers' movements.

I assume that social movements, following the Weberian terminology, are forms of sociation that are both determined purposive associations and associations relying on convictions. They do not only belong to the former category as frame analysts tend to suggest. Of course, social movements are created and maintained for achieving specific ends via particular means that satisfy activists and general interests but, and it is not less important, they are also founded and run in order to respond to values, convictions, strong normative beliefs that appear as essential for participants. Thus, activists resonate both in terms of purpose (rationality in purpose or instrumental rationality) and in terms of values (rationality in value or axiological rationality). Moreover, I claim that the role of affects and traditions are also determinants in the constitution and the development of social movements and therefore they cannot be missed by sociologists. Hence, beyond sociation and the related rational motives, a certain sense of community or a sort of communalisation is present within and through social movements.

If we go farther in the demonstration, we can wonder, following Mises' perspective, whether the Weberian distinctions between rationality in purpose and rationality in value, between rationality and affects, and between rationality and traditions are so pertinent and whether they are not arbitrary. Or, according to Damasio's view, we may wonder whether rationality and emotion are actually interrelated rather than distinct and opposed.

Actually, beyond the debate on the types of rationality and on the necessity to integrate or not emotions and traditions in the sphere of reason, I think the different concepts put forward by Weber and that we have observed above are still pertinent to clarify the sense of social activity in general, and the sense of social movements – the social phenomenon that interests us in particular. Moreover, as Weber himself stated, the theoretical frontiers between the diverse determinants of social activity is, in practice, thin, and the latter, in fact, tend to interpenetrate each other. As Weber noticed and as we have shown above, the different determinants of social activity, in our case the motives of social movements, are pure ideal-types that are conceptually built and separated from each other in order to understand and explain social activity (in our case again social movements). Nonetheless, empirically, social activity (or social movements) is oriented more or less by each type of determinants, or, at least, by various types, as it tends to combine them without being entirely associated to one of them. Consequently, the same process of conceptualisation or, better said, the same abstract

typification occurs with the types of social activity themselves and with the related kinds of social relations, which, in practice, tend to associate more or less diverse forms as well.

Furthermore, borrowing Boudon's sociological language, I conjecture that individuals composing social movements have good or strong reasons, in relation to their sociocultural context, to believe in what they believe, to behave as they do and to act in their way within and through social movements. Then, I assume that social movements are not only oriented by normative collective beliefs that regard *what must be* and *what must not be* (*le devoir-être*) and axiological collective beliefs (*what counts* and *what does not count – le valoir*) – the rationality in value as Weber theorised it – but also by positive collective beliefs that concern what is asserted to be true and wrong (*l'être* and *le non-être*). Militants' actions and beliefs (evaluative and positive) are founded on theories, systems of reasons and argumentation. Moreover, the praxis of theorising and arguing, and more generally the cognitive praxis, is central among activists. If, in other social situations, subjects' systems of reasons are more or less consciously elaborated and perceived, within the situation of social movements, militants' theories are generally conceived by themselves explicitly and publicly.

The cognitive dimension of beliefs and, eventually, of social action formulated by Boudon are in line with Eyerman and Jamison's conception of "social movements as cognitive praxis". Thus, with the latter, I suppose that social movements are great doers of knowledge, including scientific knowledge.

I contend that they are oriented both by and toward epistemology, that is, the study of sciences, and by and toward ontological research, or, if we prefer, by and toward the knowledge of *what is*, of the being or of the reality in itself, in the same way as sciences, whatever their domain of specialisation, seek to determine the truth or are guided by a major principle: "showing reality such as it is".

With Eyerman and Jamison, I also consider that social movements are public spheres. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas asserted that the public sphere, a place activated by and for the people (*de facto*, the bourgeoisie), an area of the public life open to the (in)formation, communication and debates on public issues, flourished in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe (Great Britain, France and Germany), and then, by contrast, in the following centuries, it vanished. Sennett depicted a quite similar situation and historical evolution some years later in *The Fall of Public Man*.

In fact, I think social movements, and more concretely alter-globalisation ones, are spaces that permit to maintain a certain public sphere, which is not reserved to a particular social class – that is to say, neither the bourgeoisie nor the popular strata, but rather it is about

a sphere, in accord with the proper liberal or bourgeois meaning of public, which aims for the universality by incorporating wide and diverse sectors of the society. Following Habermasian terms in particular and the language of the Frankfurt School's critical theory in general, I assume that social movements construct "communicative reason" as when activists denounce "instrumental rationality" under its economicist and neo-liberal variant. They are places for "ideal speech situation", that is, beyond their personal or private interests, beyond their idiosyncrasies, people through social movements discuss and debate publicly, rationally and critically about issues concerning the public realm. They use their reason for political matters.

This concretely and notably occurs via assemblies, print and virtual media. But, this is also the case through other "repertoires of collective action" (Tilly, 1978) as when they take to the streets during marches and demonstrations, as when they re-appropriate common kinds of public places such as the square. This process also happens through the activation of various artistic expressions (dramaturgies, *mises-en-scène*, paintings, sculptures, songs, music, etc.), games, exchanges (in its symbolic sense and not economic), sometimes around foods and drinks, all of them often taking place in the proper recuperated square.

In some aspects, the praxis of social movements recalls *de jure* the model of Ancient Greek democracy – although the latter was *de facto* marked by a highly exclusive character. Within the city (*polis*) and outside the private sphere (*oikonomia* – economy, management of the house), public or political life (*bios politikos*) takes shape in the square, in the marketplace (*agora*).

Activists practise a type of participative democracy, from the grassroots, from below, *by* the people, which counterweights the prevalent idea and practice of democracy in democratic countries – that is, representative democracy, which is realised from above, by the elite *before* the people. The people within the system of representative democracy are invited to participate in it only sporadically and quickly during the regular elections by giving a mere vote in order to satisfy parties' power interests, which strictly organise, supervise and control these elections without a real active integration of the former in these processes. Accordingly, militants call into question the kind of "representative publicness" that has ever been criticised by Habermas and that has characterised the publicity and the public sphere in modern societies since the nineteenth-century following the expansion of capitalism, the implementation of the social-welfare State (albeit nowadays one is assisting to the continued decrease of its social-welfare function), and the growth of culture industry and the mass media. Activists question publicity based on representation, which has allowed a certain "refeudalisation" of the public sphere, as Habermas pointed out, to the extent that the former

defined the type of publicity that had prevailed since the Middle Ages within the feudal society and in which the high religious, political and statutory dignitaries – the *patriciat* – displayed their spiritual, symbolic, and socio-political prestige and power *before* the *plebs* who had to settle for acclaiming this public without being admitted to participate actively in it.

Hence, through the example of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements, we shall also see how their members make public spheres and reinvent democracy. This happens via repertoires of collective action that are often considered as “non-conventional politics” and including as “irrational”, in particular by the psychology of crowds, collective behaviour theories, a certain Establishment and adversaries. However, we shall observe that these actions have, on the contrary, their own rationalities, which allow to reappraise the concept of conventionality in politics and in democracy, and finally the ideas and practices of politics and democracy themselves.

These are therefore the conjectures I am going to verify in the following pages (chapters 5 and 6) from the study of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements’ praxes.

## Chapter 5

### The praxes of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements

#### 5.1: “ECON focuses on economics”<sup>1</sup>:

Basilio told me that ECON is a movement concerned above all with economics. In this sense, ECON Portugal produces a wide range of diverse documents on topics linked directly or indirectly to the matter of economics. One can find documents more or less long, more or less detailed or developed on, for instance, the denunciation of the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) summit in Lisbon in November 2010, on what ECON is and what it does, on Europe, on the financial and economic crisis, on economic and social policies in Portugal and elsewhere, and so forth.

In its publications, as the focus of the movement is economics, it seems logical that it put forward economic data (figures, statistics) to illustrate its theses and back up its arguments. Thus, for instance, in one of these publications, militants briefly made an assessment of the crisis for the year 2011 in Portugal and showed some predictions for the following year by presenting some figures:

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<sup>1</sup> “*ECON se centra na economia*” (Basilio, ECON Portugal leader, interview 25 March 2010).

**800 thousand unemployed persons are forecasted for the year 2012; one out of two young people are unemployed; nine out of ten new jobs are precarious; Portugal is the country with the second longest working hours of the European Union; Portugal is the fourth most unequal country of OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development]; thirteen big public companies will be privatised; two million poor people.**

In a further publication, more analytical than descriptive, the militants of ECON outlined some underlying economic mechanisms of the current crisis:

**It was the financial crisis in 2007/08, which has caused the major world economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The financial hegemony on the economy, due to decades of liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of the financial markets, has lived on the incessant search for short-term profit and on the each time more unequal redistribution of the revenue. The result has been a casino economy [*uma economia de casino*] nurtured by speculative bubbles, whose implosion is immediately reflected in all the economy<sup>2</sup>.**

Elsewhere, they highlight the contradictions of the current socio-economic system that is marked by deep inequalities and social injustice:

**The current context in which the increase of unemployment and the profound social crisis cohabit with the obscene profits of banking, product of Portuguese families' transfers, tax evasion and of massive public supports for this sector (only with the nationalisation of the bankrupt BPN [*Banco Português de Negócios*, Business Portuguese Bank] the taxpayers have already financed this bank with 4000 millions euros)<sup>3</sup>.**

According to its generic "action programme", ECON is a movement that aims "to fight against the "dictatorship of the markets" and give back to the individuals the capacity of participating in the processes of political decision-making that affect them". In this sense, what is at the basis of ECON is the will "to reconquest the space lost by democracies before the financial sector, marked by the prepotency of capital, its earnings and speculations". In other words and according to its own legal statutes, the movement aims "to promote and realise all kinds of action that allow the winning back, by citizens, of the power that the financial sector exerts on all the aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural life in the world".

For its activists, these general objectives necessarily and above all imply a more immediate and primary objective that is "the implementation of the Tobin Tax". They state that "the claim of the Tobin Tax (measure proposed by James Tobin who received the Nobel

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<sup>2</sup> ECON Portugal's tract especially aiming to gain new support and adherents.

Prize in economics in 1972) aims to tax at 0,1% the transfers in the exchange market, thereby hampering financial speculation”. This is therefore an economic “regulation instrument of exchange markets”. They emphasise that this rate is reduced, what should facilitate *a priori* its establishment to the extent that the financial actors would not be excessively prejudiced by it in economic terms. Nonetheless, this reduced rate in relative terms would not be so low in absolute terms insofar as it would allow “to earn about 100 000 millions of dollars US a year”, which could be used “to help citizens” by financing public social actions and programmes like education, health, old-age pensions, unemployment benefits, and so on. For instance, and more precisely, the taxation of financial transactions should mainly serve “for the struggle against social inequalities, for the promotion of public education and health programmes in poor countries, for the eradication of hunger in the world, in the aid for a sustainable development at the global scale”. Thus, “the claim of the Tobin Tax is an anti-speculative measure”, what also “entails the defence of the cancellation of tax havens, “disarming” the markets”<sup>4</sup>. Basilio followed with these statements:

**The main idea that has motivated the creation of ECON, first in France and then in several countries around the world, is to constitute a space that promotes economist James Tobin’s principal theory – known as the Tobin tax – and therefore incites legislators to tax international financial transactions in order to regulate financial markets and consequently to avoid speculation on them. This policy of taxation, diametrically opposed to the current idea and practice of the free market inspired by neo-liberalism, has to respond to two classes of objectives. On the one hand, taxation is an effective means to impose limits to *laissez-faire*, to have a certain external control on financial activities and thereby having more abilities to prevent potential crises. By regulating financial exchanges through tax, governments have a possibility to intervene against drifts linked to transactional freedom as speculation and to ensure the stability and the continuity of the financial system and national economies. On the other hand, money reaped by this taxation can be used by governments to finance activities other than the financial sector, especially social domains like health, schooling, and further activities subsumed into the development label, notably in what is named “poor countries”<sup>5</sup>.**

According to a representative of ECON Belgium who made a speech during a popular dinner in VERDE, “ECON is a movement that is strictly related to the idea of James Tobin” although he did not remember when Tobin proposed the idea of taxing financial transactions. He added that:

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<sup>3</sup> ECON’s publication.

<sup>4</sup> ECON’s action programme.



**ECON therefore owes its existence primarily to this idea. The taxation of financial transactions must serve to the development of poor countries. ECON is not completely against the capitalist system but rather it acts within it in order to modify it, to humanise it, to make it more social without totally questioning it and without aspiring to a radically new socio-economic system<sup>6</sup>.**

ECON's activists conceive this measure as "a practical and symbolic objective", which nevertheless remains a short-term goal that should thereafter serve as a long-term means for more ambitious aims as those aforesaid. But, in itself, it already represents in their eyes "a concrete field of construction of freedom, social justice, and of struggle against neoliberalism" and its institutions of power<sup>7</sup>. According to the "programme 2009-2010" established by the members who were elected by the General Assembly to occupy the positions in ECON's governing bodies, the movement "has as explicit purpose the struggle against the domination of neoliberalism and financial capital over economy and society". In other words, ECON "seeks alternatives to the neoliberal order", it has integrated "citizenship movements against neoliberalism and the domination of financial capital"<sup>8</sup>. The Tobin Tax policy therefore integrates a broader struggle that entails "criticism, protest, claim, the building of counter-hegemonies and the process of creating concrete alternatives".

They assert that, "exponentially, political decision-makings are the responsibility of groups and authorities that are not subjected to the judgement of citizens, the populations being therefore incited to passively accept the orientations of these authorities". The Tobin Tax and more generally the struggle that embraces it aim "to break this passivity" and restore "participative democracy", that is to say, a political and social system where all citizens can directly participate in the decision-making processes, and not only their elected representatives. This struggle can be achieved thanks to "opinion movements, the mobilisation of wills and the formation of social spaces wherein these wills may gather". Thus, in their terms, "the association of different critical visions make credible the idea that another world is possible"<sup>9</sup>.

Hence, for instance, ECON alongside other movements like SOS participated in the *acampadas* (literally, accommodated in a camp), also named *assembleias populares diárias* (daily popular assemblies), which took place in Lisbon at Rossio square in spring 2011. The main battle cry of these actions was "*democracia verdadeira já. Vamos encher o Rossio!*"

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<sup>5</sup> Conversation, 1 June 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpt of his speech, 25 March 2010.

<sup>7</sup> ECON's action programme.

<sup>8</sup> ECON Portugal's tract especially aiming to gain new support and adherents.

<sup>9</sup> ECON's action programme.

(true democracy now. Let's go to fill Rossio!). On 28 May 2011, in a tract distributed by some activists to the people in the streets close to an *acampada* in Rossio, people were invited to write a message of their choice and then to demonstrate in Rossio square. *Acampadas'* activists wrote, in this same tract, an excerpt of the *I Manifesto do Rossio* (I Rossio Manifesto) in which they expressed their "indignation about the suffocating political and social situation", a situation that they reject and that is why they decided to occupy their streets. "*Ocupámos as nossas ruas*" (we are occupying our streets), "*as ruas são nossas*" (the streets are ours) are core phrases in the manifesto. The seizure of the public spaces by all the people appears as the principal means to allow social change: "We urge all the people to join, in the streets, in the squares, in each corner, under the shade of each statue, in order that, united, we can change the vicious rules of this game". For activists, "this game" rests upon "the constant oppression of the current economico-financial system", on the fact that "the world is run by a financial dictatorship", which has imposed "a bailout at the expense of the people", which has allowed "the kidnapping of democracy and people's lives" from "wages, pensions and supports cuts, while the culprits of this crisis are saved and recapitalised". Change therefore means "true democracy" that implies the collective occupation of public places by the people. Militants know other ways are possible and exist in other countries. For example, the case of Iceland has become an actual model of resistance for them and an alternative way that should inspire Portuguese people to the extent that it refuses to "mortgage the present and future for a debt that is not ours". Militants formulated two successive rhetorical questions in the manifesto that necessarily entail answers that follow their line of thought. As any rhetorical question, these questions do not really seek an answer because militants already have the answers and merely want to assert their statements notably through the use of literary stylistic devices. Besides, activists' reply is clearly and concisely expressed just after their two questions: "Why must we choose to live between unemployment and precariousness? Why do they want to remove public services, stealing us, through privatisations, what we have paid during all the life? We reply no".

In their struggle against neoliberal ideology and financial hegemony, the elements that will make the difference, according to the members of ECON, are "understanding" and "awareness". Hence, for them, it is essential to encourage and carry out "activities of debate and formation of a critical and alternative thought"<sup>10</sup>. As they said, "we want to understand the world in which we live, in order to transform it, always, into a better world... The crisis of the neoliberal model and of the financialisation of economy will be overcome to reach a fairer

model only if the awareness of its causes and consequences are generalised” among the people. They added that the realm in which their movement can make a significant contribution is that of “reflection and promotion of the critical thought”. In this sense, they considered universities and workplaces as privileged “action fields” insofar as they can help to “develop and exchange knowledge” that “is necessary to increase the potential of activism” and because, in their view, “without them there is no sense in attempting to understand the social fabric that we want to transform”. More precisely, ECON’s programme 2009-2010 stipulated that the movement seeks “to contribute to the reflection regarding the current financial crisis, by focusing not only on its genesis, but also on the proposition of alternative economic models, and by promoting initiatives that respond to this objective”. It also put forward the idea of “organising ECON’s “school” during the summer or autumn wherein it is possible to discuss, learn and agree strategies”. In 2010 and the following years, ECON’s militants effectively organised “seminars” and courses on economic topics. Finally, it stressed that the movement wishes “to contribute with other associations to a reflection and renovation endeavour concerning 25 April celebration”<sup>11</sup>.

Every year, Basilio commented to me that ECON Portugal members as other Portuguese social movements related to alter-globalisation participate in the traditional march in the *Avenida da Liberdade* from *Praça Marquês de Pombal* to *Praça Rossio* during Carnation Revolution Day – 25 April. In his view, it is a fundamental date for Portuguese social movements<sup>12</sup>. Sofia, another militant of ECON, was in line with him when she said that it is a major and ineluctable event for Portuguese social movements<sup>13</sup>. According to Rosa, a young activist in this same movement, demonstrations in Portugal occur above all between 24 April and 1 May. After this period, in her view, there is nothing more, or at best only a few public gatherings<sup>14</sup>.

Hence, for example, on 25 April 2010, several social movements such as ECON, alongside other diverse associations that commonly celebrate the event, took part in the traditional demonstration. As every year, ECON militants intended exhibiting banners, playing music and making noise. They gathered at 3 p.m. at *Praça Marquês de Pombal* in front of the premises of the national and daily newspaper *Diário de Notícias*. From there, at 3.30 p.m., with the rest of social movements and associations participating in the

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<sup>10</sup> ECON Portugal’s tract especially aiming to gain new support and adherents.

<sup>11</sup> ECON’s programme 2009-2010.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, 1 April 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Idem.

<sup>14</sup> Interview, 24 April 2010.

commemoration, they walked down the *Avenida da Liberdade* until *Praça Rossio* with their specific banners and flags showing the logotype of their movement and their particular slogans. Basilio told me that a music group named *Musica e Resistência* (Music and Resistance) had to accompany ECON members during the march<sup>15</sup>.

According to him, 25 April day is increasingly losing its intensity, its vigour as the years go by and the temporal distance from the days of the revolution gradually and irreversibly increases each year. In 2009, the date which marked 35 years of celebration, he thought that the event was already “off” in a certain manner, without dynamism and fervour, and this situation has existed since some years now. The main reason of this decline of popular interest, for him, is that the event is getting older in the same way as the people who lived at this time and who remain the main protagonists of the celebration. In his opinion, there are therefore almost only old people who assist and participate nowadays. Young people would lose interest. It would become more and more solely a mere commemorative event belonging to the past that is moving away and without actual importance in collective memories, particularly for the new generations who did not live through this historical episode. Nevertheless, for Basilio, despite this general decreasing tendency, social movements must continue to take advantage of this occasion, and consecutively, in a certain way, attempt to contribute to revitalise it, in order to conserve a salient public and media-related space in which they may diffuse their messages and publicly express their current preoccupations and claims. If most of these preoccupations and claims are not directly linked to those of the Carnation Revolution because the socio-economic and political context has changed, the fundamental principles still remain the same. Mainly, the ideas of change, revolution, the sovereignty of the people, citizenship, rights, democracy are core and shared ideas among past and present movements, among Carnation Revolution social movements and current social movements related in large measure to the alter-globalisation movement. For Basilio, 25 April day must therefore be re-actualised – and Portuguese social movements are doing it to a large extent – to make more dynamic again the occurrence as well as to advertise current social movements, their causes and eventually to generate the changes to which they aspire<sup>16</sup>.

As we have just said, the re-actualisation of 25 April day is already occurring. For the 35th anniversary, each movement that paraded along the *Avenida da Liberdade* expressed its positions by linking them to those of 25 April Revolution. Some movements claimed another 25 April, another revolution that is required before the current national socio-

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Basilio, 24 April 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, 20 May 2011.

economic situation, which necessarily implies a social change. One could witness the same types of discourses for the 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, one and two years later. A recurrent slogan sung by activists and others during the march is for example: “*Somos muitos, muitos mil, para continuar abril!*” (We are many, many thousands, to continue April!). This central rallying cry among social movements celebrating 25 April day is an epitome of the idea of continuity between the Carnation Revolution and Portuguese militancy today.

On 25 April 2010, for instance, alongside their own singularities (specific slogans and claims), as the other marchers, militants of ECON wore some red carnations, sang some traditional songs related to the event, like the aforesaid famous chorus “*somos muitos, muitos mil, para continuar abril!*”. Other traditional ones could be heard such as “*25 de Abril sempre, fascismo nunca mais!*” (25 April always, fascism never again!), “*Abril está na rua, a luta continua!*” (April is in the streets, the struggle continues!), or “*Abril de novo, com a força do povo!*” (April again, with the strength of the people!).

The past, the present and the future are thus intimately associated. The past is the point of reference for the transformation that is considered as necessary and ineluctable before present societal conditions. The transformation that was possible and actual in the past should thus be inspired by the transformation that symbolically consecrated and mythologised this past and be accomplished in the near future – albeit the new transformation must be adapted to the current historical and social context and thereby differing from the previous one. Social movements often use references that refer to past events or historical episodes and periods that are authoritative for their members and also beyond for the rest or a part of the society. Their projects of societal transformation are built in part or completely from these popular glorifications, collective mythologisations or common valorisations. A better and actual past – or better said, a past conceived as better and actual – makes possible in the social imaginary a better future against the antithetical and hard present.

In diverse circumstances, music and songs form part of militants’ acts. For instance, during a popular dinner in VERDE<sup>17</sup>, Victor, one of the members of the Executive Committee, took the microphone and started singing with guitar in hand several Portuguese songs, revolutionary songs of 1974, leftist and trade union songs. All the members of ECON who were present sang and wiggled around the tables and dinner room with him. He also sang an ecologist song against the nuclear in Portugal for VERDE members. More generally, in all the events in which ECON Portugal participates, when he is present, he does his concert. He

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<sup>17</sup> 25 March 2010.

knows an important repertoire of leftist songs and music, notably those related to the Carnation Revolution.

The popular dinners, sharing *ginjinha* glasses, listening music and songs in group that remind and keep alive common interests, shared values, and collective knowledge and acknowledgement are expressions of the pleasure of being together and allow to create circles of sociability and conviviality. During these kinds of occurrences, social movements and their members focus on themselves. In this way, these episodes are powerful social connectors. They contribute to weld and resolder social links, to crystallise the social group both of belonging and of reference. Most of the members of ECON when they greet and say goodbye, especially men, are reciprocally named “*companheiros*” (companions).

After a protest in front of *Correios CTT* in *Restauradores*, the majority of militants that were present went to have a drink in an outdoor café near this post office. Some militants went there with their young children. Militancy is sometimes accomplished in couple as Basilio and Rosa his girlfriend or with the family and children such as Ruy and his daughter for example.

Further important dates for Portuguese social movements, following Basilio and Sofia’s statements, are 5 October, the day of the proclamation of the First Republic in Portugal in 1910, and 1 May, the Labour Day that is in fact an international celebration. In their views, these dates are obligatory, key symbolic events for Portuguese social movements, and consequently they cannot miss them. During these days, big demonstrations are organised in the centre of Lisbon<sup>18</sup>.

One day before 25 April, according to Basilio, there is usually a concentration of diverse social movements and associations in addition to ECON in *Largo do Carmo*<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, for instance, on 24 April 2010, militants of several social movements occupied the square situated in front of the Carmo Church and the *Quartel do Carmo* (Carmo Casern), which is famous because it was the place where two determinant events in the recent history of Portugal, in the twentieth century, occurred.

First, according to the information provided by the proper *Guarda Nacional Republicana* (Republican National Guard) that has occupied the place since 1911, these quarters were, on 5 October 1910, one of the main military targets of the republicans. Actually, before this date, Carmo Casern was the “barracks” of the *Guarda Municipal* (Municipal Guard), the most loyal force – the “praetorians” – to the Monarchy. With the

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<sup>18</sup> Interviews with Basilio 23 April 2010 and with Sofia 24 April 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Interview, 23 April 2010.

Republic, the latter was converted into the Republican National Guard, and, thereafter, it became the “praetorian” force serving the *Estado Novo*.

Then, during the Carnation Revolution, on 25 April 1974, the Chief of the Government, Marcelo Caetano, found refuge in this casern and then surrendered there after having been besieged by “Captain of April” Salgueiro Maia’s troops. It was the start of the rebirth of the Republic after almost half a century of an authoritarian regime. Hence, this date is also a significant anniversary and recalls a major symbolic event for Portuguese social movements, this square remaining a central place of the Carnation Revolution.

In Carmo square, this day, as each year, activists from diverse movements installed their stand next to each other. There, sitting down or standing behind a table and under a tent, they gave information, brochures, flyers regarding their movements and actions to the people who passed and stopped, talked to them. Sometimes, they managed to sell them some products such as the journals they publish, diverse objects adorned with the logotype of their movement and some mottoes. Some of them especially sold food and drinks. They organised a concert and other festivities during the night and people danced whilst listening to music. Indeed, there was a scene where diverse performances were given, like dancing, songs, militant speeches. Bernadino from ECON was also there and like his companions he held his stand. He rented a seat there in order to establish his stall as the other present social movements and associations. In the middle of the square, they placed, alongside flowers made of paper and cardboard, several military weapons, also made of paper and cardboard, such as planes, missiles, tanks, submarines, guns, a tank with a red carnation in the gun, which were crossed by a red cross and/or indicated as forbidden by a red circle with a slash. They tied to some tree trunks diverse parts of copies of Pablo Picasso’s famous painting, Guernica.

In the aforesaid “action programme”, activists of ECON detailed in a long enumeration the negative effects of the “dictatorship of the markets”. Hence, in their view:

**The “dictatorship of the markets” conditions an important part of our daily life through the privatisation of social insurance, thereby transforming pension funds into dice of the stock market speculation game, the privatisation of public services and goods, from water to education; through the extinction of diverse models of agricultural production and the imposition of the consumption of transgenic products sold by multinationals, which are associated with a process of embrittlement of the small trade and industry; through the monopolisation of digital networks of communication and embrittlement of the television public space; via the exemption and privilege that are reserved in terms of tax to banks and the financial sector in general, from tax havens to the maintenance of banking secrecy; the deregulation of labour relations, annihilating social and individual rights to freedom; the increases of VAT or taxes on labour incomes; the formation, from**

**migration, of contingents of illegal labour forces that are deprived of labour rights and citizenship; the attempt of preventing, by pharmaceutical multinationals, the production of generics to fight against AIDS and the appropriation of the scientific knowledge about the human genome in order to do business; the pollution and destruction of ecosystems provoked by multinationals' activity, and the lack or disrespect of international agreements regarding the protection of the environment, thereby derailing a sustainable development; the privatisation of the genetic heritage and bio-diversity (via patents); the war as a form, par excellence, of policy, and as a way for the economic expansion of the major economico-financial interest groups; through the hegemony of a cultural industry that tends to absorb and eliminate everything that in the field of human imagination, from arts to science, is not subjected to market rules.**

Given the markets' hold over many aspects of life, as the members of ECON said "the "dictatorship of the markets" is therefore a programme quite complete", this movement has expanded its realms of intervention<sup>20</sup>. Alongside its core and initial goal, the taxation of the transactions carried out in the exchange markets (Tobin tax), the movement has also expanded its aims and actions since its origins.

Hence, for example, one may mention the following action that is a kind of protest against privatisations in Portugal. Basilio, along with other militants, distributed to the people in the streets in front of the post office located in *Restauradores* postcards entitled "*Cartada contra a Privatização dos CTT. Assina e envia!*" (Trump card against the privatisation of the post. Sign and send!). This appeal was accompanied, on the front of the card, by a representation of a mailbox stuck on a wall. Overleaf was written a letter intended for the Prime Minister at the time, José Sócrates. The mentioned address was the official address of the Prime Minister, *Rua da Imprensa à Estrela, n.º4, 1200-888 Lisboa*. The content of the letter stresses the advantages and strengths of a public post: good management and good quality of the service, what has converted the Portuguese public post office into "a business model" that is nationally and internationally acknowledged; "as a public company, it is an important source of income for the State, thereby contributing to reduce the deficit"; in addition, "it is a fundamental instrument of territorial integration and cohesion". Conversely, it points out the weaknesses and threats of a private service: the privatisation of the post is seldom among the countries, only a few have done it and in these same countries "the administration has become worse and the public service has deteriorated"; "a private company could not provide with the same quality or price some of the services of the current post, less profitable but socially fundamental". The letter concludes, before the polite phrases in use, with a call to order: "*Não privatize os correios!*" (Do not privatise the post!).

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<sup>20</sup> ECON's texts.



Thus, in general terms, the movement in Portugal and everywhere in the world “fights for a solidary globalisation, the globalisation of resistance, against war, exploitation and discrimination”. Finally, it calls alter-globalisation the whole of its purposes and actions. One of the central ECON’s aphorism is: “*Um outro mundo é possível*” (Another world is possible). This is also the core aphorism of alter-globalisation social movements in general. Those of *Le Monde Diplomatique Edição Portuguesa* are akin to it: “*Outras palavras*” (Other words) and “*Outro modo*” (Other way or mode). The latter is also the official name of the co-operative that manages the critical and leftist newspaper.

Which model of society do they advocate? They state that “we need new solutions that, as in the country [Portugal] as in Europe, point to a new economic policy and a new institutional architecture, being able to promote employment, environment, social justice and democracy in all its forms”. Less abstractly and more concretely, and contrary to the current model, they require a certain return to the welfare State, or they affirm the necessity that the State has a determinant role in economy, and finally in society. Hence, they advocate a strong public system that does not leave everything in the hands of the private sector:

**Privatisations deteriorate democracy, attack public service, beyond the fact they mean an additional and sudden withdrawal of the State from economy, limiting each time more the possibilities of intervention for the common good, these privatisations are economically prejudicial, since the extraordinary receipts got through the sale of assets that belong to everyone do not compensate in the long run the loss of dividends that these assets generate<sup>21</sup>.**

But, in their views, policies must not be strictly national and should have a European dimension through the agreement between the States of the European Union. Consecutively, they consider that this also entails to abandon the “old austerity recipes” that are continuously proposed and applied with diverse names but with a content fundamentally similar each time. In 2010, the new name of the austerity plan in Portugal against which ECON was firmly opposed was “*O PEC Português*”, “*O PEC*” being the acronym for “*O Programa de Estabilidade e Crescimento*” (the Programme of Stability and Growth). They particularly contested its plan of privatisations in the realms of insurance, energy and the post that they considered as “an additional “wink” at the private finance” (“*mais um “pisca de olho” à finança privada*”). For its militants, the reduction of the public deficits can remain an imperative, but they do not accept the ways that are taken to reach it through diverse forms of austerity plan. Thus, they highlight new modalities: “There are many forms to reduce the

deficit. It is necessary to proceed to a profound tax reform, coordinated at the European level, which reinforces the progressiveness of the [tax] system, taxes large fortunes and profits and which discourages financial speculation... and which cancels the off-shores”. This will allow “to oblige the financial sector (the main beneficiary of the public support) and the most privileged social groups to contribute to the crisis resolution”. In addition, they add that “at the same time, it is necessary to conceive, at the European level, growth and employment policies, which have to lead to the reduction of social and regional inequalities in the European Union, the enlargement of the internal market, namely in the poorest countries of Europe, and trade protection against the countries that do not respect the most elementary environmental and work rules”. These modalities appear in bold type and in bigger letters in one of ECON’s tracts to emphasise their importance in relation to the rest of the document<sup>22</sup>.

Elsewhere, they also advanced some general and more concrete normative propositions, mainly “the regulation and control of the financial markets”, “the regulation and reconversion of the finance in favour of the real economy”, “a progressive tax reform”, “the democratic control of the financial system”, “quality public services that respond to the social crisis and imbalances from the economy”, “the activism for an economy that serves the people”, and so forth. The role of social movements is considered as determinant to promote and establish a new international economy: “Only through social movements, successfully articulated at the international level, we can build a world economy immune to the successive financial crises of the last thirty years, which have culminated with the current economic devastation”<sup>23</sup>.

Alongside papers, ECON Portugal exhibits diverse types of objects that contain texts, generally aphorisms, and drawings which have a certain cognitive value. For example, it sells tee-shirts with the slogan “*Luxos para todos!*” (“Luxuries for all!”). And under it, one can see people well dressed – like the common image that we have about rich people – and a lobster. These drawings that represent signs of economic wealth in the popular imagination and the text that accompanies them show again that ECON Portugal aspires to social justice and equality – the same for all regardless of personal contributions. However, the social redistribution of material wealth does not necessarily have to imply a social levelling down, but, on the contrary, inequality must be fought with the intention of raising standards for all. By some aspects, this is the idea of industrial society developed by Saint-Simon, that is, a society in which economy, production and industrial activity would allow to satisfy all needs.

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<sup>21</sup> ECON’s publication.

<sup>22</sup> ECON Portugal’s tract against the PEC.

<sup>23</sup> ECON Portugal’s tract especially aiming to gain new support and adherents.

Another type of tee-shirts had the following slogan that is strictly related to the latter: “*Taxar aos ricos para dar aos pobres!*” (Taxing the rich to give to the poor!). Sometimes, the phrase “the poor” is substituted by that of “the people” (“*o povo*”). It also brings up the theme of wealth repartition within the society, which is therefore and effectively a core topic for ECON Portugal. The matter of taxation reappears again. The central means to achieve this objective is to tax people and allocate to them the collected funds according to their incomes. In this socio-economic regulation, the State as an arbitrator must therefore play a decisive role.

In an ECON prospectus that introduces the movement, Basilio has chosen to put as picture a representation of a painting of Pablo Picasso, *Two Women Running on the Beach (The Race)*.

One can therefore notice the important role that images, photos, paintings, drawings occupy alongside written text in the diverse documents and products made public. That is the case in ECON in the same way as in VERDE for instance, as we shall see in the next section of this chapter. Thus, material production is significant, writing and non-written forms, like pictures. There is often a combination of both, writing being associated with images. Indeed, most of the written documents have images to facilitate reading, to make the document more attractive and didactic. The objects always contain a written part: At the very least, the ECON logotype, or otherwise a slogan, a short text or aphorism like in the tee-shirts, badges, handbags, and so on.

## **5.2: “The central point is nature and ecology”<sup>24</sup>:**

For VERDE’s members, the central point is nature. Indeed, this is an ecological movement. Hence, VERDE is defined by its advocates as “an ecological, innovative association... with a strong activist component, resorting to direct, creative and non-violent actions” or as “an association that focuses upon environmental thematics by integrating social and political questions [and that], with a strong activist component, frequently uses direct, creative and non-violent actions in order to sensitise and create awareness about social roots of the environmental problems”<sup>25</sup>. These sentences are very close in one of VERDE’s

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Mara, one of VERDE’s leaders, 25 March 2010.

<sup>25</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

pamphlets. One can therefore note the importance that its members give to political militancy, “direct actions” but without violence and with creativity given their emphasis on these terms.

In further writings, they state that VERDE “addresses the ecological problematic through a criticism of the social and economic model that exploits and damages the planet, society and the future generations. Simultaneously, it seeks to build positive alternatives for a world that is ecologically sustainable and socially fair”<sup>26</sup>.

VERDE also focuses on the related topics of “climatic alterations” and “globalisation” from “grassroots” perspectives, and with an approach of “social criticism”<sup>27</sup>. Its advocates added that “our legitimacy can only grow with time, indeed our struggle is for social and ecological justice of the peoples and the planet”<sup>28</sup>.

During the ethnography in 2010, VERDE had diverse “projects” that were not close and finite inasmuch as its members encouraged new projects and ideas. There were mainly, in 2010, what they named “Opposition to the practices of experimental fields”, “VERDE and festivals”, “VERDE schools”, “Meeting of the zones free from transgenics + Formation of the network free from transgenics”, “Theatre”, “Media and publications”, “Alternatives”, “*Jantar popular*” (popular Dinner).

The first mentioned project was “a long struggle” against the practices of experimental fields with transgenic corns stemming from the Pioneer and Syngenta companies among other multinationals, practices that have been authorised in Portugal in the Monforte and Ferreira do Alentejo areas for several years. This opposition notably took the form of a protest *in situ*; one of the first actions of VERDE was to demonstrate in Monforte<sup>29</sup>.

The second aforesaid project regarded the growing participation of VERDE in numerous festivals that included sessions of information and debates to the extent that its members considered that the festivals could be experiences that allow to learn, to gain knowledge, to create “spaces to discuss about environmental and social justice” combined with “festive spirit, between concerts and relax”<sup>30</sup>.

With the “VERDE schools” project, some of its members gave lectures to Portuguese schools and universities, the movement was more and more invited to participate in debates, conferences and projects launched by educational institutions<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>27</sup> Idem.

<sup>28</sup> Idem.

<sup>29</sup> VERDE’s publication.

<sup>30</sup> VERDE’s text.

<sup>31</sup> Idem.

The following project aimed “to empower the districts and their populations, which by stating that they are Zones Free from Transgenics send a strong message that rejects the cultivation of transgenics in their land”<sup>32</sup>.

“Theatre” was an “artist project”. Its members have created this neologism that results from the fusion of the two terms “artist” and “activist”. Hence, in “Theatre”, “resistant clowns, actors, directors, percussionists or freestyle rappers” were welcomed<sup>33</sup>.

With “Media and Publications”, VERDE paid special attention to the writing and diffusion of informational texts, news, articles through its own magazines or journals, *Erva Daninha* (Weed) and *Infestante* (word that can also be translated by the term “Weed”), through its website, flyers, and via the traditional newspapers. In their bookcases, one could find anarchist literature. Sometimes, militants commented among them libertarian writings such as journals. Among the whole of its activities, the publication and mediatisation of its intellectual works are therefore determinant.

Hence, more precisely, the members of VERDE regularly publish pamphlets. During the ethnography in 2010, they had an “informative zine” or an alternative and independent self-published magazine with copyrights that they named “*Erva Daninha*” and was launched in 2003. Each new issue came out in about two hundred copies. They had an editorial board that also carried out the design and pagination of the magazine, translators, copy editors, some persons responsible for the illustrations. Some texts were written by academic researchers, like PhD students in ecological economics, by specialists or experts on ecology who were members or sympathisers of VERDE, or who belonged to associated ecological associations. The topics of agriculture and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) were subjects that were frequently discussed. One of these pamphlets was entitled “*Infestante*. All about the fight for sustainable agriculture without transgenics”. Further ones had a less polemical or more sober title, “Agriculture and transgenics”, “Transgenic agriculture?”.

In the introduction of this latter pamphlet, the idea of a collective and critical reflection regarding this subject is considered as immediately necessary. Hence, the authors, women and men, state that “the topic of agriculture and transgenics, which we are going to develop throughout the next pages, is complex and requires a more and more deep reflection from everyone”. A little later in the text, they add that “the association of theories, ideas and practices facilitates reflection on the largest context of the type of agriculture that we want for

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<sup>32</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>33</sup> VERDE’s publication.

the future, where transgenics can hardly be an integrative part”. They continue by asserting that:

**This is urgent to inform, provoke discussion on this theme... This is the time to build spaces in which critical discourses about urgent topics such as agriculture and the use of transgenics may emerge... We hope that *Erva Daninha* may offer this space... In order that nothing and none remove us the right to collectively decide about what we want to produce and what we want to eat. In order that it does not happen quickly on a day when we have no longer possibilities of choice and the price to pay is too expensive.**

The core of their text starts with a set of questions. Thus, first, they pose the problems that should lead later in the text to solutions, notably to definitions and conceptions of the reality given the nature of the questions or posed problems: “What are GMOs? What are transgenics? Are GMOs a controlled technology? Is it ethical to commercialise transgenics? What is biodiversity? And the precautionary principle?” are therefore the questions that open their text. The interrogative pronoun “what?” or the questions under the form of the linking verb to be (“are they...?”, “is it...?”) effectively entail responses that regard the nature or the being of things by expounding their properties or predicates through quantitative, qualitative, relational or modal judgements.

After this problematisation of their subject, they also wrote a glossary that contains an important list of definitions of the technical terms, scientific words and key concepts in the text such as “genetic engineering”, “genetic information” or “bio-safety protocol”. Similarly, there, they already give a short definition of the problematised concepts – “biodiversity”, “GMO”, “transgenics”, “precautionary principle”.

Then, after this glossary, the authors immediately enter into the heart of the matter by dealing with the question of the identity of transgenics. Their literary style is essentially descriptive and analytical. Their statements report scientific statements. They rest upon sources or references that they criticise – scientific publications (books and articles), essays, official studies such as those of Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), analyses from research institutes such as World Watch Institute (an independent research institute that focuses on “global environmental concerns”), articles stemming from other social movements like World Socialist Movement, Greenpeace or GRAIN (an international environmental NGO), data from the national and international media, such as the alternative social media Indymedia, the Portuguese newspaper *Público*, The Guardian and BBC news, and so on. They use examples to support their arguments. They draw up classifications or taxonomies; thus, they distinguish three kinds of transgenics that are

currently sold for agriculture and consumption: “The transgenics plants wherein genes to resist to a determined pesticide (when it is applied to them) were inserted; The transgenics plants in which genes in order that the proper plant produces its insecticide (in all its cells) were inserted; the transgenics plants that own these two characteristics”.

They make reference to some historical facts or processes linked to agriculture such as the Green Revolution or the industrialisation of agriculture that have excessively oriented agriculture, through the mass mono-cultivation carried out by machines and agrochemicals, toward productivity and profit with the main effect of reducing “agrobiodiversity” and of impoverishing and weakening lands, dynamics that have been reinforced by the recent implantation of the agriculture with transgenics created in laboratories.

They criticise and “deconstruct” most preconceptions about transgenics by showing that the reality of facts is against this *doxa* or these common ideas. They show their incoherence and contradictions. As they say, “a small exercise of deconstruction shows us a quite different reality”. Hence, they consider that:

**Many people believe that transgenics were invented in order to produce more and eradicate hunger in the world, or to face adverse conditions of the environment like rains, droughts and extreme temperatures. However, after more than ten years of cultivation and commercialisation of transgenics, for example, hunger in the world, for thousands of people, is still a reality.**

They refer to the situation of transgenics in general and that of Portugal in particular. Their study is therefore comparative. Thus, for instance, they show how historically Spain has converted itself into the major producer of transgenics in Europe. More precisely, they state that while between 1999 and 2004, the cultivation of transgenics was stopped by the European Commission, it remained authorised within the European Union at this time only in Spain thanks to the pressure of José María Aznar’s government. During this period, its cultivation in this country spread, and since the end of the European Union’s moratorium in 2004, this country has been able to exploit its past exceptional situation and consolidate its position by becoming the first European producer of GMOs. According to the authors of the pamphlet, Spain’s position has had repercussions on its geographical neighbour. Portugal has become the second biggest European producer after the withdrawal of France and Romania from the cultivation of GMOs, a position which, in their view, contrasts with the relative ignorance of the Portuguese people about the nature of this new agriculture because of the lack of information, disinformation, and of misinformation. Alongside these negative

situations, they also relate other positive social experiences and actions lived and carried out by other social movements, groups or localities situated in other contexts and that are close to their ideological views and practices, such as the activism of Monforte's locality to create a "zone free from transgenics" or the experience of "the liberators of fields" in Germany.

The writers proceed by induction, notably from the description and analysis of empirical data linked to the singular Portuguese case they make general statements that overcome this particular context. Conversely, they also proceed by deduction, notably by applying abstract propositions to the concrete situation of Portugal.

They use figures, statistics, graphs, such as histograms and pie charts, to advocate their propositions. One of their histograms shows the historical evolution of the "area of commercial cultivation of GMOs (in hectare)" between 2005 and 2008 in Portugal. Visibly, one can notice a clear augmentation from 2007. Indeed, according to this graph, the area was a thousand hectares in 2005 and a little over a thousand in 2006 whilst it quadrupled in 2007 and was about five thousand hectares a year later. A pie chart shows the geographical repartition of this kind of cultivation in 2008 in Portugal. Hence, immediately, one may note that it is the area of Alentejo that is especially affected by this cultivation (it fills half of the pie chart). Then, the area of Lisbon and Vale do Tejo, and the area of Centro respectively cover almost a quarter of the graph. The Norte is less affected and the Algarve even less. They also report statistics and trends from polling institutes such as Eurobarometer's polls and surveys (the Public Opinion Analysis sector of the European Commission).

The authors associate diverse problems with "the dissemination of the transgenic agriculture": it is accompanied by "the deriving implementation of the commercial use of patents", "the contamination of seeds", the domination of a few multinational companies that aspire "to control the world food production", "control that, through the introduction of unsustainable technologies (and having a dubious quality), leads to the reduction of the variety of traditional/natural seeds and of bio-diversity, the irreversible contamination of species, the pollution and destruction of the natural systems, and the dependency and misery of a large part of the world population". Ultimately, "all of humanity is losing the right to food, and becoming ever more dependent on half a dozen multinational companies".

Regarding health and the risk of eating GMOs for human beings, the authors highlight that the current scientific debate is divided into two main antithetic positions; there are those who are in favour and those who are against. Nevertheless, after this presentation of the state of art, the authors assert that insofar as current science is unable to truly say if transgenics are or are not dangerous for human health and life, it is unable to express an affirmative or



negative qualitative judgement that is apodeitic, that is, certain and definitive, transgenics remain a problematic question, and in doubt it is logically, and also according to common sense, wiser to abandon their use until we have reliable answers about them. Finally, they invoke, as key argument to sustain their thesis, the precautionary principle that is the modern phrase that in fact makes simply reference to the old philosophical, rational and logical principle of prudence. Furthermore, they show that some current signs support the thesis against GMOs such as “the effect of the increase of the use of herbicides and pesticides in agriculture” due to the implantation of transgenics, chemical products that have necessarily a negative effect on the quality of food.

Thus, the authors see the industry of transgenics as a “strange new “imperialism” applied to agriculture”, a “model of devastating industrial production, blind to everything except dollar signs”, “an industrial model so devastating for this planet Earth and all the beings who live here and depend on its resources”. In sum, the studied consequences are environmental, but also at the health level, and social and economic.

Against these current tendencies, VERDE’s members “seek alternatives”. They “require a more ecological agriculture, more ethical and freer” for everyone, “we are here to help to cultivate paths toward a more ecological, conscious and independent agriculture”, what notably implies to reject “transgenic seeds”, “biotechnology and the genetic manipulation of the plants”, to restore “peoples’ food sovereignty”, “to respect biodiversity”, “to be free to choose” what one wants to eat. One of VERDE’s core mottoes is “Say yes for seeds free from transgenics!”.

Furthermore, the authors often use irony as a form of literary style to make the reading of their texts more attractive and enjoyable, reinforce their statements, confirm their propositions by making them evident or, conversely, for showing and demonstrating the absurdity of some of the ideas opposed to theirs and of some situations that they contest. The produced effects are therefore both esthetical and rhetorical. Hence, to emphasise the importance of the chosen topics, “agriculture” and “transgenics”, they said that “everyone eats. (ok, there are those who live by the air, but...) Directly or indirectly, everyone depends on agriculture”. To stress the exclusively monetary interest of the agro-business, they wrote “*cego a tudo excepto a \$ifrões*” (blind to everything except dollar signs). “*\$ifrões*” is “*Cifrões*” and means “dollar signs” in this case or more generally “currency symbol” in Portuguese. They substituted the letter “C” by the dollar symbol “\$”, which was also used in the former Portuguese national money, “escudo” (1\$00 was one escudo), in order to make this narrow economic interest more visible. They pointed out that the popular dinners they

organised were free from transgenics: “In Lisbon, there are meetings every Thursday from seven o’clock in the evening followed by a popular dinner (free from GMOs)”. In these same dinners, they added that the desserts were “movies, offices, debates, music...”.

They also use from time to time a metaphoric style or employ double meanings that create a certain lyrical or poetic effect, thereby making the description more powerful. For instance, when they write, “we are here to help to cultivate paths toward a more ecological, conscious and independent agriculture”, the expression “to cultivate paths” makes reference both to its literal senses, the preparation and use of lands for growing plants or crops, the action of growing plants or crops, and to its figurative sense, the development of new attitudes, of new ways of thinking, behaving and acting.

In addition, their publications are illustrated with many drawings that accompany and support the contents of the text and also have an esthetical, symbolic, and finally, political value due to the quality of the representations and to the ideas that are represented through them<sup>34</sup>.

With the project “Alternatives”, VERDE’s members concretely sought and practised other kinds of agriculture, “more sustainable and human”, different from the transgenic one. In this sense, they are for “experimentation”, “we want to learn by doing” as they say, and until today they have espoused “the principles of permaculture” and privileged “the dynamisation of small *hortas*” (vegetable-gardens). The latter may be “urban, pedagogical, community, social or experimental”. In general terms, VERDE’s advocates define the “popular or community *horta*” as “a green space wherein people meet and cultivate fruits, vegetables or flowers, in a common field or divided into small plots for each gardener. Unlike other green spaces of the city, its maintenance is done by the proper users of the space and not by professionals”.

The main *horta* that had been run by VERDE and the local community since 2007 until June 2013<sup>35</sup>, “an urban popular *horta*”, “informal, community and experimental”, was located between the districts of Mouraria and Graça in Lisbon, near VERDE’s former community centre.

They organised *gardenfests* (“há festa na horta!”), “*dias comunitários na Horta popular*” (community days in the popular Garden), in which “the neighbours of the districts of Graça, Mouraria and Alfama, friends and sympathisers of urban *hortas*, urban agriculture and of “*ruralidade citadina*” (urban rurality) were invited to participate” in order to “share

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<sup>34</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>35</sup> On that date, the *horta* was removed by local political authorities.

knowledge about social horticulture and gardening with neighbours, interested persons and other horticulturists”. In this sense, there, they trained children in order that they knew edible plants and fostered the “interaction between old persons and children, for the benefit of both”. They generally organised a meeting per week, every Friday morning. For them, the *hortas* should help the cities “to once more find their equilibrium and re-embrace nature from which it has departed since the last fifty years”. They should also reduce the excessive dependency of city dwellers on “third-party services to satisfy their basic needs, services that are more and more prohibitive”. Thus, for instance, they highlight that “the price of cereals increased more than 50% while the access to quality fresh vegetables is more and more limited to a minor proportion of the population”. They notice that “the lack of autonomy of [urban] residents and their separation from the production of the earth have been accompanied by the loss of common spaces and, above all, of green spaces to live together, enjoy leisure time and foster a feeling of safety and belonging”. They state that “the concept of urban *horta* integrates a strategy of recuperation of urban sustainability, by linking social, cultural and environmental factors. It contributes to the conservation of natural green spaces, a more human urban planning, to food security, socio-economic stability, and even to give therapy”. In fact, they consider that “the advantages of a popular *horta* are numerous and varied, with benefits as in ecological terms as in social ones”. They added that “the augmentation of the feeling of belonging to a community, of neighbourly relations and connection with nature are some of the effects felt by those who cultivate their vegetables or flowers in a popular *horta*”. Furthermore, the popular *hortas* must be a beautiful place. One of their posters said that “we are going to build here a beautiful place for everyone”. More concretely, the activities or “the programme of the community days”, as they said, comprehended “*concertos e consertos*” (concerts and repairs). The successive use here of Portuguese homonyms is a further epitome of the literary and poetic style of VERDE’s texts. Activists play with the words and give to their writings a certain linguistic musicality. Their programme also included “conversations and promenades in the Garden; workshops about the building of recycled urban furniture”; “*tertúlias*” (meetings with friends) in which people from other ecological organisations took part; “live acoustic music and artistic performances, followed by popular dinners and parties” in VERDE’s former community centre. In the same way, militants had defined some clear and immediate objectives to reach:

**In the project [popular *horta* project] that we are developing, we intend to promote some specific learning and knowledge with the population of the neighbourhood, that is**

**to say: How to do organic fertilisers from vegetable food scraps; how to grow aromatic plants and vegetables without having recourse to the use of toxic pesticides and synthetic fertilisers; teaching to the neighbourhood kids how some of the food that they consume everyday grow, by restoring the link between the human being and the earth that feeds him; creating a pleasant communal space, wherein it is not only possible to cultivate land but also to share knowledge through relaxed conversations, by reinforcing neighbourhood links and feelings of belonging to the quarter<sup>36</sup>.**

In their pamphlets, VERDE's members also dedicate some pages to botany: They give information about unrecognised plants that are generally perceived as weeds but that are *de facto* "vegetable treasures" such as chicory (*chicorium intybus*) or stinging nettles (*urtica dioica*); they describe their structure and properties, give details on their physiology, show their food virtues and health benefits, focus on their ecological virtues (as they state, "the stinging nettles' syrup helps to fight against blights in the cultures"); they present various modes of preparation before consumption, provide ecological and geographical data such as the particular places and the countries where they grow, refer to books for their descriptions and analyses.

In practice, they also animated groups of people that attempted to grow plants and flowers in diverse deteriorated and abandoned places of the city. They called this action "*guerrilha da jardinagem*" or "guerrilla gardening". More precisely, according to their own words, this was an "urban guerrilla to embellish rotundas, vacant corners, abandoned gardens..." through diverse techniques for seeding such as the "seedbombing" (in English in their texts). They continued by asserting that:

**This is the reality... groups of persons armed with rakes, hoes, seeds, shoots... who spread through the dreary cities pieces of colourful life! The process of entering the group is simple: Find a degraded place in your town, perceive which local seeds are those of the season, perceive if the conditions are favourable to plant seeds. Then, "laid" the seed in the earth, water and water again...<sup>37</sup>**

In line with the aforesaid "projects", during the ethnography in 2010, the popular dinners constituted "an example of responsible consumption, with ingredients that respect the environment, local economy and animals... [they are] an opportunity for exchanging knowledge and thinking in a critical way". The meals served during the popular dinners were only constituted of biological and vegetarian food that stemmed in large measure from VERDE's former *horta* in Lisbon.

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<sup>36</sup> VERDE's pamphlet.

<sup>37</sup> Idem.

During the popular dinners, some activists played music and sang. For instance, as we saw before, on 25 March 2010, Victor, one of the main representatives of ECON Portugal, a restaurant owner and manager, and during his free time a singer and musician as well, played music and sang during a part of the dinner.

In this same popular dinner, alongside ECON's stall in the dining room, there was VERDE's table, from which food was distributed to people who was queuing. It was also in a certain manner its stall. In addition to serving food, alongside the cash box managed by Mara, the table offered the possibility to consult prospectuses and pamphlets like one that appealed to support reapers of transgenic maize in Portugal who had to be judged for their act, another one that criticised GMOs, a further one on VERDE itself, and so forth. They sold two pamphlets. The smallest one that cost two euros was about transgenic agriculture. The other one, more pictorial and better bound, was much more expensive and cost seventeen euros.

During this dinner, some militants of VERDE showed a documentary about an original type of activism that consists in climbing trees in order to protest against the attacks made against nature. This is an international movement that promotes this practice and essentially focuses on it. Its name, the climbing trees movement, explicitly reflects its main activity. In the documentary, one could see real climbers at the top of huge trees in the Amazon forest in order to denounce and stop the slaughtering of trees in what is considered to be the lungs of the world. This movement organises every year the international day of climbing trees, held on the 28 March. During this day, the movement and VERDE invite people to get into any tree in protest.

More generally, over the ethnography in 2010, the members of VERDE organised public meetings every Thursday in its former community centre of Lisbon from seven o'clock in the evening, followed by its emblematic popular dinners and the presentation of films related to the ecological problems and activism, the listening of music, and debates.

Finally, we could mention other actions that nonetheless remained auxiliary in relation to the previous ones, such as "*O banco de tempo da Mouraria*" (The time bank in the Mouraria), "*Criar bosques*" (Creating forests), "*Limpar Portugal*" (Cleaning Portugal), "*A massa crítica*" (The critical mass), "The platform of objection to the vivarium", "The anti-war, anti-NATO platform", language courses (that concerned Portuguese, Russian, English, French, German and Italian languages taught by native speakers and Portuguese persons), yoga, "The creative afternoons", "The walks on Sundays", and "The free store".

"The time bank", as the members of VERDE affirmed, was "a system of exchange of services without using money in which one hour of work can be exchanged by one hour of

work”. In brief, this was a barter system. People who were interested in it filled an enrolment form, said which kind of services they could carry out, formed part of a list and were contacted by VERDE once they found a requested service.

With “Creating forests”, as the name of the action literally suggests it, VERDE participated with other Portuguese environmental movements in projects that were intended for the planting of forests in Portugal.

“Cleaning Portugal” aimed “to promote the environmental education through the initiative of cleaning the Portuguese forest” once a year; “The critical mass” was “a walk in bicycle in the middle of the city” every month, the last Friday, in Lisbon, Porto or Coimbra.

“The creative afternoons” privileged spontaneity; “they allow to realise the idea that crops up: making puppets, theatre, animation in stop-motion, moviemaking...”. As they claimed, “who has imagination, has wings”.

“The walks on Sundays” permitted “to go out of the town”, “to discover the natural sites around Lisbon, to go to see a water treatment station, and other places worth visiting”; and finally, “The free store” was situated in a floor of VERDE’s former community centre. There, “everyone can go to offer and take objects that work, clothes for men, women and kids, everything is free!”<sup>38</sup>.

### **5.3: “Our crisis is precariousness”:**

PRECC is a movement composed of precarious workers who denounce precariousness at the workplace and the precarisation of existence. The general objectives of PRECC and SOS, one of the main movements that animate it in Portugal, are therefore to “name and bring down precariousness” to the extent that “precariousness has a name and requires struggle”. Their actions lean upon “this great learning that consists in transforming the questions into action, this feeling of emergency and the will to bypass the aggression of the precariousnesses (at work, in life) in order to imagine a counter-attack without waiting for starting to do it”<sup>39</sup>. In other words, “precariousness is not a fatality: It is an attack that requires a counter-attack”<sup>40</sup> or “we organise the counter-attack with creativity and imagination”<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> VERDE’s texts.

<sup>39</sup> SOS texts.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with José, a militant of SOS, 1 May 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Nuno, a militant of SOS, 24 April 2012.

Through their movement, these militants assert that “they raise important questions, but they are not afraid to know that they do not have all the answers or even the capacity to face all the necessary things”. They claim that the movements mobilised against all the forms of precariousness are fundamentally “movements of ideas”<sup>42</sup>.

PRECC is conceived above all as a movement in which people should be able to radically reformulate the problematic of work, pose new questions that better correspond to their lived experiences, and find new answers inasmuch as the old structures of workers are nowadays perceived as inadequate to face their actual necessities, intellectual and material:

**There is no free space in the current association of workers wherein it is possible the discussion about which kind of work we want, which relation regarding the ownership of the means of production we claim or even the question of if we want to work... It is necessary to raise again the fundamental questions: For what do we work? How to work? And how do we want to organise us? Finding a space wherein workers, freely, can raise these questions and attempt to give responses again seems to be the more urgent task of the movement**<sup>43</sup>.

In this sense and alongside the general problematic of work, they also pose the particular problem of sexual work, which refers, by extension, to the questions of informal work, stigmatisation, unrecognised work, citizenship, and of the possibilities of reversing the current tendencies, notably through the mobilisation, unity and protest of social movements:

**How does a social movement find the possibility of emerging? What is necessary in order that a struggle is an encounter of solidarities and emergencies? How to give voice to a stigmatised group and in a state of extreme precariousness? What can we do when, beyond being precarious, this work is also informal and stigmatised? And when this work is not even recognised as professional and bars us from the simple right to exist as citizens with all the associated rights? These are the questions, desires and challenges that involve us, that involve sexual work, in this widest cause that is precariousness and PRECC**<sup>44</sup>.

Their members reject official reasons given by the political elite and economic experts to justify precariousness such as the crisis, threat of unemployment, the weight of the public deficit. Against these reasons that are manipulated, in their views, through figures, statistics and ratios, the members of PRECC oppose other principles such as the primacy of the person, quality of life, human rights. They define precariousness as a global problem that implies a

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<sup>42</sup> SOS texts.

<sup>43</sup> SOS pamphlet.

<sup>44</sup> Idem.

solidary response among all the people affected by it, a union among social movements and beyond the borders in order to solve it. Since the origins of the movement in Portugal in 2007, SOS militants have criticised the type of “modernisation” promoted and developed by politicians and business entrepreneurs, modernisation that has generated, in their eyes and as we saw before, the growing precarisation of work and lifestyles. With other key movements in Portugal related to the criticism of precariousness, they have attacked one of the main legal instruments of work flexibilisation and precarisation in this country, that is, the *recibos verdes* (green receipts). According to their members, the latter allow the liberalisation of work, or more concretely, by this means, workers have tended to be treated as independent or freelancers, having to assume all the associated charges and risks, while in many cases they actually depend on a unique employer. Thus, the green receipts have tended to replace the employment contract, and more and more, including within work situations where workers are not really or *de facto* autonomous but are paradoxically considered as such legally or *de jure*. It is what SOS, PRECC, many other social movements but also a large part of the Portuguese people, who remains very conscious of this fact and problem, denounce as being “*falsos recibos verdes*” (false green receipts).

Thus, precariousness is also related to exploitation and social injustice by these activists. As Nuno, a young militant of SOS, stated, “what comes around, for those who work, is always the same thing: Longer working hours, lower wages, fixed-term contracts, less rights”<sup>45</sup>. In one of their publications, PRECC’s advocates put forward, one after the other, a set of figures that highlight the significant social inequalities and injustices in Portugal:

**2740 millions of euros were the profits of the bank sector between 2005 and 2009. 4,5 millions of euros to save BPN [*Banco Português de Negócios*, Portuguese Businesses Bank]. 1500 millions of euros are Belmiro de Azevedo’s fortune [Portuguese entrepreneur who is one of the richest persons in Portugal but also in the world]. 4000 millions of euros are Américo Amorim’s fortune [Portuguese entrepreneur who is currently the richest person in Portugal according to some business magazines]. 475 euros is the value of the national minimum wage. 2 millions of workers with precarious professional links. 600 thousand unemployed persons. 170 thousand unemployed persons without any social support. 900 thousand green receipts<sup>46</sup>.**

Elsewhere, PRECC’s activists also followed the line of thought of this descriptive list:

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<sup>45</sup> Interview, 1 May 2012.

<sup>46</sup> PRECC’s journal.



**The recent and progressive ultra-deregulation of work has made many thousands of people's lives more uncertain, paints the reality in tones that are absolutely unknown by the majority of the current movement of workers... In general, workers are today less secure than they were twenty or thirty years ago. It seems unquestionable. After many conquests forced by the struggle of workers, employers managed to restructure and reorganise themselves, thereby bringing, among many other things, much more precariousness<sup>47</sup>.**

Before these reports, PRECC's activists mainly claim "a globalisation of social rights", more precisely and for example, "the establishment of a minimum salary", "the separation between work and wages" (if work is discontinued over time, wages must remain continued), "the improvement of migrants' rights" ("better conditions of entrance", "closure of the spaces of migrants' detention", "free circulation", "regularisation of undocumented migrants", etc.), "free public transports", "free circulation of knowledge in Internet", "the improvement of healthcare system", and so forth<sup>48</sup>. Elsewhere, they added that "we demand that for permanent functions there are permanent links"<sup>49</sup>.

PRECC's activists publish regularly a "*Jornal de Precários*" (Journal of Precarious) in print that costs 1,5 euros. It contains many drawings and illustrations that accompany and sustain the written text. They are essentially humorous and tend to show, through derision or satire, both the seriousness and absurdity of some situations. For that matter, one of the three main functions for the publication of their journal is the function related to illustrations alongside those concerning the cover and the texts.

The authors present official figures and statistics, provide some results of public organisations' reports such as those stemming from the OECD, criticise some sources like official statements coming from the United Nations.

Some of the authors are artists or work in the artistic sector to the extent that PRECC is also composed of movements of intermittent entertainment. Other are teachers, especially teachers of curriculum enrichment activities, a function in the public school that is particularly affected by precariousness because of the lack of labour rights.

Militants published articles about precariousness in *Le Monde Diplomatique Edição Portuguesa*, a critical newspaper that replicates the central tenets of the French and original edition, translating some of its articles, but also adding Portuguese novel contributions.

Demonstrations and other exoteric activities such as the appropriation of squares have a festive, convivial, playful and cognitive feature. One can easily observe during these events

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<sup>47</sup> PRECC's pamphlet.

<sup>48</sup> PRECC's texts.

the importance of the theatrical *mises-en-scènes* and dramaturgies, the centrality of music, singing, shouting, dancing. Colours, especially warm colours such as yellow or red, are very present. One can also appreciate the richness of the material works.

On 24 April 2010, in a pre-25 April sit-in organised at the *Miradouro de São Pedro de Alcântara*, in the middle of the square, near a big fountain, several persons were painting and writing aphorisms on placards and large canvases made of paper and plastic on the floor. They also put other canvases made of the same material to avoid dirtying the streets. Paint cans and brushes sprinkled the floor. There were all ages, women, men, including children. The placards will be used during demonstrations the day after, 25 April (Carnation Revolution Day), and for the first day of May (Labour Day). The paintings were very lively: The warm tones were very noticeable through the important place attributed to the red and yellow colours. After having finished painting their placards and canvas, activists concentrated them in the middle of the square and exhibited them to the public. They also decorated the square by hanging some small placards on branches of trees, placing big banners all around it and wrapping some tree trunks with diverse coloured objects.

They set up tables where they displayed brochures, flyers, journals and other texts regarding the actions of the diverse present movements to inform the people who were passing. Some activists played a sort of bowling game. There were four skittles made of cardboard. One word was written on each of them: “precariousness”, “exploitation”, “crisis” and “capitalism”. Obviously, the object of the game was to knock down as many skittles as possible. Other militants pronounced discourses against precariousness that intertwined with different shows. One of these speeches was directed against the state of precariousness of researchers and finally of research in Portugal. This speech criticised the labour conditions of *bolseiros* (fellows). The speaker, himself a fellow and an activist in SOS, underlined above all the lack of recognition of their employment status, their wage freeze for years, the lack of protection from social insurance (voluntary scheme supported by the fellow), the obligation to cumulate scholarships in order to be able to continue with the work of researcher in Portugal because of the lack of labour contracts with universities.

There were music and dance performances: A group of Brazilian percussionists composed of young people and children, another group of African dance, a group of contemporary dance. Many people from the public, activists and mere passers-by, also participated and danced with the performers.

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<sup>49</sup> PRECC’s publication.

Among the numerous aphorisms or apophthegms against exploitation and precarisation of workers painted on the placards and canvas, we can mention, for instance, the following ones: “Our crisis is precariousness”; “organised crime, theft = precarious work”; “the crisis pops, the precariat explodes”; “work, it is a right, it is a value, it is not a favour”; “illegal, this is exploitation”; “respond to precariousness!!!”; “precarious they want us, rebels they will have us!!!”; “precarious country, come out of the wardrobe!”; “Belmiro, you will pay dearly” (they refer to Belmiro de Azevedo who was mentioned above); “the crisis pops, the precariat does not remain silent”; “for some persons millions, for the others pittances”.

On 25 April 2010, during the traditional march commemorating the Carnation Revolution in the *Avenida da Liberdade* until *Rossio* square (places downtown that are therefore historically and traditionally determinant for social mobilisations and movements in Lisbon and Portugal at large), activists of PRECC who walked down the avenue by singing and shouting were preceded by a big steamroller that they created with some materials and that was set in motion by two activists situated on the two sides and a few ones behind it who pushed it. Activists wrote the words “unemployment”, “wage freeze”, “privatisations”, “less social support” on it. When the steamroller moved forward, these words flashed. Thus, this performance gave the sensation and the idea to the bystanders that the latter social phenomena advance like a huge steamroller that runs over the people in its path.

Labour Day or International Workers’ Day on May 1<sup>st</sup> is the main event where PRECC demonstrates in the streets in order to show, as its militants say, “all the force that they have” and to report the state of workers’ precariousness instead of celebrating only the work day such as it is usually done by trade unions and other workers’ traditional movements. Hence, Labour Day becomes for PRECC “*Festa do precariado a trabalhar*” (working precariat day).

On 1 May 2010, at *Praça Luís de Camões*, militants put placards and banners all around the square again, on trees trunks and branches, on streetlights, tied to posts, guardrails, road signs, stoplights. In the middle of the square, they placed a long and large banner under Portuguese poet Luís de Camões’ statue that said “today, 1 May, there are precarious who work”. They also put another huge banner on the floor with the inscription painted in red on white background “we do not pay their crisis!!!”. Four activists carried a sculpture made of paper, cardboard, banners with different militant slogans. Others installed a stand under trees and around which people, activists and passers-by, adults with and without children, came to gather more and more during the afternoon and discussed. There, they also sold food and drinks for the collective lunch and picnic. Some old people sat on benches. In the square, there was also an open top truck belonging to PRECC and that was used to carry a stereo for

music and some of the main speakers and singers with their microphones and loudspeakers during the march. Some activists wore a red umbrella that is the symbol of sex workers or the “symbol of the fight for the rights of sex workers”<sup>50</sup>. Others wore red carnations. Then, at the bottom of Camões’ statue, close to the aforesaid banner, two young black women sang rap music. They were followed by a group of three other young black women who sang the same kind of music. There was also a group of percussionists; the musicians were dressed as clowns. Other activists made a speech. One of them said that “1 May, we will go to the streets, transforming them into a space wherein the joy of the refusal of a lifetime to bits marches”. An audience formed around them. Militants placed all their placards and banners for the demonstration together on the floor in the middle of the square. They formed a large pile under the eyes of some police officers who surrounded the square.

Later, when it was the time to demonstrate, people recuperated the placards and banners and started walking toward *Praça do Rossio*, before reaching *Praça Martim Moniz* and walking up the *Avenida Almirante Reis* until *Alameda*, the final stop, where there was a huge gathering of people in the park organised by workers trade unions. During the march, some activists located in the bridge between the *Elevador de Santa Justa* and *Largo do Carmo* threw thousands of small papers containing the inscriptions of PRECC and its numerous and diverse maxims on the demonstrators that passed below.

During the demonstration, most of activists sang, clapped, danced, jumped, made noise with klaxons, moved their placards, banners and red umbrellas by listening to music. Among their eclectic musical repertoire, one could quote traditional songs inherited, for instance, from the Carnation Revolution, reggae, African music, rock and roll, dance, techno, and so on. Other activists continued to speak among them in small groups. They also sang their own songs that they invented and re-elaborated known songs with their own words. From the open top truck that led the march, six young women with sunglasses, microphones and loudspeaker sang the following text in a sort of soul version:

**I have a precarious work  
I feel to complain  
Including Portugal!**

**Come with me, give me your hand,  
We are going to escape from the danger by shouting “No to exploitation!”  
Because a country without culture does not have legs to walk  
Including Por-tu-gaaaaaaaal!**

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<sup>50</sup> PRECC’s pamphlet.

**Everything is counted  
Everything must suffer  
Including Portugal! (bis)**

**Come with me, give me your hand,  
We are going to speak very loudly, to end the situation  
Because a country without culture does not have legs to walk  
Including Por-tu-gaaaaaaaal!**

Further songs could be cited such as the following ones:

**My work is precarious  
I still have the same salary  
But my boss is rich  
He would like I am gratis!**

**My work is precarious  
He lowers my salary  
But my boss is rich  
I am always cooked!**

And:

**For this reason, I want to work with you  
You have no social rights  
Precarious flexi! (bis)  
You are too much!**

**That's why I want to work with you  
You have no social rights  
Precarious flexi! (bis)  
You are too much!**

There was an activist with a loudspeaker who ran from time to time among the rest of the marchers by making roundtrips and shouting:

**Let-me-pass!  
Let me pass! Let me pass!  
I am precarious and I am going to change the world!**

In various occasions, during the march, it was even the whole of activists who suddenly ran together by shouting in a short distance, and then they continued to walk. At a certain time,

two activists unrolled the big banner that was previously placed under Camões' statue and walked with it. Others carried the aforesaid sculpture.

At another time, people repetitively shouted “with this government, we are walking back!” while they were actually walking back during a few minutes, and then, suddenly, they stopped and ran forward quickly over a more or less long distance by shouting again and again “we do not pay their crisis!”. They repeated this theatrical performance several times during the march until the end at *Alameda* square. Sometimes, they shouted “precarious they want us, rebels they will have us!” instead of chanting “we do not pay their crisis!”, and “with these cuts, we are walking back!” or “with precariousness, we are walking back!” instead of “with this government, we are walking back!”.

Other apothegms painted on placards and banners can be mentioned: “neither elite school nor manufacture of precarious”; “fixed-term lives: permanent response. PRECC”; “precarious people of all countries, unite”; “sexual work is work”; “the new proletarians”; “banks' profits 2005/09: 2740 millions”; “teachers demand respect!”; “are we second-class citizens?”; “my salary already deserved to mount”; “false green receipts, true theft!”; “we will not gobble down precariousness!!”; “The financial crisis lives in our pockets”; “fixed-term country”; “temporary country”; “minimum wage of 475 euros?”; “social insurance of and for everyone”; “our reply is the counter-attack”; “permanent culture, intermittent work”; “Excuse me, I want to live”.

During the months of September and October 2010, every Thursday at 17h30, activists of SOS organised in the square of *Largo São Domingos*, in front of the café *A Ginjinha*, close to *Rossio* square, an action that they named “speakers' corner action” under the core slogan “*Vamos!*” (Let's go!).

Regardless of this action, this place is already a common place in Lisbon open to gathering, discussion in the streets by the people. It is busy at all times of the day. The choice of this place by SOS militants is without doubt strategic to the extent that, there, they are sure to find people and to have a certain public. But, it is also, and perhaps above all, cultural insofar as traditionally this is a place for popular meetings and conversations *par excellence* as we have just said. It therefore seems natural for some activists to be there if they wish to open a public debate in a square.

More precisely, the topics that animated the public debates during four Thursdays were the following ones: 16 September 2010, “Ending up with poverty: More justice in the redistribution of wealth”; 23 September, “Democracy? Only with citizenship and good public

services”; 30 September, “Other economy with work rights”; 7 October, “Globalising and ensuring peace and solidarity”.

On 23 September 2010, the event started late, in part because there were in the same place a group of students who were bullying, with their black dress uniform, new students. It began only once the latter left, that is, half an hour after the scheduled time. Regarding this, Sara, a young militant of SOS, was disappointed by the fact that these students seemed more preoccupied with their recurrent initiation rite or rite of passage instead of being involved in political actions such as that of speakers’ corner organised by her movement<sup>51</sup>. A young woman stirred up the debates in the square. She started by posing the following questions with her microphone in hand to a group of bystanders standing that was forming among the passers-by, composed of different generations, women, men, children, from diverse origins, and that was more and more numerous as the debate progressed: “What do you think about national health services? What do you think about them? Do you believe we should have private services? Or, to the contrary, do we have to maintain public services and prevent to dismantle them? What do you think about this?”. Indeed, the principal appeal of these days was “join our debate, listen, speak, intervene, participate”<sup>52</sup>. The organiser said that the aim of this action was:

**To bring democracy to the streets because democracy means people’s opinion, people’s power, even if we have the tendency to forget it. In this way, it is therefore the people who can change things. Parliamentary democracy is not sufficient, it must be participative as well. The people must participate... The theme of the public debate today is about democracy and authorities. Each person in the streets is invited to participate and give his opinion on today’s theme.**

A further activist, Ruy, added: “This initiative is made by diverse activists from diverse movements. We invite each person to tell his life experience. These are experiences that have never appeared in the media”. People constituted a more and more dense and close circle around the organiser. And, successively, some bystanders, some people in the streets – immigrants, students, workers, artists, retired persons, leaders of neighbourhood associations, and so on – took her microphone, spoke in public and gave their opinion about the matter, opinions that converged and diverged on some points. Some activists distributed tracts regarding this action. People were also come to talk to each other. Two policemen watched

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<sup>51</sup> Interview.

<sup>52</sup> SOS flyer.

from afar close to a motorcycle with four wheels. Then, between two interventions from the public, the organiser recuperated her microphone and claimed that:

**We constantly have to remember that the State is us. When there are discourses that say we are living thanks to the State's money, these persons are forgetting that the State, in fact, it is all of us. The idea of the State is precisely that each one contributes for a cake that belongs to everyone. But, we are now witnessing a situation in which those who can contribute more do not pay their parts and simultaneously those who can less are contributing for everyone. There is therefore a discrepancy because those who can contribute less give actually more and finally they have even less, and conversely, those who can give more give genuinely less and at the end they have even more.**

From time to time, music and singers apparently interrupted the discussions to pause. But, music and songs in fact ensured the link and continuity between each discourse by filling the times of silence. In a certain sense, silence was not allowed inasmuch as it was a day for talking. As the militants said, "let's go! Break the silence about injustices and the lies regarding the crisis. Let's go to struggle"<sup>53</sup>, "we will not be silent. It is not us who have made this crisis"<sup>54</sup>, "in PRECC, we counter the silent life that they want to impose us, by affirming the refusal of precariousness"<sup>55</sup>, or "we are going to break the silence about injustices and the lies of the crisis. Here, in the public space, in the streets, where everyone can speak, exchange ideas, design solutions... Acting. Not waiting but building hope in the struggle, in the streets. We are going to break the silence about injustices and the lies of the crisis. Let's go to fight"<sup>56</sup>. At the beginning of the speakers' corner action, there was little participation of the people, there were few speeches; they seemed shy even if one could perceive that they wanted to speak. Again, music was central here to cover silence and allow a start of activity, but also to make less tense people who started dancing and clapping, and eventually in order that they move from the status of mere bystanders to that of active participants. People who were few at the beginning were becoming more, attracted by music and the festive atmosphere which reigned. In addition, if talking represents in the minds and it is ideally the basis of democracy, silence, to the contrary, recalls authoritarian regimes wherein speech is forbidden or strictly controlled. But, music and songs were not only a mere sound, a means to cover silence, to motivate the people to participate and to cancel what it may symbolise at the political level, they were also themselves a discourse as such. Actually, the songs through their texts continued in their way the debates, essentially texts of social criticism and hope for change.

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<sup>53</sup> SOS flyer.

<sup>54</sup> Idem.

<sup>55</sup> Idem.



One of the rappers said before singing that “I make my music, I rap in order to try to pass on what I see and to attempt to improve the system”. On this day, rap and reggae, especially played and sung *in vivo* by young black people, were composed of militant texts that described and analysed the social, economic and political situation in Portugal. Here, poetics rejoins politics and knowledge. In other words, there were a combination between culture and politics, art and politics. While listening to music and songs (reggae and rap), people sang, clapped and danced.

Workers from social insurance, childminders, and entertainment intermittents successively intervened. They essentially criticised their statute of independent professionals and green receipts since the former exclusively and obligatorily work for the sole public institution of social insurance, they are entirely dependant on it, “our boss is in fact the State and more particularly the ministry of social insurance” as they said, and the latter asserted that culture is a public good or service – and as such it is not always considered –, it forms part of the obligations of the welfare state, this is an essential element of democracy – “without culture, there is no democracy, culture should be accessible to everyone” as they stated –, and for these reasons, their work should be better recognised by the society, stop being marginalised and consequently their working conditions should be better valorised and improved to the extent that, for them and other workers, independence as work statute concretely means precariousness at work.

The organiser also posed the problem of the choice between public or private university, and by extension she referred to the current problematic of education in Portugal:

**Education is one of the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic. But, currently, it is also one of the rights that are called into question. Which kind of social action do we have in this country? In this country, it exists the need to improve education. There is the necessity to prioritise education. But, the education of the young people, the education of the future generations more and more falls into the hands of the private sector. This simply means that those who do not have enough money to pay their place at the university are automatically excluded from it. And, even though one manages to enter and pay tuition fees that have come to be a preoccupying thing, after all this, he still has to pay all the stuffs in order to actually study, that is, he must buy books, pay photocopies, food – because one who does not eat cannot study as it is obvious –, and those who have to work cannot study well, the status of worker student is the least respected one as by companies as by universities – working hours are not always compatible with class schedules –, and finally courses are followed by these students with immense sacrifices.**

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<sup>56</sup> SOS flyer.

She asked one of the young rappers after one of their songs: “What must it change in democracy and public services?”. His reply was in line with her previous statements about education: “The access to the university must be facilitated; this must be less expensive. Young people cannot go to the university because of the price of enrolment. Some of them also abandon due to their amount. In addition, one must pay books, photocopies, etc.”

In this sense, we can mention here some of the many statements that were expressed by diverse people and are interesting in regard to the initiative and the topic of the debate launched by SOS. After a first moment of hesitation and shyness, subsequently, successive discourses followed on. Including, the organiser had to intervene at a certain time and asked the people for a minimum of organisation, that is to say, they asked them to speak in turn in order to allow the speeches. One could therefore notice that the people have in fact so many things to tell despite some first appearances that could suggest the opposite.

Hence, for instance, according to a first speaker, “democracy in Portugal must be a participative democracy, which means everyone is responsible”; a second one said that “in Portugal, there is injustice. This injustice is social injustice and is equated with theft of millions by power holders”; a third one stated that “politicians attack the health system that is not enough funding. They are privatising everything to earn more money but there is nothing left for the people”; a fourth speaker stressed that “the State belongs to the people. This is not an independent thing even if politicians tend to make us believe this. The State’s money is our money, this is not their [politicians] money”.

These statements respond to those formulated by the militants: “Two words fill our days: “Difficulties” and “sacrifices”. These are words to make us silent... There are other solutions to prevent unemployment, generalised precarisation, the cuts in the social supports and public services, the attack against unemployment benefits and the increase of poverty”<sup>57</sup>. Before these situations, they stressed that “we will fight for the Portugal and Europe project in a world that grows with social justice, priority to the poorest people and future for the youngest ones. Alternatives that promote decent employment, public services and basic supports to ensure the respect of each person”<sup>58</sup>.

Now, from these empirical data, these facts or these utterances of observations we have introduced in this chapter, in the following chapter that concludes part II, we are going to make some sociological interpretations intended to clarify more the phenomena of the genesis and formation of social movements in general and the question of their praxes in particular.

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<sup>57</sup> SOS flyer.

<sup>58</sup> Idem.

## Chapter 6

### Synthesis: The centrality of cognition

#### 6.1: Instrumental rationality:

In terms of instrumental rationality and utilitarian conception of social action, what has also been called the interest paradigm, people act for their interests, they think about and do things according to the utility of these things for them, that is, if they can earn some profit or gain some advantage with little or no cost arising from these things.

These interests may be individual, what neo-classical economics and, after them, rational choice theory, bounded rationality theory and frame analysis model call *Homo oeconomicus*' egoist interests, self-interests or rational egoism.

But, they may also be collective, such as the interests of some social systems or society at large – what is equated with the general or public interest – (functionalism and pragmatism's conception), or such as class interests (neo-Marxism's acceptance).

Social movements necessarily have an instrumental or teleological rationality. They are a type of sociation, determined purposive associations wherein participants seek to reach some objectives that serve their interests. They are constituted and organised by people in order to achieve some goals, particularist and/or generalist, and the latter use, for their purposes, means that they judge adequate. Their actions are oriented toward ends that imply either change for “progressive” movements or, on the contrary, preservation and conservation for the “conservative” ones.

Thus, ECON's members have a certain functionalist conception regarding their actions: They want a society that works better, "another world", "a better world", a better future, by means of their actions among others.

VERDE's activists also share a functionalist position, including a utilitarian one. Indeed, they do not want that humankind and ecosystems disappear or are in danger, and *a fortiori* their own health and life, because of ecological imbalances provoked by human activity. As a consequence, they act against these threats according to their abilities and the means they regard as the most appropriate.

SOS and PRECC's activists act for their own social class interests or the interests belonging to their socio-economic position. This is about a new type of social class that does not correspond to the categories traditionally identified by Marxism, that of capitalists or workers. Indeed, they act in the name of precarious people, a category that comprehends precarious workers – they aspire to get a better job through their claims and actions, with satisfactory labour conditions and wages judged as good, that is, which allow them to have a better life from both a material and immaterial point of view – but that also goes beyond the sphere of labour for embracing all forms of precariousness that can be found at the level of existence at large. This is therefore a utilitarian conception that goes beyond militants' individual interests to concern, as a totality, all the workers and everyone facing precariousness.

## **6.2: Cognitive rationality:**

Nevertheless, the sense of action and the rationality of social movements cannot be only regarded under strictly instrumental or teleological reasons. If it would be the case, the analysis would be necessarily partial (incomplete and biased) and it would miss fundamental aspects to understand and explain social action. Further dimensions of social movements' rationality are what can be termed cognitive rationality, axiological rationality, and communicative rationality. All these forms of rationality, which are theoretically separated in order to facilitate the clarification and understanding of social movements but which are practically embedded to each other, combine with emotions and traditions to constitute the system of meaning of social action and social movements. First, we shall observe cognitive

rationality in detail. The other dimensions of the sense of social movements will subsequently be explored.

One of the core activities of the studied social movements, like many others that have been described and analysed by a certain literature in social sciences which focuses on the symbolic and ideal aspects of social movements, is the production of narratives, oral and written discourses, material texts printed on paper and immaterial texts virtually diffused via Internet (e-texts). This intense intellectual activity that obliges activists to create forms and contents with signs that have a sense – activists are active signifying agents within society or are actively involved in the politics of signification – also leads them to produce knowledge.

In other words, militants, through their social movements, put forward a huge quantity of rational discourses – exoteric discourses made in public spaces and/or intended to the public as well as esoteric discourses put forward in the circle of social movements. In this sense, this important militant activity is linked to the *logos* that is the language, reason and discursive rationality or to the *logoi* that are the reasonings, the discourses.

The Greek origin of the words “reason” and “rationality”, *logos* that precisely means “reason”, conveys better than the Latin root *ratio*, translation of *logos* with a particular meaning and which signifies reason and calculation, the full sense of these words, a sense that is equated with that of thought, cognition and knowledge. However, the basis of these words is formed out of the Latin root, and not from the Greek one. Etymology has therefore, without doubt, influenced semantic; the linguistic unity of “reason” or “rationality” tends to conserve the meaning of its direct root – a meaning that is necessary but that is also metonymic and not sufficient to the extent that reason cannot be reduced to a mere faculty of calculation albeit it exists, a conception that moreover considers easily this faculty as a narrow economic and utilitarian calculation –, especially at the present time in countries where the language partly derives from Latin, whereas the philosophical thought over its history has tended, on the contrary, to use these terms with a sense that is akin to that of *logos*.

Thus, one of social movements’ core actions is the production and communication of texts, which are essentially epistemic; what shows the importance of cognitive praxes and cognitive rationality within social movements.

But, what do we mean precisely by knowledge? Albeit the classical definition of knowledge has been, over the history of philosophy and epistemic theories, criticised, developed, reformulated, especially by contemporary thinkers of knowledge, it nevertheless remains the reference point or the starting point out of which most of the ulterior definitions have been elaborated. That is why we follow here this classical definition, especially as today,

given the diversity of the definitions and sometimes their oppositions according to the philosophical doctrines, there is still no agreement on what knowledge actually is.

This classical definition was initially formulated by Plato in his *Theaetetus*. Here, knowledge is defined as true opinion endowed with reason or, in other words, as true and justified belief. Three conditions must therefore be fulfilled in order to create knowledge. The first condition is that a subject must believe in a certain utterance. This utterance must be true is the second condition. And, the last condition, the subject must be justified in his belief, or, if one prefers, he must have reasons or good reasons to believe in this utterance – knowing is to know that one knows; a belief cannot be knowledge if the subject who has this belief is unable to have a good or some good reasons for accepting it. Thus, a subject knows an utterance if and only if he believes in this utterance, this utterance is true, and his belief in this utterance is justified or rests upon reasons. Be it said in passing, one may note that there is not an opposition or a dualism between knowledge and belief but rather a continuum; belief precedes knowledge, there is no knowledge (and *a fortiori* scientific knowledge insofar as the latter is a particular modality of the former) without belief – it is a necessary condition even though it is not at all sufficient in itself and requires the two other conditions to effectively generate knowledge.

For his part, in his definition of knowledge, Aristotle (in *Posterior Analytics*) especially put emphasis on the third condition of knowledge in Plato's formulation, the justificative or rational dimension. Indeed, he asserted that there is knowledge of something when one is able to say what the causes or the principles of this something are. In other words, one knows P if and only if one knows the causes or principles of P. Knowledge is therefore the elucidation of causes and principles.

In the case of activists, we can observe this constant concern for explaining, elucidating or giving causes or principles to phenomena or facts, and consequently, *ipso facto*, if we accept the classical definition of knowledge made by the Stagirite, for producing knowledge. Or, following Plato, they tend to justify their positive collective beliefs, that is, to put forward good reasons for believing; what corresponds to know.

In their discourses, activists describe and analyse social situations or phenomena. For this purpose, they use the tools of logic such as the elementary inference rules (syllogisms, *modus ponens*, *modus tollens*, etc.) that allow to link chains of reasons and to construct arguments by maintaining transitivity among propositions. They therefore elaborate reasonings, they infer propositions (the conclusions) from other propositions (the premises) – what creates a link of logical consequence between these propositions and what

simultaneously gives them a logical truth. They present examples to illustrate and support their theses as well as counter-examples to criticise and call into question other theses that they contest.

In other words, militants employ logic in their discourses, attempt to elaborate correct or valid reasonings; logic being by excellence the science of correct reasoning. They put forward logical proofs that support their propositions. In brief, they deduce, demonstrate or argue.

In regard to syllogisms, we can mention, for instance, the following ones that have been created by the studied social movements.

And, in relation to PRECC/SOS, we can quote these examples. The State is the people in democracy – the power holder is the people following the etymology of the word (first premiss). The State has money (second premiss). Therefore, the State's money belongs to the people in democracy (the consequence or conclusion).

Democracy is the power held by the people (first premise). Politicians are solely a part of the people (second premise). So, representative democracy by politicians is only a part of democracy (conclusion).

Or, democracy is the power of the people (first premiss). Participative democracy entails the people (second premiss). Thus, democracy must be participative (consequence).

In a similar vein, for these latter movements again but also for ECON, the squares and streets are public (first premiss). The public is the people (second premiss). So, the squares and streets belong to the people, they can occupy them (conclusion that is the main motto in the I Rossio Manifesto written during the *acampadas* in the centre of Lisbon in spring 2011).

For these same movements again, who is responsible must repair (first premiss). Political and economic elites are responsible for the current crisis (second premise). Therefore, they have to repair the damages caused by this crisis (conclusion).

The *modus ponens* – the Stoicians' first trope and named as such by scholasticism – may be presented in this way: If there is p, there is therefore q; there is p, so there is q. This is a kind of reasoning that essentially relies on a conditional or hypothetical proposition.

Thus, for PRECC/SOS and ECON's members, if it is public, "we" (the people, the public) can freely occupy it. The squares and streets are public, so "we" can freely occupy them.

The *modus tolens* – the Stoicians' second trope – is close to the *modus ponens*; the difference is that the reasoning rests upon negation and not on the affirmative like in the *modus ponens*. This syllogism says: If x, so y; there is not y, therefore, there is not even x.

According to PRECC/SOS and ECON's militants, if one pays, he is responsible. The people is not responsible for the crisis, therefore, they do not pay for it.

A further form of syllogisms used by activists that we may quote is the disjunctive syllogism. The latter allows to conclude the utterance Y from the attribution of the negative propositional connective to the utterance X and the disjunction between X and Y. Thus, it is structured like this: X or Y, there is not X, so there is Y.

Thus, for ECON, the alternative is either *laissez-faire* or public interventionism in economy. There should not be *laissez-faire*, so there should be public interventionism.

Finally, among their forms of reasoning, *reductio ad absurdum* or *apagoge* occupies a significant place, form of reasoning that is also one of the fundamental forms of the classical reasoning. They tend to privilege this method of reasoning in order to prove the falsity of some theses that they contest, especially the ones that are commonly accepted without any critical distance, by showing their illogical or unreal character. By this way, simultaneously, they validate their own propositions that are opposed to these contested and refuted theses.

More precisely, *reductio ad absurdum* is a type of reasoning that consists in demonstrating or proving a proposition A by demonstrating, first of all, that the opposite proposition non-A generates a contradiction and then by using the principle of excluded middle that says that either A or non-A is true – or, in the case of two contradictory propositions, one is true and the other is necessarily false – in order to infer A. Thus, in other words, if non-A is contradictory, it is false (or absurd), and if it is false, its opposite A is necessarily true following this latter logical principle. The principle of contradiction (or better said, of non-contradiction) – which requires that a same attribute or predicate cannot both be given and not given at the same time and with the same relation to a same thing – and that of excluded middle (in fact, within classical logic, both principles tend to merge) are common or general principles of thought, evident axioms in themselves identified in logic and that contribute to make possible demonstrations or formally correct and true reasonings. For Aristotle (in *Metaphysics*), the principle of non-contradiction is even the first principle of reason. Thus, this type of reasoning is usually considered as a genuine deduction because of its demonstrative power. It appears as a mode of reasoning that is entirely *a priori*, formal and analytical, thereby implying a necessary conclusion.

Following the same logic, militants show the paradoxes of other theses that they contest; paradoxes, antinomies or contradictions whose demonstration has the effect of invalidating these theses or propositions from a logical and true point of view.



Simultaneously, this logical invalidation allows them, *a contrario*, to logically validate their own utterances to the extent that they are essentially anti-theses of these invalidated theses.

Thus, within VERDE, *reductio ad absurdum* and irony – a stylistic effect that is also created by the former kind of reasoning – are frequent or iterative in their publications. For instance, we can cite the following one. According to the advocates of transgenics and the common opinion that uncritically follows them, transgenics have been created notably to produce more food and consecutively eradicate hunger in the world (proposition non-A). However, after more than a decade of production and diffusion of transgenics, not only has world hunger not disappeared, but in addition, it remains an important problem (contradiction of the proposition non-A). Therefore, transgenics are not used to or simply cannot end hunger (conclusion of the contradiction that allows to invalidate the proposition non-A). They are actually produced for other interests, not social or humanitarian ones (i.e. hunger), but for private commercial interests (proposition A put forward by VERDE and that contrasts with the proposition non-A; it is obtained through the principle of excluded middle that says either A or non-A).

In the case of ECON, one can quote for example the following reasoning. According to neoliberal ideology, privatisations must go on and conversely public or state interventionism in the economy and finance must be reduced, even eliminated, to further economic growth and development (the proposition non-A). But, because of the financial and economic crisis, the public sector financed private banks to prevent their bankruptcy and stop (or soften) the crisis (here, there is a contradiction with the proposition non-A). So, contrary to neoliberal ideology, privatisations cannot be carried out and the private sector cannot exist to the detriment of or without the public realm in economy and finance (this is the consequence of the contradiction of the proposition non-A that allows its refutation). Thus, the public or state sector must be present, must intervene in the economy and finance (this is the proposition A that is inferred from the principle of excluded middle or ECON's thesis that is diametrically opposed to that of neoliberalism).

According to SOS, for Portuguese legislators, workers are autonomous or tend to become autonomous (proposition non-A). But, many of them work for a sole organisation (contradiction). Thus, they depend on a sole organisation, what means that they are not autonomous (consequence of the contradiction that allows to refute the proposition non-A). Many workers are therefore false autonomous or freelancers in Portugal (SOS proposition A that is opposed to that of Portuguese legislators).

If activists produce and publish epistemic texts or knowledge in general, they also put forward scientific knowledge in particular.

Like the concept of knowledge, science is a polythetic concept; there is no universal agreement among the diverse epistemological doctrines about its definition. However, some fundamental principles are more or less accepted, theoretically when scientists do an auto-reflexive work and theorise on their own work (the science of science) and/or practically when they simply do their job. These main principles are usually: Facticity – scientific utterances must rest upon facts, proofs, which contribute to make them true and are obtained out of empirical research (experience, experimentation, observation); this is what classical thinkers named *adaequatio rei et intellectus* (realistic conception of truth according to which there must be similarity or symmetry between reality and its linguistic and conceptual representation) –, the principle of causality (explanation, understanding). The studied social movements tend to follow these generic postulates for the elaboration of their own discourses.

If one follows the Aristotelian typology of sciences, one may state that activists work with the three great groups identified by Peripatetic philosophy: Theoretical sciences insofar as activists seek to produce pure knowledge or do fundamental research such as in the realms of economics, ecology or socio-anthropology of work and precariousness, what falls within cognitive or epistemic rationality in general; practical sciences that concern axiological rationality, ethics, morality to the extent that their knowledge regards the human being's actions and behaviours – the doing – and therefore aims to be applied; and, *in fine*, poietic sciences since they make objects – the making –, which fit into *tekhne* or art – artistic activities and aesthetics are fundamental for militants and militancy. The two latter forms of sciences will be particularly approached in the following sections of this chapter. Here, we shall place special emphasis on theoretical sciences.

Militants set out positive collective (or trans-subjective) beliefs, representations of the world or descriptive ideas, which regard the true and the false, which concern *what is* (truths, judgements of facts or positive certainties). They attempt to show reality such as it is. Activists attempt to define and eventually define the being of things; they therefore put forward an ontological discourse about reality. When they start their pamphlets by a set of questions under the form of “what is this?” or “is this...?”, their research and analyses should lead to quantitative judgements (universality, particularity, singularity), qualitative judgements (affirmative, negative, infinity), relational judgements (category, hypothesis, disjunction) or modal judgements (problematic, assertoric, apodeictic judgements) in which predicates are ascribed to subjects, echoing Kant's taxonomy (in *Critique of Pure Reason*).

Their beliefs are founded on reflection, indicative propositions, argumentative systems or theories, notably scientific theories.

Activists therefore advance rational, objective and scientific discourses. ECON militants' system of representations rest above all upon economic theories to defend another economy and economics. VERDE activists' positive collective beliefs are principally founded on ecological system of argumentation and PRECC/SOS members' description and analysis of the social world is built from a certain sociology/anthropology of work and precariousness.

In other words, following the language of frame analysis, each studied social movement has a central, primary or organisational frame. ECON's principal frame is economics, for VERDE it is ecology, and for PRECC and SOS this is about precariousness. Their frame is structured, they put forward an articulated, organised or ordered system of propositions. Each of these core frames of thought allows the respective members of these movements to interpret and understand the world in a certain manner. They give them analysis tools and principles of observation and comprehension that permit them to define states and occurrences, to make meaningful for them and others (their audience) situations and events. These schemata of interpretation are intended to name, categorise and attribute a sense to facts and conditions. In brief, they are a kind of organised knowledge that regards social and natural objects. This is especially the case of VERDE whose frame embraces these two dimensions. This is less the case for ECON and PRECC/SOS whose frames focus above all on the social objects of study.

Movements' frames refer to elementary frames that have been modified, re-interpreted, keyed and re-keyed by activists in order to form their new interpretive frameworks. Thus, ECON's economics frame is based on economics at large, but this academic discipline has been in part re-worked, reformulated to give the specific economics frame belonging to this movement, a sort of simple and condensed interpretative scheme of world elements. In other words, out of economics on the whole that serves as initial substratum, its militants have created and provided a particular conception of economics by selecting some elements, refusing and ignoring some others, interpreting and re-interpreting some of its representations, in short, by giving a particular reading of some of its propositions. The same thing occurs with the two other studied movements. VERDE's ecology frame is also a specific scheme of thought that has been built from ecology as science and general system of thought with its diverse theories and schools. PRECC and SOS precariousness frame is defined above all – albeit not only – out of some contributions stemming from the socio-anthropology of work and precariousness. This hermeneutics is not however finite, the keying and re-keying

processes are continuous over time; what makes that their frames are never definitive and can always evolve with more or less significant changes.

Through their frames, militants present diagnostics of the current situation in particular and/or of general realms, put forward a state of art by showing some problematic conditions or situations. In other words, militants problematise situations, situations that pose problems for them and eventually for other people. Alongside the mere description of these problems, their discourses are also analytical or epistemic to the extent that they seek to explain these problems, to attribute causes to them. Militants' beliefs and actions are therefore based on systems of reasons, or they are motivated by reasons.

Thus, the principal problems within societies and related to globalisation identified by ECON's activists are for them socio-economic ones: social inequalities or injustice, low-quality and under-funded schooling and health programmes, "hunger", non-sustainable development and underdevelopment, "exploitation", "discrimination", "wars", the "world financial and economic crisis", the related Portuguese crisis, "unemployment", precarious work, poverty, and so forth. The main cause that they mention is the domination of the market that has come to gradually occupy most realms of existence – "the dictatorship of the markets" – with the support of the hegemony of the neoliberal ideology whose major prescriptions or precepts are liberalisation, privatisation, commodification, deregulation (or *laissez-faire*). More precisely, this domination of the market refers to deregulated and powerful financial markets, independent from the productive economic sphere, which create "speculation" and "volatility", the continuous search for huge short-term profits, concentration and constant bad distribution of economic wealth, and finally "a casino economy" marked by speculative bubbles whose implosion leads to iterative crises. It also refers to important privatisations of previous public companies, and correlatively of previous public goods and services that served the general interest and not some private benefits.

As aforesaid, VERDE's interpretative scheme of the world is ruled by ecology. The various threats against Earth and consequently against life – such as the exploitation of nature, pollution, destruction of the ecosystems, disappearance of animal and vegetal species, impoverishment of the bio-diversity, climatic changes, transgenics – and provoked by a type of global economy, in which some big multinational companies are dominant, constitute the major problems and cause identified by the movement.

Given that ecology is their main frame of thought, the members of VERDE are therefore particularly concerned by the study of the relations between living beings and the environment. They focus on a-biotic factors – the physical influence of the environment on

the living beings –, but also, above all, on biotic factors – the actions that the living beings and in particular the human beings exert in turn on the environment.

Over these last years, scientific ecology has tended in general to become “global”, a phenomenon of globalisation that has accompanied and that is linked to the phenomenon of globalisation at large, which concerns most of the human activities (knowledge, sciences, economics, politics, the social and cultural spheres). Indeed, scientific ecology has come to be global because it significantly takes into account human activities that appear as major causes of global changes in the ecosystemic balances of the planet: The greenhouse effect, the increase of pollutions, the seasonal deficiency of the ozone layer, the rise of desertification zones, the disappearance of forests, the diminution of bio-diversity, and so forth. The activities at the basis of these ecological mutations are not only productive activities carried out in the so-called Northern “rich” countries but also those made in most of the “developing countries” that have to face, more and more, deleterious internal economic, social and ecological situations. Thus, scientific ecology currently combines the study of nature and that of human societies, tends to describe and analyse their interfaces (Acot, 2006 [1999]). This is also what the members of VERDE tend to do.

As aforesaid, PRECC/SOS key concept to label its principal frame of thought is “precariousness”. From it, their members have developed an array of indicative propositions or a set of descriptive and explicative ideas. Thus, the main problem that their members have identified, alongside mass unemployment, is workers’ precariousness, which is expanding as a major form of labour through liberalisation, ultra-deregulation and flexibilisation of work – notably via the extensive use of the (false) green receipts in Portugal –, and consequently and *in extenso* precarisation of life. Precariousness of work also implies “exploitation” and “social injustice”, “social inequalities” (“longer working hours, lower wages, fixed-term contracts”, “less social support”, “less rights” in general), which are mainly caused by policies – “modernisation” as these militants say – that legitimise and legalise precariousness, supposedly and, in a certain sense, paradoxically to combat crisis, unemployment, public deficit and other central preoccupations in the political agendas.

The socio-anthropology of work presented by PRECC and SOS is largely inspired by Marxian thought to the extent that precarisation and precariousness of work and existence, constant topics in activists’ discourses, refer to the central Marxist concept of alienation. In other words, in line with Karl Marx, the worker by his work is, for these activists, alienated, deprived of himself. He loses his humanity and becomes a stranger to himself. In this sense,

for instance, we can recall the quotations in the prior chapter on the “stigmatisation”, the negation of the right to existence of precarious workers and people, notably sex workers.

Activists themselves use the concept of deconstruction (notably VERDE’s members), concept that, in their acceptation echoing notably that of Jacques Derrida (in *Of Grammatology*), implies criticism or the calling into question. Thus, militants devote themselves to criticism, that is to say, following the Greek etymology of the word, to judgement, to apophatic and cataphatic evaluations, to the distinction between the qualities and imperfections of things, to the enunciation of the possibilities and limits, which are ideal (ideas, discourses) and material (practices, actions). They therefore apply themselves to theoretical criticism that focuses on, in a Kantian or hermeneutic sense, texts, their interpretations, oral pronouncements, *in fine*, reason – here, reason or thought has as object, not the objects of the world, but reason or thought themselves –, as well as to social criticism that regards, this time, in line with Marxism and the Frankfurt School for example, social institutions, social actors, their systems of values, their social norms and actions.

Militants’ writings have a didactic character – one of their objects is to instruct or teach the public who read them. Moreover, they also have a propaedeutic feature – their writings are to a large extent prolegomena or introductions to different types of knowledge that they promote (economics and a kind of economics in the case of ECON, ecology for VERDE, socio-anthropology of work and precariousness for PRECC and SOS) – and a strong protreptic or exhortative dimension – their texts must turn their readers towards the study and knowledge of a particular discipline, the one that they encourage (again, economics and a type of economics for ECON, ecology in regard to VERDE, and socio-anthropology of work and precariousness concerning PRECC and SOS). In brief, on the whole, the pedagogical and educational aspects are very present across their publications.

As aforesaid, writing is a core activity for militants. Through it, they can objectify their thought. They consequently make it material, collective and historical. They convert it into a memory for future generations.

Moreover, social movements appear as social laboratories wherein new ideas, concepts, theories emerge, wherein new experiences are carried out and lived; this is a significant field for applications and experimentation. In other words, they are a field in which theories are applied, their validity is thus tested depending on obtained results, and they are potentially re-laborated according to these results. More broadly, activists study and criticise sciences; they therefore have a certain interest in epistemological questions.

Among its organisational structures, we saw that ECON created a scientific council. Its members have also promoted “schools”, “courses” and “seminars” in order to understand the genesis of the current crisis, the causes and consequences of the neoliberal model, and more generally “the world in which we live”. VERDE’s festivals and schools are considered as experiences to learn and know. With its “Alternatives”, and more precisely, with its *hortas*, its members experiment, “learn by doing” new kinds of agriculture, free from GMOs and chemical products, with traditional and pre-industrial methods. They are also a place for pedagogy, collective training and workshops. Its popular dinners followed the same logic since its militants essentially served there food stemming from its *hortas*. The studied social movements also have, on the whole, their “media and publications” wherein their members expound their theories, experiences and criticisms.

*In fine*, activists by and within social movements learn to learn, learn to know, learn to develop and develop dispositions to know; that is, they acquire a habitus of knowledge, an epistemic habitus or, if one prefers, a cognitive habitus.

### **6.3: Axiological rationality:**

Pure knowledge and practical knowledge, cognitive rationality and axiological rationality, or, in other words, alethic logic and deontic logic are related. If this is true that one cannot deduce the former logic out of the latter – one cannot obtain a description from a prescription and/or proscription, or one cannot determine the truth out of what is fair or good as well as the wrong from the unfair or bad –, nevertheless, one can logically produce practical propositions regarding values, law, duties or obligations from apophantic propositions, that is, utterances that concern truth and falsehood. In sum, *what counts* or *what must be* never entails *what is* true while the truth may be a condition, neither necessary nor sufficient, that defines values and norms. This unilateral relation may be reflected in the practical applications of knowledge and science. It also appears, for example, in the practical syllogism that is a reasoning whose structure can present factual premises and a normative conclusion, deduced from these premises and which implies an action or decision.

Similarly, activists’ cognitive or epistemic praxes lead them to formulate axiological and deontic utterances, ethical and imperative propositions. Militants combine discursive practice and practical discourse.

More precisely, militants expound normative and axiological collective (or trans-subjective) beliefs, appreciations or prescriptive ideas, which refer to *what must be* and *what counts* (evaluations, judgements of values or axiological certainties). They show political beliefs (or ideologies) that regard the social, economic and political organisation of the city as well as the becoming of societies. Their normative collective beliefs derive in part from their positive collective beliefs, *le devoir-être* is partly set out from *l'être*. Like the latter, the former are based on argumentative systems or theories, notably scientific theories.

Thus, social movements' sociation not only refers to determined purposive association based on instrumental rationality; this is also about association based on convictions, a type of sociation wherein axiological rationality prevails as well, in which actors follow their strong valuational and normative beliefs, seek absolutely to serve their cause and act accordingly. Militants' beliefs and actions are also caused by axiological reasons.

In this sense, if cognitive praxes are central within social movements, this is also because knowledge appears, for activists, as a dominant value.

Why does ECON have economics as principal frame, VERDE ecology, and PRECC and SOS that of precariousness? Where do these frames of thought come from? Their origin is less on the side of collective or individual interests – taken in a strictly economic and utilitarian sense and albeit this dimension exists and cannot be entirely denied – than that of values. Militants especially have these frames because for each of these movements their specific frame of thought is at the top of the hierarchy of their values; this is what is important or what counts for them. Accordingly, one may talk about interest if and only if one conserves the etymological meaning of the word that is larger than the current and dominant one and that stems from the Latin *interest* signifying “what counts” or “what is important”. In brief, frames are chosen by activists above all for axiological or deontic reasons, that is, according to particular conceptions, but nonetheless collective or social, of morals and ethics.

In other words, following frame analysis' language again, alongside their cognitive role and the interpretive principles that they provide, social movements' frames also have a practical function by allowing activists and beyond to organise via principles and in some way their social experiences and their modes of participation in them. They help them to define a manner of behaving and acting in their social world. Frames not only permit to think the world, they also give means to act in it, even to transform it.

The problems identified by activists with their diagnostic framing are publicly put forward because, in their eyes, it is necessary to resolve them in the short run. After them, the measures or solutions that should be adopted and followed are also set out. Militants do not



settle for diagnostics; they state what has to be done in practice, they offer concrete alternatives through what may be called their prognostic framing, if we still borrow the concepts of the frame analysis model.

Thus, for instance, alongside its positive side that aims to formulate theses, theories and argumentations about reality, ECON's economics frame owns a normative side, mainly by seeking to propose solutions or ways to solve the problematic situations identified and defined. This is what we can also call the dimension for application or intervention.

Its main solutions are to tax all business operations in financial markets, to tax the people and organisations according to a progressive system (who earns more pays more and conversely who earns less pays less), to use the money stemming from these taxations to finance social, cultural and ecological policies (or policies that are not strictly economic or financial), to publicly regulate the markets in general and the active democratic participation of all the people in political and economic decision-making, and not only politicians, technocrats and economic experts. Globalisation must be ruled, not by free markets, but by all the people who are considered to be citizens of the world, by their "solidarity" and their "resistance" against the supremacy of financial markets.

VERDE's ecology is less "fundamental" than "applied" to the extent that they give special attention to human action in order to limit, and ideally to suppress, its harmful consequences for the environment, the other living beings, and *in fine* for the human being itself, such as the deterioration of the environment, pollution, the reduction of bio-diversity, and so forth. What is called "fundamental ecology" indeed tends to exclusively study the structure and functioning of ecosystems in themselves; this is a perspective that we can consider as being "internalist" whilst "applied ecology" by taking especially into account the human activity may be qualified as "externalist".

For the members of this movement, solutions rely on the necessary transformation of the hegemonic economic model. In this way, they foster other practices of production and consumption, that is, for example, another agriculture, rooted in small localities, using biological and traditional methods, and appealing to the participation of all the residents and sympathisers. The praxis of the *horta* and popular dinners epitomise in large measure these imperative propositions.

The responses suggested by PRECC/SOS activists are that workers and people are not responsible for the current socio-economic problems and therefore they do not have to "pay" for the true culprits, that is, exactly the same ones that justify their precariousness and apply policies with other gentler names for this purpose and supposedly in the name of the general

interest. For example, politicians talk about liberalisation instead of precarisation but the effects of their policies, beyond the words, are similar. In sum, power-holders must change their manners of ruling the society: The people's welfare must be their constant top-priority and cannot be altered whatever the circumstances. This concretely implies to establish a decent minimum salary, the expansion and improvement of social rights (and for migrants, in addition, more and better political and civic rights), the juridical distinction between work and salary (salary must be constant over time regardless of the work and regardless of the existence or not of the work), the expansion and improvement of public services and goods. In the same way as the First International in which "workers of all lands" had to "unite" to struggle against the world capitalist class and for the advent of the communist society (Marx and Engels, 1998 [1848]: 119), today, at the world level, workers of all types must associate to fight precariousness since this is a global problem.

At large, the phenomenon of alter-globalisation may be defined as a movement of the civil society that contests the liberal pattern of globalisation and claims a type of development that respects the human being and the environment.

Finally, activists deal with the two related dimensions of ethics that have been traditionally approached by Western philosophy. Indeed, they are interested in the study of human behaviour and put forward some criteria regarding the evaluation of behaviours and choices – the term ethics comes from the Greek word *ethikos*, which derives in turn from the substantive *ethos* that means "behaviour", "custom". Thus, on the one hand, militants focus on the description of moral behaviour and the values that orient it, such as mainstream ideologies (neoliberalism, modernism, individualism, and son on) – this is the first dimension of ethics that is a descriptive or representational ethics. Then, on the other hand, beyond the description, they also take position by putting forward their own values and morals, by presenting the axiological criteria that should be respected in the society, by the State, by the people. This second dimension of ethics is what is usually named "normative" ethics, which therefore regards the choice of particular ethics – an environmental ethics and a bio-ethics in the case of VERDE, an economic ethics according to ECON's point of view, and a labour and life ethics for PRECC as well as SOS.

Thus, the members of VERDE espouse ecologism, a political doctrine or a movement of ideological thought that above all claims the respect of the balances of nature, the protection of the environment against the troubles created by the industrial society. More precisely, they consider themselves as followers of permaculture – a neologism coined by Bill Mollison, an Australian ecologist, and that is formed out of the fusion of two words, "perma(nent)" and

“(agri)culture” –, which refers to modes of production in relation to food, energy and so forth that do not deplete the earth’s natural resources. By extension, they advocate a “sustainable agriculture without transgenics” and a “responsible consumption”, that is, a consumption of products that obligatorily “respect the environment, local economy and animals”.

Furthermore, VERDE’s members participate in the current debates around bio-ethics. To contextualise, one may state that the important technical developments over the twentieth century until today and significant historical events have contributed to the appearance of the current bio-ethical reflection. Thus, for instance, atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis by means of science to serve their political ideology are at the core of the recent thought about scientific ethics and the ethics of life sciences. In the 1960s, the media revealed several bio-medical scandals that had a strong impact on public opinion. In the 1970s, research in genetics accelerated. Bio-ethics is a discipline that has started to be consolidated since the 1960s in the wake of bio-medical progress. It has been founded from traditional and secularised medical ethics. Preoccupations in terms of bio-ethics are therefore linked to concern that provoke the possible and real infringements, direct and indirect, on human person by scientific practice – the “bio-power” such as it was defined and analysed by Michel Foucault (Courban, 2006 [1999]).

However, bio-ethics must be understood here, in the case of VERDE, in its more generic acceptation and out of its etymon as ethics of living, thereby transcending mere medical ethics – although this is out of medicine that bio-ethics conceived as a space of reflection more or less structured and institutionalised regarding the moral questions on the living and its relationship with the human activity has emerged – and the related conceptions that place the human being as the exclusive meaningful object to understand the interactions between techno-science and the living.

More precisely, VERDE’s ethics refers to the fundamental principles of contemporary bio-ethics, which is itself based on a certain moral philosophy or a substantial ethics wherein moral theories define the ethical system and the rational decision procedure in human behaviour. These principles are inviolability of human dignity, controlling and limiting the technological excesses, respect and protection of life, and *in extenso*, of environment. Its bio-ethics is accompanied by an environment ethics, two branches among others of applied ethics that has been developed from the 1960s, notably in the United States, in the wake of social movements and socio-cultural claims regarding the assertion of individual rights and the challenging of the sources of authority. These latter movements have therefore furthered the proliferation of diverse and new fields of ethical reflection that have been gathered together

under this general notion of applied ethics (Courban, 2006 [1999]). Thus, VERDE, as other current movements, fits into these historical socio-cultural movements, extends their actions and shares with them some features – similar or close ethics, ideologies –, which are nonetheless re-actualised according to their current historical socio-cultural context.

In this sense, the problematics related to bio-ethics have furthered the formation of a public space of communicative interaction that is open and pluralist, wherein different actors – social movements, associations, scholars, medical practitioners, politicians, interest groups, the media and so on – take place, in which diverse discourses and opinions take shape and are confronted. Accordingly, bio-ethics is a pluri-disciplinary discipline where several themes nurture reflection, in which topics are plural and diverse. Among these numerous themes, one may mention the particular relation between patient and doctor (or caregivers), or, more largely, the link between health and society, the techniques and approaches regarding the environment and the non-human beings (the matters of transgenics, genetic engineering, the protection of the environment that particularly interest VERDE enter into these two latter thematics), (Courban, 2006 [1999]).

Related to its ecologism, environmental ethics and bio-ethics, one of the core values that orient VERDE's actions is that of prudence or precaution.

Today, the principle of precaution refers at large to the avoidance of irreversibilities, mistakes with serious consequences. According to its generic and common definition, it should be activated in contexts, and in a variable way that is appropriate or adapted to these contexts, where there is a lack of certitude that creates the possibility of the advent of an undesirable extreme or irreversible situation. When it is applied, incertitude allows to open public space and debate, evaluations of potential damages and consequences of measures that should be taken are usually carried out, actions that aim to avoid the undesirable risks should be made. In this sense, the latter are opposed to any type of delaying actions that necessarily nurture incertitude and the possibility of risks such as actions that negate the risks, refuse to take into account concerns and criticisms, to consider the warning signs, that use incertitudes and scientific divergences to block public action, or that convert mere hypotheses – sometimes arbitrary or only corroborated in part – into dogmas that serve the interests of some corporations or social groups. In brief, the principle of precaution absolutely seeks to maintain risk within reality because this is an inner part of it, and consequently it cannot be negated only because of its uncertain and aleatory character (Callens, 2006 [1999]).

Its conception and application through national, European and international laws is relatively recent even though it falls within and extends the old philosophical concept and

virtue of prudence and albeit it is nowadays a juridical rule that is largely spread throughout many legislations. Indeed, its history is intimately related to that of sustainable development, a political programme that is also relatively recent – since it has emerged at the beginning of the 1970s in the wake of Club of Rome’s report entitled *The Limits to Growth* – and in which precaution is a key notion to the extent that the development, to be viable in the long run, should rest upon economies and a growth that respect the environment, avoid extreme or irreversible ecological risks. Since the start, it has been therefore associated with environmental matters or ecological concerns even though thereafter it has been applied in other fields such as in the health sector (Callens, 2006 [1999]).

Besides its modern definition and use, we have just said that the principle of precaution fits into the concept of prudence. When VERDE’s activists oppose the principle of precaution to the uncontrolled fabrication and diffusion of GMOs, they finally apply the old philosophical and ethical principle of prudence. For the thinkers of the ancient and medieval period, prudence was one of the principal virtues or excellences. When it was not assimilated to wisdom, it was distinguished from the latter by its practical orientation whereas wisdom could only belong to the realm of theoretical reason. Thus, according to Plato, Aristotle and Hellenistic philosophies (Epicurism, Stoicism), prudence – *phronesis* in Greek – was a fundamental notion that was associated to virtue and thought. For Aristotle in particular (in *Nicomachean Ethics*), the virtue of prudence is an essential human disposition that allows one to take the right decision for oneself and the others in the different complex situations of life. Before being progressively reduced and re-elaborated by the Christian thought, substituted by other competing concepts or relegated to the status of minor virtue in the classical moral philosophy, it was also one of the four cardinal virtues, alongside justice, temperance and force, virtues that determined morals and contributed to articulate among them the other virtues considered as secondary.

ECON Portugal’s socio-economic theory implicitly uses, to face and bring positive solutions to the current economic and social crisis, the main prescriptions of the British economist John Maynard Keynes that he formulated precisely in the context of the Great Depression, in 1936, in his famous book *The General Theory of Employment, Money and Interest*. According to these prescriptions, given that the market economy left to itself tends to maintain a portion of available workers unemployed or that the labour market can never readjust itself alone unlike the other types of markets, only a state intervention, via a monetary policy that aims to rise the quantity of money in circulation, or better, through a budgetary policy intended to increase public expenditure, may lead the market economy to

full employment of resources (notably the workforce). Today, ECON's militants, in line with Keynes, think that the contemporary economic and social crisis, the Great Depression over the 1930s (incidentally, both crises have been largely compared because of their scope by the media and academic circles), or any socio-economic crisis cannot and could not therefore be absorbed by more liberalism or neo-liberalism, by economic policies that seek to further reduce labour costs or wages contrary to the current dominant economic thought, by the "old austerity recipes", or even by a fatalistic and naturalising *laissez-faire* that consists in doing nothing or not intervening at all. They therefore claim, like Keynes, a type of interventionism, a state interventionism that is not purely normative or ideological but that owns, on the contrary, its most important justification in the proper scientific economic theory.

In addition, this state interventionism entails a certain return to the welfare state and public action or the participation of the people in politics to the extent that state means public or the people in democratic regime. Alongside Keynes' thought, ECON's economic ethics rests also upon a form of Saint-Simonism since its militants hope that economy, production and industrial activity will satisfy all needs if the appropriate policies are adopted, and above all upon the Tobin Tax.

Finally, its ethics is not anti-capitalist, but it is rather alter-capitalist insofar as its militants seek more to modify or transform the capitalist system by humanising it or by making it more social (what implies to reject "the neoliberal order") than to substitute it by a new social regime such as communism.

For ECON and VERDE, but especially for the militants of PRECC/SOS, one of the main ethical principles is justice. More precisely, this is about distributive justice, which regards the repartition of wealth among people in the wake of social cooperation. In this sense, they are influenced by the modern definition of justice that tends to equate it with political and social equality and that has been especially promoted by socialism. Indeed, from the end of the eighteenth century, under the influence of the Enlightenment, the notion of justice generally has come to be identified with this socio-political equality, and all socialist literature employed the term of justice in accordance with this acceptance over the nineteenth century.

Activists' conception of justice rests upon the principle of equality that contrasts with that of equity. Equality supposes a social levelling insofar as it requires the same consideration for everyone regardless of their contribution. To the contrary, equity – albeit this is a concept that is often merged with that of equality, notably by actors of the civil society like NGOs – does not entail at all a social levelling and maintains a differentiation of

the distributed material proportions or a certain social inequality regarding the repartition of wealth to the extent that this principle states that consideration or remuneration is a function of contribution, the value of what one earns depends on the value of what one brings to society. The two terms of the relation are therefore proportional in this latter case, what necessarily generates differences in treatment, operations, results and positions. In other words, if this latter principle is followed, everyone does not receive the same thing. For activists, this point remains a central form of iniquity. The unjust character of this latter principle is accentuated by the fact that the values of contribution and consideration as well as the relations between these two types of values are not necessarily defined in a just or non-arbitrary way by the members of the society. The social devaluation, without solid rational justifications, of the so-called “manual” work in relation to the so-called “intellectual” work, the social depreciation of women’s work in relation to that of men who have the tendency to earn more than the former for a same kind of job, or, similarly, the lowering of immigrants’ work (especially if they are considered as illegal) in contrast with that of nationals are common epitomes of iniquitous or arbitrary definitions of these values and their relations.

Related to the principle of distributive and egalitarian justice, a form of social justice, PRECC and SOS labour and life ethics also relies on the principles of “the primacy of the person”, “quality of life”, “human rights”, the welfare-state.

#### **6.4: Public spheres and communicative reason:**

Social movements aim to maintain the *res publica* or the space of polity. They are public spheres wherein communicative reason (related to cognitive reason) can take shape, that is, wherein people can intellectually and discursively interact, wherein they have decided to freely unite in order to form a collective entity, a public that monitors public affairs, to use their reason in group. In other words, social movements allow their members to publicly, rationally and critically debate, to reflect on public issues, to become politically active and actively informed and trained before the official and professional holders of the political power.

Public spheres are particularly set in motion during the seizure and re-appropriation of public squares (like the *agora* in Ancient Greece) and streets by militants. ECON and SOS *acampadas*, ECON’s sit-in in front of a post office at *Restauradores* in order to contest the

privatisation of the Portuguese post, speakers' corner action carried out by SOS epitomise this process.

In this sense, activists practise dialectic, the meaning of this word must be considered here according to its Greek etymological meaning, that is, following the verb *dialegesthai* that signifies "to discuss", "to reason together".

Related to this, social movements' isonomy, the same laws for everyone who is a member, entails isegory, the same time to speak for everyone who participates in them. These two principles again recall the positive aspects of the Ancient Athenian democracy.

In Ancient Greece, the principle of equality of all the citizens before the law (isonomy) was accompanied by the principle of equality of the speaking time (isegory). Athenian democracy was a direct democracy where it was possible, at any time of the day, to hear the herald's voice who called the citizens to participate in the public deliberations. However, if they were equal among them, citizens only represented a minority of the population living in the city, a proportion estimated at about 10% of the whole of the population. All the inhabitants of the city were not therefore equal. Women and children were confined to the private sphere of the house. Wogs (resident foreigners) had fewer rights and slaves could not participate in common decision-making. Some previous citizens were excluded from citizenship, such as the citizens who did not pay their taxes, after having been condemned to atimy, that is, to the loss of their civil and political rights, what notably included the restriction of their juridical rights, the loss of the right to vote, that of publicly expressing oneself in the assembly of citizens.

If they practise dialectic, activists therefore practise *a fortiori* the dialogue, the conversation between two or several persons. Dialectic is indeed a specific dialogic exchange – when it is not purely and simply merged with the dialogue – that was generally and historically theorised and practised by philosophers and that was, in a Platonic perspective, structured around questions and responses in order to reach the truth.

More precisely, in philosophy, dialogue is one of the forms of rational discourse. For some philosophers, this is even the proper and privileged mode of the philosophical discourse. According to Socrates, it is a structured discussion around questions and responses among people who are linked by a shared interest in the search for truth and that allows to criticise the common opinion or the *doxa*. This Socratic definition prefigured the Platonic dialectic. Indeed, Plato (in *Phaedrus*, *Protagoras* and *Theaetetus*) converted the dialogue into a science that he named dialectic, which appears as a discussion among philosophers and the means to attain Ideas or true knowledge. Dialogue, in this acceptance, even becomes philosophical



thought, the latter being defined as an immanent and silent dialogue of the soul with itself. Dialogue ensures the logical coherence of thought with itself or the coherence of discourse. For Plato, it is therefore the first or superior discursive form in relation to all other discursive forms insofar as, contrary to these latter forms, it furthers the interactions among the persons, obliges the interlocutors to question, wonder and reply to the questions. Dialogue is consequently a heuristic and critical method; it allows the people to have a better understanding of themselves and of the world such as what has been qualified the different “philosophies of dialogue” show it.

Thus, dialogue or more generally conversation is a discourse characterised by interactions among participants, and by the alternation of the roles of speaker and listener or by the alternation of public speaking – turn-taking. Conversation is therefore a public and co-operative activity, but also competitive (different opinions or positions enter into competition) and structured (conversation is circumscribed within a circle limited by more or less ritualised practices, topics, rules of alternation – that is, how turn-taking is carried out –, the defined nature and contents of the speeches). Here, language, words and their meanings play a key role since the dialogical relation only exists with them and by them.

Thus, VERDE’s activities include “conversations and promenades in the Garden” (its *hortas*), in a certain sense like in Epicurus’ Garden wherein the sage used to walk and talk about philosophy with his disciples. Its *hortas* are spaces for collective meetings, workshops and “sharing knowledge”. We can also mention speeches made during the *acampadas* in the centre of Lisbon in which ECON and SOS took part; ECON’s schools, seminars and courses that sought to further learning, knowledge, the “formation of a critical and alternative thought” through debates, intellectual and dialogical exchanges, discussion; VERDE’s festivals which encourage debate and the spread of information, “spaces to discuss about environmental and social justice”; VERDE’s schools that allow to nurture more debates around ecological and social matters in Portuguese educational institutions; its popular dinners were places “for exchanging knowledge and thinking in a critical way”; the “media and publications” of the whole of the studied social movements that are public platforms for debates related to public matters; speakers’ corner action launched by SOS that recalls the famous and original north-east corner of Hyde Park in London, an area for open-air public speaking, debate and discussion, or the “sit-ins” “happenings” in the 1960s.

Militants re-appropriate the squares and the streets, create public spheres notably through and thanks to art and aesthetics. Artistic creations and expressions made by activists are related to their communicative actions and cognitive praxes.

Activists re-actualise the subversive power of the theatre in particular and of art in general, power that fundamentally calls the established order into question and that has been positively and negatively highlighted by the Western philosophical tradition since Antiquity.

Thus, for Plato (in *Republic*), the theatre was the most dangerous form of *mimesis* (term that in Greek means “imitation, reproduction” at large and that more particularly refers to “theatrical performance”), a threat against the unity of soul and the city. Dramatic poetry would disturb citizens’ balance of passions and consequently their full adhesion to their social role of good citizen. That is why, in his view, it should be condemned and excluded from the city.

By contrast, for Aristotle (in *Poetics*), tragic art serves to train men to knowledge and virtue to the extent that tragedy offers ideal, but possible, representations of human reality, or it shows human reality such as it could be out of ideal patterns towards which real patterns that appear over the human history tend. It therefore allows to represent and know the fundamental structures of the human world. In this sense, art does not settle for reproducing sensible things or imitating, with more or less success, visible or phenomenal reality, it also contributes, more fundamentally, to reach the knowledge of things. Arts are not therefore mere copies of copies of Ideas, but rather, they are a particular way – a specific symbolic form – towards the Ideas. In modern terms, they permit to approach knowledge instead of going off it.

More recently, for Hegel (in *Lectures on Aesthetics*), art is a major moment – albeit it is not absolute or the most important – of the liberation of the spirit in the human history. Marxist aesthetics, notably that proposed by György Lukács (in *The Historical Novel*), attributes to art, if it is genuine and realistic, the role of showing the societal dynamics, what allows it to necessarily have a critical, progressive and sometimes revolutionary function. In a similar vein, for Ernst Bloch (in *The Spirit of Utopia*), art and especially new, open and critical experiences carried out by artistic avant-gardes allow the human being to consciously anticipate the future. They open to him new horizons, create new possibilities, present utopias that can lose their negativity and become veritable *topos* or actual – art is a window or opening toward possible worlds. *In fine*, they lead him towards the end of the history of humanity, that is, towards the emancipation from alienation.

According to Antonin Artaud (in *Le théâtre et son double*), in a positive approach that also contrasts with that of Plato, the theatre allows to challenge established norms, to call into question *what is*, to transform the necessity into contingency, the natural and eternal into the artificial and ephemeral.

But, beyond the variability of the negative and positive evaluations regarding the theatre, art and their consequences, what remains unchanged in Western thought, their substratum, this is always the idea of their subversive character.

In this sense, like in the American civil rights movements and the peace and students movements in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, there is a close interdependence between music and militancy in the studied Portuguese movements. They have also, to a certain extent, their own “social gospel” or “freedom songs” as several of their public performances showed.

Alongside music and songs, activists practice different forms of art like dancing, painting, sculpture, theatrical performances that have also a critical and subversive character. Parts of Guernica, Picasso’s painting, scattered throughout *Largo do Carmo* square, on 24 April 2010, served to denounce war and correlatively the army given its central role in this kind of human activity. VERDE’s theatre is essentially an “artist project” in which activism (or political resistance) and art are merged. Its *hortas* and popular dinners were also places wherein art and social criticism were joined.

The theatre – the play with bodies and play with words – places in its centre on the stage the human being itself. Beyond or below illusion, *illusio* (the play) and appearances that the theatre and its actors produce and even if, for that matter, the latter use archetypes or ideal-types that do not really exist as such in the real world, there is nonetheless a theatrical truth that manages to show and unveil human nature, social links, human characters and behaviours such as they are.

For Hans G. Gadamer (in *Truth and Method*), the experience of art is an experience of truth during the moment of the interpretation or hermeneutics, a moment in which the world and the life of the interpreter are involved and may be deeply transformed if this experience is genuine.

According to Hans R. Jauss’ “aesthetic of reception” (in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*), the work of art is a response to a problem or a question for the person who, by facing it, becomes its receiver.

Finally, beyond their differences, these diverse previous theories (except the Platonic one) also have in common, alongside the subversive power of art, the stressing of the cognitive or epistemic basis of all artistic and aesthetic experiences. Artistic and aesthetic production necessarily entails or goes hand in hand with the production of knowledge or forms of knowledge.

Thus, activists also produce knowledge through art and aesthetics. Like knowledge, art and aesthetics are a central value for them.

In this sense, activists belonging to the studied social movements often express their ideas through painting, to a certain extent like the Stoicists. Indeed, the first headquarters of the Greek philosophical school called Stoicism was the *Stoa poikilè*, what means the “painted portico” and what also gave their name (stoicism, but also Portico School or simply *Stoa*). This is explained by the fact that Stoicists often used pictorial art to illustrate their theories. Thus, through their arts, activists are able to show a wide range of aphorisms or apophthegms. VERDE’s festivals, *hortas* and popular dinners were places in which music, art, learning and knowledge were combined.

Art is a fundamental mode of expression of thought, of rational reflection. It allows the presentation and sensible figuration of the relation of the human being with the world, of the human being with itself. Art, in the same way as philosophy, permits one to think about the world, to give it, in a hylemorphic sense, a form and a matter (or a content). It has a descriptive and objective role that is akin to the scientific function of representation of reality in its diversity and complexity. But, its task is perhaps above all practical. In this sense, art does not settle for showing the world; it also opens new horizons by offering different possibilities to live in it. Beyond the message transmitted by its author, the work of art gives to the person who observes or faces it a way of living in the world, a means to situate and place himself in it by making the world present and meaningful, and by giving a type of experience that may be lived.

A central ingredient within militants’ praxis, related to art and more generally to the construction of knowledge, is creativity. Indeed, activists have this capacity that characterises the creative quality to present the links among the things or ideas in a new way or to put forward intuitions that do not appear within ordinary or traditional schemes of thought. In psychology, the creative thought is also named “open thought” and corresponds to the “divergent thought” that Joy Paul Guilford (in *The Nature of Human Intelligence*) opposes to the “convergent” and close thought.

A further core component within militants’ praxis that is linked to creativity and art is imagination. In a Sartrean approach, related to his ideas elaborated in *L’Imagination* and *L’Imaginaire*, imagination allows the people to transcend the world such as it is given and consequently it is a manifestation of the freedom of their consciousness that manages to detach itself from the actual things as well as to turn towards what is still unreal but may become.

We can make reference here to “the creative afternoons” launched by VERDE, for instance, in which “spontaneity”, “application of new ideas”, “imagination”, freedom prevail. PRECC and SOS militants state that their movement rests also on the concepts of “creativity and imagination”.

In sum, activists develop a veritable aesthetics, on the one hand, because, following the modern sense of the term forged out of the eighteenth century, artistic production under different modalities (music, song, dancing, sculpture, painting, dramaturgies, and so on) is significant in the militant praxis – and correlatively, for activists, the matter of the beautiful, the sublime, judgements of taste are to some extent central –, and, on the other hand, because activists, notably through their diverse types of art, present a sensible knowledge that stems from perceptions or intuitions – in accordance with the Greek etymology of the word, aesthetics refers to “sensation” (*aisthesis*), to the perception with the senses (*aisthanomai* means “I perceive with the senses” or “I feel”). In this sense, we can also add that activists put forward a veritable political aesthetics that entails both a knowledge based on the spatio-temporal perception of urban territories and arts.

### **6.5: Emotions and traditions:**

The fact that different types of rationality (instrumental, cognitive, axiological, communicative) influence social movements’ praxes, this does not preclude emotional and traditional factors. Social movements are not only a form of sociation, which falls within both determined purposive associations and associations based on axiological convictions; they also form communities or there is communalisation to speak with Weber. In other words, the activation of emotions and traditions within social movements contributes to create in them a certain sense of community or a sense of communalisation. This is more the case when social movements are above all “self-help” – when the movements are especially focused upon themselves and their members – to use a concept established by Hanspeter Kriesi in his taxonomy of *lato sensu* social movements.

Despite the different categories of passions and emotions in accordance with the cultures and societies, differences due in large measure to the specificity of each language that implies a classification and economy of the sphere of the human affects of its own, this is possible to identify some general principles that shape the typologies. Thus, a common

classification of passions, that referring to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, is founded on the central dichotomy of the terms pleasure-pain, from which several ancillary antithetic dyads are derived, such as love-hate, joy-sadness, audacity-fear, hope-despair, and so forth. Within social movements, one may find almost all these main dyads, even all types of emotions, positive and negative, to the extent that social movements are social microcosms and as such, from their smaller scale, they reflect the human and social life in general.

As aforesaid, the praxes of music and songs are recurrent in the diverse social movements' actions. These praxes generate diverse types of emotions (joy, anger, etc.) and reinforce the group of belonging and reference by fostering and increasing the social links among militants. They create an atmosphere of conviviality and friendship.

Furthermore, artistic activities and other actions of social movements that may or may not encompass them such as demonstrations have a cathartic effect, echoing Aristotle (in *Poetics* and *Politics*) and Freud (in *Studies on Hysteria* with Josef Breuer). They allow activists to express, externalise and release their discontent, anger or resentment, and other negative and strong feelings (suffering, distress, and so on), and consecutively they provide them relief from these feelings in a symbolic, figurative or representational mode instead of the physical and violent manifestation for instance. In other words, these actions lead to abreaction, actions that provoke emotional discharges allowing to "purge" or "purify" the mind by evacuating emotional tensions and negative feelings. Hence, there is also a process of sublimation, echoing again Freud (in *Civilisation and Its Discontents*). Activists manage to canalise and regulate their *libido*, which is oriented toward creative productions (cultural and artistic realisations), and not toward destructive acts. Tragicomical theatrical performances, dancing, play, painting and sculpture in group are here particularly determinant.

Alongside emotions, as aforesaid, traditions are also determinant for social movements' existence.

The national public holidays are crucial moments for demonstrating. The official purposes of these specific days are recuperated and reinterpreted by militants according to their own objectives, systems of representations and values. In some way, they reinvent traditions. From social movements' point of view, Carnation Revolution Day is no longer a mere commemoration of the emblematic revolution with carnations and without gunshot, blood, deaths and wounded. It is no longer a mere celebration of the day – 25 April 1974 – that marked the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the current democracy and republic in Portugal. For current movements, the revolution is not over, it is incomplete and has to continue in the present time. This day represents a start and not an end in itself that

would purely and simply belong to the past. It symbolises change at large and that is why it is above all and constantly reactivated. This past event works as a key reference and by inductive inference it makes possible in the minds new transformations, a new Carnation Revolution Day in the future that would remove the current social problems and what Carnation Revolution Day could not solve in its time. Similarly, ordinary and scientific knowledge are usually founded on induction. From the experience, the observation or the knowledge of a particular event or fact, or of a range of singular occurrences, people and scientists tend to make generalisations. They consider that if some conditions are present, those they identified and that allowed, in their view, the happening of a fact, this same fact or the type of fact to which it belongs will reproduce. Thus, from the study or perception of particular cases, they tend to establish laws or universal propositions. Following the same reasoning, because revolution occurred once and if some conditions that permitted it are reunited again, revolution would happen again for militants. From the direct or indirect experience of the Carnation Revolution, a singular revolution with its own properties, it becomes possible for them to think and conceptualise revolution in general. Far from being a utopia (a non-place or a place that does not exist following the Greek etymology of the word), revolution is an idea that was applied once and therefore an idea that can be applied *tout court*.

In this sense, the 24 April 2010, in *Largo do Carmo*, alongside stalls, people installed in the centre of the square sculptures made of cardboard and representing tanks, missiles and other military weapons marked with a red cross. These symbols, which are, first of all, both a criticism of the role of the Portuguese army during the dictatorship and a tribute to the non-violent revolution realised especially by the national army, are also re-actualised by current social movements to contest the function of the military institution in general – that is why, a representation of a tank with a red carnation in the gun, one of the symbols of the Carnation Revolution, was indicated as forbidden by a red circle with a slash in the same way as the rest of war weapons were. In this re-actualisation, for instance, these signs are used to express their aversion to NATO and their commitment for peace, to denounce all the different armed conflicts around the world like in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. Likewise, some of the social movements present on this day with their stall were strictly specialised with the topics of peace and disarmament.

By the current social movements, there are therefore reinvention and reinterpretation of what the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of April traditionally represent. Their principles are thus de-contextualised and acquire a transnational or universal dimension that goes beyond but

encompasses the simple Portuguese historical context. Finally, they insert them in their larger discourses on globalisation and alter-globalisation.

Similarly, 1 May is no longer Labour Day, but is nowadays Precarious Labour Day for PRECC and SOS. This is a significant occurrence of frame alignment, that is, of alignment between a cultural and traditional element known by everyone, therefore universal (the Labour Day) and PRECC/SOS particular frame albeit it is not exclusive to this movement (the precariousness of work today). Thus, by this association, Labour Day becomes Precarious Labour Day and PRECC/SOS manages to make a new social reality more visible and known.

Moreover, social movements' music and songs usually rely on traditions, on a shared cultural inheritance, on the collective memory of unifying past experiences, which were directly lived or related. In this sense, activists actively use their memory of past events or facts rather than being subjected to the effects of anamnesis or reminiscences, involuntary returns of recollections, imprecise recollections without becoming aware of their origins, or unconscious and vague memories. The activation of their memory allows them to actualise the past in such a way that imprints present experience.

## **6.6: Conclusion:**

Why are social movements formed? What are their praxes? Why? What are activists' beliefs (and ideologies), social behaviours and actions? Why? What do they think and do, and why do they think about what they think and do what they do? How to understand and explain them? How to determine their genesis? What is their sense? What are their rationalities? What are their causes and reasons? These different questions overlap.

Militants' beliefs and actions are caused by instrumental reasons. They believe in some things and do some things because these things are useful and serve their interests (individual and collective). Social movements are created to reach some useful ends and to employ the most appropriate means for these purposes.

But, more generally, militants' beliefs and actions are also caused by reasons that transcend the mere sphere of instrumental reasons. Militants' reasons are also Reason, that is, militants' beliefs and actions are above all caused by cognitive or epistemic reasons. Thus, social movements are formed in order to know, to understand and explain the social world, to set out causes of social phenomena and situations. Their beliefs are positive collective beliefs;



they are apophantic. They believe in what they believe because in their eyes this is true and accordingly this must be publicly said, demonstrated and explained. The production of their knowledge rests upon logic, sciences (especially economics for ECON, ecology, natural sciences and techno-sciences for VERDE, and sociology/anthropology of work and precariousness for PRECC/SOS), on art and aesthetics.

In this sense, militants' beliefs and actions are also caused by axiological reasons, which are linked to cognitive reasons. Social movements are formed for knowledge (cognitive reason) and because knowledge is a value for their members (axiological reason). If knowledge is a value, *a fortiori*, logic, sciences (notably economics, ecology, natural sciences, techno-sciences, sociology/anthropology of work and precariousness), art and aesthetics that are at the basis of their knowledge are also values for them. Knowledge has a value in itself (like its basis) but it also owns a practical value (again, like its basis) by helping to build an ethics that rationally regards the mode of behaving and acting in the world according to a system of values. In brief, knowledge is a value that is determinant in the choice of further values. Social movements are therefore formed because of values. Militants believe in what they believe and do what they do because this has value for them, this counts for them. Beyond knowledge, but related to it, these values are economic values (ECON), ecological values (VERDE) as well as existential and labour values (PRECC/SOS). More precisely, VERDE's ecological values rest upon the value of precaution or prudence, the respect of the balances of nature, the protection of the environment and life, the inviolability of human dignity, the necessity of controlling and limiting the technological excesses. ECON's economic values that are deeply anti-neoliberal but that are at the same time alter-capitalist rely on a Keynesian form of state interventionism (and *in extenso* on the participation of the public or the people in politics), on the welfare-state, on a form of Saint-Simonism and on the Tobin Tax. PRECC/SOS existential and labour values are related to the value of the welfare-state (like for ECON), of "the primacy of the person", "quality of life", "human rights". A further central value for all these movements, and especially for PRECC/SOS, is the value of justice, distributive and egalitarian social justice. These values lead to norms to be followed: ECON's system of taxation, its system of redistribution of economic wealth, the regulation of markets, the political participation of the people; VERDE's ecological and agricultural programmes; PRECC/SOS labour and social policies.

Militants' reasons are also communicative, reasons that are strictly related to cognitive reasons as well. Hence, social movements are also formed to communicate, or better said, to publicly communicate. They are created in order to constitute public spheres, spaces open to

public dialogue, debate, reflection and criticism, in which all people can participate. Social movements are set in motion to preserve the *res publica* or the space of polity, to form democratic spaces founded on the principle of participation, on isonomy and isegory, on the ancient Athenian *bios politikos*. These spaces of participative democracy are generated by activists, more generally, in order to make democracy at a higher level, at a societal level, in turn, more participative as well and accordingly less representative and elitist. Social movements are constituted to do and reinvent publicness (or publicity) and politics, to reinvent democracy, to give it a new re-foundation according to principles where the people is supposed to really hold the political power.

Militants' beliefs and actions are caused by emotions and traditions as well. But traditions do not appear as reified, as something that would be unchanged over time and that would determine militants' beliefs and actions in a unilateral way, militants therefore remaining passive and mere receptors before them. On the contrary, activists actively, consciously and rationally reinvent traditions. Traditions are therefore linked to the cognitive dimension of reason as well, accordingly to reason *tout court*.

## **Part III**

### **Identities: The Self and the Other within the framework of social movements**



## Chapter 7

### **Sociological theories on identity, otherness and social movements**

Along with the logical space of representation regarding the positive, that is, the true and the false or the yes and the no, which we have explored in the previous part through activists' positive collective beliefs, there is another central and intertwined logical space of representation that concerns, this time, the similar and the dissimilar or the different and the identical. In other words, it is about identity (from the Latin term *idem* that means the same) and *a contrario* otherness.

The latter concepts that are associated in practice and sometimes theoretically are poorly defined by social sciences and remain ubiquitous and elusive. At least, there is a consensus on the fact that they regard the definition of the individual and/or the social group. The main question that inhabits social sciences concerning them is what defines the individual and the social group. Some traditions of thought stress the social, the socialisation, the structures or the culture as main factors of this definition. These perspectives can be subsumed under what is usually termed the holistic perspectives in social sciences. Other intellectual traditions, by contrast, point out in this definition the active role of individuals seen as more or less thinking, conscious, acting and interacting subjects. Others have an intermediary position, which combines with different degrees the two previous approaches by nevertheless giving more saliency to one or other of them.

These are the aspects we are going to explore in this part. Here, in this chapter more precisely, I shall expose a sort of state of art that does not pretend to be exhaustive given the huge literature that exists in social sciences about identity. It would be impossible, and not necessarily fruitful (rather the contrary), to deal with all of the publications upon that matter in a single chapter. They would require more developments that go beyond the framework of this study. For this reason, I shall focus more modestly only upon some of the major works and studies on social movements that seem particularly significant in regard to the problematic of identity, otherness and social movements.

### **7.1: Identity from holistic views:**

The holistic approaches in social sciences form part of intellectual traditions that have criticised and been opposed, especially since the nineteenth century, to the philosophies of the subject seen as a thinking and conscious self. They have operated a “decentring” from the individual-subject toward the immaterial and material structures, toward the group, society or culture, which are perceived as the true source of meaning. In these perspectives, the individual becomes a product, an effect of structures or transcendent forces. His action merely allows to “support” or bear them (Althusser, 2005 [1965]). Ferdinand de Saussure, considered as the “grandfather” of structuralism, opposed (in *The Course in General Linguistics*) the system of relationships of *langue* that is socially embedded, structural and tangible features of language, explaining its permanence or continuity and its function of medium of communication – what he named the synchronics – to the historical transformations of *parole* (language in use) – what he called the diachronics. Thus, in his view, languages, a core social phenomenon, do not result fundamentally from individual creations and representations, but they are systems of signs generated by extra-individual structures (like alphabets, grammars, lexicons). This thinker exerted a significant theoretical influence on structuralism in human and social sciences over the twentieth century.

According to Jean-Marie Benoist (2010 [1977]), during a seminar on identity that he organised and ran with his close collaborator, the founder of structuralism in anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss, structural anthropology aims to overcome “a crude, immediate identity” or “an identity “of surface””, the one that is told by the studied people, and correlatively to reach the “profound structures that shape identity” (*idem*: 17). This method or this “theoretical

detour”, in terms used by Benoist (*idem*: 20), reminds depth psychology or Freudian psychoanalysis, which consists in going beyond the conscious stratum to reach, within the psyche, the hidden unconscious, at the origin of the “true” meaning of the individuals’ actions. More generally, indeed, structural anthropology is particularly influenced by Freudian theories along with Saussurean linguistics, social facts being therefore considered as *langues* and society as systems of circulation of signs or networks of symbolic exchanges whose structure must be analysed.

Françoise Héritier (2010 [1977]), who participated in this same seminar among other scholars, asserted, in a Durkheimian style, that the “essential point” of her paper is that the Samo identity, a population living in the north-west of Upper-Volta in Black Africa, is entirely determined by the collective. For her, it is Samo society, in its totality, that exclusively defines, through its social rules, social and individual identity. Collective social norms automatically give the Samo individual a social position, a function and a name according to gender and his/her particular location within a specific lineage. Although the Samo have personal feelings, all their acts and behaviours are strictly regulated by the social code that they have interiorised and accepted. Including the marginal or the deviant continues to follow the social rules corresponding to his marginal or deviant act. For instance, the Mad, who no longer follows the social norms concerning the rest of his group, comes to obey the law governing the madness. Thus, the Mad, following this law, goes to install himself near his village where he will organise alone the rest of his life. But, by his geographical proximity and his standardised action, he never completely gives up his collectivity and its laws. Within “this system of totalitarian representations”, most of the principles of individuation, such as individual responsibility, the feeling of culpability and guilt, are absent from the Samo ethics. In short, the Samo individual is a mere personification of society. The individual is neglected in favour of the sole social group. He/she is totally submitted to the collective will. His/her identity is completely expressed by his/her name that is socially ascribed (Héritier, 2010 [1977]: 68-71, 75).

Alongside structural anthropology, one can also refer, within the holistic positions that regard more particularly the issue of identity, to the works of Erik Erikson and Michel Foucault.

According to Erikson’s neo-Freudian psychoanalysis, individual identity is especially shaped during childhood and adolescence. He gave a particular saliency to the influence of the environment in which the child and adolescent live in the formation of their identity. Identity constitution, from childhood to the beginning of adulthood, follows several predetermined

successive phases. These early steps condition the individual's identity for the rest of his existence. At the end of adolescence, the person's "final identity" is established and will accompany him throughout his adult life (Erikson, 1968, 1950). This conception tends to ascribe to identity a stable structure that is fixed in the individual mind and the collective memory of a social group. In some aspects, it reminds us of the notion of *conatus* as it was developed by Spinoza, that is, the idea that all things tend to persist in their own being. This conception is also close to Talcott Parsons' structural-functionalism (Parsons, 1968) and other trends that rest upon the idea according to which, by the effects of socialisation, especially the first types of socialisation through the family and the school that appear as determinant, individuals interiorise a set of standard and general values, a culture belonging to their social group. This interiorisation leads individuals to integrate their original group. They end up identifying themselves with the latter that appears like a unitary system (Parsons, 1968; Smith, 1986).

Foucault especially addressed in his works the systems of thought, their history (as the name of his chair at the *Collège de France* pointed out), the study of general discourses and collective practices albeit some of his analyses in his last researches, notably those relative to power and the "arts of oneself" (or "the government of oneself and the others"), also show the importance of the co-relational character of the elements, which may be individuals-subjects as well, and not only groups or structures – thereby, for instance, coming closer to Georg Simmel's thought to a certain extent and by some aspects, thought that we are going to examine in part a little further. Throughout his studies, the main and constant topic was the subject. He dealt with the ways through which the human being has been constituted as a subject over the course of Western history, that is, the different processes of subjectification that simultaneously entail dynamics of objectification. The human being has come to be both subject and object, and Foucault focused upon three modes of subjectification/objectification. A first mode concerns science or alethic logic. The formation of some sciences has been accompanied by and is indivisible to the creation of an object-subject human being. Linguistics, philology and general grammar have formed the object that is "the talking subject". Economics has created as object of examination "the productive and working subject". Natural history and biology has established "the living subject" as object of analysis. A second mode is related to what Foucault named "dividing practices". Because the subject is divided within himself or from the others by some practices, he becomes an object. These practices permit to install dichotomies, opposed categories that define what is within and outside the norm or deontic logic. These dividing practices will be explored more precisely in



the section about identity and otherness in this same chapter. A last mode of subjectification/objectification observed by Foucault regards the modes that lead to the formation of the subject of a “sexuality” (Foucault, 1994c: 222-243, 415-430).

In relation to social movements, a central work that belongs to what has been called new social movements theories and that enters into the holistic points of view is that of Alain Touraine. Although, for him, the actor or the subject occupies a determinant position within his sociology against the structural approaches, notwithstanding, this is essentially about a collective actor or subject, and not an individual one, by his tendency to hypostatise social movements and to see them as potential subjects of history or as the main protagonists of the becoming of society – in the same way as in its conception of the philosophy of history Marxism has considered the working class movement as the subject of history in its struggle against the capitalist class (Touraine, 1969, 1978: 40).

## **7.2: The construction of identities by the selves:**

Georg Simmel illustrates particularly well this theoretical tendency to see in the individual and the individuals through their interrelations the source of all the contents of life, notably the social, culture, the consciousness of oneself and the others, and so, in modern language, identity. In sum, they are at the basis of all the human creations.

Thus, Simmel’s approach is diametrically opposed to the previous theories that we have examined above albeit in some passages of his studies, especially in his early writings (Simmel, 1989 [1890]), he seemed rather to combine individualistic and holistic methods by considering the dialectic between the individual and society *sui generis*. The majority of his analyses remain situated within methodological individualism; that is why, I consider this is more appropriate to locate him under this epistemological perspective – like most of his commentators did before me, such as, among the best hermeneutists, Raymond Boudon (2000: 125-161, 1998: 165-218) – and not under those that seek to establish a certain compromise between the two mentioned methods, which we shall observe in the following section of this chapter. A further argument that can justify more this epistemological position stems from a historical fact. Indeed, Simmel and Emile Durkheim were contemporaneous and from an academic point of view were hostile towards each other because of deep methodological divergences. And we know that Durkheim (2010 [1895]) defended a certain

holism inherited from Comtean positivism. Society appeared for him as a reality and a totality in itself that is exterior and restrictive vis-à-vis individuals. For Simmel, this was not the case. He did not consider society as an independent substratum and as owning a coercive force on individuals by shaping them.

Therefore, for Simmel, society is not the consequence or the cause of but it is already the “reciprocal action” (*wechselwirkung*) – one of the core concepts of Simmel’s philosophy and sociology – among individuals, the latter being the sole real elements apart from the material objects that they have made and the physical entities belonging together to what they call nature (Simmel, 2009b). Society, like nature for Kant, is a mental category or “form” – another central notion for Simmel that is close to that of ideal-type formulated by Max Weber or, more recently, akin to the concept of “model” suggested by Boudon (Boudon and Bourricaud, 2004a [1982]: 522-527) – created by human beings for putting in order and subsuming all their relationships among them under a core concept before their disparity, complexity and plurality. This is the general concept or the psychic synthesis that is used by people to think and talk about all these relationships among human beings which cannot be considered simultaneously in their individuality.

Kant solved the problem regarding the knowledge of nature by answering the question “how is nature possible?” and by asserting that nature is possible to the extent that human beings conceive it mentally. In other words, nature is a human representation. This is a content of human consciousness and a singular mean that owns the mind for constituting, classifying and uniting sensible perceptions that initially appear before it in an unpredictable and diverse way. These different perceptions of the world or these immediate data are not therefore nature in themselves, but they become it only once and to the extent that they are organised by the mind into objects, series, substances, predicates, links of causality.

Especially inspired by Kant’s gnoseology, Simmel applied the same question to society – “how is society possible?” – in order to pose the problem concerning the knowledge of society. His response is also similar to that of Kant: Society is a representation of human beings; it is possible because they think about it (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 39-79). He therefore considers society as a “spiritual” or “subjective creation” that exists only within the human mind, as an abstraction that is done by people and scientists studying the social to name the whole of the associations or reciprocal actions among individuals (Simmel, 2009b: 9). Nonetheless, the important difference between Kant’s theory of knowledge and that of Simmel is that, unlike the concept of nature that is not thought by its diverse elements but only by external observers, natural scientists or all the people at large, the concept of society

may be represented by its elements, and not solely by social scientists or sociologists, since all of them are human beings and the faculty of representation is a faculty that is specifically human. Consecutively, social unity is already made by its inner elements that have the capacity to represent and form their links among them whereas the unity of nature, as we said, can be only realised by the outer thinking subject (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 63-67). Moreover, the ideal of knowledge – pure knowledge – and the ideal of sociology is to manage to know the ultimate reciprocal actions among individuals. Notwithstanding, before the complexity and opacity of most of their associations, scientists are often initially obliged to content themselves with abstract and supra-individual notions, like society, state, law, under which these associations are subsumed, pending a better clarification of the latter. In the same way as the biologist analyses reciprocal actions among the organs and other particular elements within living organisms instead of limiting himself only to talk about life or vital force as a unique principle transcending these interactions, the sociologist must tend to discover more and more the individual *modus procedendi* that concretely constitutes social things, thereby tending toward the ideal of science (Simmel, 2009b).

Simmel also uses as synonyms of reciprocal action the terms of “correlation”, “reciprocity”, “relativity”, or “relativism”. These concepts highlight the mutual dependencies, the influences that each element exerts on each other directly or through one or several intermediaries – and not merely their co-existence –, the situations of exchanges in which giving always imply, in turn, receiving and giving back as well.

These concepts also explain why Simmel preferred to employ rather the notion of “socialisation” (*vergesellschaftung*) or “sociation” instead of that “society” as the title of his major work in sociology shows – *Sociology: Investigations on the Forms of Sociation* (Simmel, 2010 [1908]) – to the extent that the former, by emphasising the movement or the process, better expresses this idea of continuous and dynamic reciprocity whereas the latter gives more the sensation of a fixed and finite state. Indeed, for Simmel, society is always forming – *in statu nascendi* –, and is not already out there and absolutely constituted. Furthermore, society takes different forms of associations, from the most transient contacts like a walk in group to the most permanent ones that constitute a closed unity such as the family or a medieval guild according to the proper examples quoted by Simmel. Therefore, society can have several sizes. It does not only mean a political unity that assembles individuals and groups. It exists all the time where there are people linked by the reciprocity of their action. This perspective justifies macro-sociological studies as well as meso- and micro-sociological researches from the moment they are all considered in terms of reciprocal

actions. These forms of reciprocal action also take into account the struggle and competition that are forms of socialisation *lato sensu*, and not only the associations and unions *stricto sensu* that would ideally mean cooperation and harmony. More generally, the socialisations that are different because they are created by their members in the name of diverse motives – what Simmel calls the various “contents” of socialisation – may present similar forms – *id est*, in Simmelian language, types of identical reciprocal actions. For instance, a company will be established for economic reasons, a church principally to respond to religious needs, a political party will be animated by ideological objectives. Beyond these differences of contents – the matter of these associations –, they can, notwithstanding, own equivalent forms. Thus, for example, they could be organised around relations of domination/subordination. Conversely, socialisations that have the same content may, by contrast, be heterogeneous from the point of view of their respective form. For example, economic organisations that pursue the same goal – that of making profit – can take the form of domination/subordination, the division of labour, competition, cooperative, and so forth. This distinction between form and content of socialisation is fundamental for Simmel. For him, this intellectual abstraction is necessary in order that sociology has a *raison d’être* among the rest of empirical sciences. Indeed, he considers that sociology – “pure sociology” – must study these forms of socialisation, the study of the contents belonging to the other empirical sciences even though in practice or in reality forms and contents are inseparable. Similarly, geometry studies spatial figures regardless of their matter although both are also indivisible in concrete – one cannot exist without the other, and vice-versa. If sociology ought to study everything that occurs within society, it would encroach upon realms that are already explored before it by other sciences and therefore it would be solely a new name without own specificity for these sciences which already exist. This epistemological position explains why his sociology has been qualified as formal (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 39-62, 2009b).

Thus, the idea of relativity is applied to the study of all kinds of phenomena by Simmel. He especially emphasised its central role in the definition of collective values (values in general, economic values via money, esthetical values), of knowledge, different forms of socialisation, subject – and so correlatively of identity albeit the latter concept is not employed by Simmel in its current meaning. This is the relativity between the subjectivities that create objectivity, which is only what is valid for all the subjects (Simmel, 2009b: 24-25). The elements of the dyads subject/object and subjectivity/objectivity, far from being strictly separated and opposed, *de facto* overlap. Unlike a certain scientism that remains highly influential to the present day within social and human sciences, Simmel does not conceive of

objectivity as something that necessarily has to evacuate all forms and contents of subjectivity in order to be what it is. On the contrary, objectivity exists or may exist only from and thanks to the interplays among subjectivities. It appears as a result of these interplays, a result that is acknowledged by all the implied and concerned parts.

Therefore, in relation to the formation of value, the latter possesses an objectivity and the objectivity of value results from correlations among subjective elements. The economic value, a particular type of value, is the objectification of subjective values that is created when the subjects manage to establish a distance between themselves and the desired object. This distance entails a non-immediate consumption, and consecutively, endeavours, renunciation, sacrifices in order to subsequently overcome this distance and eventually make possible the possession of the object. The economic value and its objective character also stems from the relations of exchanges between the parts, from the interactions among the subjective values. The objectivity of the value of a thing therefore appears when this thing may be substituted by another thing, substitution carried out during the exchange. The exchange is consequently the fundamental element of the economic value, its essential condition, the first economic fact. The prices that are socially fixed are established by exchanges and they are the objective prices. Consecutively, the exchange beyond the mere economic sphere determines objectivity. Money is both the tool and the symbol of this form of reciprocal action carried out in the economic realm, the vehicle and expression of this relativity in which the realisation of the needs of one part always depends upon that of another part, and conversely.

Similarly, in another realm, although it is related to the previous one, the realm of art, esthetical values and their objectivity also result from processes of reciprocity like economic values or values in general. The value or truth of art therefore rests upon the relations among the immanent elements constituting the work. In this sense, these relations have to lead to a unified, coherent and significant totality expressed through the work as a whole (Simmel, 2009a [1900]: 21-124).

Moreover, regarding the construction of knowledge, Simmel's relativity or relativism does not absolutely correspond to sceptical relativism as he made clear it himself. Unlike sceptical relativism, he does not consider that there is no truth except that affirmed by the proper sceptics that says truth is not possible – what ineluctably conduces from a logical point of view to an aporia. Indeed, one cannot state that truth does not exist and at the same time pretend that this enounced proposition is true. Radical scepticism logically auto-contradicts itself. For Simmel, to the contrary, knowledge and truth – the ideal of knowledge – are possible if scientists methodologically proceed by putting into relations different theses, by

confronting them with each other, all the more if these are opposed theses. That is this connection that Simmel calls relativism and that may advance the state of knowledge toward its infinite objective of truth. The objectivity of truth, like that of value, arises from correlations among subjective elements. Relativism, for Simmel, is therefore a method for scientific knowledge – in the same way as induction and deduction –, and not, like for the sceptics, a dogmatic doctrine. Besides, relativism as scientific methodology is opposed to every closed doctrine that treats only one aspect of things and excludes all the rest. It is rather an inclusive perspective that permanently aims to unite and confront diverse points of view in order to reach a synthesis of the studied phenomena – a synthesis always renewable over time according to the appearance of new theses and the abandonment of irremediably refuted theses –, and consecutively to gain a better understanding of these phenomena by being closer to reality, but without copying it (*idem*, 2009a [1900]: 84-124).

Finally, in regard to the human subject, as we said above, for Simmel, following Kant, the human mind has this faculty of conceiving psychic unities or intellectual syntheses from diverse elements by finding what they have in common or their relations beyond their differences that separate and isolate them from each other. This mental process that organises, categorises and generalises allows the people to represent themselves, the others, their links with them, the world, and their links with it. Thus, the creation of the intellectual category of “worker” is a significant instance of psychological production of universal synthesis that overcomes the specific differences among the workers depending upon their sector of activity or the particular type of their labour and that unites them under a common and shared character. The conceptualisation or abstraction of Worker has permitted to produce some “unity of social consciousness” based on the idea and the fact according to which all the workers work to earn a salary regardless of their singular work, a common link in relation to capital.

The degree of generalisation varies, what allows to make a certain quantum of intermediary notional categories. The higher the abstraction, the more the common character is reduced and the concrete differences are extensive. Within the scale of abstraction of the worker, the concept of the sole worker constitutes the *terminus ad quem*, the highest and most general idea, while any particular worker *in concreto* is the *terminus a quo*, the immediate empirical datum or the primary sensible perception from which all conceptualisation may be carried out; *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* being two Latin locutions frequently used by Simmel to express the limits or the poles – the frame like in a painting – of a scale of forms concerning given correlations. Between the general and abstract worker, and the

singular and individual worker, there are different levels of typifications of the workers. These typifications may be based upon the nature of the job: One can feel to be a weaver, a mechanic or a miner in addition to apperceive or perceive oneself as a worker in general and as a particular individual who works. A form superior to the previous ones may rely upon a common sector of activity even though the professions are distinct. The form “railway worker” comprehends all the workers who work for the railways and there are different sorts of occupations: Train drivers, blacksmiths, porters, ticket collectors, counter clerks, and so forth. These categories of workers are less general than that of the sole worker, and they have common features that are larger than those of the general worker. Moreover, a same category may cross several other categories, thereby tending to associate antithetic categories that would not therefore be united without the existence of a third encompassing concept. For example, the “woman” category, obviously at the heart of feminism and the related women social movements, is a typification that is transversal to the worker category inasmuch as it embraces the woman worker (and not all the workers, i. e., not the men workers), but also to the capitalist class to the extent that it regards the *bourgeoise* woman as well.

This apperception or this knowledge of oneself by the mind is not reducible to the sole pure knowledge; it also has practical consequences – what shows the correlation between logical dynamics and the socio-historical contingencies. The act of becoming conscious of oneself, of realising his immanent being through and for the mind generates forms of solidarity because the apperception, albeit it is first an individual intellectual activity or an infra-individual process, does not lead to atomism or solipsism insofar as its content is shared by a set of individuals – what gives it a social or supra-individual trait. Hence, among the various sorts of workers, their feeling of belonging to the universal category of “worker” beyond their own particularities of differentiated workers has conduced to a certain collective cohesion that has been materialised through the constitution of a set of institutions and associations. The concept of worker, firstly a purely cognitive concept, led to the creation of its juridical concept. This passage has implied a formal or official objectification, a public or societal recognition with rights and duties – a normativity – which consequently overcomes and comprehends to a certain extent – some elements are excluded because they are opposed or ignored – the sole recognition by the own workers, *id est*, the workers’ objectivity. Alongside the juridification of the idea of worker, since the nineteenth century, associations of workers and associations grouping together several branches of activity have proliferated – the most famous and important among them remaining The International.

Furthermore, the more the conceptual generalisation is important, the more the social unity that derives from this generalisation is broad because the process of generalisation increases the number of concerned people beyond their differences that become bigger and albeit simultaneously it reduces the shared criteria of identity. Generalisation also creates new social circles. It therefore provokes both a quantitative and qualitative improvement. The making of the category of worker has allowed the formation of new social circles founded upon this category, and this enlarged category has made these social circles wider than the previous ones related to professional specificities. In this sense, the owners saw the threat that this generalisation and all its practical consequences entailed for their material and ideal interests, and consecutively they organised themselves around the general concept of capitalist to face, via the law, employers' associations and other means, the large opposition formed from the general notion of worker. Thus, generalisation extends alliances and networks, gives new feelings of belonging and identity, strengthens coalitions and the capacity of acting. In turn, the amplification of social circles of belonging diversifies the identity representations (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 437-447).

Individuality and, consecutively, identity have come to be more and more differentiated since the Modern age, especially since the Renaissance, mainly because of two related historical tendencies. Indeed, unlike medieval associations that were created according to the criterion of common geographical location of their members, modern associations have been constituted following shared ideal or material interests – principle that ignores and overcomes spatial frontiers, and that encourages cosmopolitanism, which is co-relative to individual differentiation. Likewise, while medieval communities and corporations integrated strictly and exclusively their members – the associative affiliations being rigorously delimited and impermeable –, modern individuals combine, cross, participate in several and different social circles. Modernity is characterised by the numerical growth of societies – a phenomenon that is accompanied by social differentiation. The extension and diversification of social groups is therefore correlated to the expansion of individuality – links that are well exemplified by the modern monetary economy (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 407-452, 685-706, 720).

At the level of studies that are specifically focused upon the topic of social movements, Alberto Melucci is without doubt the most emblematic author who belongs to this constructionist and individualist perspective. Indeed, following his own terms, collective identity in general and *a fortiori* that relative to social movements are a “process”, a “construction” carried out by individuals who interact together and share a certain amount of values and beliefs. By their relationships, individuals produce common “definitions” about



themselves and their place in relation to their environment. These definitions entail the use of a common language that can either be particular to the individuals forming a collective action or belong more largely to some sectors of society or the whole of society. Conversely, they cannot avoid the appearance of heterogeneous and contradictory definitions (and consecutively of conflicts), which necessarily emerge as well following the interactive and communicative processes of constructing meaning.

By this point of view, Melucci suggests some epistemological and methodological principles. Notably, he claims the necessity to “dereify” collective identity, what constitutes a criticism in regard to “realistic” conceptions or “monolithic and metaphysical ideas” that tend to ascribe to collective actors “unified ontological essences” or “existences in themselves”. Collective identity is just a notion constructed by social scientists and others that has to help them to interpret reality but it cannot be confused in any case with reality itself. In other words, it is an intellectual instrument that allows to be closer to the facts but, notwithstanding, it is not a tangible fact. Or, if one prefers, it exists only within human minds. Simultaneously, the researcher should consider in his analyses not only the nexus among the individuals composing social movements but also his proper circular link vis-à-vis these individuals. This task forms part of a work of “self-reflexivity” that nowadays seems incontrovertible in the field of identity studies (Melucci, 1996 [1995]: 41-63).

### **7.3: An intermediary position: Between determinations and individuation:**

George Herbert Mead (1967 [1934]), one of the main thinkers who influenced the Chicago School and the related programme of symbolic interactionism like, among their most illustrious representatives, Erving Goffman (1961, 1959) and Anselm Strauss (1969), appears as a precursor of an approach that combines both the social and individual effects in the formation of identity.

In his work, he refers to the Self instead of identity. More precisely, here, it sometimes means identity and in other occasions it is equated with individual, actor or person. *De facto*, within the anglophone literature, on the one hand, the terms self and identity, and on the other hand, those of self and individual (or actor or person) tend to be synonymous and interchangeable, more particularly through advocates of symbolic interactionism.

One of Mead's central accounts is that the human mind and selves are outcomes of and emerge following the social processes.

Ongoing social processes that form society stem from the continued and dynamic interplays among "biological organisms" or human individuals. They interact through communication, that is, through "the conversation of gestures" that work as symbols or signs. They are symbols inasmuch as they are early steps of an action that signal, support and provoke what has to be done in the following steps and in relation to the objects involved until the completion of this action.

One of the main specificities of the human being in relation to other living beings is his ability to use a particular kind of gestures, that is, "vocal gestures" or language, which imply "significant symbols".

Thanks to language, the individual is able "to call out" within him the response his gesture calls out in the other individual. By calling out within him and through his gesture the response of the other, his gesture gains a meaning. That is why vocal gestures are significant symbols. They are the sole kind of gestures that can be perceived by the individual who makes them in a similar way as the individuals to whom they are addressed. When an individual talks to other individuals, he can hear himself talking like the others hear him, whereas the non-vocal gestures usually are only seen by the addressees of these gestures and not by their senders. Only vocal gestures similarly affect the two parts entering into a relationship of communication. Through significant symbols, communication is not only addressed to other people, it is also directed towards the proper individual who uses them.

By calling out within him and via his gesture the response of the other, the individual becomes conscious of his own acts. The mind or reason forms when the gestures become meaningful or when the individual comes to be conscious of what is happening. For Mead, mind or the act of thinking is simply an inner conversation that the individual carries out with himself by means of language or significant symbols. The knowledge of his own gestures enables him to control and orient his own further behaviours, to be self-critical. The response of the other indicates to him what he ought to do, now and later.

Since meanings are socially constructed by the interactions among individuals, they are not subjective, mental and private, but are, on the contrary, objective, present, and shared in the social situations concerned by these interactions. They acquire a universal character to the extent that the same response is calling out within both the self and the other through vocal gestures.

The individual, by his own vocal gestures, is able to import or take the attitudes and roles of the other individuals for himself, or, in other words, to put himself in their place. In a certain sense, he therefore becomes the others and integrates their values. He comes to be able to understand them.

In sum, within the social processes and interactions among individuals, this is through the internalisation of the conversation of vocal gestures or the taking of the attitudes and roles of others that consciousness, mind and selves occur. Thus, the generation of mind, the self and consciousness follows the same general logic linked to the social process of communication or the agency of language.

More particularly, the self arises when the thinking “form” or organism, that is, the individual, becomes an object for himself. This may happen only insofar as the individual by means of vocal gestures takes the roles of the other since by this role-taking he comes to observe and answer himself from a new approach. Basically, the selves are individuals who are conscious of themselves what Mead terms “self-consciousness”. The self is therefore both subject and object.

The formation of the self or of the individual’s personality is composed, in more detail, of two opposed and paradoxically inseparable elements: The “Me” and the “I”.

The “Me” constitutes the social effects that determine the self. The Me is basically this taking of the organised attitudes and roles of some specific others who belong to the same social group like in the child’s play, or those of the whole others – “the generalised other” following Mead’s phrase – who belong to the same society such as in the game. While in the play the child comes to successively adopt the behaviours of some close relatives or animals with which he enters into contact, in the game the individual is led to simultaneously take into account the conducts of all the individuals involved in it. Indeed, he is constrained to consider the whole organised activity or the actions of all the others in order to act himself in accordance with the rules of the game. When the individual appropriates the role of the generalised other, he becomes in some sense this generalised other and his values are the social values that have an objective and universal character. The play and the game appear as two core stages in the development of the self. In short, the Me regulates the self’s behaviours and acts according to the social patterns of conducts and actions. It makes “the organised self” or provides “the structures” or “the framework of the self”. The individual adjusts or adapts his attitudes following the others’ behaviours and with whom he is involved in common social or co-operative activities. He adopts the conducts, the institutions and the language of the community to which he belongs. And because the same individual is confronted with different

social situations, he develops several selves that each of them respond to each of these situations. In these social processes, he acquires what Mead calls “a multiple personality” beyond a certain “unified self” that reflects the belonging to a whole community or the identification with the generalised other.

Notwithstanding, the self cannot be reduced to “the social Me” according to Mead. He cannot be a mere reflection of society or social structures that reproduces at the individual level the social attitudes and roles as such. In other words, he cannot simply be the structures or the framework out of which he is built. Otherwise, the idea of the self would be biased and partial by this one-sided position that would inevitably appear as excessive, radical and caricatural.

Hence, opposed to “the universal Me” that characterises all members of a given community, there is another part within the self for its full expression, the “I”, which is the most personal or individual part. This is the creative and inventive dimension that properly belongs to each individual. The individual or the self is not only what all the others are. Unlike the Me, the I is not already given. It always implies a certain part of uncertainty and unpredictability. Beyond common attributes that make them members of the same social group, each individual owns his proper particularities and ideas.

This is that side of the self, the I, which is the source of social change, of new and reconstructive action. For Mead, it “gives the sense of freedom, of initiative” to the individual. After having taken the roles and attitudes of the others, after having called out within himself the response that his gesture calls out in the others, the reply of the individual to the others is never exactly the same as the response he has received and taken from them. It differs in some way from social expectations. The I is therefore the personal and novel response of the self to the Me, to the taking of the organised conducts of the generalised other. His response is seldom mechanical or automatic albeit the individual is often morally and socially obliged to respond. And as everyone follows the same process of communication, it necessarily results in social change or societal transformation that is generally slight, gradual, constant and more or less imperceptible following most of actions, but which can be also great in certain circumstances through the acts of the geniuses and leaders as several examples in history have shown it. Here, Mead cited the names of Jesus Christ, Buddha, Socrates, Albert Einstein as examples among the most important figures in history that provoked fundamental change in the conception of the world and in the way of approaching it. In any case, every action does not merely replicate the existing social procedures defined by society and necessarily entails structural change to a certain degree. The adjustment of one’s conduct

in relation to those of the others inevitably implies a change of one's conduct, and, in turn, this change affects and modifies the others' attitudes. While the individual takes the behaviours of his community, he also replies consciously or in a reflective way to this same community – responses that affect the further answers of the community and correlatively “reform the order of things” at a certain level. Society is in fact an ongoing process of change due to the permanent interactions – “the give-and-take” – among individuals and their transforming responses. Individuals are constantly “reconstructing” their “immediate society”.

Without the I as well as without the Me, society could not exist. The forms or the organisms determine their environment as their environment determines them, both being in permanent interrelationship. The living beings by their specific sensitivity select their environment, certain aspects of it, what they can only perceive by their senses. The individual is never absolutely influenced and controlled by society. He shapes society as well as society shapes him. The relative weight of the I and the Me within the self depend upon social circumstances. In some of them, the Me is stronger than the I whereas in other occasions the relationship between them is inverted, thereby the self especially relying upon the I rather than upon the Me. For instance, when an individual wishes to protect his property in the community, he will tend to follow the laws of the latter in order to succeed in his enterprise and consequently his Me will be particularly significant in his actions at the expense of his I. By contrast, if one contests some given laws in his community, his I will be necessarily more important than his Me that narrowly reflects these laws.

Thus, by his position, Mead is opposed to the substantialist conceptions that operate within psychology and philosophy and that see the mind and the self as things that strictly belong to the inner individual, already there, already constituted prior to any social relationships and regardless of society. He asserts that both inner and outer dimensions in regard to the individual necessarily have to be taken into consideration. Individuals' particular actions are always socially situated. The “social world” is “a world of selves” and the self exists only to the extent that he enters into relationships with others, with the other selves who share the same social experiences (Mead, 1967 [1934]).

In a now classic of the sociology of knowledge, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1991 [1966]) – who were especially influenced by Alfred Schütz's phenomenology that he imported from Edmund Husserl and applied to social sciences – were also inspired by G. H. Mead's thought among other scholars. Thus, for them, the formation of identity follows a dialectic between society and individual. The idea of dialectic is explicitly borrowed from Marx while that of interplay between society and individual clearly derives from Mead.

More precisely, in their views, identity is an essential dimension of “subjective reality”, but, as every element making up subjective reality, it enters into a dialectical relationship with society. Social processes or social relations that entail the interplays between conscious individuals generate identities. They cause their formation, maintenance, crystallisation, and *a contrario*, their modification and reshaping. Notwithstanding, social processes participating in the creation and establishment of identities are defined by the social structure. Society produces “identity types” – sorts of general modes of being – which characterise more or less all the individuals belonging to a same social group or to a same sociocultural and historical context. Social relations and behaviours in everyday life are affected by this kind of collective or societal “typifications”. However, in turn, identities that stem from the interactions between conscious individuals and the social structure influence this same structure by reproducing it or, on the contrary, by changing it or restructuring it. In sum, if identities always appear in the framework of particular societies that have their own histories, these histories are also created by people who have their own identities. Before “structural realities”, people construct themselves reality.

By their dialectical approach in the sociology of knowledge that has a theoretical and methodological influence that goes beyond this mere specific domain of sociology and *de facto* concerns sociology *tout court* and even other disciplines in social sciences such as anthropology, Berger and Luckmann criticise sociologism and psychologism, the reifying and hypostasising focuses that operate in social sciences, criticisms that, as we can note, are in line with those formulated by Simmel, Melucci or Boudon (see the previous chapter 4).

Hence, their criticisms are particularly addressed to Durkheimism, structural-functionalism, and culturalism resulting from the “culture and personality” School in American cultural anthropology and with advocates such as Edward Sapir (1921), Margaret Mead (1928), Ruth Benedict (1934) and Abram Kardiner (1939). These latter approaches tend to consider identity as a collective thing and an irreducible totality. More specifically, culturalism insists upon the conditioning that cultural models realise on the basic personality of people belonging to the same social group (Berger and Luckmann, 1991 [1966]).

Jean-Claude Kaufmann (2010 [2004]) has proposed one of the most complete syntheses regarding the notion of identity recently within the French sociology.

He holds that identity is a historical process, a phenomenon that emerged with the formation and the consolidation of the nation-State that came to replace traditional and local communities. In order to impose its new social order that was previously insured by the community and because this new institution had to face and organise a wider population and

territory, it started to apply its “institutional programme” – in terms also used before by François Dubet (2002) –, which essentially consisted in attributing to each individual belonging to its jurisdiction a social role and status from above, from the State. In this context of “modernity”, individual identity has begun to appear, notably and materially through identity administrative documents that have allowed the State to locate and identify the individuals. For Kaufmann, this state programme based largely on the responsabilisation of the individual, as the instance of the birth and the development of identity documents shows, has left more room for the autonomy of subjects whereas within communities identity and the individual were strictly determined by the collectivity. Before the growing contradictions inherent in the institutional programme, the empowerment of individuals expanded with their reflective and critical capacity, what eventually entailed the protest against and the crisis of the social system built by the State in the 1960s, notably through what has been called the “new social movements”. In his view, from this period, subjectivities and the construction of the self (the identity) by the proper self have extended and become a social phenomenon. Hence, the phenomenon of the explosion of identities built from below, from the individual (and no longer from above, from the State) is intrinsically linked to the emergence of social movements from the second half of the twentieth century and that have come to “focus on the loss of, the search for, and the affirmation of multiple identities”. This is this expansion of identity within society and notably from social movements that explains to a large extent the proliferation of this same concept, and from the same period, within human and social sciences at large and beyond the sole social theories on social movements epitomised by new social movements theories (Kaufmann, 2010 [2004]: 36). Along with the instances cited previously (in the chapter 4) by Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison (1996 [1991], 1998), we have here a further example of how the social movements’ ethos can influence the scientific and academic noesis.

Nowadays, in Kaufmann’s view, the identity process is in fact shaped by two opposite movements: social frames and subjectivity. Indeed, the growth of subjectivities and self-identity has not meant the total end of social and cultural determinations in favour of full free-will and personal creativity. *De facto*, the subjects need a social basis that they use as a material to construct their identity. But, this social basis does not work only as a resource for the identity building. It also orients, frames and demarcates the possible and available options. It is therefore a constraint as well.

Thus, the social construction of the individual is affected, on the one hand, by socialisation, the “heritage of holistic societies”. People continue to incorporate social roles

and act according to them albeit these roles are less rigid, more changing, briefer and more diverse than those established during the age of the institutional programme.

On the other hand, it also depends on his/her own subjectivity, that is, personal choices decided from mental images that offer possible directions over the life. People now have more ability to intervene themselves in the configuration of their social roles that are less integrated in and more distant from the bureaucratic State.

The main criticism that one can advance regarding Kaufmann's theory on identity is that the latter insists on emotions and images (incorporated social schemes over the existence) at the expense of reflection, rationality or cognition of the individual-subject participating in the process of identity construction. Indeed, for him, the images, which are, in other words, social experiences interiorised during life, therefore constitute the subject's memory and he situates them at an infraconscious level. Thus, reflection and consciousness do not define these images, which are in addition activated and chosen according to their emotional charge and following the circumstances in which the subject is found. Furthermore, by stressing the emotions, Kaufmann, without being assimilated to them, comes closer to collective behaviour theories concerning the study of social movements and of collective action, or, more generally, to Pareto. The latter sees emotions as the principal factor of social action apart from the economic and market sphere. Including, a certain rapprochement with the old psychology of crowds takes place when Kaufmann underlines the unpredictable, spontaneous, violent and dangerous features that may have some identity processes, notably within stigmatised and pauperised social milieus, by manifesting themselves in the form of committed and radicalised collective actions. As we already know, Le Bon (2003 [1895]) better epitomises this kind of social or collective psychology that is today largely outdated in the academic *koine*, albeit it continues sometimes to pervade it, often in an implicit and unspeakable manner as the instance of Kaufmann's theory among others shows it. All these conceptions, mentioned above, by their orientation that put emphasis on affects, emotions or passions, and Kauffman follows to some extent this path as we said, leave little room for the subject's rationality or cognition when they are not radically opposed to the latter (Kaufmann, 2010 [2004]).

Within Portuguese social sciences, the historian and anthropologist José Manuel Sobral is one of the scholars who have well highlighted the links between processes of identification and those of individuation.

For him, national identities, as identities in general, are not "static" or "fixed". They are constantly changing over time according to "situations or contexts" and they are the effect of



“interaction among groups” that establish their “boundaries” (Sobral, 2007b: 142-143). In his view, national identity has tended to be confused with citizenship, at least in the West, since the emergence of nation-states in Europe in the nineteenth century. Despite globalisation and the progressive retreat of nation-states before the affirmation of supra-national and supra-state entities (like the European Union for example), the link between citizenship and national identity is not over. Far from substituting national citizenship, post-national citizenship, like European citizenship, is built from the latter that therefore conserves a central place for the definition of citizenship and collective identity (Sobral, 2007b: 138, 150). Moreover, by accelerating migratory flows, particularly from countries called “southern” (or “poor”) to those called “northern” (or “rich”), globalisation has accentuated national citizenship and political and juridical mechanisms of protection of this citizenship before the “threat” created by the immigration coming from the South. A certain nationalism has reappeared in the age of globalisation that has favoured and multiplied the continuous contacts between different national cultures (Sobral, 2007b: 150-151).

He has developed a conception of identity based on the idea of process. This conception is particularly influenced by symbolic interactionism. Here, as we already know, identity appears as the result of multiple interactions. Thus, individuals play several social roles during daily life, which is characterised by a variety of situations and encounters (Turner, 1978; Hewitt, 2000 [1976]). They have several identities that are shifting and uncertain, never definitively established and never pre-established, because they interpret, as theatrical performers, different roles depending on social circumstances and the kind of relationships with the others (Goffman, 1961, 1959). Similarly, ethnical identity is not the product of a frozen culture, it is not culturally isolated from other ones, but it is rather the consequence of links among diverse groups that have established boundaries in order to be auto-recognisable and recognisable from outside. However, as these boundaries are not impermeable and are moving, identities are permanently redefined through exchanges, negotiations and penetrations among groups of people (Barth, 1969).

Alongside the conceptualisation of identity as a process, Sobral has underlined the distinction between an identity that is defined from the exterior by the society, which classifies or categorises individuals and social groups, and an identity that is produced from inside by individuals or social groups themselves. This distinction also refers to that established by Richard Jenkins (1996). The internal and external dimensions of identity are therefore interrelated. They constitute the two faces of identity. The external dimension is called “nominal identity” because individuals or groups receive a social label from outside or

the rest of the society. The internal dimension is called “virtual identity”. Here, identity is lived experience and the interpretation of oneself by oneself. Sobral uses this distinction to explain the formation of national identities and their maintenance in the age of globalisation. Next to a nominal national identity that is attributed by the State and materialised on identity documents, it exists a virtual national identity, the one that is concretely lived by individuals (Sobral, 2007b: 143). More generally, this distinction refers to the difference between the individual character and the social character of identity, between its “subjective” side, also called individuation, and its “objective” side, named identification as well (Tap, 1986; Sciolla, 2000). Identification is the institutional tool of the individuals’ classification into possible social categories (Tajfel, 1974). Through identification, institutions or groups ascribe to individuals a name, status, roles (professional, national, ethnical, etc.). It is what Nelson Foote (1951: 17) called “proceeds by naming”. Classificatory names and languages have a significant weight, a symbolic power, in the production of a certain stable identity that is therefore defined, to a large extent, by the others (Strauss, 1969; Sciolla, 2005: 336). Nevertheless, identification does not remain alone and it is always mixed with individuation in the identity construction. Individuation is the process of auto-representation by the subject. The latter thinks about himself as a unique being. Although individuation is also built from the links that the subject has with the others, it is formed by “the active and selective incorporation of several identifications and recognitions” by the subject (Sciolla, 2005: 336). The association between identification and individuation is not perfect all the time. An identity that is ascribed to a social group by the society can be partially or completely put into question by this same group, which does not partly or totally recognise itself in this exogenous identification. This challenge can generate, for example, social movements that take place in order to publicly contest the identity assigned and to simultaneously defend an individuation ignored or rejected by the society. This “politics of identity” is the spearhead of ethnical, nationalist, religious, gays and lesbians, feminists (etc.) social movements (Camilleri *et al.*, 1990; Calhoun, 1994).

Along with these general theoretical approaches on identity, more specifically, in the case of studies on social movements, we can, for instance, refer to the works of T.V. Reed and James M. Jasper, which also enter into this general perspective that underlines the interrelationships between socio-cultural determinations and individuation.

Reed (2005: 32-34; 308-309) has shown from the example of civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States that in any social movement there exists a dynamical relationship between the individual and the collectivity, between personal and collective

identity. Movements are composed of individuals who take part in them as individuals. There, they conserve “a sense of individual commitment” that comes to be juxtaposed with “a sense of collective identity”, which is built by the members’ endeavours in order to define their movement. According to him, the civil rights movement is one of the movements that best dealt with the difficult compromise between individuality and collectivity, notably thanks to music and song. Within this movement, freedom, spiritual and gospel songs played a core role in the reinforcement and transformation of individual and group identity. Through their texts, they contributed to mediate between the “I” and the “We”, and eventually to unite these two dimensions. One of the excerpts chosen by Reed and taken from one of their most famous songs, “Deep in my heart I do believe, we shall overcome some day”, exemplifies this collective will to associate the individual and the collective by referring textually, alternately and jointly to the I and the We. If individuals with their specific identity allow the creation of a group identity, conversely, this group identity helps these same individuals to find their own self. Music and song again played a fundamental role here by putting collectively individuals into social and psychic situations, spiritual or mystical experiences, wherein they can go and be beyond their usual limits, go out of themselves – or access a transcendent state – to discover a new self. Collective “self-singing” performances were a crucial step toward the knowledge of selfhood. Besides, not only music and song were decisive in the emergence of a movement identity and for each militant in the definition of their respective identity, but they have also been determinant until today in the positive shaping of Black identity or the idea of “Blackness”, in the United States and beyond around the world. Civil rights movement significantly influenced subsequent movements like urban black movements among many others.

If the insights offered by Reed are interesting, nonetheless, they tend to focus almost exclusively upon art, music, song, and correlatively upon emotions to bring out the phenomenon of identity within social movements. The same kind of criticism addressed to Kauffmann above might be directed toward Reed because his emphasis on art and emotions (via transcendence and religious experiences that are generated by music and song) is realised to the detriment of reflection and rationality whereas the latter necessarily operate including and noticeably within the proper artistic creation.

Jasper (1997) distinguishes three main categories of identity that are closely intertwined and that influence each other: “Personal identity”, “collective identity” and “movement identity”.

Personal identity is “a sense of who one is, a sense of self”. The individual recognises in himself particular qualities, has special “activities and interests”, he feels a member of some collectivities. This kind of identity is a consequence of “idiosyncratic biographies of individuals”, which are also constituted out of external cultural references that compose collective identities. It characterises the biographical aspect of social movements. Even though it is never stable and does not form a unified whole, their transformation is slow and anticipatory.

The second class of identity, collective identity, regards the feeling of a collection of people to form a group, a sort of community that has its own limits, attributes, concerns and in this sense differs from other collective belongings. Collective identities are elements of the general culture of a society. To illustrate this type of identity, Jasper refers to “caste, class, religion, race or ethnicity, sexual preference, and gender” and to geographical criteria like “nation, region, and neighbourhood”.

Although they can fuse in some cases, the last form of identity, movement identity, is not akin to the previous one to the extent that its specificity rests upon the fact that it emerges when a range of individuals and groups come to consider themselves and by others as “a force” overtly aiming to a certain social transformation. If some social movements say that they represent and act on behalf of a certain collective identity like women or Afro-American movements, others do not do it, such as animal rights or anti-nuclear movements. Movement identities are shaped by the interplay, often conflictive, between inner “movement culture” in which biographies and personal identities participate and the outer wider culture wherein collective identities take place.

Within movement identity, several sub-identities can be formed. “Organisational identity” occurs when activists, alongside their identification with their whole movement, are particularly close to a specific group within it, notably because they created it. “Tactical identity” concerns this time the fact that militants tend to refer especially to a type of action or strategy that operates among others inside their movement such as “direct action” or “radical vanguard”. In addition, beyond their movement identity, militants may adhere to a larger militant culture that influences various movements, what Jasper names “activist identity”. Depending on the movement, some identities are more salient than others. Thus, for Jasper, in regard to post-citizenship movements that generally concern humanity at large and/or nature, organisational identity is normally less relevant than the tactical and activist ones (Jasper, 1997: 85-90).

The merit of Jasper's analysis is that, albeit he gives above all a special attention to emotions for explaining social movements and identity constitution within them, he also highlights the role of cognition, morals, instrumental rationality, and their relationships with emotions. Thus, he overcomes both collective behaviours theories that essentially stress, as we already know, the emotional and a-rational factors, and resource mobilisations and political process theories that, on the contrary, as we also stated repeatedly, put sole emphasis upon teleological rationality. However, its consideration of reason in all its aspects (cognitive, axiological, communicative, instrumental) remains too weak and implicit in relation to the great importance he ascribes to affects. The former are much less theoretically and empirically explored than the latter that receive *de facto* a privileged development in all his analysis. Hence, it would have been necessary that he more extensively and better reports on the saliency of the different types of rationalities in the process of social movements and identity construction (Jasper, 1997).

#### **7.4: Identity and otherness:**

The problematic of otherness cannot be seriously avoided when one decides to focus on the study of identity. For Benoist (2010 [1977]: 17), otherness is an essential part of identity. Through a specular relationship, the identity can be established only if the other appears (*idem*: 22). Both are therefore closely linked. Furthermore, according to Lévi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss and Benoist, 2010 [1977]: 331-332), the concept of otherness is more salient than that of identity to describe reality inasmuch as the comparison between living beings, societies, groups or cultures always shows gaps that cannot be filled – the “discontinuous” being “an irreducible datum” that is more pervasive than the “continuous” although there still exists a certain dialectic between both.

The specific question of otherness has been traditionally and more particularly considered by anthropology given its usual research field in societies different from the West or in social groups within Western societies perceived by the majority inside these same societies as “atypical” (for instance, peasants, foreigners, ethnical minorities, “deviants”, and so forth). Finally, the ultimate aim of anthropology is to study human difference and diversity, not only to know the Other but also to know oneself and thus, more globally, the human being.

In a way recalling to a certain extent post-colonial theories, Benoist (2010 [1977]: 18-19) asserted that, from a methodological, epistemological and ethical point of view, the ethnologist during his fieldwork cannot ignore or cancel the difference of the studied people by reducing their identity to his own categories or patterns of thought. Otherwise, the ethnologist creates a situation of “ethnocentrism of the annexation” in which “the other is equated with the same” (*idem*). Indeed, most of the societies observed by anthropology belong to “another space”, “a different topology from the topology carried by the Western logos” such as the Mossi, notably analysed by Michel Izard (2010 [1977]), or the Samo, studied by Héritier as we saw (Lévi-Strauss and Benoist, 2010 [1977]: 318).

The philosopher and anthropologist Francis Affergan (1987), in his “criticism of anthropology”, considers that this science, which has been constituted in its empirical methods, theories and epistemology from the Other conceived as “observable object/subject”, does not provide paradoxically an elaborated or advanced presentation of otherness. To the contrary, he states that otherness through anthropology has been reduced to a “difference” wherein the qualitative dimension has been removed in favour of the sole quantitative aspect – anthropology fundamentally classifies, attributes places and functions, evaluates the norms, compares, measures the distances – and in which the encounter and existential links between the ethnologists and the studied populations have been largely suppressed – anthropology thus transforms “a culture *in vivo*” into “a culture *in vitro*”, but the latter, unlike the former, does not exist out there. Hence, a “quantified otherness” and an isolated otherness without relations with the exterior, and more particularly, a “subject-indigenous” without contact with the subject-anthropologist are the unique forms of otherness – an otherness necessarily partial – which have essentially interested anthropology since its emergence as a science until recently.

To recuperate and show a full otherness, and finally to solve the main problem of anthropology that explains to a large extent its contemporary crisis of legitimacy, Affergan suggests as a possible way that anthropology follows “a phenomenology of the exotic or diastemic consciousness”. In this sense, it especially has to reinsert the qualitative dimension of otherness, examine the nexus between the ethnologists (the allochthons) and “the indigenous” (the autochthons), and more generally to take into account and study practices and behaviours that are ignored or taken for granted, such as “the eye, face, colour, enunciation, dialogism, dividing”.

Alongside anthropology, otherness also crosses all the work of the philosopher and historian Michel Foucault who has himself influenced anthropology and other disciplines. Notably inspired by the historic School of the Annales and by Georges Canguilhem’s

researches on knowledge and the questions of the “normal” and the “pathological” (Canguilhem, 1991 [1966]), he dedicated himself to analysing historical forms of marginality, transgression or deviance in the long term essentially through the figures of the Madness (Foucault, 1976a [1961]), the Incarcerated (Foucault, 1993 [1975]), the Homosexuality – “sexual heterogeneities” (Foucault, 1976b: 51), “the boy’s honour” (Foucault, 1984a: 225-236), “the boys” (Foucault, 1984b: 217-266) –, the “Abnormals” (Foucault, 1999). Beyond the particular study of this otherness situated on the fringes of society, this is the proper subject at large that is examined through his work.

The subjectification and objectification of the human being have come to be possible to a large extent because of “dividing practices” that create inner scissions for the subject and separations among the subjects (Foucault, 1994c: 223).

While madness and non-madness, reason and non-reason (or unreason) were not clearly distinguished and separated before the Classical Age yet, from this period the dichotomy has come to be definitively established on behalf of “the man of reason” and at the expense of “the man of madness”. In Antiquity, the Greek Logos did not have an opposite. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, madness formed part of daily life and appeared as a sort of “esthetical fact” present within the social universe. Madness, revelation and truth were even related. But, from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, madness has come to be treated as a mental illness and managed by medicine, its personnel, techniques (of physical and psychological violence) and institutions (of internment, social segregation and exclusion). There is no longer common language and dialogue between the modern man and the mad, but only silence, which has allowed a “monologue of reason *on* madness” through “the language of psychiatry”. The man of reason maintains a link with madness only “through the abstract universality of illness” while the man of madness can enter into contact with the former solely via a reason as abstract as illness – reason that imposes him “order, physical and moral constraint, anonymous pressure of the group, obligation of conformity”.

By this large division, the West has confined the experience of madness to its limits – this space that each culture defines as the Exterior, which defines the culture that is rejected in the same way as the own values of this culture. This is essentially and first of all from its rejected space that paradoxically a culture is created, begins its history and establishes its “positivity” – its values being thereafter transmitted during the historical continuity. The history of the West, its “great *oeuvre*”, has been made possible, edified and realised from this space that is for it, on the contrary, the non-history, “the lack of *oeuvre*”. The Western culture is therefore based upon “a structure of refusal”: Its reason cannot exist without the presence

and rejection of madness, the truth without dementia, the sense without the non-sense, the language without “words below or without language”, the *oeuvre* without acts that are not the *oeuvre*, and so forth.

Madness therefore integrates a space of limits or exteriority – “immobile structures of the tragic” from which the dialectic of Western history has been developed – in which other forms of “experiences-limits” also appear. In the case of the West, Foucault mentions the tragic itself, the East, the dream, sexual proscriptions, which are separated from and opposed to “the universality of Western *ratio*”. Quoting Nietzsche, he asserts that the history of the West rests upon a tragic structure that is precisely “the negation, omission and silent consequences of tragedy”. The East appears for the West as the point of origin, and potentially and ideally of return, the space open to its “colonising reason”, but it is never totally occupied because it remains on the edge. The dream is expelled into onirism. Sexual prescriptions and proscriptions have given birth to forms of repression that therefore locate the experience of desire at the border of the Western world and show the origin of its morals (Foucault, 1976a [1961], 1994a: 159-169).

The phenomenon of jails follows a historical movement akin to that of madness. The practice of internment or imprisonment of the mad people that has accompanied the constitution of madness as illness has also appeared at the level of the management of delinquency or criminality. Until the Middle Ages, the jail was not the punishment that was practised following a fault yet. It is only from the seventeenth century with the formation and the development of the large nation-states and capitalism that the jail has become the main form of punishment for practical reasons, that is, in order to face a larger population and correlatively a criminality potentially and numerically more important, especially among the poor masses.

Madness and criminality are therefore treated as forms of transgression – madness is a transgression of *good sense* and criminality is a deviation in relation to what is socially considered as the good, the permitted, the legal, the law. And, as forms of transgression, madness and criminality, despite their respective specificities, have led to forms of modern repression that essentially rest upon the imprisonment (Foucault, 1993 [1975], 1994b: 205-209, 296-306).

More generally, this otherness studied by Foucault regards the generic category of the “abnormals” – a large and ill-defined category that essentially regroups “the human monster”, “the individual to be corrected” and “the onanist”. The human monster is a juridical-biological notion that concerns the human being who both transgresses the laws of society and



the laws of nature, an ill-formed being who is not therefore totally human. Within Western juridical history, this notion with its real punitive consequences has especially affected hermaphrodite people. The individual to be correct is the individual who does not respect the normativity of his social group (the army, school, workshop, workplace, family, society at large, and so forth), and consequently has to be rectified through “techniques of discipline”, processes of “dressage of the body, behaviour, aptitudes”, procedures of imprisonment. Vis-à-vis onanism, infantile masturbation has come to be considered, from the eighteenth century, as a “problem”, a pathology at the origin of a set of diverse physical diseases throughout one’s life, and as such, it has led to a medical administration with significant social effects such as the familial reorganisation around the parents and the doctor. The medicalisation of sexuality and onanism has favoured the passage from the extended family to the nuclear family because parents have been encouraged to be closer to their children without intermediaries around them, except the advice coming from medicine, in order to face this “disorder” – the absence of parents and their substitution by other people have been seen as the main factors of the latter (Foucault, 1999, 1994b: 822-828).

This approach of an otherness as dominated also constitutes the heart of post-colonial theories (Barker, 1985; Bhabha, 1994). Within these theories, the analyses of Edward Said are among the most known. Inspired by Foucault and his notional dyad power/knowledge, Said (1995 [1978]) considered Orientalism as a discourse, a type of knowledge or a corpus of different genres of texts (literary, philosophical, scientific writings, and so forth) produced in the West by Western intellectuals, artists, scholars, and that has accompanied Western institutions of power and their political practices in the shaping, the domination and the occupation of what has been constituted as Orient and Oriental through this same discourse. According to his own words, Occident has essentially elaborated its identity of “Occident” through the concomitant and depreciating elaboration of an *Alter Ego* – “Orient”. In a binary mode, it has built its positivity out of the construction of a negativity that serves as a mirror reflecting an antithetic image – positivity and negativity necessarily ideological and that appear as being hegemonic, thereby denying the complex and multiple reality of the world, or, better said, the worlds that are “orientalised” or indifferently assimilated to the label “Orient” in large measure because of Orientalism as a kind of discourse or knowledge and its diverse Orientalist authors.

Although to a lesser extent than in anthropology, the question of otherness is also present in sociology, notably through the traditions of symbolic interactionism. The concept of “the generalised other” put forward by G. H. Mead epitomises this scientific inclination. In

his terms, as we have seen above, the individual's self can be formed only when this same individual is interacting with the others – other individuals who are also forming their own self during the interplays –, and with whom he is involved in common social activities and situations.

Because all of Simmel's sociology and philosophy is based on his core concept of reciprocal action – alongside that of form – which he also calls reciprocity, correlation or relativity, and since this concept necessarily entails at least a relation between one with another, the question and the analysis of otherness is omnipresent within Simmel's important work. This concept of reciprocal action also shows that he is against unilateral determinations and monism, and he always highlights, by contrast, the mutual dependencies and influences between the elements, the dualities, and even the dualisms, within the unities. Particularly influenced by Hegel, he tends to show the dialectical links between the elements, their connection in spite of their character that apparently and at first glance seems to be paradoxical or antinomic. He insists upon the relations thesis/antithesis, binary and antithetic relations that he nevertheless conciliates and overcomes by the elaboration of syntheses.

Among the most salient parts of his studies, we can refer, for instance, to his observations on the Woman, the German (Simmel, 2004 [1989]), the Poor, the Stranger, the relation domination/subordination (Simmel, 2010 [1908]), the conflict (Simmel, 2010 [1908], 2009b, 2004 [1989]).

His insights into the Woman-being and the German essence apparently and at first glance seem to be closer to philosophy or metaphysics than sociology or social sciences. Notwithstanding, they have implications that remain pertinent for proper sociological understanding, notably regarding the relations between men and women, the problems of gender, feminism and women social movements, the questions concerning ethnical and national identities.

Thus, according to his own words, the dominant values within society are masculine values, what makes them “objective” or “absolute”. Therefore, the values and norms of society essentially rest upon these values to the detriment of the feminine values to the extent that there are no superior entities above the categories of masculine and feminine.

However, to face masculine domination, women have created their own system of values that remains linked to the social values, that is, the masculine values. Thus, a twofold system of values exists and is closely correlated. If the woman being depends upon the man being, notwithstanding, the opposite relation is also true. Indeed, the man being is not only the

absolute being – albeit this absolutisation is perhaps more ideal than real –, he is also and fundamentally a relative being who strictly depends on the woman being.

Furthermore, for women, the woman being is already an absolute being in and for herself because she is essentially a unitary being focused upon herself while the man being can become absolute only in the social. The Man-type – or ideal, and not necessarily, far from it, all the concrete individual men – follows a teleological dynamic: The man being is essentially oriented toward the objectified and external action, what shows his duality, his necessary relativity vis-à-vis the outer world and finally his immanent incompleteness. His realisation or his entelechy relies upon this direction outside himself unlike the Woman-type who is sufficient in herself to reach fullness (Simmel, 2004 [1989]: 55-122).

In relation to German identity, Simmel asserted that German spirit is dialectical because the German being is not only focused upon himself in order to reach his perfection or entelechy – unlike the English and French being –, he is also oriented toward the Other. He needs otherness and duality in order to know himself and form his unity. In addition to characters that constitute his “Germanism” (*Deutschtum*) *stricto sensu*, he seeks his German being into the different and even the opposed. In this sense, the German being has never managed to create definitive forms, his productions being always confronted with and automatically called into question by their opposites that have the same positive values. This continuous lack of form makes that his teleology is asymptotic or means the infinite. Similarly, the unknown is a fundamental datum in the history of German culture, the idea of contradiction – and correlatively the dialectic – also occupies a key position as illustrated by Hegel’s philosophy. For that matter, his thought received an extremely favourable reception among the German people because he found the words and conceptualise what the German being already felt and thought about his own reality (Simmel, 2004 [1989]: 405-411).

Regarding the situation of the Poor, its assistance has come to be treated more and more as an abstraction from the passage of communal help to the State intervention. Private charity deals with the poor whereas the State is concerned with poverty. Thus, under State organisation, the Poor has become a “universal” and objectified category, the singular individual being ignored.

However, the Poor is an actor within social interaction; he is not a passive being within an asymmetrical relation and who benefits without activity from outer help (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 453-490).

Simmel’s observations on the social situation of the Poor led him to the question of the gift or present. Unlike appearances, the gift is irreducible to the act of giving and the actor

who gives; it creates a situation in which the beneficiary has to either accept it or refuse it, that is, there is necessarily a reaction from the recipient that, in turn, conduces to another action from the giver, and the like (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 579).

His analyses about the gift and present have explicitly and implicitly influenced ulterior interpretations on this issue. We can refer here to one of the most important theorists of this matter, namely Marcel Mauss.

Indeed, for Mauss, the gift is never an isolated act that would concern only and unilaterally the donor. The donee who receives the gift is morally constrained to accomplish two acts: first, that of accepting and, then, that of giving back. Gifts entail counter-gifts that are realised within either “non-agonistic” relations, which are based on the reciprocal exchange of goods having an equal value, or “agonistic” relations that rely on relations of rivalry or competition such as the potlatch – a system of ceremonial exchanges of goods among diverse and opposed social groups within Amerindian societies located in the north-west coast of the Pacific, in Canada and the United States. Thus, donors and donees are always in reciprocal action and dependency (Mauss, 1980 [1923-1924]; Godelier, 2002 [1991], 1996).

Consecutively, one can easily observe the link between Mauss’ theory and that of Simmel about the gift, link that is not always acknowledged by current social scientists, especially by anthropologists who wish absolutely to see in Mauss a pioneer or a precursor.

The situation of the stranger is like that of the poor. The stranger like the poor is perceived as a general category or an abstract type, and never as an individual person because he is seen from what he has in common, or, in other words, from what is shared, general or universal. These common characteristics, since they are general and consequently light, highlight more the particular differences. The Stranger is the “synthesis between the closeness and the distant” (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 482-483, 663-668).

The relations of domination/subordination always entail, in return, a certain liberty of those who are dominated and subordinated. Although it apparently seems that the link is unilateral or even though at first glance there is an impression of a strictly and exclusively “top-down” orientation in this form of relation, the reciprocity of action *de facto* always exists in any case – the dominated or the subordinated always having some degree of personal autonomy that varies according to the circumstances and the content of the relation domination/subordination (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 161-264).

Simmel’s view on the link between domination and subordination have also inspired more or less overtly, directly or indirectly, posterior studies on the topic. We can cite for

example the works of James C. Scott (1990, 1985). The latter has shown that – including within the cases of extreme material deprivation and the denial of freedom like inside caste systems, slavery, serfdom, concentration camps, prisons, and so forth – the dominated remain in control of themselves in that they run their own consciousness and face hegemonic power, especially through what Scott calls “hidden transcripts” – a sort of underground resistance that often takes the form of cultural and symbolic actions such as gossip, folktales, songs, jokes and theatre.

The conflict, beyond its destructive and anomic character for people and societies that is well-known by the *doxa*, is nevertheless a form of socialisation as peaceful forms as well. Within a certain limit, the conflict owns a socialising function, may even cause social cohesion and contribute to the perennial of forms of interactions – the principle of struggle and that of union tending to coexist.

The struggle of a group against another group – more than their common alliance – fosters the immanent cohesion of each group in conflict. Under the form of war or competition, the opposition gives a more accentuated sense of the unity and identity to the elements of the belligerent group and makes the defence of this unity and identity challenged by the adversary’s hostility an imperative for them. The conflict against the Other, especially if this is about a stranger, strengthens identity. Most human groups need a certain dose of external conflict in order to be able to exist as such. Since one of the main representational capacities of the human beings is to perceive differences, the consciousness of uniqueness and sameness can solely become significant for the individuals from the emergence of the opposite consciousness of otherness for these same individuals. Beyond the exogenous relations of the groups, the conflict understood both as cause of social disorganisation and, paradoxically, of social links also concern groups that stand immanent tensions. Indeed, on the one hand, internal conflicts may risk provoking definitive ruptures, if they are too exacerbated, but, on the other hand, if this extremity is not reached, they have the advantage of better highlighting for the elements in opposition what is common and what founds their unity and shared identity. Moreover, the conflict between elements always presupposes some degree of previous union between them. For example, if trade relations are essentially based on competition among merchants, nonetheless, they also lead to trade agreements and conventions among them that enhance a certain social and economic solidarity and in turn make possible trade struggle. Alongside their individual interest that consists in making personal profit by selling and buying their goods to the detriment of the sales and purchases of the other merchants, they also have collective interests as social category of merchant that

imply, for instance, the definition of common rules for the successful realisation of their respective business. Most antagonisms within societies tend to be regulated in order to ease them, to eradicate them or, on the contrary, depending on the type of conflict, to allow them to flourish inside a controlled frame. Not all oppositions appear as problematic for the continuity of societies. Some social systems like the capitalist system are based to a large extent on inherent confrontations. Alongside social groups, whatever their size, from the nation-state or federations of nations to the smallest collective social unity, the socialising and anomic functions of the conflict regard the most elementary inter-individual relations as well, like friendship or love between two persons. When they are not extreme, disputes lead to reconciliation instead of separation, reconciliation that reinforces existing friendship or love. Within some limits, opposition therefore contributes to unity (Simmel, 2009b: 87-92, 2010 [1908]: 265-346, 2004 [1989]: 355-382).

*In fine*, Simmel proposed three *a priori* concerning forms of socialisation. While the third one relies upon the idea according to which the individuals believe consciously or not that the modern division of labour would enable everyone to find his place within the socio-economic organisation, the two first *a priori* regard the representation of the others within relationships. The first one presupposes that individuals solely have a partial knowledge of the other individuals with which they enter into contact in the same way as they know themselves only partially. This representational shortcoming is completed by a process of typification or generalisation from which the individuals ascribe their interlocutors a social or supra-individual identity alongside the representations of their individuality. Like the knowledge of the singularity of the Other, these categorical ascriptions never correspond to the entire reality of the individual – by assuming that there is already a minimum of resemblance. For the individuals, their acquaintances are perceived both as private and singular persons and as collective beings, that is, like functionaries, officers, colleagues belonging to a same professional group, and so forth. Conversely, and this is the second *a priori* suggested by Simmel, which constitutes a chiasmus with the previous one, the interlocutors are not only conceived as social beings but also as unique individualities. Beyond the repetition and style effect, these two *a priori* allow Simmel to insist upon the closely intertwined character of the representation of the Other who is therefore seen both as social and extra-social, or as supra-individual and individual (Simmel, 2010 [1908]: 68-79).

Hence, as one can see, in a similar way as for the problematic of identity, the perspectives in social sciences about otherness are either holistic, or individualist, or a concomitant compromise between both.

## 7.5: Conjectures and final considerations:

In the same way as activists think about the world and consecutively theorise on it – as we observed it in the previous part –, they also think about themselves and theorise on who they are, where they come from and on who they should and must be. They follow a temporality in which the past (their social origins), the present (their current life) and, more significantly, the future or the becoming (projections of invented and desired selves that can become possible and be concretised within forthcoming projects and actions) are intellectually reworked but not necessarily in a linear way. The opposite is indeed more common. If the periods of life are linked, they are less often apprehended in a strictly diachronic mode. Thus, they think on the sense of their being – the concept of sense having a twofold signification: meaning and orientation of their existence.

By this reflexive process, they necessarily come to define the Other as well. This otherness is present in two dimensions. First, these are the other entities, different from their social movement, and the other people in what they are different beyond their similitude – the *idios* before the *koinos* or the singular, the particular before the common. This notion of *koinos* is usually translated at large by the ideas of “a human nature”, “a unity of the human being”, “a universal identity of the human being”, or of “a transcendental subjectivity” (Benoist, 2010 [1977]: 14). And, then, it is also about the other self – the inner different selves and the thought future possible selves that are different from the represented current and past selves.

Thus, cognitive activity regards, on the one hand, the constitution of representations of the *cosmos* and the related prescriptive and evaluative ideas on it, and, on the other hand, the construction of representations, norms and valorisations of selves. Cognitive rationality and by extension axiological rationality – or alethic and deontic logic – therefore concern the “out there” and the proper “I” (and the “We” and the “Them”) in a certain existentialist fashion. People cannot give a sense to their actions if they do not give a sense to their life. Definition of reality and definition of the existence are two faces intimately related. Ontology is therefore situated in two levels: the search for *what is* and the search for *who I am* in what is. More generally, activists participate in the conception of the human being, in the definition of the meaning of the human life, or in philosophical anthropology. Furthermore, along with

cognitive and axiological rationality, and correlatively alongside communicative reason since the construction of movement identity is a collective process that implies people who argue among them, identity formation relies also upon instrumental reasons. Indeed, people can have diverse interests to identify with specific social movements in addition to values and positive considerations about themselves and the others. As we saw in the previous part, the nature of these interests may be functionalist, pragmatist, utilitarian, based on class or socio-economic positions or on the will to power and resentment. The study of praxis thus ineluctably implies the study of identity. The sociology of action and of rationality necessarily derives toward the sociology of identity and of otherness. Social movements are a chapter of sociology that allows by their nature to give more easily prominence to these links.

In Simmelian terms, individuals proceed by induction, that is, they generalise from diverse particular cases. They create general concepts or universal categories that organise, put together, distinguish, classify heterogeneous elements or different sensible perceptions throughout their similitudes. By this process of abstraction or typification, individuals manage to know their immediate physical world, their relationships with it, their social world or their links with the other individuals. Finally, they come to represent the others and themselves thanks to this formalisation or modelling. Conversely, they proceed by deduction as well insofar as they also seek to reach the knowledge of the singular things from general extrapolations, syntheses or taxonomies. In the same way, this cognitive process allows them to know their immanent self and all the particularities around them and beyond.

Nevertheless, cognition is not pure. Indeed, cognition of external reality and of *Ego* are functions of the context in which the thinking and conscious subjects are situated. They learn to know and know the world and themselves through interactions with other subjects, “the generalised other” at large to speak with G. H. Mead. Activists interplay among them as well as with other individuals who form part of other social groups, of other social institutions, and who sometimes explicitly represent them and officially act on behalf of them. Action is reciprocal, as Simmel argued. Furthermore, militants are usually a kind of stigmatised, “deviant” or “anomic” otherness from other perspectives than theirs in society, and the former know that they often have to deal with these negative eyes, that they must act upon and against these ascriptions. Subjects’ social, economic, cultural, political and historical context imposes frames upon them, frames that orient to a certain degree their definitions of the world and of themselves albeit they have a capacity of acting on these predefined frames and consecutively of modifying them, a capacity that varies, in turn, according to their context. Following again Mead, the “I” and the “Me” through the self are inseparable albeit in the case



of social movements the I tends to be stronger than the Me because activists aspire to modify their context and reject several aspects of it – if not everything for the most radicalised and revolutionary of them. Or, in other words, like in Berger and Luckmann's terms, there is necessarily a dialectic between the individual and the society in regard to identity as for most of social phenomena.

The word “subject” has *de facto* two contrary meanings and this semantic duality perfectly reflects the character, both autonomous and paradoxically heteronomous, of individuals. Indeed, to be a subject, it is to be subordinate according to the Latin etymology – *subjectum* means what is subordinate, *subjectus* is submitted. Correlatively, a subject is a person submitted to a power or an authority, notably a sovereign. This may also be a submission to all kinds of external influences that are independent of personal will and therefore uncontrollable by the concerned people like for example illness. However, paradoxically, the subject is also the main element of something – a discourse, a text, a work, an action, and so forth – and therefore this is no longer here the subordinate element. In grammar and logic, a subject in a sentence is a word, an expression, a phrase or a proposition to which at least another expression or proposition is attributed or predicated. The subject also performs or does the action of the principal verb in an active form. To be a subject, this is also to be actor. By contrast, in a passive sentence, the subject becomes affected by the action of the verb. Here, we renew with the original meaning of the word and the syntax shows us again the ambivalence of the term.

In philosophy, the subject is usually conceived today as the being who thinks and feels in contrast with the object of thinking and feeling. It is synonymous of self and of mind. This current sense, inherited especially from Descartes' cogito, Kant's criticism and Hegel's dialectic, contrasts with the meaning ascribed by the scholastic and mediaeval noetic according to which the subjective being (*esse subjective*) is the concrete and existing thing regardless of the mind whilst the objective being (*esse objective*) concerns the represented thing in the mind. In an Aristotelian view, a subject (*hupokeimenon*) is also a substance differentiated from its attributes. For Simmel, subject and object are closely embedded into each other. The human subject is both subject and object of himself. He has become subject only when he has managed to create a distance toward himself, a distance that allows him to consider himself, and not only the world around him, as an object that can be thought by him. That is this subjective faculty, specifically human, of putting oneself as an object that makes possible, in turn, the consciousness of oneself by oneself, the existence of the subject. Subject and object are in reciprocal relation and dependency. Beyond the sole individual and against

all tendencies toward atomism or solipsism, this reciprocity between the subject and the object also concerns the interrelations among individuals. Objectivity stems from the relativity among subjectivities. In a similar vein, according to Mead's words, objectivity is created by the interactions among the subjects insofar as objectivity is a common or "universal" result of these interactions and it is shared by these subjects.

The verb "to subject" means in English "to subdue" or "to subjugate", that is, "to subordinate". The act of subjecting gives to his author the capacity of submitting and he is not therefore the object but the subject of subjection. Thus, the subject implies the subjection but also *a contrario* agency, action, authorship and the notion of person.

Given the polytopies and the heterotopies, in the sense of plural and different places, it is therefore necessary to carry out a sort of topology, a study of the places in which the actors are situated, by taking into account their histories. This is what I have tried to do especially in the first part of this research by examining the Portuguese context in relation to local social movements linked to the phenomenon of alter-globalisation.

Furthermore, by considering the interactions among the individuals-subjects, and among them, their context, and their histories, I have opted for a processual (or dynamist) and correlative perspective regarding the identity construction, against the fixist, innatist and substantialist (or essentialist) visions on this issue.

In sum, my theoretical and methodological approach in regard to identity follows a certain interactionist and dialectical tradition of thought such as it was expressed by authors like Simmel, G. H. Mead, and Berger and Luckmann – a tradition that allows to overcome the one-sided and partial holistic points of view, and correlatively which tends to consider fully and in all its complexity the problematic of identity.

In addition to their context, individuals-subjects' reflexive praxes on themselves – in the same way as those concerning their actions, behaviours and beliefs – interlace with emotions and incorporated traditions (but which are also often intellectually re-evaluated or reworked). However, unlike Kaufmann and other theorists emphasising the a-rational aspects in the identity construction, I do not consider that emotions and images inherited from socialisation over life are more determinant than reflection or rationality in the work of identity production. For these theorists, the latter would be secondary in relation to the former when they are not totally denied or neglected. It is difficult in fact to measure the relative part of each of these variables in the process of identity building. They are perhaps incommensurable. Nevertheless, we shall see in the following chapters – as we saw it in the previous ones – through the empirical material regarding Portuguese social movements related to alter-

globalisation that the reflective or rational part (rationality taken in the large meaning that we have ascribed to it and equated with cognition) is essential. Having said that, I do not question the influence, also notable, of emotions and traditions.

## Chapter 8

### The identities of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements

#### 8.1: “Economists”, “Non-economists” and “Alter-economists”:

In chapter 2, we said that the main activists of ECON Portugal composed the executive committee of the movement and during my fieldwork there were among them especially Basilio, Helena, Eduardo, Victor, and Sofia.

Basilio studied economics at university in the Portuguese capital. He graduated in this scientific discipline and considers himself as an economist. He rejects, with some former colleagues and students in economics who also participate in ECON or not, the current dominant conception of economics that rests on (neo)classical economics and (neo)liberalism. According to them, it is a narrow vision of what it is economics, a social science that is, in reality, much more complex and rich with diverse and opposite theories and paradigms. In a certain way, they wish to rehabilitate economics by defending another kind of economics<sup>1</sup>.

However, we must state that not all the members of ECON are economists or studied economics albeit economics is the principal focus of the movement and even though several militants are or consider themselves as economists. In other words, albeit ECON Portugal's members put *economia* (economy/economics) at the heart of their activism, they are far from

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Basilio, 24 April 2010.

all having a training in economics. The militants' profile is relatively heterogeneous on the whole: For example, among them, I met a physician, doctor, singer, restaurant owner, retired person. During a popular dinner at VERDE, among the militants of ECON who were present, only Basilio was effectively an economist by university training.

Nevertheless, even though there exist activists who are not officially professional economists, or albeit they were not trained in economics and did not graduate from recognised academic institutions, they are strongly interested in the matter and have developed a significant economic knowledge through their activism in ECON that works, in this sense, as a sort of theoretical and practical school. Indeed, ECON's members are led to learn economic theories, to follow economic and political actuality over their militancy.

Thus, they acquire a certain economic culture through their interactions among them, the organisation of exoteric and esoteric discussions and debates, the reading of books and articles related to economics and political economy, the preparation of documents for the public, the diffusion of economic information and knowledge, the writing of articles, pamphlets, tracts and other texts, and more generally, through various epistemic actions. This learning in and by the militancy conduces them to develop a critical sense and analyses of the socio-economic and political situations in Portugal and the world.

The original distance toward *economia* is not at all a problem that would prevent the commitment of non-economists. Instead, the opposite phenomenon occurs. In ECON, there are non-economists – and they are numerous – because, precisely, they are not economists and they aspire to be so in a certain sense through the movement, or to be alter-economists – by expounding an alter-economics and practising another or an alter-economy that contrasts with the current and hegemonic economic model essentially based on the theoretical and practical principles of neoliberalism –, or to become economic critics.

For several activists, it is this first distance vis-à-vis *economia* that has facilitated its criticism and also, paradoxically, the desire to become closer to this matter. Then, this desire or will to proximity, in turn, allows them to better know it, to better know it in order to finally better challenge it to the extent that this is the central organising principle of our societies and it has deleterious effects that are not ethically accepted by them and a majority of people.

Helena is retired and fond of camping. She often makes caravan voyages across Spain, France and Italy. Sofia is a physician. Eduardo is a doctor. Victor is a restaurant owner and manager in the area of Caparica near Lisbon. He is also a singer and musician as we saw. During a popular dinner at VERDE, sat down near ECON's members, I listened to Helena and Sofia who told me that they had little knowledge in *economia*. They added that they were

not experts in economics because of their background – their studies and job. They therefore considered that it was sometimes difficult for them to understand and follow all the discourses and actions in ECON. In their terms, they sometimes felt down over the preparation of written documents of the movement and during the participation in collective debates.

However, *de facto*, while they were talking with me, they showed that they were able to put forward critical, interesting and accurate analyses about current economy. Indeed, they paradoxically seemed to own a critical culture of *economia* that was quite developed. During the dinner, and in other occurrences as well, their analyses on the financial system, financial and economic exchanges, economics in general were deep. For instance, they were able to spontaneously and publicly describe in detail, with a significant oratory ease, during several minutes without any interruption, without any pre-planned preparation, and in a critical way, the macro-structural and micro-structural mechanisms of the debt<sup>2</sup>.

According to Basilio, as we saw in the chapter 5 and we mentioned again above, “ECON focuses on economics”. Nevertheless, as he added himself, the movement is interested more and more in ecology, other topics and scientific disciplines, mainly through and thanks to the development of its contacts and nexus with other social movements that do not primarily stress economy/economics, such as VERDE and its essential interest in ecology. In one of the tee-shirts of ECON that are regularly exhibited in its stalls over public events, the following aphorism was written: “Do not attack the climate! Attack the system!”. This epitome shows the movement’s interest given to ecology.

Nonetheless, the awareness and promotion of affinities do not prevent the militants of ECON from highlighting the dissimilarities in relation to other movements as well. Hence, for example, Basilio and Helena noticed that the members of ECON Portugal are physically different, in their aspect, from VERDE’s members. According to them, the activists belonging to their movement have a classic look: They are normally well dressed, men often wear a jacket and have short hair like Basilio himself. By contrast, they considered that VERDE’s militants look like “hippies”, with long hair, dreadlocks, and sloppy clothes. As Basilio said, “there are no dreadlocks in ECON Portugal unlike VERDE”<sup>3</sup>. They thought that this essentially resulted from the fact that they have diverse focuses at the root: As we know, “VERDE’s activists are fundamentally ecologists and close to libertarianism whereas ECON’s participants are above all interested in economic questions”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Conversation during a popular dinner in VERDE, 25 March 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, 25 March 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Basilio and Helena, 10 April 2011.

The awareness of differences, beyond similarities and convergences, leads to maintain a certain distance between the movements. Hence, for instance, during a popular dinner in which ECON Portugal also participated<sup>5</sup>, in the dining room where the stalls of ECON and VERDE were installed, a person exterior to these two latter movements, who came to eat and while he was asking Basilio some questions about ECON Portugal, noted that there was not really much mixture between them in the same way as there were two distinct stalls, two separate tables and two different money-boxes.

More generally, alongside VERDE and ECON, as we saw in the chapter 2, Basilio is a militant in various social movements in Lisbon. In this sense, for the members of ECON, their struggle is “a struggle of millions in which there is always room for a person more”<sup>6</sup>. Apart from VERDE, as we saw elsewhere, ECON maintains links with other social movements such as the LGBT movement, PRECC, SOS. They are associated in various public events. For example, as we showed previously, they participated together in demonstrations for the days of 24 and 25 April 2010, in commemoration of the Carnation Revolution (25 April 1974), and for the first day of May 2010, the Labour Day, as they usually do it every year. As a result, through its interactions or interplays with the LGBT movement, ECON integrates, more and more, in its own discourses and actions, themes linked to sexual identities and gender cultures, which remain ancillary in relation to its core topics but which are nevertheless important, while they are the *raison d'être* of the former movement. The questions of “the globalisation of social rights”, of work, wages, precariousness that are particularly approached by PRECC and SOS also form part, nowadays, of ECON’s main interests and, to a large extent, as in the situation with the LGBT movement, because of its continued interactions over time with the former movements.

Most of the objects exhibited by ECON Portugal carry the symbols of the movement. They are therefore powerful identity markers, a materiality or signs immediately recognisable from the movement and from outside. More generally, logos, slogans and designs on the objects and documents of social movements work as symbols or identity markers: Those who bring objects of ECON, in some way, recognise themselves or identify with this movement in relation to the exterior. Consecutively, they are also a means of publicity that can make known the movement and foster new adhesions. These identity markers are further signs that show the non-esoteric and non-exclusive character of ECON as for many other social movements. Far from working as markers of close borders, they favour inclusion and call for

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<sup>5</sup> 25 March 2010.

<sup>6</sup> ECON’s texts.

the participation of those who are not in them yet. The we/I is open to the Other. These identity markers constitute a magnet for the they/you in movements that are resolutely exoteric.

In the I Rossio Manifesto elaborated by Lisbon *acampadas*' activists<sup>7</sup> wherein ECON's militants also actively took part, the subjects are "citizens, women and men, workers, migrants, students, unemployed and retired persons". The text highlights male-female parity. The range of the subjects is therefore large, it covers without doubt almost all the social categories except the children. In sum, the subjects of the manifesto, of the *acampadas* and of the protest are a universal category, the people, or better said, the adult people. Activists emphasise this collective entity or identity through the frequent iteration in the text of the pronouns "we" (*nós*), "us" (*nos*), "ours" (*nossas, nossa*) and the determiner "our" (*nossas*), and via the repetition of verbs and adjectives that stress the unity such as "*unidas*" (united), "*juntamo-nos*" (we join), "*se juntem*" (they join), "*unidas e unidos*" (united, women and men). The excerpt of the manifesto distributed in Rossio, 28 May 2011, started with the pronoun *nós* and finished with the pronoun *nossas*.

In the same manifesto, they essentially oppose to two institutional actors, the European Union and above all the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They appear as "kidnappers", they "kidnap democracy and people's lives". The IMF is particularly targeted. It is also identified as guilty of "murder": "In the countries where it intervenes around the world, the IMF is responsible for the dramatic falls of average life expectancy. The IMF kills!". This last sentence is in bold type, the unique one in the core text, what allows to emphasise, with the exclamation mark, the importance of the statement in the eyes of activists. Thus, for them, social change notably entails the end of European Union's current economic policies and of International Monetary Fund's intervention, considered as responsible for and the important beneficiaries of the current deleterious situation in Portugal and elsewhere.

These militants criticise the economic model advocated and applied by the European Union and most of the European governments, a model essentially based upon "the systematic erosion of the role of the State in economy and of the mechanisms of public social protection" to the extent that the "ideology" of this model considers that the market is more "efficient" than the State and alerts to "the imperious necessity of reducing the public deficits". They added that, according to this ideology, "the progressive dissolution of the public mechanisms of regulation should clear the circulation of capital and the growing financialisation of

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<sup>7</sup> We remind that *Acampadas* (literally, accommodated in a camp), also named *assembleias populares diárias* (daily popular assemblies), took place in Lisbon at Rossio square in spring 2011.



economies”, and it should also allow “the creation and consolidation of structures of governance external to the rationality of the public sphere, structures resting upon the so-called necessity of reducing decisions to their “scientific” foundations and, in this way, democratically depoliticised”. In this sense, the State has come to hold a mere function of “institutional instrument serving the market and its expansion”<sup>8</sup>.

More generally, nowadays, militants in Portugal and elsewhere have as main adversaries what they name “*a troika*”, a media-related category that means in the Portuguese context and in other concerned countries a triad composed of the two aforesaid institutional actors in addition to the World Bank. The IMF and the World Bank usually work together in the countries where they provide their economic programmes and loans that entail strict socio-economic conditions to be obeyed by the debtor countries.

In other occasions, they also targeted other international organisations such as North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and behind it, the leading United States, especially, in regard to Portuguese militants, when a summit of NATO was held in Portugal in November 2010. Like for the IMF, NATO is presented by activists as an aggressive and bloody entity: “A summit of war and aggression”; “it brought the war to Belgrade, bombed in an unprecedented action after World War II”; “since 2002, it has bombed Afghanistan, it has attempted to occupy it but unsuccessfully”; “this aggressive Block”; “*os senhores da guerra*” (the war lords)<sup>9</sup>.

This is a further example that shows that, alongside the central thematic of economy and economics, ECON is also involved in many other topics that are at the core of the claims of other movements. Hence, ECON also takes part in “citizenship movements... for peace and solidarity”<sup>10</sup> or it is also involved in movements for peace and against the war around the world. Its members protested as well against the NATO summit held in Portugal in November 2010. They wrote critical tracts about this international organisation, tracts that they sent by e-mail through their mailing list to their sympathisers, that they presented on their web site and distributed in the streets to the public during some actions not always primarily connected with this specific protest against NATO. In one of these tracts, they firmly asserted, in red and uppercase letters designed to show the danger of the situation, that “Portugal must not lodge a summit of war and aggression”.

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpt of the I Rossio Manifesto, Lisbon *acampadas*, Spring 2011.

<sup>9</sup> ECON’s texts.

<sup>10</sup> ECON Portugal’s tract especially aiming to gain new support and adherents.

Furthermore, the authors of the tract pointed out several contradictions in relation to NATO. In theory, they stated that this is an organisation “intended to maintain harmony and peace around the world”, an “organisation of collective defence”, but, in practice, through its recent history, they stressed that:

**We only know, during the last 15 years at least, that it brought the war to Belgrade, bombed in an unprecedented action after World War II. It was used to impose a country, Kosovo, which does not have its own economy and works thanks to trafficking in weapons and drugs... Since 2002, it has bombed Afghanistan, it has attempted to occupy it but unsuccessfully and to impose there a democratic government based on fraudulent elections, a government that the proper Afghan people do not recognise and that is led by Mister Karsai, the richest man of the country, arms and drugs trafficker.**

They therefore demonstrated the immanent contradictions between the ethical principles of this organisation and its concrete acts, notably by referring to the history of its relations with Portugal:

**Portugal has belonged to NATO since its foundation, in 1949. As a curiosity it is noted that NATO was intended to defend democracies and that Portugal was under the oldest fascist regime and prepared to be the most cachectic and lasting colonial regime, until the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. Then, we started to understand that, this year, Portugal became a stone, a geo-strategic position, and nothing else, in the game of the Western powers, led by the USA and in this way it is going on, without self-will.**

Other contradictions were also stated. Thus, they showed the anachronistic character of this organisation insofar as it is still existing while its primary *raison d'être* belongs to the past, a reason that appears itself as a false justification and even as an absurdity since it is itself anachronistic as well: “NATO, a military block, created to control Europe, following the Second World War, arguing today the necessity of its creation because of the emergence of the Warsaw Pact, which appeared only seven years later!, nowadays does not even have an enemy in sight, given that Eastern governments have become Western in form and in content”. Hence, to justify its existence today, it has found a new reason, that is, a new enemy to fight, but here again, according to the writers of the tract, this is not a good reason to the extent that, this time, there is an incompatibility between NATO’s competence and the new type of adversary: “It had to invent an enemy, terrorism, which cannot be fought with armed forces but with actions of international policy”<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> ECON’s tract against NATO.

As ECON's activists stated, they necessarily have to act within "a global space" to the extent that "since the end of the 1990s, it has come to be clear for social activists that neoliberalism acted and acts below and beyond the national borders, thereby weakening the capacities of nation-states' control". They added that "most neoliberal impositions directly have emerged from non-elected and non-democratically controlled international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organisation (WTO) and G8". From a historical point of view, they stressed that "these international organisms and US Treasury designed a social and economic policy that they named the Washington Consensus, an ideological programme that was applied to different degrees to the major part of the countries, and with disastrous results". They quoted the emblematic and recent examples of "the Asiatic crisis, the situation within the area of the ex-Soviet Union and Argentina's "bankruptcy"". After this brief historical and international overview, they referred, in comparison, to "the national, political and current context", which is also subjected to "deep dynamics of expansion of neoliberal policies, such as in the realms of tax policy, labour code, social insurance, and so on"<sup>12</sup>.

## **8.2: "Hortelões", "Liberators of fields", "Garden Guerrilleros", "Seedbombers":**

The figure of "*hortelões*" (gardeners) or "horticulturists", those who work in the popular *hortas* (vegetable-gardens) or "social horticulture", those who "put their hands on earth", is central in VERDE as the practice of *hortas*<sup>13</sup>.

Its militants consider that together they form "a collective and non-capitalist identity and citizenship, an autonomous and political identity, an agro-ecological identity, which takes shape and is developed out of a combination of resistance, creation, questioning and challenge of the law and dominant social norms"<sup>14</sup>.

According to VERDE's activists, "opinion-makers" negatively judge their actions and finally themselves by qualifying them as "eco-terrorists", "terrorists or other akin adjectives", "invaders of fields", "vandals", "mere delinquents", "anti-scientists", "*tecnofóbicos ecofreaks*" (technophobic ecofreaks), "mad persons" or people with "displaced neurones"

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<sup>12</sup> ECON's texts.

<sup>13</sup> VERDE's texts.

<sup>14</sup> Idem.

because they are opposed to transgenics whereas “science” would claim in an univocal manner that they are safe in the “opinion-makers” views.

These “opinion-makers” are more precisely “scientists”, politicians and most of all the mass media, thereby exerting an important authority and influence on a large part of the people. For VERDE’s advocates, the influential scientists say that “nothing justifies that citizens are preoccupied by transgenic alimentation, because “science” states that there are no problems”. They add that “political elites” accept their statements. And, Portuguese newspapers generally follow them in an uncritical way by extolling “the wonders of genetic manipulation in agriculture”, or otherwise, in the best case, they do not even mention the theme as if it does not exist. Following militants’ words, “we have in our society a lack of means of communication and publications that are able to reflect on social and ecological themes in a critical perspective”<sup>15</sup>.

Furthermore, in their views, most of the media approve and diffuse police discourses – as when “they invent radical and violent groups” that do not actually exist – insofar as the principal source of their information stems from the police, and in this way, they tend more to convert themselves into “propaganda organs of the forces of the authority” and a means of “misinformation” than to be a means of reliable information serving citizens. Thus, “the police-journalists”, as VERDE’s militants call them, tend to tell “fables” “with characters who are akin to those from movies that are broadcast on Sunday afternoon television” in order to frighten the people who did not take part in public demonstrations organised by social movements or who do not know the social movements that appear in these media stories, and finally to attempt to contain social protest.

In other words, elsewhere, they pointed out the “indecent journalism” or “the partiality and crass lack of quality regarding Portuguese journalism” due to their mistakes and wrong certitudes that often tend to negatively depict in a radical way social movements in general and VERDE in particular, especially following huge public demonstrations, thereby distorting reality and falsely “creating panic in a sensationalist fashion among the Portuguese people”<sup>16</sup>.

More generally, they consider that the media through newspapers and television appear as “a pre-historical system made from consumption, authority, competition, crimes and football”, run by “huge corporations, which sell news like those that sell hamburgers made from plastic, control our way of thinking and seeing the world”. They added that “in all the editorial offices, expenditures were cut and journalism was annihilated”.

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<sup>15</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>16</sup> VERDE’s texts.

Their criticisms of the media do not entail that they “hate” and reject any forms of media, but rather that social movements and the people must do the media, “take the media in their hands” and “be the media” – like through the positive alternatives that have proliferated since more than a decade everywhere, such as pirate radios, websites, pamphlets, fanzines, videos and blogs – instead of the mainstream media that is fundamentally perceived as being unnecessary and undesired by them<sup>17</sup>.

In fact, the members of VERDE regard themselves as “*ceifeiros internacionais*” (international reapers), “*ceifeiros voluntários*” (voluntary reapers), or as “*libertadores de campos*” (liberators of fields) rather than as mere “*ceifeiros de OGM*” (GMOs reapers) or “invaders of fields”.

For them, this act of reaping is “an act of civil disobedience”, “a citizen and highly risked act” – due to its criminalisation and illegality to the extent that it is considered by the law as a serious offence against private property – conceived and made “in defence of the common good” and “not for egoist motives”, which is necessary to counter the private and monetary interests of big multinational corporations that constitute through the production of transgenics a current and actual danger for the human being and nature. In this occasion, they are conscious that they act against legal norms, but, unlike the criminals, they do not seek to escape from the sanctions because their actions are achieved for what they consider to be the collective interest; this is precisely the definition of the notion of civil disobedience. The law initially has to be transgressed, and then, eventually, it must be changed because it is currently designed to protect corporations’ interests to the detriment of “the common natural patrimony”. If GMOs reapers may be legally punished for their acts, by contrast, corporations dedicated to the production of transgenics may genetically contaminate fields and lands with complete impunity, without any problem with justice.

They do not therefore regard themselves as “delinquents” but rather as “members of the civil society” who represent it, who express and apply the will of the majority of the civil society or the people by their acts of reaping, that is, their common opposition against and refusal of the cultivation and commercialisation of GMOs. They stated that they act in the name of and for the civil society before, against and instead of the State that does not assume its role of defence of the civil society’s interests, and that even prejudices the latter interests through the law and for the sole corporations’ narrow interests. As they asserted, their reply is “a reply of citizenship before a problem of society”.

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<sup>17</sup> VERDE’s texts.

They make an analogy with medicine and compare themselves with “surgeons” who have to operate “bodies” (fields) that have “gangrene” (GMOs) to save their life; thus, they must “amputate” or cut the infected parts in order to avoid that gangrene spread over the rest of the bodies and finally kill them. Ultimately, their actions must protect and ensure life<sup>18</sup>.

In their views, they are also “urban *guerrilleros*” or “garden *guerrilleros*”, what entails, in their concrete case, to seed as far as possible – “seedbombing” following their own terms – all around the cities to make them more green, pleasant and beautiful. This conception of guerrilla and *guerrilleros* is opposed to the common conception that rather equates them with “terrorism”, “violence” and “armed struggle”<sup>19</sup>.

VERDE’s advocates call into question this “science” that they call “reductionist” – “in its way of seeing and understanding the world and its phenomena, as if it was the sole objective vision” – and they consider that the so-called “anti-scientific citizens and activists have in many occasions ideas more adequate to the real world than those who call themselves “scientists””, notably thanks to their “intuitions”, “fears” and “doubts” that are often corroborated or “supported by other scientific theories” radically opposed to those that are at the basis of genetic engineering, but also by the knowledge of the effects of numerous and diverse “past experiences” wherein the hegemonic science said there were no risk before nonetheless the happening of humanitarian and ecological catastrophes.

VERDE’s activists quoted Rachel Carson’s book and best-seller, *Silent Spring*, which showed in 1962 the environmental and human dangers of using agrochemicals that have effectively generated “endocrine disruptions and sterility”; the so-called “inert” chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that destroy the stratospheric ozone layer, what have contributed to the increase of skin cancer; “Chernobyl (the clean and safe nuclear energy)”; “bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE (mad cow disease has appeared when the ruminants are transformed into cannibals)”. Furthermore, they reiterated that:

**This is essential to create means of articulating networks of resistance that contemplate different forms of struggle and methods, but that have in common the reflection, criticism and objectives... We hope that *Erva Daninha* (Weed) becomes a symbol of resistance and dissidence before the dominant technocratic thought, by manifesting a developed ecological and social criticism of the current capitalist society and its modes of unequal appropriation of the environmental spaces<sup>20</sup>.**

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<sup>18</sup> VERDE’s texts.

<sup>19</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

<sup>20</sup> *Idem*.

A further action of civil disobedience carried out by VERDE's activists occurred during demonstrations against a summit of G8 held in Heiligendamm near Rostock, Germany, in June 2007. Indeed, there, some of VERDE's militants actively took part in the broad social protest that notably contested the legitimacy, morality and democratic character of this association of the eight major economic powers, whose leaders regularly meet in order to decide and define global policies that concern all the planet and the whole of the societies. VERDE's coordinator of the campaign against transgenics said that she was in Rostock in order "to protest in a pacific way, but directly, by challenging the logic of G8's illegitimate power". Their main non-violent and direct action of civil disobedience consisted in being dressed as clowns and blocking like this one of the entrances of the summit. As some of them related, "an army of clowns from VERDE was in the front line, blocking the gate number two that gave access to the forbidden area in Rostock"<sup>21</sup>.

Moreover, for one of them, "there was a clear intention to create a division between the good and bad demonstrators, by attempting to associate the direct-action movements with terrorist groups, in order to discredit them and weaken the structures that are opposed to G8". In their views, the political measures taken to prevent social mobilisation against the summit were exaggerated and consecutively the repression against social movements significantly increased in Germany just before the organisation of the summit.

According to their figures, the German government spent thirteen million euros for an enclosing wall that measured 2,5 meters in height and within a 200 meters radius around the summit. They also stressed that the Schengen agreement and free movement of European citizens were suspended as this occurred in other international summits organised within the European Union, that various social centres in Germany were searched by the police, that dozens of activists were detained following actions that were marked by the presence of water cannons and tear gas, among other measures taken by the German State, which encouraged an escalation of clashes and violence<sup>22</sup>.

More generally, the metaphoric language of VERDE's members often refers to military and warlike terms in order to emphasise that their actions and commitment is a struggle, an opposition against what they consider to be threats and aggressions against nature and human nature. But, at the same time, they use oxymorons in their metaphoric style; these military and warlike references are always combined into phrases with terms that have opposite meanings and implications in order to highlight as well that their struggle is not like an armed struggle,

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<sup>21</sup> VERDE's texts.

<sup>22</sup> Idem.

but that is, on the contrary, a non-violent, pacific, playful but serious struggle. As we saw above, the phrases “liberators of fields”, “garden *guerrilleros*”, “seedbombers”, or “an army of clowns” are epitomes of oxymorons that show that VERDE’s militants play with words, concepts and paradoxes.

These are also replies to opinion-makers’ attacks and accusations as they name them: Thus, they are perhaps warriors, *guerrilleros* or bombers but they are not at all terrorists or violent agents, contrary to what the opinion-makers think and say, to the extent that they are a particular type of bombers or warriors; they exclusively bomb seeds for growing plants and ultimately for life and they do not use actual bombs that destroy and kill, they are warriors who use irony, mockery, fun and entertainment to defeat adversaries, but not at all arms or physical force, except when they reap GMOs.

Alongside the protest against G8’s summit, further international actions may be quoted. For instance, VERDE’s activists were in Copenhagen, in December 2009, to protest for “climate justice” and against the Climate Change Conference, the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-15) – the governing body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an international environmental treaty. In the same way as for G8, VERDE’s militants call into question “the legitimacy of this decision space, which not only has been totally ineffective in the reduction of carbon emissions, but which has also accentuated social injustices through market mechanisms and other schemes that are typically colonialist”. In their views, “the UNO’s summit is only a new legitimisation of the old colonialism, again in the realm of the most sought resources, this time, the right to pollute”. And, “before a serious crisis of civilisation, they offer us a political circus that plays for the big companies’ interests”.

In other words, they wished “to delegitimise the negotiations that are made from above given that, as one can observe it over the last fourteen years (the Earth Summit, where the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was ratified, was held in 1992<sup>23</sup>), they did not manage to reduce carbon emissions, quite the contrary”. They developed their statements by estimating that “at least three hundred thousand people already passed away for causes related to climatic change”. They added that “in what may be the most significant act of mass extinction in the current time, these are still the people who were unlucky to be born

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<sup>23</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or FCCC) is an international environmental treaty negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from June 3 to 14, 1992. The official objective of the treaty is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.



in countries from the global South who will be the most affected”. Instead of encouraging and contributing to climate justice, they stressed that the decisions taken in the last fourteen COPs have, on the contrary, allowed a certain “colonialism” by diffusing and applying “the idea that we must help poor countries to reduce our emissions with our wonderful technologies (the same ones that help us to be so effective that we have emissions per capita much more superior to these countries!)”.

In addition, they claimed that “the culprits of the current climatic crisis buy rights of carbon emissions (called “offset”) to countries that, due to a minor industrial development, do not have so many emissions”. In their views, “carbon markets allow that environmental crimes are practised and that profits are made through them”. They compared this policy and practice with “the medieval indulgences acquired by the faithful to liberate themselves from their sins”. They also made reference to further contemporary practices that are akin to the previous ones and that are supposed to serve, without avoiding ethical contradictions, as they said, “to clean their conscience”, as when they decide to launch “reforestation programmes” that actually consist in “planting cloned or genetically manipulated eucalyptuses, which are harmful to local ecosystems and indigenous people living in countries like Brazil”<sup>24</sup>.

Before these general statements and criticisms, VERDE’s militants therefore decided to be in Denmark in order “to take part in the protests that aim to block the summit and initiate new grassroots processes that can open paths for a true climate justice”<sup>25</sup>.

The members of VERDE characterise their movement as being “plural”<sup>26</sup>. It is especially composed of young people; most of them, albeit not all of them, are students. Some members are academic researchers, such as PhD students in ecological economics, specialists and experts of the numerous and composite topics related to ecology.

As we stated above, ECON is not only attached to *economia*. Since ECON has started to know VERDE and develop several activities with it, the former has been more and more interested in ecology, even if sometimes its members do not always understand what ecological activism is and see some of its forms as a strange thing.

After a popular dinner, on a Thursday evening, some of VERDE’s militants showed their guests and some militants of ECON a documentary that presented a form of ecological activism consisting in climbing up trees and staying there, at the top, for a certain period of time in order to protest against the killing of the trees and the nature by human activities. This

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<sup>24</sup> VERDE’s texts.

<sup>25</sup> Idem.

<sup>26</sup> VERDE’s pamphlet.

action has given rise to an international social movement that is mainly dedicated to it. Every 28<sup>th</sup> March, its members organise the international day of climbing up trees and invite all the people across the world to participate in it and to occupy any tree for protesting. For ecological activists, it is a strong action that can be very effective and can oblige corporations to stop cutting trees, especially if there are people within them at this precise moment and the event is followed by the media. By contrast, ECON's activists, after having watched this story, were relatively astonished by this kind of action that seemed, for them, an unusual thing and not really serious. Basilio watched VERDE's documentary whilst smiling. One could perceive a bit of mockery.

More generally, albeit ECON's participants are more and more attracted by ecology, it remains that some topics and praxes within ecologist movements, as in VERDE, are not really understood or recognised by them. Unknown, they can provoke laughter, the stereotype, the idea of futility. In many aspects, by contrast, for ECON militants, these actions are the opposite of theirs. They see *economia* as a more important and fundamental thing, a more serious issue. In an opposite way, VERDE is more slowly taking into account topics related to economy/economics. Even though some aspects of economic/economics matters presented by ECON do not convince them and are therefore totally ignored, through their prolonged contacts with ECON's members, VERDE's activists have started to become conscious of the importance of these matters and their relationship with ecology.

In short, real and potential similarities and convergences do not prevent the actual and possible existence of dissimilarities and divergences. Both antithetic features generally tend to co-exist more or less harmoniously, sometimes necessarily in a tense way with latent oppositions and conflicts that may become more or less strong and overt.

### **8.3: "I think, then I resist":**

PRECC's advocates define their movement as "a precarious workers' movement", a general movement composed of a plurality of movements: "Very different from each other, they communicate and articulate, in a permanent dialogue, for an open intervention – sometimes more sectorial, others more inclusive, but always with the aim of attempting to

face difficulties and make possible the mobilisation against the silent powers of precariousness”<sup>27</sup>.

Its militants assert that “the imposition of precariousness proceeds, without doubt, but it has to take into account the opposition of various movements”, which are “movements of persons, movements of wills” to the extent that “we know where there is the true crisis – privileges and profits for some people and unemployment and precariousness for the majority”<sup>28</sup>. In other words, as they also said:

**Precariousness attacks everyone, from the oldest persons to the youngest ones, by expropriating – in the name of the interests of a minority – one of the richest things that the persons have: Their capacity to collectively create and produce. What there are not for the workers, unemployed and retired people, there are for the banks and big corporations. Our indignation and desire of justice are shared by many people in this world. We are precarious men and women. For many reasons and in many ways**<sup>29</sup>.

In their “*Jornal de Precárixs*” (Journal of Precarious), they wrote the letter “x” in the word “*Precárixs*” instead of the grammatically correct letter “o” or “a” to highlight that males, females and transsexuals are concerned. In other occasions, they also use the more common sign “@”.

Militants are first mobilised to respond to their singular state of precariousness. As they say, “all the precarious women and men start here and there by stamping their feet to face their specific situation”<sup>30</sup>. Then, their mobilisation that originally had an idiosyncratic basis comes to form a collective mobilisation whose target is no longer only their sole isolated and concrete case but precariousness in general and in abstract, which therefore becomes, on that occasion, a collective problem:

**We fit all: Persons with fixed-term contracts, victims of false green receipts, informals, over-exploited persons by temporary employment agencies, entertainment and audiovisual intermittents, disposable immigrants, forced fellows, eternal interns, retired people, indebted people before the banks, students, call-centre workers and operators, and simply unemployed people or very bad-employed people**<sup>31</sup>.

In a long enumeration, PRECC’s militants define what is and what is not to be precarious. Some of the attributes or predicates are metaphoric. They are critical, positive and negative,

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<sup>27</sup> PRECC’s texts.

<sup>28</sup> Idem.

<sup>29</sup> PRECC’s pamphlet.

<sup>30</sup> PRECC’s texts.

<sup>31</sup> PRECC’s pamphlet.

show some paradoxes and injustices. On the whole, they appear as a sum of particularities of precarious people's daily life. Notwithstanding, these particularities or details of life are not at all minor or ancillary. On the contrary, through this long enumeration of short sentences about the being and non-being of the precarious individual, one notices the central and decisive character of these details in their life given that they determine their life and well-being. The text ends by asserting that the actual power of the precarious people relies on their solidarity and common mobilisation, social power that will lead to social change:

**Being precarious is to be stuck for the entire scoop. Being precarious is not to be able to have office. Being precarious is possibly to do work placements in order to animate the government's statistics. Being precarious is to not be sure to have work tomorrow. Being precarious is to not be entitled to unemployment benefits, even when one already worked a lot and now has not work. Being precarious is to be obliged to make discounts even when one did not earn money. Being precarious is to receive a salary of misery and thicken the wealth of the temporary employment agencies, many of them are in the hands of the *boys* [written in English in the text] and bigwigs of the big parties. Being precarious is to not be recorded in the already long lists of the unemployed people. Being precarious is to work without any contract and the possibility of being dismissed without just cause. Being precarious is to be systematically "in experience", even though experience is already verified. Being precarious is to be treated as a liberal professional when one lives below dog. Being precarious is, almost every time, not to choose to be precarious. Being precarious is to have a book of green receipts [*recibos verdes*] in order to miraculously prevent that employers have to take any responsibility in the construction and maintenance of the chain of wealth production. Being precarious is to not be allowed to have children, because bosses do not like pregnant women, neither competent mothers, nor fathers who are too present. Being precarious is to be treated as cattle, but without any guaranteed reason. Being precarious is to cover the small and big holes of capitalism. Being precarious is to not be sure to be able to pay the rent, and it is to be sure that money is not enough for all the invoices. Being precarious is to have to eat less and less times a day, except when the family and friends feel compassion. Being precarious is to swallow anger, to cry hidden for not being seen, to be afraid of being labelled as a rebel, to panic at the idea that this label motivates the loss of a mediocre job but so hard to get. Being precarious is to have the will to go to the streets for shouting. Being precarious is to be obliged to go to the streets for shouting. Being precarious is to decide to go to the streets for shouting. The first day of May. With all the other precarious companions [*companheiros*] who go around hidden. With all those who, revolted against the growing social injustice and exponential increase of the precariat troops, join PRECC's parade. Being precarious is suddenly to be conscious that, if everyone gives hands and stomps, THE WORLD TREMBLES<sup>32</sup>.**

In a similar vein, militants of SOS wrote a "Precarious Manifesto" that says:

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<sup>32</sup> PRECC's pamphlet.

**We are precarious at work and in life. We work without contract or with very short fixed-term contracts. Temporary, uncertain jobs, and without guarantees. We are call-centre operators, trainees, the unemployed, workers with green receipts, immigrants, intermittents, students-workers... We do not appear in the statistics. Albeit we are more and more precarious, the governments hide this world. We live doing odd and temporary jobs. We can hardly pay a rent. We have no holidays, we cannot become pregnant and fall ill. Right to strike, it is chasing shadows. Flexisecurity? “Flexi” is for us. “Security” is only for the bosses. This lying “modernisation” is thought and made by businessmen and governments. We are in the shade but not silent. We do not cease to fight alongside those who work in Portugal or far from here for fundamental rights. This struggle is not only about figures, between trade unions and governments. This is a struggle of workers and people like us. Things that the “figures” always ignore. We do not fit into these figures. We do not let them forget the conditions to which they refer us. And with the same force with which the bosses attack us, we respond and reinvent the struggle. In the end, we are much more than them. Precarious, yes, but inflexible.**

In line with this manifesto and the previous long enumeration about the being and the non-being of the precarious person, they also wrote another manifesto entitled “My Manifesto”, which states:

**We are those who do not count for the statistics. Those who do not receive subsidies that can be cut by the government. Those who have to pay alone and for those who would have the “goodwill” to (mis)employ them, if and when they have the whim. We are those who have no holiday. We are those who do not have children, family, house, who do not fall ill, deal with bureaucracies, go to the bank, make purchases, use transports, pay invoices, use services. We are those who do not progress in the career. We are those who have no career. We are those who are not even unemployed. We are the stopgaps. We are second-grade, third-grade workers, those who do not have grade, those who do not form part of something, integrate something, have team spirit, constitute the body of something. We are second-class, third-class workers. The collaborators. The sticks for all the work. And if one day we all stop? What would happen? And if one day we show who we are? We are workers like all the others. Come to show you exist. Do not let them continue to convince you that you do not count.**

Thus, the members of PRECC often reiterate the importance of the diversity of the movement, diversity that is not at all conceived as an obstacle to their mobilisation. This is rather the opposite trend that they claim insofar as this diversity does not prevent a core common identification, that with precariousness. As they say, “by joining call-centres workers, sex workers, immigrants seeking documents that they steal them and us, or *bolseiros* (fellows) without any perspective, we believe that we are advancing to unite, in this diversity, a type of precariat that, until today, has never been so united, acting and thinking”<sup>33</sup>. Elsewhere, they

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<sup>33</sup> PRECC’s texts.

also stressed that “in PRECC, we transform the streets into a space wherein diversity and the strength of the refusal of a lifetime to bits march”<sup>34</sup>. In other words, they claimed that:

**Who have made this crisis are those who have never suffered “difficulties”. These have been bankers and speculators who play with our money. We are before a huge transfer of wealth from the poorest people to the richest ones. We do not accept the complicity of the governments, European Commission and European Central Bank in the suffering and misery of millions of people. So, we will not be silent. It is not us, workers of the whole of Europe, who have made this crisis... For this reason, we bring solidarity to the streets, a solidarity committed with all the victims of this situation for a social alternative that carries justice in our lives... From many ideas and experiences, we join together for equality and against the injustices of this crisis... Because we are not alone, we assume a commitment to action, to not folding your arms, to acting with those who act, with movements, associations, trade unions. But acting<sup>35</sup>.**

Some of them, sex workers, also stress, from their particular situation, this importance of the diversity and the strong identity that exists behind it and despite it:

**For us, sex professionals, this integration in PRECC’s demonstrations, the simple democratic and radical possibility of appearing and of being welcome in the demonstrations, the fact that we recognise ourselves as a part of this group, of this multitude of people with the most diverse situations and contexts, had and have, *de facto*, a liberating potential, because it allows to voice claims and to conquest the public space. Declaring, presenting oneself as a female/male prostitute, saying that we are proud to be who we are is not a comfortable and easy situation... But we believe that, ironically, the existence with and the fight against precariousness may be at the basis of bonds among us! Right to housing, being able to contribute in order to have a dignified retirement, not having children removed by Social Insurance for the simple fact of being sex workers, fighting police coercion, not allowing moralistic and judgmental glances to fall upon us, being able to fully live this profession that can be seen as a space of acknowledgement and valorisation of human relations. How many of these claims are not also yours?... We know that sex work seems a distant thing, closed off in a ghetto that is alien and that tells us little about or that is not immediately associated with the struggle against precariousness. But would it not be the heteropatriarchal and capitalist system, that is it, the system of values that places at the top of the social hierarchy the white and heterosexual men of upper-middle class, that stigmatises prostitution, exactly the same one that attempts to regulate your body, your sexuality, your feelings, your desires? Would it not be exactly the same machine that persists in repressing your claims, in exploiting you and denying your rights, your existence?... It is for freedom, for the possibility of choosing and for dignity in our choices that the struggle for sex workers’ rights is a broader struggle that concerns everyone. We believe that the fact of being in PRECC and that PRECC is with us only empowers both struggles, which are,**

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<sup>34</sup> PRECC’s texts.

<sup>35</sup> PRECC’s pamphlet.

**at their root, a sole struggle: The end of precariousnesses, dignity for the workers, the fight against the situations of exploitation, violence and impotence before power<sup>36</sup>.**

The members of SOS claim that their movement “is a movement that appeals but also that challenges and points”, and its members “do that by knowing that the dimension of the offensive against those who work requires responses that bring down barriers and preconceptions – it would be easy to demarcate or divide, but we exactly need and want the opposite”. They add that “governments and bosses tell us that we must be more flexible, more competitive, more obedient, because they want that we remain isolated, divided, distrustful of anyone who is on our side, unable to unite to combat exploitation”.

They specify these statements by asserting that “the identity that we are building is different and admittedly unfinished, because we still have many things to discover and many encounters to make, but we do not avoid the urgent clarifications, with eyes on the forces that steal from us the present and the future”; “immigrants, sex workers or entertainment intermittents, the result is always the same one: The precariousness of some people weakens the position of everyone”. Finally, they stress that “we are conscious that the change of our lives requires much more, we refuse to wait and resignation. PRECC is a common force that, tired of carrying all the weight of an economic system that usurps its life, wants to autonomously create and freely decide. The future is now”<sup>37</sup>.

Following this same epistemic logic, one of the core aphorisms painted in placards and that reappeared in many occasions during diverse social events organised by these activists is that of “I think, then I resist” (*Penso, logo resisto*).

A further noticeable motto is “struggle against the fantasy of normativity, which precarious all those who do not adapt to this norm!”. They clarify the character of this “normativity” by stating that it is a “patriarchal normativity”:

**Discrimination exists in more or less localised episodes of daily life. LGBTphobia is incorporated into common representations and domains that are limited to note the differences attributed to the persons from what the patriarchy defines as norm. Patriarchy is thus an institutionalised norm that attributes to the people well-defined roles, with a hierarchical primacy for the heterosexual-white-man<sup>38</sup>.**

In this sense, they distinguish two principal forms of “LGBTphobia”: “Institutional” and “cultural”. The first form is a kind of “institutional discrimination” that refers to “the

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<sup>36</sup> PRECC’s pamphlet.

<sup>37</sup> SOS texts.

situations in which legislation does not recognise or makes illegitimate the rights of the workers, wherein the main culprit is the State that does not promote legislative acts to end up with these situations” such as “the slow legal and medical process that transsexual people have to follow in order to have their gender identity recognised by the law”. One of the main effects of this example is that “they live during years with medical treatments for a sex defined in the documentation that does not correspond to their real identity, thereby clearly preventing the integration at work”. In their views, “institutional LGBT phobia” requires “the necessary intervention [of PRECC and other movements] before the State, intervention that cannot be nevertheless reduced to the legislative level” in large measure because “discrimination is not only a matter of law”.

The second kind of “phobia”, “cultural LGBTphobia” or “cultural decriminalisation”, precisely exists “outside the legislative power, without the latter manages to fight it, and even the own actors do not realise it in many occasions”. They quote the example of “a boss who says that he is not prejudiced, but at the same time he does not employ a transsexual person (or a woman, or a black person, or an immigrant, or a fat person, among the many that we are) for believing that the customers will not like this”, and the example of a situation in which “the management team changes and the worker is exempt because this time the second boss is prejudiced, and his term contract in a permanent job has finished”<sup>39</sup>.

They add that the latter type of “phobia” or form of “decriminalisation” is often encouraged by “the media power, either through its own statements, or via the diffusion of political, religious or institutional discourses that talk about the exclusion of the different people”<sup>40</sup>.

In a long excerpt from an article written in PRECC’s journal, sex workers related to this movement describe and analyse the social construction of their social identity, and more generally the social construction of gender identities:

**We did not have doubts: What WE ARE or we will be is also defined by and in relation to what we are NOT or we will not be. The invention of the “bad woman” – the woman that we cannot be – like that who decides about her body, her life, the woman who has sex, who has pleasure with whoever, when she wants and with the wished returns, was one of the most brilliant strategies to create the idea of the “good woman”, the serious woman – what WE HAVE to be. Similarly, to be a “true man” we cannot desire, love or have sex with another man or we cannot show what we feel. No! As “true men” we have only forces, we are only interested in the public space, what counts is solely to conquest,**

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<sup>38</sup> PRECC’s pamphlet.

<sup>39</sup> Idem.

<sup>40</sup> Idem.



**have and take initiatives, win, vanquish, make profit. And all this in order that society clearly knows who the woman is and who the man is and, consequently, they have bombarded us since childhood with the model that we have to follow, with the directives that we have to do, think and feel. Yes, this is brilliant the idea of telling us what we can NOT be, more than constantly telling us what we have to be – the control is more effective, the power is more effective. And what we cannot be, never, is to be prostitutes and even less wanting to make this immoral activity a recognised work!... This is not in vain that the prostitute has always been seen as “the bad woman”, even when the Church defended her existence in the Middle Ages to avoid that male “sexual pressures” were directed toward “serious women”, to safeguard their chastity. The idea of the prostitute as the “bad woman”, its connotation of “deviant”, of “different kind of woman” are not more than a way of the heteropatriarchy to create and reinforce the idea of the “serious woman” (that who is desexualised and solely reproductive). Because it was like this that the system wanted them and because it is like this that the system wants us: With our bodies and desires well controlled and exclusively to serve a major order; married and producing children-pieces for the heteropatriarchal, capitalist and monogamous gears.**

In this sense, one of the core apophthegms of the movement is “Prostitution: No to preconception, yes to the person!”<sup>41</sup>.

Now, in the next and last chapter of this study, we shall put forward some sociological interpretations regarding the empirical observations that have been made in this chapter, interpretations that will allow us to reply to the problematic of social movements’ identities and to corroborate our conjectures made in the previous chapter.

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<sup>41</sup> PRECC’s texts.

## Chapter 9

### **Synthesis: “Ontology” of social movements – the interplays between the Self and the Other**

#### **9.1: Cognition, apperception and syntheses of apperceptions:**

After Kant and Simmel who respectively posed the following problem and question in regard to nature and society, how nature/society is possible?, I can say concerning the problem of the knowledge of social movements, how a social movement is possible?, that beyond the social conditions that determine in part the possibility or possibilities of social movements – conditions necessarily related to the singular context in which they appear, which contribute to make social movements potential and eventually actual and which were observed in the first part of this research –, like these thinkers proposed in relation to nature and society, a social movement is also the representations that its members have on it. In other words, it is about the conceptualisation that militants have about their social ties or their reciprocal actions. Social movement is a supra-individual notion, a mental category or form made by individuals, the activists, in order to subsume all their relationships among them under a core concept.

Thus, activists think about themselves. This dimension of the cognitive praxis – apperception or the conscious perception of oneself – is epitomised by their aphorism “I think,

then I resist” (*Penso, logo resisto*) that is iteratively shown during public demonstrations (such as in the *acampadas*) on banners and placards, what makes it emblematic.

This aphorism falls within Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* (in *Discours de la méthode*). The conscious perception of oneself as a thinking being allows oneself to simultaneously apperceive his/her existence and his/her being (there is a difference between existence – the *quod*, the *oti esti*, the fact that a thing is – and essence – the *quid*, the *ti esti*, what is a thing). This aphorism also fits into the famous apophthegm launched by Albert Camus (2010 [1951]) in *L’Homme révolté*, “*Je me révolte, donc nous sommes*” (I revolt, therefore we are). The conscious perception of oneself as a revolted being allows oneself to apperceive his/her own existence and being as well as those of the humanity as a whole, thereby transcending the absurdity of existence.

Or, perhaps, this militant aphorism better refers to the Kantian distinction between pure or original apperception and empirical apperception (in *Critique of Pure Reason*). Pure apperception (I think) – the *a priori* representation of oneself as a thinking being or the consciousness of oneself that generates representation – determines and encompasses all other forms of representations, empirical apperceptions. In this case, the empirical apperception is “I resist”, the representation of oneself as resisting being.

Militants’ pure apperception is also explicitly expressed through other phrases. Alongside the phrase “I think”, they use, for example, the expressions “we are conscious that...”, “we know that...”, “being precarious is suddenly to be conscious that...”, “we assume”, “we recognise ourselves”, “declaring, presenting oneself as...”, “saying that we are proud to be who we are”, “we believe that...”, “do that knowing that...”, “PRECC is a common force that wants to autonomously create and freely decide”, “we did not have doubts”.

There is an epistemic continuum between the knowledge of the world and the knowledge of oneself, between the representation of things and auto-representation, or between perception and apperception; the individual therefore becomes both object and subject for the thinking and knowing subject.

Alongside resistance or revolt, militants’ pure apperception determines and embraces other kinds of empirical apperceptions.

In sum, militants think about themselves mainly as thinking subjects, and following this, as resisting subjects, therefore *in extenso* as acting subjects. Their resisting and acting being is indeed determined in their eyes by their thinking and knowing being. For them, Reason leads to action and resistance. These are the knowledge of the world and of themselves, the

awareness of injustices and societal dysfunctions, the observation of the social and political reconsideration of their values that lead them to assert themselves as a reflecting or excogitating being (and therefore as criticising and denouncing being), and correlatively as a moral and political being, a being that acts in society for the definition of society, which militates, which defends itself and defend its social, economic, cultural and political rights (in brief, which also defends universal rights), which put forward axiological and ethical propositions for a better social organisation of society in accordance with their defended principles and values. By asserting themselves as cognitive and ethico-political beings, activists also assert themselves as talking subjects (*orator*), writing subjects (*scriptor*), listening subjects (*auditor*), therefore as communicating linguistic subjects.

Less abstractly, in the studied movements, militants are journalists-militants, intellectuals-militants, scientists-activists, artists-activists – or “artivists” following VERDE’s neologism.

Social movements are a place wherein people, due to their intense cognitive praxes, are all converted into intellectuals – what makes them movement intellectuals. Some militants belonging to SOS published articles in *Le Monde Diplomatique Edição Portuguesa*. We have here an illustration of the figures of journalist-militant and of intellectual-militant.

Similarly, through their intense artistic praxes, which are related to cognitive praxes, these people also become artists – what makes social movements movement artists as well. By the ways they re-appropriate the squares and the streets, notably during sits-ins and demonstrations, activists become this central figure of artist-militant.

By thinking about and criticising the society (or some particular aspects within it), by denouncing its problems and the responsible entities, activists and some intellectuals deal with the same kind of topic, they occupy a similar type of activity. Many activists especially owe their sources of theoretical inspiration to diverse philosophical and scientific critical theories and movements of thought. Below, we shall see, for example, the influence of Michel Foucault’s thought on some activists’ discourses in regard to social categorisation or compartmentalisation. But, this relationship is not unilateral. Reciprocally, intellectuals who have a leftist sensibility are also inspired by social movements. Actually, one can say the same thing about movements and intellectuals characterised by a certain rightist sensibility. Furthermore, finally, in many circumstances, activists and intellectuals are even effectively the same and unique persons.

Activists conceive syntheses of their empirical apperceptions. They generate psychic unities or intellectual syntheses out of diverse elements by finding what the latter have in

common or their links despite the differences that separate and isolate them from each other and even in spite of the contradictions that may oppose them. Beyond their ideal or abstract character, these syntheses also have actual material consequences that are reflected in concrete associations. From pure cognitive or subjective concepts, they come to be objectified into formal and public groups.

Thus, alongside the core synthetic concept of social movement, which we have seen above, we can, for example, also mention the synthesis achieved by militants through the concept of precarious or precariousness.

Like the intellectual category of “worker” analysed by Simmel, the abstract form of “precarious” is a further epitome of psychological production of universal synthesis that transcends the particular differences among precarious individuals according to their work, their economic and social situation and that gathers all of them under a sole and similar trait. In the same way as the former, the latter also allows to create a certain “unity of social consciousness” among the concerned people, a unity based on the idea and the fact that, despite their specificities, they all face, over their daily life, risky, uncertain, unstable, provisory, fragile, worrying, dangerous situations from a physical, material and/or psychological point of view, what they precisely name precarious or precariousness.

We can recall that, according to PRECC and SOS activists, the figure of the precarious binds people of all ages, people around the world, “workers, unemployed and retired people”, “men and women”, “trans-sexuals”, sex workers, call centres’ employees, “persons with fixed-term contracts”, “victims of false green receipts”, “workers with green receipts”, “informals”, “over-exploited persons”, workers for temporary employment agencies, “entertainment and audiovisual intermittents”, “disposable immigrants”, “forced fellows” (*bolseiros*), “eternal interns”, “indebted people before the banks”, “students”, “students-workers”, “very bad-employed people”.

This apperceptive concept of precarious has practical effects; it leads to a certain extent to its juridical conceptualisation and to its formal and social objectification. Like the intellectual category of worker that is related to effective associations of workers, the supra-individual notion of precarious is concretely linked to organisations, networks, assemblies, associations of precarious that imply rules and rights – a normativity or a certain juridification of the notion of precarious –, as we saw in the prior parts of this study.

Furthermore, the synthetic typifications of “alter-economists” and “ecologists” may also be quoted. For ECON, alter-economists are “citizens, women and men, workers, migrants, students, unemployed and retired people”. For VERDE, the category of ecologists makes

reference to “agro-ecologists”, “social horticulturists”, “liberators of fields”, “garden *guerilleros*”, “seedbombers”, “non-capitalists”.

At a broader level, alter-globalisation is a further synthesis. This is a higher abstraction or generalisation – even this is the *terminus ad quem* or the ultimate concept – than that of precarious, for instance, or than those of alter-economists and ecologists that appear as intermediary notional categories. Through this concept, the common features become lower and conversely the differences are larger precisely because of its higher degree of abstraction. But, at the same time, due to its greater degree of generalisation, it may cover and include more intermediary categories and *a fortiori* categories *tout court*. It allows to create a broader social unity by addressing to more people and groups even though their differences are growing.

Because alter-globalisation, as frame of thought or collective action frame especially related to social movements, is highly flexible, inclusive, open and elastic, it also works as a meta-frame – a master frame in frame analysis’ language – or a paradigm that embraces a plurality and diversity of frames that are more specific or particularistic. Or, to the extent that the alter-globalisation frame is relatively plastic, it permits a large inclusion of the diverse frames that contest globalisation. This frame, which appears as a big umbrella in which many frames can take their place, is mainly bounded by the criteria of the denunciation of capital globalisation and its various deleterious effects, and of the will to a safer and fairer world. These bounds are themselves sufficiently fluid or permeable to enable the inclusion of all the people across the world willing to oppose current globalisation. It therefore puts forward general propositions that may be recuperated and applied at an inferior level within singular and more concrete contexts. Hence, ECON’s specific economics frame, VERDE’s ecology frame or PRECC/SOS precarious frame may integrate this meta-frame because they find in it principles and utterances that are more generic and abstract than theirs but that nonetheless remain congruent with theirs.

In other words, the master frame of central frames is alter-globalisation. All these latter frames are bonded by the alter-globalisation frame. This frame does not only allow the discursive links among social movements’ diverse discourses, but it also nurtures, like the categories of workers and precarious, the concrete associations among these movements, which mainly take the form of demonstrations together in the streets, the organisation of forums, among other types of joint action in the field. The alter-globalisation frame favours virtual and real networks, at the local level, in my case, in Lisbon, but also at the greater scales, at national and transnational levels. The studied movements form part of European and

international networks, as we saw in the previous parts, which include, under the alter-globalisation frame, a wide range of social movements.

Master-frames further frame alignment among the diverse frames that compose them. Under this unique frame – alter-globalisation –, different frames – ECON’s economics, VERDE’s ecology and PRECC/SOS precariousness – have come to be closely related and associated. In their case, frame alignment rests above all on frame bridging, frame extension and frame transformation.

If ECON, VERDE and PRECC/SOS frames have been relatively close from a strictly ideological point of view since the beginning of their formation, they have come to be closer from a structural and organisational point of view later when these movements, previously unconnected, have started to integrate the same networks, to lead common actions – this is what frame analysts name frame bridging.

During their interactions over time, each movement has also integrated in their own frame elements belonging to the other social movements’ frames. Thus, ECON’s militants have included in their economics frame propositions stemming from VERDE’s ecology frame and PRECC/SOS precariousness frame, what has allowed it to expand, among other things. The same process, called frame extension by frame analysis’ advocates, has occurred with VERDE vis-à-vis ECON and PRECC/SOS, and, in turn, with PRECC/SOS vis-à-vis the two other aforesaid movements.

In other words, beyond their own core frame that identifies them as an identity marker, movements through their interactions among them recuperate other movements’ frames in their diverse discourses. Activists combine these frames without abandoning the centrality of their own key frame belonging to their movement (frame (re)alignments). All the exterior frames are incorporated and adapted by social movements to their own frame, which is also, to a certain extent, reconfigured in the process. Nevertheless, these (re)shapings (or (re)framings) do not affect the profound meanings of each frame, what allows a certain cohesion among them.

Simultaneously, their respective frame has not only been extended through these interactions, it has been transformed as well. Militants have modified some points of their frame in the wake of their relations with other militants belonging to other movements as well as, correlatively, of the inclusion of elements belonging to these movements’ frames in their frame. This convergence and rapprochement at the level of ideation is also followed at the material level, notably through the organisation of joint mobilisations, demonstrations, sits-ins, and so forth.

Activists apply the second part of Platonic dialectic, the ascending dialectic that is also named *synagoge*, which means “unity”, “conjunction” (in *Republic* and *Symposium*). It therefore aims to gather together or it consists in driving the reasoning to place different things in a unique intelligible form that embraces them, whereas, by contrast, the first part of Platonic dialectic – the descending dialectic or *diairesis* (division) – entails to subdivide an idea into its essential components (in *Sophist*). *Diairesis* and *synagoge* are at the source of modern analysis and synthesis, which respectively refer to the intellectual activity of decomposition/separation and re-composition/combining. Synthesis therefore allows to identify a unique form under the multitude of diverse forms or to cover a plurality of forms with a sole and same form. By applying the method of *synagoge*, activists seek to lead the diverse back to the one or the multiple back to the unity that is named precariousness in the case of PRECC and SOS or more generally alter-globalisation for most of contemporary social movements.

Without falling into essentialism or substantialism, one can say that precariousness forms the *genus* and the different particular forms of precariousness – sex work, fellowships, entertainment intermittence, and so on – form the species of the *genus* precariousness. Similarly, alter-globalisation constitutes the *genus* and the diverse particular types of alter-globalisation – environmentalism, alter-economics, anti-precariousness – form the species of this *genus*. Against Platonian and Aristotelian substantialism and more in line with nominalism opened by stoicism, precariousness and alter-globalisation appear as the result of a conjunction of different notions or properties. Or, following contemporary logic, they are a class that comprehends a multiplicity of classes having an inferior extent.

## **9.2: Syntheses of social movements:**

The syntheses of militants’ apperceptions show the identity pluralism or eclecticism of social movements. Social movements are a place where new political and social identities appear, are shaped and re-shaped over time. Syntheses of apperceptions (ideal dimension of the syntheses) are accompanied by syntheses of social movements (material dimension of the syntheses). Syntheses or generalisations favour the formation of new social circles. Actually, the consequences are even both quantitative and qualitative. Not only there exists an increase of social groups from a numerical point of view, but there is also an expansion of the existing



groups that come to be part of larger groups. *In fine*, actors establish a network of reciprocal influences. Through syntheses, they extend their alliances and networks, put forward new feelings of belonging and of identity, bolster their associations and power of acting. In turn or reciprocally, the amplification of social circles of belonging diversifies the identity representations, to speak with Simmel.

According to postmodernism, current identities are fragmented, discontinuous, they lack unity. For some scholars (Meiksins Wood, 1997: 7), the multiplicity of identities within and among social movements would jeopardise the possibilities of inner and outer unity. There would not be a “basis for solidarity and collective action founded on a common social “identity” (like a class), a common experience and common interests”.

In fact, even though identities are plural, they rather show a certain continuity among them beyond differences, and even beyond oppositions that separate them. Apperceptive syntheses and the related syntheses of social movements show that diversity, variety of interests do not prevent unity and internationalism, that they are not necessarily a source of particularisms and antagonisms, that there is not a lack of solidarity among militants, that these movements are not necessarily and easily coopted by the State and capitalistic interest groups, contrary to some positions in social sciences, notably Marxian like those of Holst (2002), which focus on the nature of contemporary movements and call into question the transformative capacity of these movements due to this nature.

Alter-globalisation identity allows to ensure a link, a continuum, a unity or a synthesis among several different identities and at first glance without any apparent links, such as alter-economists identities, ecologists or environmentalists identities, anti-precarious identities, and so forth.

In sum, the alter-globalist frame responds to the proper nature of alter-globalist social movements, or to their concrete otherness. Indeed, the particularities of many alter-globalist social movements, as we saw in the first part of this research, are their structural fluidity, flexibility, plurality, their horizontal and decentralised organisation, their spontaneity, their small size, their non-stability and permeability, their functioning through networks.

According to some Marxian theoreticians studying social movements, the social basis of contemporary movements would no longer be the working class. They would no longer be constituted by workers and they would essentially be a product of the middle classes or of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, which would not identify with the proletariat, workers and the idea of class struggle. In this sense, their objectives would no longer be economic and material. For instance, they would not seek to bolster working conditions and to increase

workers' wages. Their interests would be, by contrast, immaterial and symbolic. They would not address the issues related to the social relations of production between capital and labour (Holst, 2002).

Actually, unlike the “new” social movements and the “old” movements, current movements are composed of workers, alongside middle classes, petty and middle bourgeoisie as well. To a certain extent, one may state that they are trans-class. They unite a plurality of individuals belonging to different social strata, from social outcasts to favoured social strata with a relative importance of the middle classes having a quite high level of training and education (most of them own university diplomas) and knowing to use the new informational and technological systems. The studied movements, with their particular variants, also embrace this spectrum.

The materialistic substratum has re-appeared within social movements in the age of contemporary capitalism founded on services, information and new technologies to the extent that forms of economic domination and “oppression” continue to exist. But, contrary to both kinds of past movements, current movements also include “precarious” (like PRECC and SOS), “excluded” and “poor people” (one of ECON and VERDE’s targets) and not only workers or the exploited people. Workers are no longer perceived as the historical agent of social transformation and including as the privileged social actor. As Alberto Melucci (1992: 52) stated, “the heroic era is over”, that where workers, elected and “essentialist subjects”, had a “messianic” role.

Since the end of the “Thirty Glorious Years”, the ascendancy of neoliberalism within national and inter-governmental economic policies has weakened labour and de-structured the working class. Alongside the improvement of wages and working conditions, one of the main social problems is a growing and chronic mass unemployment. Nowadays, alongside the problem of economic exploitation, there is also the problem of exclusion of individuals from the labour market. Marginal and excluded people form a growing social fraction. These dynamics are notably reflected through the constant development of the informal or underground economy at the expense of the formal or legal economy, notably in the Southern countries. This is an economy of marginals who re-invent the economy outside regulation schemes before the multiplication of processes of exclusion that are produced by new capitalism. Producers, workers and sellers who are active in this highly differentiated economy according to the social contexts are therefore situated on the fringe of the capitalist system and their economic activities are a response to the dysfunctions of the latter. We have seen above that the category of “informals” forms part of the larger category of “precarious”

in the typology of PRECC and SOS. According to some authors (Burbach, 1998: 61), these informal economic activities are products of under-employment and mass unemployment that are generated by liberalisation and the expansion of capital, and they are specific and localised “alternatives” before the excluding and unequal system of “the hegemonic and globalising economy”.

In addition, alongside their materialistic substratum that therefore concerns “workers”, “the exploited”, “the precarious”, “the excluded” and “the poor”, current movements still have an idealistic substratum such as the questions related to ecology (VERDE), economic ethics (ECON) and existence and labour ethics (PRECC/SOS) in the wake of the “new” social movements and unlike the “old” movements.

Contrary to some acceptations stemming from post-modernism, the advent of the immaterial age does not entail the end of the pertinence of economic and materialist analyses of the world or the caducity of political economy. The focus on culture, different cultural variants, the ideal and symbolic, and correlatively the focus on symbolic struggles, cultural domination and power, which have been notably made by post-modernists, should not prevent us from paying special attention to the economic and material sphere and struggles as well given their respective saliency in contemporary mobilisations and social struggles.

In fact, contemporary movements overcome the traditional dichotomy, to a large extent created by social scientists and less evident or real in the facts, between “old” and “new” movements, between the materialism generally and theoretically ascribed to the former and the post-materialism or idealism attributed, by contrast, to the latter. They therefore realise a sort of synthesis between these two dimensions – the old/new or the materialism/idealism – that are no longer opposed but that are integrated and associated. Indeed, in current movements, these two sides tend to nurture each other; they interact or reciprocally act, echoing again Simmel.

### **9.3: Dialogism between the Self and the Other:**

Alongside the syntheses of apperceptions within social movements and the related material syntheses of social movements, which imply that during synthetisation the Self is already interacting with the Other, an inner Other or an Other located inside the movements themselves, the interactions with the Other also occur outside the sphere of social movements,

with hetero-topies. This time, this is therefore about an outer Other whose interactions with social movements entail reciprocal ascriptions between them.

Thus, alongside syntheses of militant identities that comprehend diverse identities interacting and influencing each other (such as alter-economists identities, ecologists or environmentalists identities, anti-precarious identities that are united through the synthesis of alter-globalisation identity), these same identities are also built from oppositions against other identities like governments and economic groups.

We saw that through diagnostic framing, militants identify problems, “victims” of these problems and culprits. To speak with frame analysts, this is the function of attributions.

Thus, the problems related to globalisation identified by the members of ECON affect, in their eyes, “citizens” in general and poor people in particular. The concept of “citizen” is not reducible to the idea of “national citizenship”. To the contrary, it breaks national boundaries and suggests the idea of citizens of the world, of cosmopolitanism. The responsible entities are world economic and political elites who, following neoliberal ideology, do not regulate the financial system to allow a better redistribution of the economic resources among the different social sectors.

For VERDE, the principal victims are Nature and life on the whole. In the same way as ECON, the responsible entities are the political and economic institutions that enable the destructive dynamics of the natural world and its various species for narrow economic interests.

According to the PRECC/SOS scheme of thought, the victims of globalisation are workers of all types that suffer because of precariousness and the continuous precarisation of labour and *in fine* of existence. The responsible entities are the same as those of ECON and VERDE: political and economic power-holders.

Because of the contents of the diagnostic frames that give names to culprits and of the contents of collective action frames at large, social movement frames are always confronted with other social frames, antithetical collective frames or counter-frames that are promoted by other social movements and/or other key social actors like state institutions, international organisations, corporations, corporate foundations, think tanks, the media, and so forth, which are, *ipso facto*, converted into more or less active and overt adversaries according to the degree and kind of the opposition.

We remind that counter-framing is a process that rests on four main discursive actions according to frame analysis scheme. The first one is the problem denial that consists in simply denying the fact that the problem highlighted by a movement is really a problem or exists.

The second common process is that of counter-attribution. Here, opponents recognise the existence of the problem expounded by a movement but at the same time they do not accept to recognise the culprits that are mentioned in their discourses, and *in extenso*, the causes of the problem. Consequently, they also tend to make reference to other causes, to other culprits, often, they even blame the same movement that has initially targeted them; hence, the name of counter-attribution given by frame analysts.

The third discursive action of counter-framing is counter-prognostic, which entails the denunciation of alternatives set out by the critical movement and simultaneously the propositions of other solutions.

Finally, by the politics of discrediting the movement, its members and actions, the ultimate mode of counter-framing that nonetheless remains the most frequent, this is directly the movement in itself that is aimed.

To face and respond to these discursive actions of counter-framing, we can also remind that militants may follow five alternatives, if we still apply the frame analysis model. They may ignore them, change their meanings (the keying as counter-counter-framing), espouse them at the beginning in order to better key them later, they can distance themselves from them by refusing the criticisms that they contain and by continuing to develop their own frames in parallel to them, or, finally, they can also set out counter-maligning responses by showing and criticising the amoral character of the means employed by opponents, especially when the latter intensively use the politics of discrediting against them.

In the studied movements, these are especially the counter-framing resting upon the politics of discrediting the movement, its members and actions as well as the alternatives based on counter-maligning and re-keying counter-frames that have been noticed because of their saliency.

Repetitively, militants have to face the rhetoric of *argumentum ad hominem* systematically put forward by most of their opponents (the politics of discrediting in frame analysis' terms). Indeed, the latter seek to discredit the former through arguments, and fallacious arguments, which tend to attack more their so-called characters by ascribing them negative epithets than their ideas.

We recall that, in the view of "opinion-makers" (scientists, politicians, mass media) and of the agents responsible for maintaining societal order (the police, the State), VERDE's advocates are "radical and violent", "bad demonstrators", "eco-terrorists", "terrorists", "invaders of fields", "vandals", "mere delinquents", "anti-scientists", "technophobic ecofreaks", "mad persons", "people with displaced neurones". For PRECC and SOS militants,

there are always the risks to be “labelled as a rebel” by their employers, because they express discontent regarding their wages and working conditions, and consecutively to lose their “mediocre job but so hard to get” because of this label.

These outer identifications are a type of “dividing practices”. By these negative ascriptions, activists fall within the social category of the “anomic”, the “disorder”, the “pathological” or the “abnormal”, antinomies of the order, the normal, the societal normativity, which comprehends the “Deviant”, the “Transgressor”, the “Marginal”, the “Atypical”, the “Mad”, the “Ill Person”, the “Incarcerated”, the “individual to be corrected”, the East, the Monster, the Onanist, the Homosexual, the desiring sexual individual, and so forth, to speak with Foucault. They are therefore expelled on the fringe of society, toward the Exterior of what is socially accepted. They are confined on the edge, the other space that is problematic, stigmatised, condemned and that paradoxically serves to positively build the space of the admissible. These dynamics are even recognised by some activists who thus adopt in some occasions a Foucauldian style.

For example, VERDE’s members had indicated the construction of a huge enclosing wall that separated and excluded social movements from what was acceptable, the recognised members authorised to participate in the G8 summit held in Germany in 2007. In the same event, they stressed that social movements also faced the police’s repression, with perquisitions, arrests, physical attacks.

In PRECC and SOS, sex workers know that their job “seems a distant thing, close in a ghetto that is alien”. They and further militants in these movements added, as we already know, that “the dimension of the offensive against those who work requires responses that bring down barriers and preconceptions – it would be easy to demarcate and divide, but we exactly need and want the opposite”. Similarly, they asserted that governments and employers “want that we remain isolated, divided, distrustful of one who is on our side”, that “Patriarchy is thus an institutionalised norm that attributes to the people well defined roles, with a hierarchical primacy for the heterosexual-white-man”. For their part, LGBT activists within these movements denounce “LGBTphobia” that exists in any place during the daily life to the extent that it is both “institutional” and “cultural”, what implies a constant social “stigmatisation” and “discrimination”. Sex workers claim that “the invention of the “bad woman” – the woman that we cannot be – like that who decides about her body, her life, the woman who has sex, who has pleasure with whoever, when she wants and with the wished returns, was one of the most brilliant strategies to create the idea of the “good woman”, the serious woman – what WE HAVE to be”, or that “the idea of the prostitute as the “bad

woman”, its connotation of “deviant”, of “different kind of woman” are not more than a way of the heteropatriarchy to create and reinforce the idea of the “serious woman” (that who is desexualised and solely reproductive)”. As we saw at the end of the prior chapter, they created a similar discourse with the “true” and “wrong man”. And, they pursued by asserting that, in this way, “the control is more effective, the power is more effective”, or that “it is like this that the system wants us: With our bodies and desires well controlled and exclusively to serve a major order; married and producing children-pieces for the heteropatriarchal, capitalist and monogamous gears”.

For some militants, if their quality is absolutely ignored, the precarious are not even a quantified and measured otherness, and *in fine*, considered and objectified. They are not even a difference. In their eyes, they are denied and excluded, but also and paradoxically used and exploited by politicians and economic elites. As we saw, they iteratively state that “we do not appear in the statistics. Albeit we are more and more precarious, the governments hide this world”, that they are “things that the “figures” always ignore”, that “we do not fit into these figures. We do not let them forget the conditions to which they refer us”, that “we are those who do not count for the statistics”, or that they “do not let them continue to convince you that you do not count”.

On the whole, we can say that throughout the processes of outer ascriptions, social movements and their militants are an altered otherness.

Conversely, or reciprocally, activists also use the rhetoric of *argumentum ad hominem* against their adversaries to de-legitimise them in turn (the politics of discrediting from the movements this time).

For ECON, for instance, the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank (the Troika) as well as the governments that follow their policies are “kidnappers”, “murders”. Its militants see NATO and the United States as violent, “bloodthirsty”, “killers”, “invaders”, “colonisers”, “war lords”.

This time, from social movements’ point of view, these are no longer them that are deviant, outlaws, criminals, but the very ones who have accused them of these same transgressive behaviours.

For VERDE’s militants, the police, the related mass media (and more broadly the whole of what they call the opinion-makers) are “liars”, “story-tellers”, “fables-tellers”, “movies-makers” insofar as they do not tell the truth about them in order to mislead and frighten ordinary people, and finally to discredit them before the public or society. In addition, they consider that scientists who form part of this group of opinion-makers are actually pseudo-

scientists because they have a reductionist conception of science, they have espoused “the dominant technocratic thought”, they are partial or dogmatic, and therefore because they present a biased and distorted version of the reality. Besides, they see G8 as an illegitimate, a-moral, non-democratic association of the eight great world economic powers. They also perceive the Climate Change Conferences organised by the UNO as an illegitimate, unfair, elitist, “colonialist”, “neo-colonialist” undertaking, as a “criminal” “circus” that is ineffective and harmful for the environment (and for the people, especially from the “Global South”), and that only serves the big corporations’ interests.

According to PRECC and SOS advocates, businessmen and governments are also “liars” to the extent that the “modernisation” that they have promoted and developed does not serve everyone, contrary to what they claim, but only their own interests to the detriment of those of the rest of the people. They perceive bankers and speculators as “thieves” and governments, the European Commission and the European Central Bank as their “accomplices” – “the forces that steal from us the present and the future” – since they do not use their own money for their businesses but “play” with that of the people – this is “the weight of an economic system that usurps people’s life”.

Here, again, social movements’ adversaries fall within the categories of the illegal and blameworthy via the labels put forward by militants.

There is an inversion of qualities. The Same addresses to the Other an inverted value in relation to the one that the Same attributes to oneself.

Thus, for ECON’s members, their movement rests upon the values of citizenship, peace and solidarity whereas the international organisations and governments that they target are, by contrast, elitist, authoritarian (even non-democratic), belligerent, conflictive.

For VERDE’s militants, these are not them who are delinquents or criminals, but the corporations that produce transgenics in farming fields. They are, on the contrary, sorts of “righters of wrongs” who face these criminals that paradoxically have the support of the law. In addition, they perceive themselves as being more scientists than the pseudo-scientists who take part in the social circle of opinion-makers, who pretend to be the sole and genuine Scientists and accuse them of being anti-scientists, inasmuch as, in many circumstances, their propositions that are attacked and rejected by the pseudo-scientists come to be akin to other scientific positions and to be empirically verified and accepted, and, conversely, insofar as the pseudo-scientists’ statements appear as incongruous with the facts.

Furthermore, militants positively re-evaluate their otherness, or othernesses, which are generally, to the contrary, negatively considered by the common *doxa*, and in addition,



actively denigrated by their various opponents. They tend to make positive what has been perceived as negative by adversaries, thereby attempting to diametrically invert the order or the value of perceptions. This is re-keying counter-frames and to some extent this is also counter-maligning if we still espouse frame analysis' *koine*.

Thus, PRECC's militants claim their "abnormality" or "deviance", which is even judged as necessary before the nature of the system of social precepts, when they condemn "the fantasy of normativity, which precarious all those who do not adapt to this norm!". For sex workers acting in this movement, this is about positively transforming the social perception of their work, which from the status of "distant thing", "ghetto", "alien" must be converted into "a space of acknowledgement and valorisation of human relations".

Similarly, VERDE's activists positively consider their social status of "anomic". We remind that they state that their "collective and non-capitalist identity and citizenship", their "autonomous and political identity", their "agro-ecological identity" are constructed from "resistance, creation, questioning and challenge of the law and dominant social norms".

In addition, if these militants accept the common assertion that accuses them of being "reapers", they nonetheless substitute the negative epithets that are usually joined to this word by positive adjectives. Thus, in their eyes, they are not "GMOs reapers" as it is simply stated by the opinion-makers, but they are more deeply "international reapers", "voluntary reapers". The same process of positive re-evaluation also occurs with the term "field", for example. They are no longer "invaders of fields" as is asserted by opinion-makers, but they are, on the contrary, "liberators of fields". In this sense, reaping is no longer an illegal and criminal act, but it becomes, to the contrary, a civic act that serves the common good or the general interest. Reaping is even perceived as a "medical" act, made by "surgeons" (militants), that must care and save "ill" fields.

Besides, they recuperate the negative ideas of war and armed struggle (that are currently and mainly associated with terrorism by opinion-makers when they stem from small social groups considered as illegitimate), and then they give them a positive tone for showing that their actions are actually located at the antipode of those that are told by opinion-makers, for showing the incongruity of the statements made by the latter and finally for ridiculing them. Activists play with oxymorons, with the contrasts that come to be bound. By this process, they rehabilitate, for example, the ideas of *guerilla* and bombing when they respectively join them with the positive epithets of "garden" and "seed". The same thing occurs when they state that they are "an army of clowns... in the front line". *In fine*, they show in a humorous way that their actions are fundamentally anti-violent and irenic. Similarly, PRECC and SOS

activists talk about “the precariat troops” to refer to the whole of the militants who are subjected to precariousness and who contest this state in an irenic fashion as well.

There is a reciprocal play between apophatic (negative) and cataphatic (positive) ascriptions and evaluations.

Thus, militants and their adversaries respectively tend to develop a certain Manichean vision of the world since, within their normative system or their system of moral values, they tend to oppose “Good” to “Evil” or, better said, what they consider as being good to what they perceive as being bad. And, each of them by turn occupies an antithetic position according to the normative system and the speaker. Within the deontic system of social movements, the latter are the “Good” and, by contrast, opponents are the “Evil” while, conversely, within adversaries’ normativity, the latter are the “Good” and social movements are “the bad thing” that must be removed in some way.

As Simmel showed, the conflict with outer actors – transcendent dis-unity – contributes to bolster immanent unity. The perception and actuality of antagonisms simultaneously highlight what is, by contrast, similar. Solidarity among militants, their non-agonistic relations, and consequently a sense of common collective identity are reinforced by their oppositions to and agonistic relations with external adversaries. And reciprocally, these same opponents see their inner links and identity consolidated by these same outer conflicts with social movements.

More largely, militants, like their opponents, are led to formulate diverse kinds of judgements on subjects (beings and things), which accordingly receive predicates from the former. To speak with Kant (in *Critique of Pure Reason*), these judgements may be quantitative; universal (all the given subjects are concerned – the category of unity), particular (only some of them – the category of plurality) or singular (solely one of them – the category of totality) predicates are therefore ascribed. By contrast, they can also be qualitative; affirmative (such a subject is that – the category of reality), negative (such a subject is not that – the category of negation) or infinite (such a subject is non-that – the category of limitation) attributes are put forward.

Non-being in relation to being does not mean nothingness or absolute negation. Rather, this is about a relative negation, a different reality in relation to the Same or another existence in relation to the identity. Non-being and being, according to this co-relativity, therefore follows a dialectical link; each one of the two terms is constructed and defined in relation to the other one that has the quality of limit, of “experience-limit” situated at the border. The Other has a specular effect; out of its difference, it presents to the Same its own image.

Echoing Francis Affergan (2006), we can assert that there is a dialogic relation between “proxemy” and “diastemy”, between “endotism” and “exotism”, or between the close and the distant.

The discovery of the Other allows the discovery of oneself. This is the endotic side of the encounter (endotic stems from the Greek term *endon* that means “inside”); the diastemic or exotic side (diastemic refers to *diastema* that means “interval” in Latin or to *diistanai* that signifies “to separate” in Greek, and exotic comes from the Greek word *exotikos* that is translated by the word “foreign” or from *exo* that means “outside”) being purely the discovery and apprehension of the Other, following the two meanings of fearing and understanding someone or something.

In other words, if we have seen that dialogic exchanges allow the interlocutors to better know the world, they also permit them to build and assert their identity, their self or personhood. Individual and collective identities emerge out of dialogic relation, of the confrontation with the others. This dialogic dimension of identity creation also explains its dialectical and non-monological character.

*In extenso*, activists’ identities are formed in a dialectical fashion in a sense that is also Hegelian (that referring to *The Science of Logic*) and not only Platonic. Indeed, alongside the constitution and assertion of unities beyond differences – the ascending dialectic or Platonic *synagoge* that we mentioned before –, militants’ identities, far from being static, fixed, or catastematic, are formed from oppositions or opposites. The self cannot be defined, asserted, and finally, it cannot exist without the Other in the same way as the thesis goes hand in hand with the antithesis, or the cataphatic with the apophatic. Identities are therefore relative and dynamical to the extent that all things are intimately constituted through the relation with what they are not. The being necessarily implies the non-being or its negation in order to be determined, to have qualifications. Each one appears as defined by the fact of not being the Other.

This discussion can easily give the false impression that social relations within social movements are always non-agonistic and that, by contrast, opposition and struggle exist only outside the movements, between them and other social actors, notably the State. In fact, both inner and outer spheres of social movements are crossed by collective relations that are both agonistic and non-agonistic. Conflicts, more or less minor or strong, regularly appear within the movements among militants, notably regarding the nature of frames of thought on the world, on oneself and the others, what recurrently generates inner frames disputes to speak with frame analysts.

In the studied movements, some conflicts of interpretation of sense have occurred regarding frames, and also some reciprocal incomprehension and detachment, but they have never been so deep as to provoke great clash and finally schisms, at least until the end of the ethnography of this research.

Thus, we can recall the dissimilarities between the members of VERDE and ECON, beyond their affinities, pointed out by the proper ECON's militants. In their views, the former are like "hippies" wearing long hair, dreadlocks and sloppy clothes while they consider that they have themselves a more formal and classic appearance to the extent that they are usually well dressed, men wear jackets and have short hair. Moreover, they tend to see some of VERDE's actions as "strange", unusual, futile and funny things while theirs would be, to the contrary, "serious", important and effective.

To some extent, we can therefore observe that there are also dividing practices within and among social movements. Antithetic social categories that separate and divide the normal and admissible from the "abnormal" and peripheral are thus created among and against militants themselves.

Besides, we may add that, unlike rational choice theory, social interactions or "the give-and-take" among militants as well as between militants and other social actors are not reducible to social exchanges or transactions that are akin to economic exchanges or transactions. In other words, they are irreducible to economic laws that rest upon the reciprocal exchanges of material and immaterial goods, services or resources, on self-interest or egoist interest, on the calculation of the benefices and costs of these interactions, and *a fortiori*, on the maximisation or optimisation of the profits stemming from these interactions.

#### **9.4: Dialogism that makes the social:**

The outer Other, the Other situated outside social movements is to a certain extent "the social Other", "the generalised Other", the "Me" inside the Self to speak with G.H. Mead. In other words, the social Other reflects to some extent the social, society or the context.

Notwithstanding, the continuous, dynamical and changing interplays over time between the Self – in our case, this is about social movements – and the Other, which is also to some extent the social or society, as we aforesaid, impede the reification of the social.

Holistic perspectives tend to hypostatise or reify the social and *a fortiori* social movements that therefore become an irreducible thing, a totality in itself and for itself or a reality *sui generis*. Consequently, this sociologism or social determinism makes the individual less active than passive, even he/she “disappears” in favour of the sole society.

But, unlike holistic acceptations, the individuals-subjects are not a mere product, a result or consequence of structures or transcendent forces. Their behaviours and activities are not simply supports for the social. An interactionist perspective entails a “re-centring” toward the individuals-subjects without for all that eliminating their context, their history, the ecology wherein they interact. There is a co-relativity among elements against all forms of monism or unilateralism.

Social movements, as the phrase explicitly indicates, necessarily entail the movement and mobilisations imply in themselves the idea of process. Together, they convey the idea of continuous and dynamic reciprocity, of co-relativity or correlation like the notions of socialisation and sociation that had been preferred by Simmel for this reason to the detriment of the notion of society that he had often criticised due to the idea of fixity and finitude that it gives by contrast. Thus, social movements, like society or sociation at large pointed out by Simmel, are always forming – *in statu nascendi* – and not already and definitively established out there.

Correlatively to the fact that social movements must be “de-hypostasised”, they cannot be seen either as the subject of history in a philosophy of the becoming of society, whatever its name.

Regarding more particularly the social phenomenon of identities, the continuous interactions between the Same and the Other prevent all identity closing. Identities have supple borders, vague limits. They are not frozen and renew themselves over these interactions that are also changeable, never totally the same ones due to the transformation of historical circumstances and the concomitant modification of the space of these interactions. Activists themselves acknowledge these features when they state, for instance, that “the identity that we are building is different and admittedly unfinished, because we still have many things to discover and many encounters to do”.

The Same and the Other depend on each other to build and assert their respective moving identity. The difference, a necessary condition in order that it can exist the notion of identity, only appears in a relation between a differentiating and a differentiated. The differentiated becomes itself in turn the differentiating and conversely the differentiating takes the role of the differentiated following a logic of mutual attributions of places.

Conflictive interactions with the exterior, like the agonistic relations within the movements, are continuous over time, what makes that frames of thought on the world, on oneself and the others elaborated by militants and others are continuously reshaped, re-framed out of these interactions, from the successive results of these inter-relations. Similarly, but less significantly, the same proposition may be expounded concerning non-agonistic links inside and outside the movements. Inner and outer solidarity and cooperation are also changing and continuous over time and accordingly they also generate, albeit to a lesser extent, continuous processes of re-framing that are adapted to the new created situations by the social actors.

Like collective action that is built over time and that is not given *a priori* or *ex-ante* – an action, whatever its scope or nature, necessarily has a kinematic character; it always entails a movement –, the group-actor, the one that builds this action over time, is also defined and re-defined over time, and it is not definitively fixed, defined *a priori* and before collective action. The identity of the group-actor does not have a static reality; like their actions, their identity is effectively dynamical. Thus, social movements' identities have a kinetic or kinematic character and correlatively they are not catastematic.

In sum, all substantialistic definition of identity tends ineluctably to reify it while identity is generally given through a relation, which is not necessarily supposed to exist for ever. Identity is therefore less necessary than contingent, less substantial than accidental. Moreover, identities are therefore rather variable than invariable, rather mobile than immobile, rather variants than invariants.

## **9.5: Conclusion:**

What are social movements? Who are militants? What are their collective and individual identities? What are their relations or their co-relativity? Which “ontology” of social movements may we put forward?

Following Kant and Simmel's point of view in regard to their question, what does it make nature (Kant) or society (Simmel) possible?, a social movement is first what the first concerned people, the activists themselves, think and say about it, and *in fine*, about themselves as a collective. In this sense, collective identities are syntheses of apperceptions – a core dimension of cognition. They are determined by individual identities or subjective

apperceptions. People who form social movements together apperceive as “resistant” (see their emblematic apothegm “I think, then I resist”), a key empirical apperception among others. Syntheses of apperceptions (ideal side of syntheses) are also accompanied by syntheses of social movements (material side of syntheses). In turn or reciprocally, these same syntheses influence individual identities and apperceptions. Finally, a social movement is first the reciprocal actions, interactions or the give-and-take among its members.

In this sense, alter-globalisation appears as the master-frame of social movements, a sort of meta-frame that is akin to meta-theories or paradigms in sciences and social sciences. In other words, this is a large and open set composed of diverse core frames more or less linked (ecology frame, economics frame, precariousness frame, etc.), which therefore work like theories that integrate a paradigm, with their concepts, problematics, *koine*, objects. This analogy between the alter-globalisation master-frame and scientific paradigms is reinforced by the scientific character of a part of utterances or propositions that emanate from discourses and texts produced by activists.

This master frame not only allows the discursive links among social movements’ diverse discourses, but it also nurtures the concrete associations among these movements, which mainly take the form of demonstrations together in the streets, the organisation of forums, among other types of joint action in the field. The alter-globalisation frame favours virtual and real networks, at the local level, but also at greater scales, at national and transnational levels.

But, a social movement is also what the others, people and social groups situated outside it, think and say about it. A social movement is also the reciprocal actions, interactions or the give-and-take between its members and external individual and collective actors. There may be, and often there are, oppositions between apperceptions – what one thinks about oneself or the conscious perceptions of oneself in the wake of Leibniz’s philosophy (in *Monadology*) – and outer ascriptions. As the proper activists recognise it, “what WE ARE or we will be is also defined by and in relation to what we are NOT or we will not be”.

Activists identify the others – especially the opponents –, they identify themselves, are identified by the others – notably by the adversaries –, they identify the others and themselves by taking into account the others’ identifications – and above all those made by antagonists. In sum, there is a veritable play of reciprocal identifications or ascriptions.

Finally, a social movement also results from the synthesis between the thesis and anti-thesis, between the being and the non-being, to speak with Hegel, or between apperceptions

and external ascriptions from the Other. This synthesis does not entail harmony between the two opposites but only association that determines the nature or identity of social movements.

Their identity is thus determined in a dialogic or dialectical way, in a dynamical or processual fashion through the continuous interactions and oppositions between the cataphatic and apophatic dimensions of social movements, or between their positive and negative attributions and attributes.

In this sense, who are the activists? They are positive figures; they are “alter-economists”, “*hortelões*”, “liberators of fields”, “garden *guerilleros*”, “seedbombers”, “righters of wrongs”, irenic, “scientists”, “surgeons”, and so forth. Or, they are negative figures; they are “terrorists”, “radical”, “violent”, “rebels”, “anti-scientists”, “criminals”, “invaders”, “vandals”, “delinquents”, “bad”, “mad”, “ill”, and so on. The alternative depends on the point of view that one adopts and follows according to his/her system of values. But, in any case, both sides – the cataphatic side and the apophatic side – together affect and determine the nature or identity of militants in the same way as they affect and determine the nature or identity of their movement.

Activists also build their being and that of their movement, their positivity, from their negation by the Other. The identity of liberators of fields, garden *guerilleros* or seedbombers, for instance, is to a large extent a response and opposition to the identity of terrorists or violent. The former reshapes the latter in a certain humorous way, what contributes to give it its positivity and simultaneously to cancel its negative tone.

In addition, alongside the negation by the Other, this is also the negation of the Other that participates in the shaping of social movements and militants’ identities. Negative ascriptions are reciprocal as the rhetoric of the *argumentum ad hominem* pronounced by the Self and the Other toward each other shows it. For example, according to governments, militants are “terrorists”, “violent”, and by contrast, for militants, governments are “murders”, “liars”, “thieves” among other qualifications.

The Other is also the social; “the social Other”, “the generalised Other” or the “Me” inside the Self in terms of G. H. Mead.

More largely, social movements are always socially situated, they do not exist within a social vacuum; hence, the importance of the historical, socio-cultural context wherein they take place as well in the definition of their identities. However, if this importance is recognised, it ought not to lead to sociology or social determinism, mainly because of the active and ongoing interactions over time within social movements as well as between them and outer actors. These are these interactions that are changing over history that precisely



make the social. Thus, alongside sociology, these processes ought to also prevent social scientists to reify the social and *a fortiori* social identities.

In other words, the being of social movements is not definitely, once and for all, fixed. Rather, it is formed by the continuous interplays between their self and the Other, or better said, between their selves and the others. This is a non-permanent, changeable and changing reality in time and space, what prevents us from accepting the essentialist *a priori* in its methodological and ontological form or all substantialist reductionism.

## Conclusion

### *The how, why and what of social movements:*

This research in sociology has dealt with the problematic of the genesis and formation of social movements. The latter has been approached through the study of Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements, and more precisely via an emphasis on their mobilisations, praxes and identities. In this sense, I have explored, here, the conditions or possibilities of social movements (their socio-cultural and historical context, and their “structures” or economy), the sense of militant action (activists’ motives and reasons), and the “ontology” of social movements (collective and individual identities, otherness, and their co-relativity).

More precisely, I have aimed at responding to three main questions in this research: How? (the first part regarding the issue of the mobilisations of social movements), why? (the second part concerning the problem of movements’ praxes) and what? or who? (the third and final part covering the question of identities), that is, better said, how are social movements formed? Why are they formed? And what are they or who are activists?

From our study, we have therefore put forward some propositions that reply to these questions – in part and not in the absolute since, following Kant, the search for absolute truth or solution is impossible for human mind.

How are social movements formed? Basically, they are formed, first of all, thanks to their social capital, that is, out of the more or less formal organisation of a certain quantum of people who have decided to gather together in order to achieve a certain social change, and correlatively, from the creation and/or integration, by these people who have become in these processes more or less active militants, of networks (virtual and actual) that comprehend

further people (themselves converted into more or less active activists through these economic dynamics of inclusion), further organisations, further networks.

In all of these processes, the role of the people is fundamental, and more particularly, the role of some key actors who, by their nature or function (they are brokers, facilitators, mediators, “cadres”, “entrepreneurs”, organisers or spokespersons), precisely foster the formation of social capital and *in extenso* that of social movements. To speak with economists, human capital with its cultural capital (cognition, pure knowledge, scientific knowledge, ethics, aesthetics) is therefore determinant for the establishment of social capital.

These three types of capital allow, to some extent, to compensate for the lack, within social movements, of other core kinds of capital for social mobilisation and gaining power, namely economic capital and political/symbolic capital. The former refers to money and material infrastructures, the latter to recognition, credit, prestige, notability attributed by the political actors to the political actors and *in extenso*, following the former, by a large part of society to political actors. The lack of these two latter kinds of capital within social movements explains in large measure why they occupy a bottom position in the political and power field.

Furthermore, the formation of social capital by activists is facilitated by the “post-modern”, “post-structural”, even libertarian nature of many current social movements in the wake of the “new social movements” that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in most Western countries, that is, by the fact that many of them are primarily small local entities with some permanent activists and many intermittent militants and sympathisers who can be mobilised in some circumstances, that they are decentralised, horizontal, federated among them beyond geographical distance, national borders and their specific interests (what matters for them), that they are labile and fluid.

The formation of social capital is also facilitated by the media, by the fairly recent emergence and consolidation of new technologies of information and communication, notably the Internet, despite their shortcomings that make that actual militancy or militancy *tout court* cannot be replaced by cyber-activism or virtual militancy.

Why are social movements formed? They are formed by groups of people in order to respond to their individual and collective interests, to those of society (instrumental or teleological reasons), to know (cognitive or epistemic reasons; militants’ reasons are Reason). The knowledge of social movements’ knowledge shows that their knowledge is logical, theoretical, scientific (activists act for knowing the world and themselves, for understanding and explaining the social world by finding and showing causes of social phenomena). It is

ethico-practical (activists also act on the basis of values, knowledge being a core value among others for them as well; these are axiological reasons). Their knowledge is also aesthetic (they use art and also put forward a sensible knowledge), political and communicative due to the importance given to collective discussion, debate, dialogue, reflection, reflexivity and criticism in public on public matters – the public sphere – (activists also act because of communicative reasons). Finally, militants act according to traditions that are often re-appropriated, modified and updated by them on the basis of their interests (what counts for them), as well as according to emotions that cannot be completely separated from and opposed to reasons for action; actually, emotions may even often be perceived as being “good reasons” for action or as linked to good reasons for acting.

We have also addressed the ontological question “what is that?”. In our case, more precisely, what are social movements? Related to the what of social movements, there is the question who are militants? Social movements are first what the first concerned people, the proper activists, think and say about them and consecutively about themselves as a collective. Apperceptions – the conscious perceptions of oneself by oneself, a further principal form of cognition – are therefore central in the definition of their identities. Thus, in our case, for instance, they see themselves, more or less explicitly, as “thinkers”, “resistants”, “speakers”, “intellectuals”, “journalists”, “scientists”, “artists”, “artivists” (artists and activists).

Collectively, activists carry out syntheses of apperceptions; individual identities and subjective apperceptions therefore contribute to define their collective identities and objective apperceptions. Thus, in our case, they are “precarious”, a synthetic concept that embraces people of all ages, people around the world, “workers, unemployed and retired people”, “men and women”, “trans-sexuals”, sex workers, call centres’ employees, “persons with fixed-term contracts”, “victims of false green receipts”, “workers with green receipts”, “informals”, “over-exploited persons”, workers for temporary employment agencies, “entertainment and audiovisual intermittents”, “disposable immigrants”, “forced fellows” (*bolseiros*), “eternal interns”, “ people indebted to the banks”, “students”, “students-workers”, “severely mal-employed people”. They are “alter-economists”, a supra-individual notion that comprehends “citizens, women and men, workers, migrants, students, unemployed and retired people”; they are “ecologists”, a further typification that include “agro-ecologists”, “social horticulturists”, “liberators of fields”, “garden *guerilleros*”, “seedbombers”, “non-capitalists”. Or, finally, they are “alter-globalists”, the ultimate or highest abstraction – the notional *terminus ad quem* – which encompasses all the prior intermediary categorisations that are less general and more particular, that is, the ideas of “precarious”, “alter-economists”, “ecologists”, and their

respective underlying concepts among other concepts that belong to the identity of further specific movements.

These syntheses of apperceptions are not only ideal or abstract and lead to material syntheses, to concrete associations among people and social groups. These collective identities and objective apperceptions, in turn, influence individual identities and subjective apperceptions. Thus, current movements are trans-class. They comprise “workers”, “exploited people”, “unemployed people”, “excluded people”, “marginals”, “informals”, “precarious”, “under-employed people”, “indigents”, “social outcasts”, as well as a part of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, a part of the middle classes having a high level of education and knowing to use with artistry the media, the new technologies of information and communication. Modern-day movements embrace this large spectrum of members to the extent that present-day stakes before contemporary capitalism are both material and post-material; current movements therefore transcend, here, the old dichotomy between “old” and “new” social movements. In short, a social movement is first the reciprocal actions, interactions or the give-and-take among its members.

However, movements are also defined by the dialectic or dialogism between apperceptions and outer ascriptions that takes place over time. A social movement is also what the others, people and social groups situated outside it, think and say about it and its members. A social movement is also the reciprocal actions, interactions or the give-and-take between its members and external individual and collective actors. This dialectic or dialogism is often conflictive. Social movements necessarily possess an agonistic character to the extent that they are inevitably concerned with struggle and protest, insofar as by seeking a certain social change they must necessarily face resistances to change and opponents along their way.

Activists identify the others – especially opponents –, they identify themselves, are identified by the others – notably by adversaries –, they identify the others and themselves by taking into account the others’ identifications – and above all those made by antagonists. In sum, there is a veritable play of reciprocal identifications or ascriptions that are alternately cataphatic and apophatic.

In this sense, activists are either positive figures; they are “alter-economists”, “*hortelões*”, “liberators of fields”, “*garden guerrilleros*”, “seedbombers”, “righters of wrongs”, irenic, “scientists”, “surgeons”, and so forth. Or, they are, on the contrary, negative figures on the basis of the point of view that one adopts and follows according to his/her system of values. Here, in this second alternative, they fall within the social categories of “abnormals”, “pathological”, “deviant” or “the fringe of society”: They are “terrorists”, “radical”, “violent”,

“rebels”, “anti-scientists”, “criminals”, “invaders”, “vandals”, “delinquents”, “bad”, “mad”, “ill”, and so on.

Furthermore, this is the dialectic between social movements and the others that makes the social. Social movements are always situated, they do not exist within a social vacuum; hence, the importance of the historical, socio-cultural context wherein they take place as well for a complete ontology of social movements. Nonetheless, due to the active and ongoing interactions over time within social movements as well as between them and outer actors, the social (and correlatively collective identities) cannot be reified or hypostatised, what also prevents *in extenso* all forms of sociology or social determinism.

### ***Theory and empiry:***

Besides this, we have addressed in this study some fundamental problems in epistemology of sociology in particular and of social sciences in general such as the traditional dichotomies between theory and empiry, between methodological holism and methodological individualism, between subjectivity and objectivity, between structure and agency, between cause and reason; problems that are intertwined.

In regard to the first aforesaid problem, a sociological research cannot be purely theoretical, it cannot be a theoreticist theory, echoing Bourdieu, a pure speculation on the social, even though the genre exists, albeit philosophies of the social are useful for research and largely widespread within the literature in social sciences. Sociology is not a metaphysics of the social albeit it has its roots within the long history of philosophy and even though sociology and philosophy maintain close links, especially at the level of epistemology that seeks the conditions of possibility and validity of scientific theories and from the point of view of theorisation *a priori* and *a posteriori* itself.

Conversely, a sociological research cannot be empiricist either, a sociography purely descriptive or narrative. The *logos* of sociology entails the analysis, theory of the social, not only the description or tale of facts and occurrences. Otherwise, it would be a pure *graphein*, a sole sociography that is a necessary step but not the ultimate one of the discipline as for any science.

Thus, a sociological research may be neither one nor the other, but this is actually both. This is what I did in the present study. Our empirical study has been necessarily completed by

a theoretical study, which have conducted together to an analysis of the considered phenomenon. The three first chapters of each of the three parts are theoretical; I have referred to the literature in sociology in particular and social sciences in general regarding social movements and other key concepts in relation to my problematic – like action, rationality and identity. The following chapters are empirical, and the last synthetic ones integrate theory and empiry. This dissertation has taken the form of a triptych by being divided into three correlated parts, themselves, in turn, composed of three connected chapters.

During the study, continuous “comings and goings” between the theoretical and empirical have allowed me, *in fine*, to develop my own sociological interpretation of the observed and collected data or to put forward my own theoretical analysis out of this material.

To some extent, the merit of positivism, and more particularly and subsequently, of neo-positivism or logical empiricism, despite their shortcomings and criticisms that have amply questioned them, remains, after all, the fact that they have stressed the centrality of the empirical foundation for the validity of sciences – what has allowed to justify the recourse, more or less avowed, to a sort of “moderate positivism” in sciences.

During the workshop on *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* organised by Della Porta (2013) at the European University Institute in April 2013, the three speakers, Stefan Malthaner, who talked about “Fieldwork in hostile environments”, as well as Philip Balsinger and Alexandre Lambelet, who dealt with the topic of “Participant observation”, did not highlight a central point in their respective presentation and paper, the point according to which it is necessary to orient participant observation in particular and ethnography in general on the basis of the scientific objectives that one aims towards because the period of research is generally short, and because social movements are microcosms from which one can study many things, even everything. As I suggested, it is always important to already have some hypotheses before going fully to the field, hypotheses obtained after a reflection on the state of art regarding some topics or key concepts that interest the researcher and also after a first and brief contact with the field. The three studied movements have been chosen precisely because after a first contact with the fieldwork it appeared that they were among the most active movements in the field of social movements in Lisbon. These hypotheses may always be redefined over the ethnography, and generally they are redefined, modified, new ones are put forward as well according to the empirical data. At the end, after the fieldwork, these hypotheses must be verified or not by the experience, that is, by the proper fieldwork. This is what constitutes the analytical dimension of a study. As Bourdieu

stated (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 137), “I could, paraphrasing Kant, say that research without theory is blind and that theory without research is empty”.

In sum, in scientific research, theory necessarily entails empirical observation and, reciprocally, empirical study needs theory; both activities are inseparable even though they are not indivisible.

### ***Methodological holism and methodological individualism:***

Regarding the question of the division between methodological holism and methodological individualism, according to Boudon (Boudon, 2005; Boudon and Bourricaud, 2004a [1982]), there are two principal ways to address social phenomena.

The first way is usually called “methodological holism”: Social phenomena are considered as “things” or totalities in themselves, and they can be addressed only through other social phenomena that also appear as macro-realities *sui generis*. Promoted, among others, by Emile Durkheim and *L’Ecole de l’Année Sociologique*, this perspective basically argues that individuals are shaped by society or social structures. A social phenomenon is not reducible to the sum of the individuals’ actions that compose it. In terms of explanation, individuals are not sociologically important. Individual behaviours are not the causes of social phenomena but, to the contrary, the former is the consequence of the latter. A particular social phenomenon is explained by another particular social phenomenon or by several others. In this way, the causes of social facts can only be determined by other social facts.

The second sociological methodology is usually called “methodological individualism”: A singular social phenomenon is explained from an analysis of individual behaviours. A social phenomenon is the outcome of an aggregation of individual actions.

The positive point of holism is to show that social movements do not obey a process of parthenogenesis – they do not give birth to themselves alone without the intervention of the socio-cultural context wherein they are. In other words, social movements are not created *ex novo* or *ex nihilo*, actors are always situated within historical societies; hence, the importance of the socio-cultural context for studying social phenomena.

However, in his criticism of behaviourist psychology inspired by John B. Watson, George Herbert Mead (1967 [1934]: 2-3) used the metaphor “Off with their heads!” borrowed from the character of the Queen in Lewis Carroll’s novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* to



contest the fact that in this kind of psychology there is no place for subjectivity, “inner experience”, consciousness, mind, thought, or reflection. In brief, there are “no heads” because this psychology has decided to “cut” them. The same metaphor and correlatively the same sort of criticism may be done more generally about narrowly holistic perspectives in human and social sciences. By focusing essentially upon structures, culture, society, and everything that makes a whole, they have neglected the active and influential part of individuals in the determination of social phenomena.

In this study, I have tried to avoid reifying social movements, that is, to consider them as “things” or person-entities, but rather I have intended to see them as entities of persons. Indeed, some holistic sociological theories tend to see social movements as beings in themselves whereas they are concretely formed by real persons who animate them. Avoiding the reification of social movements also implies trying not to hypostasise them. In other words, they cannot be seen as vectors of a unique and frozen volition given the fact that they are constituted by a variety of persons. As such, they are necessarily the scene in which diverse positions emerge – convergent and divergent positions – although it is true that some of them tend to dominate the others (Chazel, 1992). In this study, when I talked about social movements and even if I did not explicitly mention their members every time, it was always with these latter principles in mind.

Actually, social subjects are both autonomous and heteronomous. Despite the pressures exerted on individuals by the structures, the former have all the time a certain margin of autonomy that varies according to the weight of the latter. As Sylvie Mesure and Patrick Savidan stated (2006: IX), in the age of the “democratic individualism”, although individuals are limited and constrained by their social and historical contexts, they cannot be neglected by social scientists.

Or, conversely, people are not totally free in their comprehension of the world, they are partly influenced by their cultural and social environment. People’s actions, beliefs and behaviours have a sense for them and social scientists only insofar as they are related to a specific historical, cultural and social context, or, if one prefers, to a particular social space wherein objective historical social relations determine the place of each actor (individual and institutional) that forms part of this space, to speak with Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The sociology of action cannot lead to a “pure” subjectivism or idealism either.

Similarly, in our case, alter-globalist social movements depend on individuals who are within them. However, we cannot ignore, at the same time, the influence of the socio-cultural context that works as a frame or parameter. Portuguese society, other social groups in

Portugal, European Union, the Troika, globalisation at large, for instance, also exert an influence on the formation of social movements. That is why, the studied social movements and their militants have been placed in their socio-cultural context.

The comprehensive and interactionist sociology that we have espoused in this study can be a field sociology at the micro-level since both privilege the actors' interpretations and points of view, their interactions. Nonetheless, this micro dimension has been confronted with meso and macro data and analyses.

In this sense, movements' leaders are, in a certain way, obliged to take into consideration their environment's cultural parameters if they want that their frames of thought and actions are comprehensible for the public and if they eventually wish that people join their cause – this is Snow and Benford's idea of “frame resonance” (1988). In a similar vein, as Tarrow (2003 [1998]: 106-108) noted, militants' leaders must negotiate and find a compromise between the innovations they propose in their perception frames, which are necessary for producing changes (movements' final objective), and some current and common cultural parameters in place within their society. To a great extent, their success depends on this delicate equilibrium between newness and conformity.

More generally, the metaphor of the actor, iteratively employed in this research, must not signify that the individual strictly follows predetermined particular roles without bringing his personal touch. Indeed, the actor himself, that of the theatre or cinema, always interprets pre-fixed roles according to his personality, so that a same role is never played in the same way by individuals. Each of them bring his/her originality or creativity. Beyond adaptations, individuals are therefore capable of inventions.

### ***Subjectivity and objectivity:***

In this study, we have also addressed to a certain extent the epistemological and old debate in social sciences around the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity.

To speak with Wilhelm Windelband (in *History and Natural Science*, 1894), I have followed in this research an approach that is rather idiographic than nomothetic. More precisely, by idiography, I mean that I have privileged the methods of qualitative sociology, fieldwork among three alter-globalisation social movements in Portugal. This approach focuses upon the people who compose social movements. It allows social scientists to know

more precisely or with more details actors' practices and representations, the social logics. Ethnography and by extension anthropology and comprehensive sociology address "practices and representations of those that one studies", their "mentalities" (Sobral, 1999: 33). In other words, this sociology *in situ*, *multi-situ* and *in actu* leads to interviews with activists, to pay attention to diverse praxes, oral discourses and "emic" writings, to realise what has been conceptualised by anthropological theory and praxis, namely "participant observation". I have focused on actors' idiolects by observing the variety and forms of their languages. I have adopted in the writing of the empirical chapters a narrative or descriptive style, a form that is well adapted to an idiographic orientation.

Furthermore, by idiography, I mean that I have less sought to establish laws than to observe tendencies. I have less aimed to formulate absolute apodictic judgements than to put forward assertoric judgements or to expound some truths of facts that are not inevitably necessary and universal, and within which there is all the time a place for contingency.

However, this idiography is irreducible to idiosyncrasies, individual ipseity or subjectivity. On the contrary, it also allows to observe collective or trans-subjective features of militant actions and representations, thereby highlighting their objective dimension. Beyond idiolects, there are also *koines*.

The dyad subject-object or subjectivity-objectivity – far from having to be separated and isolated from each other, science and sociology therefore focusing only upon the object, objectivity – are *de facto* in relation and reciprocal dependency, echoing Simmel. The subject and the object or the I and the world are not antinomic, but they have rather a co-relational character, unlike some forms of idealism that only privilege the thinking subject as well as materialism that considers as relevant solely the object or the world. To speak again with the German sociologist and philosopher or in a manner analogous to G. H. Mead, objectivity results from close links that subjectivities develop among them.

In other words, in the wake of the comprehensive approaches in social sciences in general, subjectivities, if they are collective, cease to be subjective, precisely because they are collective, that is, they become trans-subjective and finally objective (at least for the collective that embraces these subjectivities). Moreover, the study of subjectivities such as they are or appear is already an objective approach in itself. The object of social sciences is also the study of subjectivities.

This co-relativity between subject and object is always present during fieldwork. The ethnographer, a singular subject, must himself negotiate his position vis-à-vis his object of study that also refers to subjects. Thus, following the dichotomy established by Francis

Affergan (2006), the ethnographer must find a compromise or balance between two extreme approaches, between a diastemic approach, in which the Other, the studied actors, would be too distant for being approached and finally understood – what would lead to an excessive objectivism that is harmful for the comprehension and explanation of social groups –, and a proxemic approach, which would imply, to the contrary, an over proximity with the Other that would prevent a certain critical distance necessary for the analysis – what would lead, by contrast, to a radical subjectivism that also harms the scientific presentation of data. I have myself tried to obey this comprise during my research.

### ***Structure and agency:***

In relation to the antinomy between structure and agency, praxeologic paradigm allows to face the limits of structural-functionalist and structuralist paradigms, two related major paradigms in social sciences. The action field approach is more dynamic and flexible than Neil Smelser's structural-functionalism, and thereby being more congruent with the reality of social movements. The same thing regards social subjects' identities. Symbolic interactionism, by its focus on processes of identity formation, reflects better the reality of social movements than Talcott Parsons' structural-functionalism and Erik Erikson's structuralism.

More generally, the praxeologic paradigm provides a better alternative to studying social action because, following Karl Popper's criterion of validity of scientific theories (in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*), theories belonging to this paradigm tend to be more congruent with reality.

This importance given to social dynamism and processes is also reflected by our comparative approach. We have compared among them three Portuguese alter-globalisation social movements. Our research has been oriented toward the actors and their specific situations, and in this sense, as we aforesaid, by qualitative research and micro-scale studies, principally through fieldwork among particular social movements.

However, these movements are not like monads, to speak with Leibniz; they do not belong to an isolated, closed and separated world from the others. Beyond the local character of this comparison, we have also contrasted these movements with other ones belonging to

other geographical spaces and/or other times. The comparison has therefore been more macro as well.

I have adopted here one of the main elements of Marc Bloch's historiographic method and of Durkheim's sociological method. The former, strongly inspired by social sciences, studied *La Société Féodale* (1939-1940) from diverse geographical spaces (European, Japanese). Durkheim (2010 [1895]) who partly influenced Bloch considered that comparisons between different spatio-temporal places were in social sciences as important as experimentation in natural sciences (Sobral, 1992: 121).

Thus, following these fundamental methodological precepts, my study has also been comparative in a diachronic way by making reference to several historical instances (for instance, the "new social movements" in the 1960s and 1970s in most of Western countries, the civil rights movement at this time in the United States) as well as in a synchronic fashion by taking into account, alongside time, space or different geographical contexts (for example, the squatters movements, World Social forums).

### ***Cause and reason:***

Related to the dichotomy between methodological holism and methodological individualism, this is the antinomy between cause and reason. For Boudon (Boudon, 2005; Boudon and Bourricaud, 2004a [1982]), there exist two core modes to explain a social phenomenon in sociology, the explanation or the analysis being the central activity of sociologists and other social scientists.

Sociology, as all sciences, comprises a fundamental etiologic dimension, that is, one of its core tasks, and without doubt the most important one, is to explain (or study) and show the causes of phenomena – and, in its disciplinary specificity, it is about those of social phenomena.

A first mode is therefore related to methodological holism and refers to "causal explanation". Generally, the causes that are considered are a-rational causes to the extent that actors' reasons are not taken into account.

The second mode of explanation is thus related to methodological individualism. It is habitually named "comprehensive explanation". To a large extent inherited from the sociology of Georg Simmel and Max Weber, this approach stresses the sense that actors give

to their thought and actions. Here, scientific objectives and sociological analysis are attached to explain the causes of collective beliefs, behaviours and actions from the sense of the latter for the concerned individuals or subjects who are situated in particular contexts (a historical time, and a geographical and socio-cultural place). In some way, comprehension means to take the actor's place. The individuals' subjectivity and "states of consciousness" are significant for this approach. Knowing the actors' reasons for thinking and doing what they think and do is central here as well. The concept of sense is also and often related to that of reason, taken in a large signification. Hence, reasons and causes may be interchangeable concepts. The causes of a macro-social phenomenon ultimately depend on this sense or these reasons. This is about explaining the macro-social by the micro-social, and the micro-social by individuals' motives or reasons.

In brief, generally, the considered causes are both a-rational and rational causes since this perspective regards actors' reasons in addition to other a-rational motives such as emotions (or affects) and traditions. The rational approach does not mean rationalist because it is accepted within this approach that social action, in relation to the socio-cultural context, does not only rely on reasons and that other factors as emotions, traditions or some a-rational causes can also have a major influence, and including they can be more determinant than actors' reasons in some social circumstances. In these sociological traditions of thought and unlike theories based strictly on a-rational causes, sense and cause or understanding and explanation are interrelated. Understanding is a fundamental step of the explanation (Boudon, 2009c [1995]).

My approach, as stated elsewhere, has been comprehensive to the extent that I have shown in this study rational causes and a-rational causes (such as emotions and traditions) of social movements. Far from having separated and isolated them, I have shown their link or co-relativity, their overlap or meshing.

In this sense, one of the aims of this study has been to respond to some shortcomings presented by the main schools of thought in the sociology of social movements. In the present research, the chosen theoretical perspectives comprehend and go beyond the main and traditional theoretical categories regarding the sociology of social movements. Albeit these latter theories have given significant insights that have allowed to better elucidate the phenomenon of social movements, they remain partial and consecutively they have to be completed by a larger paradigm, notably to face the problematic that is posed by current militant collective action. In this sense, it has seemed necessary to consider more largely the

contributions of the sociology of action (Weber, Bourdieu, Boudon) and of identity (Simmel, G. H. Mead, Berger and Luckmann, Sobral).

By our approach, more precisely, we have therefore tried to face collective behaviour theories' behaviourism and emotionalism, reductive rationalism of resource mobilisation theories/political process models and of some variants of Marxism in its utilitarian form, structuralism of political process models, structuralism of Marxism, structuralism of new social movements theories, limited conception of rationality from Habermas (solely seen as communicative reason), Touraine's holism, Melucci's individualism that does not sufficiently develop or highlight the whole of the rationalities of social movements.

The conceptions that reduce rationality *tout court* to instrumental or teleological rationality (like resource mobilisation theories, political process models, Marxism focusing on class utilitarianism or class interest) appear as a type of trope, a figurative language where metonymy or synecdoche prevails and that is a hegemonic representation in social sciences and beyond, inherited in large measure from the theoretical influence of economics. In the metonymy, the name of the thing itself is substituted by the name of a specific attribute or a particular feature of this same thing; thus, rationality at large becomes the sole and particular instrumental or teleological rationality. In the synecdoche, a more generic or inclusive term is substituted by a lesser one; again, here, by this figure of speech, rationality at large is transformed into the narrow notion of instrumental or teleological rationality.

In other words, if social movements' actors are moved both by individual and collective interests, the study of social movements is irreducible to the study of their instrumental or teleological rationality, that is, to the adequacy between the means and ends of action, as this mainly appears in the mainstream Anglo-American sociology on social movements. Rather, by rationality, one must refer to its classical philosophical meaning, especially Kantian, which has influenced through neo-Kantism a significant part of social sciences like precisely the Weberian, Simmelian and phenomenological traditions. In this way, the notion of rationality can be equated with that of cognition, people's faculty of knowing, demonstrating, making explicit, arguing, criticising within some limits.

Thus, related to reasons, cognitive praxes within social movements and elsewhere are already in themselves an act of emancipation that may call further ones.

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