



UNIVERSIDADE D
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Jonas Van Vossole

CRISIS AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY

THE DIVERGENCE OF NARRATIVES ON DEMOCRACY
IN THE PORTUGUESE SOCIAL CONFLICT

Thesis under the PhD program in Democracy in the 21st Century,
supervised by Professor Doctor José Manuel Marques da Silva Pureza
and presented to the Faculty of Economics and the Centre for Social Studies
of the University of Coimbra.

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FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA
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Centro de Estudos Sociais
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Universidade de Coimbra

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Coimbra, December 2020.

To Dirk Van Vossle and Kristien Devloo-Delva.

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The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum, morbid phenomena of the most varied kind come to pass.

(Antonio Gramsci)

ABSTRACT

For nearly three decades democracy seemed to be unquestioned and unquestionable. The Fukuyaman post-political and post-history framework dominated social theory and mainstream political science approached democracy solely through its formal liberal representative prescription based upon free and fair rules of competition between parties. Also, critical political theory had more or less accepted the liberal political horizon; proposing deliberative, participative and agonistic alternative models which left capitalism itself evermore unquestioned. In the middle of the Global Financial crisis, the Euro crisis, the emergence of the Occupy movements and the Arab Spring, these certainties seemed to eclipse instantly. The main objective of this research was to discover why and how democracy was going through such a legitimacy crisis. This thesis is an inquiry into the relation between crisis and democracy based on the case-study of austerity-ridden Portugal between 2011 and 2015. Based upon a historical analysis of democratic theory throughout the evolution of capitalism and a critical analysis of the concept of crisis in the construction of political knowledge, this research studies the relationship between Portugal's political economy and the development of its democracy; from the period of fascism, over the Carnation Revolution and the European integration process to its present period of crisis and austerity. Our research is based upon the idea that democracy is an ideological concept – in which ideology refers to the medium through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate – and that crises emerge the “fundamental contradictions in society”; breaking up the hegemonic consensus. As diverging, potentially legitimate interests emerge, the dissensus in society is concentrated in the conceptualization of democracy itself, producing divergent narratives and perspectives of it: a Demodiversity is the apparent expression of the crisis of the hegemonic form of democracy. Such hypothesis has been substantiated by applying a critical discourse analysis to interviews of the various sides of the social conflict under austerity conditions. Besides the 67 people that were interviewed at the anti-austerity protests; we also interviewed 8 key-players: policymakers, opposition members of parliament, social movement activists and Trade Union leaders. For at least three decades, the traditional liberal-democratic democratic discourse has based upon the technocratic depoliticization and the culturalization of political problems, while government policies are formally legitimized based on procedures, law, elections, parliamentary majorities, ratified treaties and constitutional judgements. Austerity only deepened and normalized the neoliberal dimensions of inevitability and exceptionality. Besides the dominant model, we distinguished three other competing discourses of democracy which could have formed an alternative democratic content: the *Acampadas*, the Trade Union model, and the alternative party model. While the union discourse focusses on a conceptualization of democracy based upon everyday working and living conditions, collective action and direct participation, the social movements were more utopic by focussing on systemic change, horizontality, and practices of prefiguration. The discourse of the parties, was more institutionalist, focussed on organization, power, and the state, focussing on social and constitutional rights, elections, history, ideology, and strategy. This thesis argues that an articulation between these models – in the form of socialism – is necessary to present a viable alternative to the hegemonic liberal-democratic form. We conclude this thesis by critically analysing possible shortcomings of the separate alternative discourses, and how, to different extent, they were rearticulated back into the hegemonic liberal-democratic model of democracy. Notably, we focus on how aspects of depoliticization and aesthetics in the assembly movements and how the excessive hope in electoral change and subsequent coalition-negotiations around the Geringonça-project did not solve the structural problems behind the democratic crisis.

Keywords: Crisis. Democracy. Legitimation crisis. *Indignados*. Demodiversity. Semi-peripheral capitalism. Portugal. Democratic discourses. Austerity. Social movements. Political Science.

RESUMO

Durante quase três décadas, a democracia parecia ser inquestionada e inquestionável. A perspectiva pós-política e pós-histórica dominara a teoria social. Para a ciência política comum, a democracia era maioritariamente abordada em forma de prescritiva formal; como uma representatividade liberal baseada em regras de competição livres e justas entre os partidos. Além disso, a teoria política crítica havia mais ou menos aceito o horizonte político liberal; propondo modelos alternativos – como os deliberativos, participativos e agonísticos – que contestavam cada vez menos o próprio capitalismo. No meio da crise financeira global, a crise do Euro, o surgimento dos movimentos como o Occupy e a Primavera Árabe, essas certezas pareceram eclipsar instantaneamente. O objetivo principal desta pesquisa foi descobrir porque e como a democracia passou por tamanha crise de legitimidade. Nesse sentido, esta tese é um inquérito sobre a relação entre crise e democracia com base num estudo de caso: Portugal dominado pela austeridade entre 2011 e 2015. Com base numa análise histórica da teoria democrática ao longo da evolução do capitalismo e numa análise crítica do conceito filosófico de crise na construção do conhecimento político, esta investigação estuda a relação entre a economia política portuguesa e o desenvolvimento da sua democracia; desde o período do fascismo, ao longo da Revolução dos Cravos e do processo de integração europeia, até ao seu presente período de crise e austeridade. Esta pesquisa se baseia na ideia de que a democracia é um conceito ideológico – em que a ideologia se refere ao meio pelo qual a consciência e a significância operam – e que as crises emergem como “contradições fundamentais na sociedade”; quebrando o consenso hegemónico. À medida que emergem interesses divergentes, potencialmente legítimos, o dissenso na sociedade concentra-se na própria conceituação da democracia, produzindo narrativas e perspectivas divergentes sobre ela: uma Demodiversidade é a expressão aparente da crise da forma hegemónica de democracia. Tal hipótese foi fundamentada pela aplicação de uma análise crítica do discurso a entrevistas de vários lados do conflito social em condições de austeridade. Além das 67 pessoas que foram entrevistadas nos protestos contra a austeridade, também entrevistamos 8 atores-chave: gestores políticos, parlamentares da oposição, ativistas de movimentos sociais e líderes sindicais. Por pelo menos três décadas, o discurso democrático-liberal tradicional – formulado pelos gestores – baseou-se na despolitização tecnocrática e na culturalização de problemas políticos, enquanto as políticas governamentais são formalmente legitimadas com base em procedimentos, leis, eleições, maiorias parlamentares, tratados supranacionais e julgamentos constitucionais. A austeridade apenas aprofundou e normalizou as dimensões neoliberais de inevitabilidade e excepcionalidade. Além do modelo dominante, distinguimos três outros discursos concorrentes de democracia que poderiam ter formado um conteúdo democrático alternativo: as Acampadas, o modelo sindical e o modelo alternativo partidário. Enquanto o discurso sindical se concentra em uma conceitualização da democracia baseada nas condições de trabalho e vida cotidianas, na ação coletiva e na participação direta, os movimentos sociais foram mais utópicos ao se concentrarem na mudança sistémica, horizontalidade e práticas de prefiguração. O discurso dos partidos era mais institucionalista, centrado na organização, no poder e no Estado, nos direitos sociais e constitucionais, nas eleições, na história, na ideologia e na estratégia. Esta tese argumenta que uma articulação entre esses modelos – na forma do socialismo – teria sido necessária para apresentar uma alternativa viável à forma liberal-democrática hegemónica. Concluímos esta tese analisando criticamente as possíveis deficiências dos discursos alternativos separados e como, em diferentes graus, eles foram rearticulados de volta ao modelo hegemónico de democracia liberal-democrática. Nomeadamente, focamos em como aspetos de despolitização e foco

estético nos movimentos assembleares e como a esperança excessiva na mudança eleitoral e as subsequentes negociações de coligação em torno do projeto Geringonça não resolveram os problemas estruturais por trás da crise democrática.

Palavras-chave: Crise. Democracia. Crise de legitimidade. Indignados. Demodiversidade. Capitalismo semi-periférico. Portugal. Discursos democráticos. Austeridade. Movimentos sociais. Ciência Política.

ACRONYMS

15M	<i>Movimiento de los Indignados (Manifestación del 15 de mayo de 2011)</i>
15O	<i>Plataforma 15 de Outubro</i>
AAP	<i>Aam Aadmi Party</i>
AC	<i>Acampada de Coimbra</i>
AL	<i>Acampada de Lisboa</i>
BE	<i>Bloco de Esquerda</i>
CDA	<i>Congresso Democrático das Alternativas</i>
CDA*	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	<i>Centro Democrático Social</i>
CDS-PP	<i>Partido Popular</i>
CDU	<i>Coligação Democrática Unitária</i>
CES	<i>Centro de Estudos Sociais</i>
CESOP	<i>Centro de Estudos e Sondagens de Opinião</i>
CGTP	<i>Confederação Geral do Trabalhadores Portugueses</i>
CIP	<i>Confederação da Indústria Portuguesa</i>
COPCON	<i>Comando Operacional do Continente</i>
CPC	<i>Cidadãos por Coimbra</i>
CPL	<i>Cidadãos por Lisboa</i>
CSES	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems
CUF	<i>Companhia União Fabril</i>
EC	European Commission
ECB	European Central Bank
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union

FENPROF *Federação Nacional dos Professores*

G8 Group of Eight Inter-Governmental Political Forum

GAR *Geração à Rasca*

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GUE *Gauche Unitaire Européene* (Group of the European United Left)

IL *Indignados Lisboa*

IMF International Monetary Fund

IWW International Workers of the World

M12M *Movimento 12 de Março*

MAS *Movimento Alternativa Socialista*

MEP Member of European Parliament

MFA *Movimento das Forças Armadas*

MoU Memorandum of Understanding

MP Member of Parliament

MPT *Movimento Partido da Terra*

MRPP *Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado*

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OCA Optimal Currency Area

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PàF *Portugal à Frente*

PAN *Partido Animais e Natureza*

PAR Participatory Action Research

PB Participatory Budget

PCE *Partido Comunista de España*

PCF *Parti Communiste Français*

PCI *Partito Comunista Italiano*

PCP	<i>Partido Comunista Português</i>
PD	<i>Partido Democrático</i>
PDR	<i>Partido Democrático Republicano</i>
PEC	<i>Pacto de Estabilidade e Crescimento</i>
PEV	<i>Partido Ecologista os Verdes</i>
PI	<i>Precários Inflexíveis</i>
PIDE	<i>Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado</i>
PIGS	Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain
PPD	<i>Partido Popular Democrático</i>
PREC	<i>Período Revolucionário em Curso</i>
PS	<i>Partido Socialista</i>
PSD	<i>Partido Social Democrata</i>
PSOE	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i>
PSR	<i>Partido Socialista Revolucionário</i>
PVDA	<i>Partij Van De Arbeid</i>
QSLT	<i>Que Se Lixe a Troika</i>
RTP	<i>Rádio e Televisão Portuguesa</i>
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SEAL	<i>Sindicato de Estivadores e da Atividade Logística</i>
SETC	<i>Sindicato dos Estivadores, Trabalhadores do Tráfego e Conferentes</i>
SMU	Social Movement Unionism
SPD	<i>Sozialistische Partei Deutschland</i>
SR	<i>Socialismo Revolucionário</i>
STML	<i>Sindicado dos Trabalhadores Municipais de Lisboa</i>
TINA	There Is No Alternative
TSU	<i>Taxa Social Única</i>

- UDP *União Democrática e Popular*
- UGT *União Geral dos Trabalhadores*
- UMAR *União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta*
- UN *União Nacional*
- VAT Value Added Tax
- WTO World Trade Organization
- WWII World War II (Second World War)

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INTRODUCTION

A wide range of often contradicting schools have tried to theorize democracy. Many reviews of currently existing literature have failed to overcome the differences between them. They have usually represented democratic models as an evolution. At the end of this evolution – in true Fukuyama-style – liberal democracy appears as the hegemonic principle of governance. Paradoxically, in this new “post-political” or “post-democratic” (Swyngedouw, 2007; 2011) world, democracy was reduced to “low-intensity democracy” (Gills & Rocamora, 1992; Santos & Avritzer, 2005), in which management took the place of politics and democratic sovereignty became increasingly curtailed through neoliberal policies and globalization. While democratic participation declined (Santos, 2005), neoliberal ideology remained uncontested; and the elitist formal legitimation sufficed to ensure governance stability. Much of the current “state of democratic theory” reflects this hegemony by detaching democracy from the organization of the political economy. A liberal kernel can be found in almost all important contemporary democratic schools; from the democratic elitism of Schumpeter (1976) and Przeworski (1999), the positivist empiricism of Huntington (1991) to critical schools of Benhabib’s (1996) deliberativism and Mouffe’s (2013) agonistic democracy.

Due to its semi-peripheral position (Santos, 2016b, pp. 42-45 *passim*), and the crisis it went through, Portugal is an excellent case-study to understand the contradictions and struggles that exist behind the concept of democracy. In contrast to many peripheral countries, Portugal has known 40 years of a relatively stable parliamentary democracy, in which a democratic hegemony could develop. In contrast to the richer countries of the core, however, the country has less economic room of manoeuvre to pacify and therefore submerge subjacent social and political conflicts.

From its democratization in 1974 onwards, ideological struggles about the meaning of democracy involved continuous processes of reinterpretation and rewriting of historical events. In the initial years the church, the army-top and the MFA (left-wing Armed Forces Movement), the PS (*Partido Socialista* – Socialist Party), the PCP (*Partido Comunista Português* – Portuguese Communist Party), the radical left and the right-wing parties, fought over different forms of governance legitimacy – electoral, participative, constitutional, local or national (Santos, 1985). This conflict inspired Boaventura de Sousa Santos for his concept of Demodiversity – “The peaceful or conflicting coexistence [...] of different models and

practices of democracy”¹ (Santos, 2005, p. LXIII; Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 70) –, a concept developed as a historical description, but also as a means of emancipation, an inspiration of alternatives against the situation of liberal hegemony he called a “democratic monoculture”. During the next decades, the diversity gave away to such a hegemonic re-articulation around an elitist constitutional representative democracy within the European Union. The European project brought the possibility to enter the globalized “civilized” world, and to establish a modern liberal democratic state – with a modern judicial system, new markets and a national infrastructure –, a task the Portuguese elites were never able to develop before (Santos, 2012).

And then came the crisis. The socio-economic crises of the 1930’s and 1970’s coincided with a disruption of the liberal, rationalist conceptualization of democracy and led to renewed debates about democracy (Avritzer, 2002; Santos & Avritzer, 2005). Just as Habermas (1975a) theorized the legitimation crisis of the “late-capitalist” social-democratic welfare state as the emergence of a range of different narratives or “contradicting legitimacy claims” on democracy; the Euro crisis and the European austerity-policies, raised questions of democracy and legitimacy (Scharpf, 2012; Schmidt, 2013). While the democratic deficit of European governance structures is not a new problem (Magnette, 2003), the crisis exacerbated these (Schmidt, 2013): some authors (Bosco & Verney, 2012; McGiffen, 2011) have even been warning about the dangers of what would be considered a “democracy without choices”, or “a bloodless *coup d’etat*” in the Euro-zone.

During the development of this thesis, many insightful and valuable contributions have been published by researchers and intellectuals. Some have analyzed the social protest movements in Portugal in the context of austerity from a descriptive, comparative and anthropological perspective. I particularly want to mention Britta Baumgarten (2013) here, who as an academic activist was doing a great job trying to bring together and systematize these analyses, but sadly deceased in 2018. Among others are the auto-analysis of the *Acampada de Coimbra* (Alípio, Norega, Bras, Gomes & Moya, 2013), the work of Accornero and Pinto (2015a), Costa (2019), Camargo (2014), Soeiro (2014), Fonseca (2016), Estanque (2014), Estanque, Costa and Soeiro (2013), Fonseca and Estanque (2018), and the book *Protest, youth and precariousness: the unfinished fight against austerity in Portugal*, by Carmo and Simões (2020), for which I had the opportunity to contribute with

¹ Our translation. In the original: “A *coexistência pacífica ou conflitual [...] de diferentes modelos e práticas democráticas*” (Santos, 2005, p. LXIII; Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 70).

a chapter. Some have proposed the new experiences brought by the anti-austerity protests as democratic alternatives to neoliberal capitalism. Examples include the work on performativity in the Occupy movement by Butler (2011), the possibility for a left populist articulation in the work of Mouffe (2018), and the participative experiences in Santos (Bonet, 2010). Others have done excellent work on the political economy and ideological critique, problematizing neoliberal capitalism and deconstructing the austerity discourse. In the specific case of Portugal, one could for example refer to the analysis of austerity in Reis, Rodrigues, Santos and Teles (2013) and Costa and Caldas (2014), as well as the deconstruction of neoliberal discourse by Soeiro, Cardina and Serra (2013).

This thesis tries to integrate many of these contributions into a universalizing approach of the crisis of democracy in austerity-ridden Portugal. We² will do this through a Marxist-inspired perspective. As we will try to show throughout this thesis, the Marxist approach is particularly adequate for the following reasons: 1. The Historical Materialist methodology of Marxism lets us understand the present in the context of past and present struggles and power relations; it integrates particular phenomena in a universal theory which accounts for logics of class, periphery, legitimacy, political economy, crisis – which all play a decisive role in the present crisis of democracy; 2. Marxism is the theory par excellence to analyze social phenomena in the context of capitalist political economy. As Marxism is a critical theory and a crisis-theory of capitalism, this is even more the case when this political economy is confronted with a deep crisis; 3. Marxism is based upon an ontological politicization – upon the category of class – which is indispensable in the global context of depoliticization that marked the last 30 years of neoliberal hegemony; at the same time, this politicization – in contrast to the original conservative-nationalist version found in Schmitt – offers a perspective of universal social emancipation; 4. Marxism fundamentally links up analysis and science with historical and political practice, or as Marx famously quoted eleventh thesis on Feuerbach states: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it” (Marx, 1998, p. 571).

² Throughout this thesis I will mostly use the first-person plural. The process of writing a PhD thesis is very much a solitary activity, and one could argue that the first-person singular would better express the individual responsibility of merits and errors of such intellectual task. I prefer the first-person plural however, because all science is a collective activity and aspires some level of abstraction and universality which surpasses personal opinion. As this moreover is an exercise in political science, the objective of a thesis is to convince readers of the perspective of the author and thus transforming an individual into a collective perspective. The exposition of a thesis is a collective interaction between author and reader; a voyage of at least two people through and unknown land in which the author is a guide who exposes ta path he or she discovered.

Within the contemporary crisis of democracy, the task for the theorist, is thus not just to empirically analyse the crisis, and its expression in different movements and discourses in their contemporary and historical context. The theorist needs to condense historical experiences and debates about strategies and tactics into political knowledge that can be used to build alternatives for a fundamental change. The objective of this thesis is, not only to expose how the crisis of democracy is an expression of social struggles, but thus also to come to a strategy of how to get an alternative notion of democracy, alerting for the pitfalls of co-optation and ideological confusion.

We will start with a description of democracy in Portugal, its history, its institutions, traditions, and political economy. Then we dedicate two chapters to the general theoretical and philosophical framework of the two interacting concepts: Crisis and Democracy. We will analyse the role of crisis in the construction of knowledge in social science and how it permits the development of a critical and political approach to the subject. We will analyse the history of democratic theory, the crisis of democratic participation and the different alternatives critical theory developed over the last decades, to come to a political framework of analysis that could be applied to crisis of democratic legitimacy in Portugal. Then we dedicate two chapters on the empirical analysis of democratic discourses in the context of the Portuguese crisis, based on interviews with key players in the social conflict. We will analyse the neoliberal and formal democratic discourse used to legitimize austerity. This discourse will be contrasted with the judgement of the protesters who reject the current democratic state of affairs and formulate democratic alternatives. Finally, we will dedicate two chapters on the contradictions and inter-penetrations between the elite's and the protesters' democratic discourses, practices and strategies. We will discuss the fragilities of the anti-partidarian and performative strategies of the social movements protesting austerity, and will discuss the role of the different electoral moments in the rearticulation between social movements, Trade Unions and parties.

CHAPTER I – DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL: CONTEXT AND CRISIS

Summer of 2011; the Euro crisis hit the Portuguese economy hard and protests rocked the country. As a young activist and academic, like many young people, I participated in many of these protests. Inspired by the Spanish *indignados*' movement, they mobilized against austerity and demanded: "Real democracy now!". The crisis involved a sentiment of loss and fragility regarding democracy. At the same it was a time full of hope and plans for other, alternative forms of democracy. This research is an attempt to give a voice and a legitimacy to these mobilizations. "How does the crisis affect democracy in Portugal?" seemed a good start of this research.

I could have chosen a purely empirical and comparative approach for this endeavour – as many political scientists have done before in the last decades. Soon, during the research I came by some fundamental problems: Is this research universal or only applicable to Portugal? If we inquire about how crisis affects democracy; what parameters can we use to measure crisis and democracy in order to find correlations? Can we use quantitative statistics? How do we define crisis? How do we define democracy? What is lost if we use one or other definition? What is the historical and political background and effect of using one or other definition? And what is the role as a social scientist and activist in all these issues? Assuming that one cannot make an analysis in a void, in this chapter we start drawing up an indispensable historical and economic context of Portuguese democracy and its crisis. From these contexts I'll develop the research hypothesis and structure of the rest of this research project.

1.1 The making of Portuguese democracy

Where do we start with the historical context of Portuguese democracy? Probably, we should not go back to ancient Greek influence in the South of the Iberian Peninsula from the fifth century BC. But we could have gone back to the phenomenon of communal management of the "*Baldios*" – common lands, administered by the local communities – that dates back to medieval times, and survived until today, being inscribed in the constitution often serving as example of participatory democratic practices in Portugal (Brouwer, 1995; Serra, 2019). Another starting point could have been the influence of French republicanism and anti-clericalism through the Napoleonic invasions in the first decades of the nineteenth

century, the following civil war about constitutionalism, or the ideas and events and that led to the republican revolution of the 5th of October 1910 (Catroga, 2010).

Portuguese democracy, as our generation has known it, has nevertheless been mostly influenced by the events of the April Revolution of 1974. The Carnation Revolution has not only been of great international importance, as it marked the start of what Huntington (1991) would call the third wave of democratization and the transitions to liberal democracy of South European Countries – Portugal, Spain and Greece. Up until today, this period strongly influences the institutional and discursive setting of democracy. An analysis of today's crisis of democracy thus should start with a historical understanding of this democratic transition.

1.1.1 The collapse of Fascism

Portugal was ruled by an authoritarian, fascist dictatorship between 1926 and 1974. The “*Estado Novo*”, as the regime liked to call itself, was led by António de Oliveira Salazar until 1968 and succeeded by Marcelo Caetano. The regime entered in a profound crisis in 1969, a period marked by working class upheaval and student protests. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016b, pp. 17-21 *passim*), the crisis is a consequence of a combination of the class struggles, the internal divisions of the elites and the internal logics of the “*Estado Novo*”. For most of its existence, the dictatorship had been supported on the hegemony of the agrarian bourgeoisie, whose economic interests were superimposed to other social classes. This agrarian hegemony started to decline from the start of the nineteen sixties. As a consequence of the militarization, following the outbreak of the colonial wars, the government had to change its political economy.

Opening itself to international capital and the effects of massive emigration – and migrants bringing back the fruits of their labour – eventually brought an influx of foreign currency which created an economic boom in the nineteen sixties and started a process of industrialization. The financial-industrial bourgeoisie – made up of big industrial groups with foreign capital – gained influence while the influence of the agrarian bourgeoisie declined. For the former, the colonies were too small, and they rather looked towards the European markets for expansion. At the same time, the organized working class roared itself and demanded higher salaries (Santos, 2016b, pp. 17-21 *passim*).

With the substitution of Salazar by Marcelo Caetano, the regime seemed to open up somewhat from 1969 onwards – the so-called *Marcelismo*-period, tried to appease the industrial-financial bourgeoisie and opened doors for the “liberal wing” of the official opposition in the National Assembly. At the same time, the regime tried out concessions towards the working class, granting more autonomy for the unions and some social security. But the concessions were fragile and insufficient; the reforms crashed upon the rigidity of the state. The unequal growth of industrial monopoly capital meant that the central role of the corporatist state to mediate between the different economic sectors became obsolete (Santos, 2016b, pp. 17-21 *passim*). New conflicts that arose were met with fascist authoritarianism and repression from the state, and the state was unable to cope with the new conditions of capital-concentration and the end of colonialism – that eventually led to a legitimacy crisis:

In the case of Portugal, the legitimation crisis resided in the state’s incapacity to institutionalize the relations between capital and labour in concordance with the changing power relations that the economic development and emigration had provoked during the sixties. It also resided in the state’s incapacity to catch up with the new expanding sector of the petit bourgeoisie, discontent with political paralysis, the mediocrity of cultural life and the lack of civic and political liberties³ (Santos, 2016b, p. 21).

Colonialism had been the basis of the regime, but the economic importance of the colonies for Portuguese industry was decreasing. Only a handful of family-monopolies profited and by the end of the sixties more than half of the Portuguese exports were directed to the European markets, while the African colonies counted for less than a quarter. Moreover, while the agrarian bourgeoisie had important offsets in the underdeveloped colonies, the products of modern industry were destined for more developed economies. The advanced sectors of the Portuguese economy would have preferred a neo-colonial relation with the colonies, in which direct control was replaced by indirect control, but the Portuguese state was too weak to support this (Santos, 2016b, pp. 23-25 *passim*).

Foreign debt became a problem and as conscription robbed the labour market of young recruits, labour became scarce and more expensive, spiking inflation. The unpopular wars demoralized the population and the soldiers, and aggravated the economic problems

³ Our translation. In the original: “*En el caso portugués, la crisis de legitimación residió en la incapacidad del Estado para institucionalizar las relaciones entre capital y el trabajo en consonancia con las alteraciones en la correlación de las fuerzas sociales que el desarrollo económico y la emigración de la década de los sesenta habían provocado. Residió también en la incapacidad del Estado para captar a sector en expansión de la nueva pequeña burguesía descontenta con la parálisis política, la mediocridad de la vida cultural y la ausencia de libertades cívicas y políticas*” (Santos, 2016b, pp. 21).

(Chilcote, 2010, pp. 90-91). Internationally, the *Yom Kippur*⁴ war in 1973 and the following oil crisis worsened the international economic and political environment.

Everything depended upon the military apparatus. But as no military solution was possible and the war was impossible to win, an impasse was reached that would politicize the military. It would lay the grounds for a polarization between the old loyalists of the “rheumatic brigade” and the newly created “*Movimento das Forças Armadas/MFA*” (Armed Forces Movement) – which was composed by highly politicized students whom conscription had turned into junior officers. Losing its last pillar of support – the military apparatus, including General Spínola⁵ – the regime collapsed (Santos, 2016b, pp. 23-25 *passim*).

1.1.2 The Revolutionary period

On Thursday, 25th of April 1974 – the broadcast of the emblematic song “*Grândola, Vila Morena*” announced a military uprising led by a group of young democratic and antifascist officials, led by major Otelo Carvalho. The “captains of April”, as they came to be known, put an end to the regime with an extraordinary speed in a relatively bloodless coup; only 6 people died – 5 of them due to fire of the fascist secret police. The mid-cadre of the military was fed up with the war and had been influenced by the university protests and left-wing ideology from the end of the sixties (Chilcote, 2010, p. 90; Maxwell, 1997, p. 60; Santos, 2016b, p. 48). Rather than as a revolution, the process started as a purely military coup with a progressive content. Neither the PS nor the PCP had a decisive role in it. The political program of the MFA was focussed on the 3 Ds: Democratization, Development and Decolonialization. A majority of the population quickly identified with the coup; the masses ratified it, by literally embracing the rebellious soldiers (Antunes, 1985, p. 48; Chilcote, 2010, pp. 92-93; Santos, 1985, p. 29). The MFA demanded the elimination of the fascist elements of the state, democratic elections for a constituent assembly that was to implement a parliamentary democracy, political pluralism, Trade Union autonomy and an economic policy to combat monopolies and guarantee more redistributive justice (Antunes, 1985, pp. 48-49; Maxwell, 1997, pp. 56-57; Santos, 2016b, p. 48). The original MFA program was

⁴ Maxwell (1997, pp. 54-55) explains how *Yom Kippur* war between the Arab states and Israel led to an isolation of the Caetano’s regime versus the USA.

⁵ António de Spínola (1910-1996) was a conservative general, and later Portuguese President, that had expressed opposition to Salazar’s colonial policies.

modest⁶; it was nevertheless made instrumental for the left (Chilcote, 2010, p. 97). The condemnation by the fascist regime of all opposition as “communist”, created a confusion which made the old most persecuted villains the new heroes (Maxwell, 1997, p. 62). The modesty of the MFA program was a reflection of strong charismatic personalities and leadership, ideological divisions in the ranks, the contrasting social class origins and affiliation within the officer corps, and a dispersion of power within the MFA (Chilcote, 2010, p. 122). Among the different forces in the MFA, we can distinguish forces that sympathized with Spínola, the forces around Vasco Gonçalves – the so-called *Gonçalvistas*, which were identified with the PCP and its model for socialist transition –, the group of nine, around Melo Antunes, which itself mixed clear counter-revolutionary positions with others that defended a continuing social democratic transformation and a populist revolutionary current around Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho (Chilcote, 2010, p. 125).

The uprising brought down the oldest dictatorship in Europe but did not have revolutionary connotations in the beginning (Maxwell, 1997, p. 60). It signified a rupture with the one-party state, the political police, political tribunals, paramilitary militias, political repression and censorship. But while many people linked to the old fascist regime were sacked, most of the institutions remained in place, including the police, the military and the church (Santos, 2016b, p. 48). General Spínola, who had been critical to the colonial policy of the regime but represented the military hierarchy and the interests of the financial bourgeoisie took office as president. The first government – which would stay in power between May 15th and July 10th, was led by Adelino da Palma Carlos and was composed by members of the MFA and party-representatives from the left to the right (Maxwell, 1997, p. 64). While the PCP-minister of labour implemented a minimum wage, policies were nevertheless rather centre-right and focussed on the establishment of a liberal democracy and integration in the European Economic Community (Chilcote, 2010, pp. 95-96).

The Portuguese Communist Party, led by Álvaro Cunhal, was the largest mass-party when the dictatorship fell. It had been organizing large-scale clandestine resistance for decades and had a strong base in the industrial working class in the urban centres and the rural workers in the south of the country. As a result of its clandestine activities, the party was very centralized and had a generalized mistrust towards any spontaneous popular mobilization (Maxwell, 1997, p. 133). Revolutionary legality and popular power were

⁶ Due to the influence of Spínola, references to fascism and to decolonization were removed from the final version of the program (Maxwell, 1997, p. 58).

combated as “adventurism” by the PCP; the party seemed to suffer from insurrecional vertigo (Louçã, 1985; Santos, 1984, p. 24; 2016b, p. 50). From the moment, the large industries were nationalized in March 1975 and popular support guaranteed the influence of the left wing of the MFA in the government, its politics were largely concentrated on the state. During the revolutionary period, the PCP had a politics of contention towards workers’ demands, and it showed loyalty to the different governments it participated (Varela, 2010, p. 2). The politics of the PCP led to a split in the left. Popular unrest in the summer of 1975 was met with laws – passed by both PS and PCP on August 16th – curtailing the right to strikes and seeking to control the protesting workers⁷.

In contrast to the PCP, the Socialist Party (PS), led by Mário Soares, was a recently created and heterogeneous party. Mário Soares had been a youth organizer of the PCP, but distanced himself from that party and cofounded Portuguese Socialist Action in 1964. The PS, as a party, was eventually set up by the Portuguese diaspora on April 19th 1973 in Bad Münstereifel, Germany, with the help of the German SPD (*Sozialistische Partei Deutschland*) led by Willy Brandt. It strongly favoured parliamentary democracy. During the revolutionary period, the party transformed into a broad coalition of political forces opposing the PCP (Santos, 2016b, p. 50). At the hight of the cold war, the PS and Mário Soares would get the full support of the United States of America to get and keep the communists out of government (Maxwell, 1997, p. 95). In the period after the revolution, many put hope for a transition to socialism based on a collaboration between communists and socialists. But the centrist inclination of the PS-leadership, and their anti-communism, meant that the PS rather leant towards the PPD than the PCP. The PS preferred a liberalization of the regime under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie (Chilcote, 2010, p. 84). The relations between PS and PCP would deteriorate qualitatively over the Trade Union question in January 1975. The PCP and MFA mobilized for a single Trade Union confederation representing a unified working class. Mário Soares’ PS, the PPD and the church wanted free Trade Union elections⁸ (Vasconcelos, 2019, p. 20). At the time, this

⁷ On August 28th, PCP and MFA criticized a strike at the airport of Lisbon, which was organized by MES, demanding better working conditions. COPCON⁷ occupied Lisbon airport and imposed martial law. While the communist party pushed for a national democratic revolution as a prelude for socialism in the future, the extreme left grouping wanted socialism immediately (Chilcote, 2010, pp. 96, 99).

⁸ The graphic worker’s occupation of the *A República* newspaper, and the dismissal of its PS-leaning management in May 1975, was also seen by the PS as a PCP-led authoritarian attack on democratic freedom of speech (Vasconcelos, 2019, p. 20).

conflict was presented as an opposition between revolutionary vanguard socialism and broad-based democratic route to socialism (Maxwell, 1997, p. 109).

The Popular Democratic Party (PPD), precursor of the later Social Democratic Party (PSD) – was only founded after the fall of the fascist regime, on May 6th 1974 by Francisco Sá Carneiro e Francisco Pinto Balsemão. It was composed by former liberal members of the national assembly; the parliamentary structure of the dictatorship. The elections held in 1969, had resulted in a victory of the regime-party *União Nacional*, which took 100% of the seats (Chilcote, 2010). Francisco Sá Carneiro had been elected on lists of this UN but declared himself as “independent of the Caetano government” shortly after. The PPD called itself social democratic and meant to dispute the “political centre”. It had a strong influence of lawyers and law professors whose primary objective was maintaining the order of law in the transition to democracy.

The April 25th coup transformed the enduring regime crisis that had been going on since the 1969 into the biggest popular movement explosion in Europe since the end of the Second World War. The revolutionary period after the coup – the *Período Revolucionário em Curso* (PREC), between April 25th 1974 and November 25th 1975 – was marked by massive social struggles, land reforms and nationalisations from below. These really transformed the coup into a revolution and avoided that the coup would simply resolve the ongoing hegemonic crisis of the fascist regime in favour of the industrial-financial bourgeoisie (Santos, 2016b, pp. 26-27). Where *Spinolistas* and the MFA had been divided upon the colonial question⁹, the labour struggles definitely split them. The right-wing PPD accused the PCP of organizing the strikes and being disloyal to the government, but the MFA refused to repress the strikes.

It is against the background of the internal struggles about social and colonial matters within the first provisional government, that the so-called “people-MFA alliance” emerges (Varela, 2013). After the coup, the MFA had gradually assumed responsibilities over the social demands of the popular movements (Santos, 1985, p. 29). The “people-MFA alliance” is the result of a social explosion that called for a military presence in collective life for multifaceted tasks and utilities of peace and a new direct form of democracy. This participatory role of the military went from repairing roads or the projection of films to the

⁹ Spínola defended a federation with the colonies and the MFA defended independence (Chilcote, 2010, p. 99).

creation of new forms of social and political organization such as popular assemblies and residents' commissions etc. (Santos, 1985, p. 32). On July 12th, the MFA launched COPCON – *Comando Operacional do Continente* – led by Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho to restore civil order in the chaos and to resolve disputes between the MFA and popular movements. COPCON would eventually develop into the radical wing of the MFA and the main link between the popular struggles and the military (Chilcote, 2010, p. 98). COPCON had a remarkable influence on the issues of housing and the occupation of buildings for popular residencies, for example (Santos, 1985, p. 29).

Amid the process of radicalization of the military, Spínola tried to regain the initiative in a speech on September 10th 1974. In this speech, he appealed for the support of the “silent majority” against extremism and totalitarianism; and pushed towards a demonstration to take the capital on September 28th. Spínola had nevertheless underestimated the popular support of the left. The attempted coup against the MFA-led provisional government, re-united the left. The attempted counter coup by Spínola was defeated through the complete barricading of Lisbon and ended with the renunciation and exile of Spínola on September 30th 1974 (Chilcote, 2010, p. 99). The successful defeat of the self-coup forced the bourgeoisie and rightwing forces into a defensive position. Meanwhile the progressive MFA – least aligned with the monopolists behind Spínola – was further strengthened by the mobilization of the popular social movements. Within the heterogeneous MFA itself, the popular support neutralized its right-wing and radicalized its left (Santos, 2016b, pp. 26-27, 48).

The real initiation of a revolutionary crisis was the consequence of a second right-wing coup attempt by Spínola in March 1975 – the so-called “*intentona*” (Maxwell, 1997, p. 110). Its failure led to further radicalization that would bring the industrial-financial bourgeoisie as a class to the brink of collapse. While the country went through a massive capital flight and capital abandoned and disorganized production, this was answered by nationalizations, cooperatives and workers control (Santos, 2016b, p. 52). Members of the old oligarchy, such as the families Espírito Santo and Melo, were arrested and imprisoned at the old PIDE (*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*) stronghold of Caxias due to alleged cooperation with Spínola's coup attempt (Maxwell, 1997, p. 110). The state nationalized the banks, insurances, and all big industrial groups – including CUF, the *Companhia União Fabril*, which had been the biggest Portuguese conglomerate for decades, the rest of the economy was supposed to remain private. The March 11th nationalizations

directly affected 250 companies, but due to the monopoly-positions of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, these companies were themselves owners of more than 2000 companies. Nationalizations affected finance, energy, transportation, chemistry, beer, oil-refineries and naval construction. The state decided to rationalize the organizations banks and companies and concentrated, founding united companies like CIMPOR in the cement sector, UNICER in beverages, PORTUCEL in forestry, EDP in energy and Petrogal in the oil-industry (Costa, Fazenda, Honório, Louçã & Rosas, 2010, p. 268). In the Southern Alentejo region, the lands of the big landowners were occupied and expropriated. In the large urban centres, neighbourhood commissions were set up to organize the occupation of buildings to solve the housing question. Worker's commissions took over the management of abandoned companies. Commercial, agricultural and industrial cooperatives, and popular clinics were set up. Led by the MFA, the government and social movements organized the cultural dynamization and alphabetization of the most underdeveloped regions of the country (Santos, 2016b, p. 49).

The first elections – for the constituent assembly – on 25th of April 1975, which gave the PS a relative majority and were disappointing for the PCP who only got 12.5%, didn't stop the popular mobilization. The state went through a revolutionary crisis until November 25th. This so-called “*verão quente*”/hot summer, brought the country on the brink of civil war. In some respects, the situation could have been compared to the situation of dual power¹⁰ during the Russian Revolution¹¹, that opposed the legality of the provisional government and the popular legitimacy of the law from below of the soviets¹² between February and October 1917. This duality of power, between the state and popular councils, expressed a moment of transition in which eventually one of the powers had to disappear. Instead of dual powers, Boaventura de Sousa Santos characterized the Portuguese situation of “dual impotencies”; as neither of the social forces is ready or had the capacities to take power and impose its hegemony. Instead we got a struggle for the political power within the

¹⁰ Trotsky (2001, p. 224) defines dual power as “[...] a situation in which the class which is called to realize a new social system, although not yet master of the country, has concentrated in its hands a significant part of state power, while the official apparatus of the government is still in the hands of the old lords”.

¹¹ The comparison went so far that Kissinger named Mário Soares “the Portuguese Kerensky” (Maxwell, 1997, p. 95), and Huntington (1991, p. 4) branding Spínola's coup attempt in March 1975 as Portuguese “Kornilov-conspiracy”.

¹² The soviets were wide-spread workers' and soldiers councils – which were guided by the principles of the 1871 Paris Commune: substituting the police and military by the armed workers and peasants, substituting the bureaucracy of the state by elected and deposable workers-representatives.

state between the Socialist Party – which defended social-democratic capitalism – and the Communist Party – which defended workers power (Santos, 1985, p. 27; 2016b, pp. 27-32 *passim*). During this revolutionary period, the left was confronted with different dilemmas: centralized command versus local participatory democracy, authoritarianism versus pluralism, discipline versus spontaneity (Chilcote, 2010, p. 121).

This process of indecision came to an end on November 25th 1975 with another military coup which neutralized the radical left of the MFA. The Bonapartist coup, which put an end to the revolutionary crisis, was made possible by the popular demobilization and the institutionalization and contention of the PCP. The left had been weakened by internal factionalism, a deterioration of discipline in the military units and the worsening economic situation. The right got increasing support from the conservative small bourgeoisie from the North which rose up against the revolutionary events in Lisbon (Maxwell, 1997, p. 132). The new countercoup, the third attempt, under leadership of Ramalho Eanes was a culmination of a period of near-anarchy, and the failure of the 6th provisional government – led by moderate Pinheiro de Azevedo – to hold control over the media, military and labour movement. Ramalho Eanes would consolidate his power over the moderate wing of the military, and the countercoup would neutralize COPCON and the MFA. Eanes will become president, and Mário Soares will lead the first PS-government (Chilcote, 2010, pp. 98, 103). It closed the path to socialism, and led Portugal to a European democratic model and capitalist restoration (Santos, 2016b, p. 53) . In the end the moderates won, or as Mário Soares eagerly and commonly paraphrased French writer André Malraux: “For the first time in History, the Mensheviks were able to defeat the Bolsheviks”¹³ (Vasconcelos, 2019, p. 19).

In April 1976 the Constituent Assembly, which had been elected in 1975, approved a new Constitution. It is one of the most progressive on the European continent. The preamble ensures “[...] the primacy of a democratic state based on the rule of law and open up a path towards a socialist society, with respect for the will of the Portuguese people [...]” (Portugal, 1976). Still, it reflects the shift of forces after the defeat of the radical left of November 25th 1975 (Maxwell, 1997, p. 159). The text not only confirms all the civic, political, and cultural rights found in most constitutions, but enshrined many of the social conquests of the revolutionary period: the irreversibility of the nationalizations, the land reforms, different forms of democratic participation parallel to parliamentary democracy and

¹³ Our translation. In the original: “*Pela primeira vez na História, os Socialistas Portugueses demonstraram que os Mensheviks são capazes de vencer os Bolsheviks*” (Vasconcelos, 2019, p. 19).

relatively far reaching social rights, such as the rights to free education, right of housing, free healthcare etc... (Santos, 2016b, p. 53). For the years to come, the document would provide a unifying rallying point for progressive forces in Portugal (Antunes, 1985, p. 52).

From 1976 onwards, democratic legality stopped to be challenged by revolutionary legality. With the support of all parties, excluding the communists, Coronel Ramalho Eanes was elected as the first constitutional president and took office in June 1976 (Maxwell, 1997, p. 160) . The bourgeoisie as a whole, did not assume a leading role. Instead a new transclass Bonapartist power bloc emerged which – at least temporarily, respected some of the popular conquests of the revolutionary period; the nationalizations, land reform – which had moderated the workers – were inscribed in the legal democratic order. The working class was granted a strong social position that could only very slowly be dismantled (Santos, 2016b, pp. 33-34). Salaries had risen from 43.7% of GDP in 1973 to 57.6% in 1975 (Santos, 2016b, p. 52).

1.1.3 European Integration and Parliamentary Democracy

The salaries that had spiked to 57.6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1976, eventually declined to 44% of GDP in 1978 and to 42.3% in 1983 (Santos, 2016b, p. 55). The rise in the revolutionary period opened a market in durable consumption products – like TV's and washing machines to which the average Portuguese families had no access before. The growth of salaries and growth of imports had however a disastrous effect on the trade balance and foreign debt. As a consequence, the country asked for financial aid to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the first time in 1978. The agreed structural adjustment program would restrict internal consumption and had the objective to promote exports. Its implementation would not be easy; due to the existence of progressive laws, the still strong position of the communist party and the Trade Unions – its implementation could have discredited the dominant political discourse and signify a return to the revolutionary period. The situation was resolved by the organized absence of the state, and the creation of a disparity between what the constitution and the law said and the social and political practices. The working class is strong enough to avoid the dismantling on social laws, but too weak to impose its practical application. Fordist-like laws and institutions were thus combined with informal practices of primitive accumulation. Examples include the common situation of workers not being paid for months, scared of unemployment; the enduring use

of child labour in the North of the country; the common practice of employing people with salaries under the minimum wage, the flourishing of the parallel economy etc... (Santos, 2016b, pp. 53-56 *passim*).

The decade after the revolution was marked by the reconstitution of capital in Portugal. The process of the reconstitution of agrarian capital was relatively easy and started in 1977; lands were given back to the old big landlords or they were compensated for their losses. In the end only 18% of the land had effectively been expropriated, and the agrarian working class was relatively weak. Land labour had not much power in the PCP nor in the Trade Union federation that was more focussed on the urban working class. The recomposition of industrial capital was more difficult. The main industries had been nationalized during the revolutionary process, and reprivatizing these did not go easy. The state companies were the sector with strongest union representation and the most advanced social rights; these companies were in fact the only ones where the Fordist labour legislation effectively applied. The Unions would not give up easily on them and privatizations did not work well with the discourse of the PS. The nationalisations had also fostered relations of clientelism and populism within and between these companies and the public: management positions had been distributed according to political loyalties and new investments and services by these companies had been used for electoral reasons. Individual and party-interests of many policymakers thus proved obstacles for privatization. Finally, capital, technology and their cadres weren't ready for the new international economic free-market environment; particularly because various of the nationalized sectors were already uncompetitive and devaluated at the moment of their nationalization (Santos, 2016b, pp. 60-61).

The rationalization and concentration of companies, facilitated through their nationalization, would eventually provide a strategic advantage for the economic groups that would have the power to regain their property over the next decade. The Portuguese bourgeoisie – with its international ties of dependence – never constituted a leadership for the country; the reconstitution of Capital meant a return to rentier capitalism, protected by the state based on finance and reproductive logics (Costa *et al.*, 2010, p. 268). The social and economic normalization from the end of the seventies and the European integration from 1986, would make a switch to this reconstitution possible. At the same time, the parallel economy would be slowly curtailed by the same process (Santos, 2016b). Victories for the right in 1979 and 1980 and the formation of alliances between PS and PSD created the

possibilities for constitutional changes that opened the gates for the reprivatisations. The constitutional revision of 1982-1983 opened the sectors of finance, insurances, fertilizers and cement for private initiatives (Costa *et al.*, 2010, p. 269). From 1985, with the 10-year long government of right-wing PSD-leader Aníbal Cavaco Silva, privatizations became an ideological objective, besides having the objective to clean up public finances. The constitutional agreement with the PS of 1989 finally made the privatizations¹⁴ possible that would lay the base for a new monopoly sector (Santos, 2016b, p. 61). By 1995, when the PS-government of António Guterres took power, 22 of the 30 biggest companies in Portugal had become partially or completely privatized (Costa *et al.*, 2010, pp. 266-277). The next PS and PSD governments kept privatizing the rest of the state-property. Under Guterres¹⁵, the total public income from privatizations reached an equivalent of 25% of national debt (Costa *et al.*, 2010, p. 283)¹⁶. The weight of public companies declined from 21.5% to 8.4% of GDP between 2000 and 2010 (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 35). At the end of the cycle, the big groups of private capital such as Espírito Santo, Group Mello, Group Champalimaud, Group Amorim and Sonae were reconstituted. If we would compare the fortunes and property between 1910 and 2010, a considerable part of the economic interest groups survived into contemporary fortunes, surviving wars and revolutions. In the end, the contemporary owners of Portugal are the same families as throughout the last century (Costa *et al.*, 2010, p. 342).

Portugal finally concluded the legal process of European integration in 1986. The integration was facilitated through the close relationship between Mitterrand and Mário Soares, who had become Portuguese prime minister in 1983 (Dinan, 2004, p. 189). It joined the European Community for political and economic reasons. The new political elites of PS and PSD saw Europe as a beacon of political stability, as well as a chance to recover international respectability after decades of authoritarian rule. On the economic level, they sought industrial and agricultural modernization (Dinan, 2004, p. 184). In the same year Portugal joined, Europe however took a qualitative step to become the major political

¹⁴ In 1989, not only Unicer breweries and Aliança insurances; but also the majority of the Big Portuguese banks, including Totta, BES and BPA, were privatized. This privatized financial sector would, together with the dominant political elites, be the new backbone of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the European integration based market-doctrines and the vanguard in the new privatizations of the 1990's (Reis *et al.*, 2013, pp. 33-35 *passim*).

¹⁵ António Guterres; former Portuguese prime minister and the current general-secretary of the United Nations.

¹⁶ Costa compares this processo of nationalizations and privatizations with a similar proces at the start of the XIX century when properties of the church and royal family had been nationalized and afterwards privatized to solve public debt (Costa *et al.*, 2010, p. 279).

instrument of neoliberal reforms. In that year French Socialist Mitterrand finally gave in to the political influence of Thatcher on European budgetary policies, which the latter had imposed as a condition for further European enlargement (Dinan, 2004, p. 189). Political and Economic conditionality were to become the guidelines for all new members of the EU. While officially the political conditionality included democratic demands, such as free and fair elections and transparency, the integration had perverse consequences for democracy in acceding countries (Orbie, 2008, p. 27). The process of integration widened the gap between state and citizenry, it took away power from the national legislatures in favour of the executives. Moreover the neoliberal consensus hindered debates and undermined the basic function of political parties (De Ridder, Schrijvers & Vos, 2008, p. 251).

The first period of European integration after the Second World War had been a neo-Keynesian project of reconstruction under the umbrella of the United States, based upon economic planning, public investment, Fordist industry and strong welfare states (Reis *et al.*, 2013, pp. 30-31). 1986, when Portugal joined, was the year of the Single European Act – which set in motion the single European market under leadership of Jacques Delors. It prepared for the Maastricht treaty and monetary unification pushed by Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand (Dinan, 2004, p. 7). Free-market ideology and monetarism would become the guiding principles in this second period of integration which would culminate in the Euro (Reis *et al.*, 2013, pp. 30-31). The neoliberal model brought by the Single European Act and Maastricht was fundamentally incompatible with the social welfare state model, but the extraordinary influx of foreign capital in peripheral countries led to economic growth and low unemployment; the social consequences of its incompatibility would only be felt later on (Pureza, 2015a, p. 10; Reis *et al.*, 2013).

Portugal joined the European community within a favourable international context – after successfully having left the IMF-SAP (which had recovered the economy through a controlled devaluation of the escudo). The abrupt decrease of oil-prices boosted the economy since 1984, the increase in foreign investment and European structural funds boosted public investment, and its principal trading partners experienced a steady growth in demand at the moment that trade barriers were taken down by the Single Market. Unemployment decreased from 9,3 in 1986 to 3,9 in 1992. Processes of liberalization, privatization and deregulation imposed by European integration played a crucial role in the reconstitution of capital and the transformation of capital accumulation in Portugal (Reis *et al.*, 2013, pp. 31-32).

Fighting inflation as one of the criteria of convergence for a united monetary politics (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 36). These deflationary politics created the first period of slow growth and recession between 1991 and 1995. From 1993, there is a convergence of interest rates towards the low averages in the core European countries which benefited – expanding internal demand and investment – both private and public sectors. The dominant explanation was that: “[...] the country is harvesting the fruits of the modernization of the financial system”¹⁷ (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 25). Keeping the country within or close to the norms of the Maastricht treaty by 1998 – 3% of deficit, 60 of public debt – which made the country ready to be one of the founding countries of the Euro, which was at that time seen as a big success (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 37).

At the turn of the millennium, three factors however, would fiercely affect Portugal’s position in the newly established European currency area. The first is the effects of an ever-stronger Euro in relation to the dollar and other currencies which affected Portuguese export and its trade balance. The second was the trade agreements with China, starting from 2001, which gravely affected industries like textiles and shoes. A third factor was the enlargement of the European Union towards Eastern Europe. All factors were moved by the interests of the core EU-countries, and particularly Germany, which saw lucrative opportunities for its capital and possibilities to relocate industries to cheap labour countries while keeping control of the value chains. But all three seriously affected Portuguese competitiveness, Portuguese exports and its ability to attract productive industrial investments (Reis *et al.*, 2013, pp. 40-41). At the same time, no measures were taken to absorb asymmetric shocks on the Eurozone; no European budget was provided, nor a banking union, nor the establishment of the European Central Bank (ECB) as a lender of last resort (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 26). Moreover, in Portugal, some political forces saw the euro as an opportunity to forge a disciplinary mechanism to ensure neoliberal ruptures in economic politics and impose, in a quick and external way, a model of competitiveness on a global scale (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 36).

Portugal has traditionally had high aggregate levels of public opinion support for EU membership (Lobo & Magalhães, 2011, p. 81). From the mid-seventies until 1992, political support to Europe was monopolised by the two major – pro-European establishment parties, PS and PSD, which have alternated the leadership of all governments since the end

¹⁷ Our translation. In the original: “[...] o país colhia os frutos da chamada ‘modernização do sistema financeiro’” (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 25).

of the PREC. Party-based Euroscepticism could only be found at the extremes of the party system (Lobo & Magalhães, 2011; Freire, 2006, p. 384). According to Lobo and Magalhães (2011), Euroscepticism at the party-level has been influenced by two factors: ideology and strategy. On the ideological level, we find economic arguments voiced by the left which criticize the integration as a market-oriented capitalist project – “a Trojan horse of international capitalism” – and in the emphasis on the “[...] decline in economic sovereignty and its consequences for the social losers” (Lobo & Magalhães, 2011, pp. 85-90 *passim*).

The political argument, which criticizes the loss of formal political sovereignty, was primarily voiced by the CDS (*Centro Democrático Social* – People’s Party) – Portugal’s most right-wing party in parliament, in the 1995 election. It ran a successful Eurosceptic campaign following the Maastricht Treaty, being more Eurosceptic than the PCP, but rather based on strategic aspects of vote-seeking and office-seeking than because of ideological principles. Later the party downplayed and softened the importance of these issues in its program in order to be an acceptable partner for office with the PSD (Lobo & Magalhães, 2011; Freire, 2006, p. 384).

On the left, the PCP always had a very critical position towards the EU. EC membership of Portugal was a conscious move of the country’s elite directed against the communist threat. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc as an alternative model towards liberal democracy, the increasing popular support for European integration, and its participation in direct elections to the European Parliament from 1988 onwards, the PCP was forced to significantly moderate its resistance to Europe and defend less euro-sceptic positions (Lobo & Magalhães, 2011; Freire, 2006, p. 384). The party only returned to more Eurosceptic positions in periods of economic crisis and from the moment it got a competitor – the Left Bloc in 1999 – which defended Eurosceptic propositions based on critiques of neoliberalism (Lobo & Magalhães, 2011).

A similar strengthening of euro-sceptic position was therefore certainly to be expected in the middle of the Euro crisis. As we will see further on, Euroscepticism is certainly existent on the left since the intervention of the Troika. There was a consensus on the left, supported by a growing number of leading international economists and academics (De Grauwe, 2010; Krugman, 2012a; 2012b; Stiglitz, 2017) that the European institutions were at least partially, if not wholly responsible for the economic and social crisis that started in 2011. As a consequence all political movements left of the PS – which had tried to avoid

the Troika involvement as long as possible – excluded themselves from any talks with the European institutions in the negotiations on crisis-response.

1.1.4 Pre-crisis state of democracy

Portugal has since the revolution evolved to a semi-presidential¹⁸ constitutional democracy (Freire, 2006; Amorim Neto & Lobo, 2009). Although other authors have characterized the regime as parliamentarist, Amorim Neto and Lobo's (2009) analysis of Portuguese politics between 1976 and 2006, concludes that the president retains some crucial constitutional powers that make him relevant – despite being curtailed by the constitutional reform in 1982. The roles of the president include the appointment and dismissal of cabinets, agenda-setting, the powers to dissolve parliament, the influence on ministerial appointments, the power to refer legislative bills to prior judicial review, and ultimately veto them (Amorim Neto & Lobo, 2009, p. 235). The unique interaction of the two different kinds of semi-presidentialism – Portugal evolved from a president-parliamentarist to premier-presidentialist variety accordingly – with a changing multiparty system gave rise to a wide range of flexible governing formulas. Presidential governments, single-party minority cabinets, majority coalitions, near majority single-party and single-party majority cabinets and periods of cohabitation ultimately guaranteed the consolidation of Portuguese democracy as we know it (Amorim Neto & Lobo, 2009, p. 250). The presidential elections are contested under a run-off majority system, with a strong tendency to personalization – although many candidates receive official party support. The system forces the parties to form coalitions in a bi-polar logic: presidential elections have seen the parties of the left and right forming separate ideological blocs (Freire, 2006, p. 389).

Portuguese parliamentary democracy is marked by a stable party system which emerged during the revolutionary period. The legislative branch of government is based upon a single chamber of 230 representatives elected in 22 multi-member constituencies. Although the parliament is based upon proportional representation, Portuguese democracy had always trended¹⁹ towards majoritarianism²⁰. National legislative elections, held every 4

¹⁸ Duverger (1980, p. 187) defined semi-presidential regimes based upon an effective power-sharing between two organs of executive Branch: the president and the government led by the prime minister.

¹⁹ This trend was eventually refuted by the elections of 2015 which produced a government which was based upon parliamentary compromise which did not include the largest electoral formation. Cf. Chapter 7.

²⁰ Lijphart (2012, p. 7) defines majoritarianism – the rule of parliamentary majorities – based upon competitive and uncoordinated pluralism – by contrasting it with consensus democracies which are coordinated and compromise-oriented and tend to protect minorities.

years, ultimately determine which parties form the Government and who becomes prime minister, sharing executive power with the president (Freire, 2006, p. 376). Since 1976, four parties have continuously represented almost 90 percent of the electorate, with a general tendency for the vote to concentrate in two centrist “catch-all” parties: the centre-left *Partido Socialista* (PS), and the centre-right *Partido Social Democrata* (PSD). Alongside, the *Partido Comunista Português* (PCP) – which usually participates in elections under the CDU-cartel – and the conservative *Centro Democrático Social* (CDS) have become the system’s main parties. Since 1999, these four parties were joined by a fifth party – the leftist *Bloco de Esquerda*, or Left Bloc²¹ (Freire, 2006, p. 373).

The three mainstream parties of the so-called *arco de governação* – the arch of governance – PS, PSD and CDS, have composed the governments between the democratization and the Euro crisis. They traditionally relied on patronage networks and state support in forging relations with civil society, and have, according to Freire (2006, p. 373) ill-defined ideological profiles. The right-left divide is traditionally based upon socio-economic, sometimes combined with religious issues – such as the question of abortion and state support of private catholic education²² (Freire, 2006, p. 385).

²¹ The crisis has eventually lead to a further fragmentation of the Portuguese political landscape. In 2019 another four parties had parliamentary representatives: the animal-rights party PAN, the center-left party *Livre*, the right-wing libertarian *Iniciativa Liberal* and the extreme-right party *Chega*.

²² The crisis and the Troika-intervention put the main dividing line between left and right essentially around the scope of the social welfare state.

TABLE 1 – VOTES AND ABSTENTIONS IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

Anos	Eleitores		
	Total	Votantes	Abstenção
— 1975	100,0	91,5	8,5
1976	100,0	83,3	16,7
1979	100,0	87,1	12,9
— 1980	100,0	84,8	15,2
1983	100,0	77,8	22,2
1985	100,0	74,3	25,7
1987	100,0	71,5	28,5
1991	100,0	67,4	32,6
1995	100,0	66,2	33,8
1999	100,0	61,0	39,0
2002	100,0	61,6	38,4
2005	100,0	64,4	35,6
2009	100,0	59,7	40,3
2011	100,0	58,1	41,9
2015	100,0	55,9	44,1
2019	100,0	48,6	51,4

Fontes/Entidades: SGMAI, PORDATA
Última actualização: 2019-10-25

Source: Pordata (2019).

Despite the high levels of mass mobilisation, protest and political engagement that characterized the democratic transition in the 1970's, contemporary political participation – including voting in elections, as well as resorting to conventional and unconventional forms of political action and civic activism – has been relatively low. Turnout in legislative elections, has consistently dropped since the revolutionary period (Magalhães, 2005, p. 975). It decreased from averages well above 80 percent in the nineteen seventies, to 60% around 2000, to below 50% in the most recent elections (Pordata, 2019). While decreasing political participation is a general trend in the whole European continent, Portugal dropped from being one of the Western nations with highest turnout, to below the average for the West European democracies without compulsory voting. Portugal represents the sharpest decline among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Freire & Magalhães, 2002, pp. 47-50 *passim*; Magalhães, 2005, p. 975). According to Magalhães (2005, pp. 976, 988), the Portuguese situation is rather a case of “democratic disaffection” rather than “democratic dissatisfaction”: feelings of estrangement from politics

have tended to breed political passivity instead of growing discontent and political activism within an accepted democratic framework.

In the 2002 survey by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES): 47% of respondents answered they were “not very” or “not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Portugal”. The percentage of Portuguese citizens that are satisfied and very satisfied with the way democracy works in Portugal has since decreased from 28.5% in 2008 to 10.6% in 2012²³ (Tsatsanis & Belchior, 2020, p. 80). According to Magalhães (2005, p. 975), there is no question about the diffuse support for the fundamental values of democracy, but there is an increasingly weak support for the political class and the political parties; the fundamental actors of any representative democracy (Freire, 2003, p. 154; Magalhães, 2005, p. 975). Regarding the statement “Political parties don’t care about what people think”, Portugal got the highest average score among surveys conducted in 31 countries, including countries which are commonly disqualified as free electoral democracies – such as Belarus, Russia or Ukraine (Magalhães, 2005, p. 975).

In their book *A qualidade da democracia em Portugal: a visão dos cidadãos*, based on inquiries in July 2011, just at the onset of the crisis in Portugal, António Costa Pinto, Luís de Sousa and Pedro Magalhães (2013, pp. 21-26 *passim*) painted a worrisome picture: not only did three in every 5 Portuguese citizens think that citizens are treated unequally by the courts of justice. Besides the well-known relatively low political participation in comparison with other European countries; mistrust also affected other channels of participation: parties, Trade Unions. Citizens on the right of the political centrum tended to feel better represented. Citizens in the centrum are left in alienation and lack of interest in politics, while citizens on the left were more prone to participation of associations and protest (Lisi, Marchi & Evans, 2013). Citizens thought that their right to vote was insufficient and more than 70% of the inquired thought that political decision makers were not sufficiently responsabilized for the policies they implement. A majority of citizens also thought that the checks and balances in the system did not work well enough, particularly they saw the insufficiencies in the control of the government by the president. While people’s associational and religious liberties are guaranteed, citizens tended to be worried about freedom of speech, guarantees of non-discrimination and protection against police abuse (Gorbunova & Raimundo, 2013). While Portuguese citizens put social rights central to their conception of democracy, they perceived

²³ It partially recovered to 18.4% in 2016.

a lack of capacity by the state to implement social welfare, having repercussions for the legitimacy of the democratic regime itself. In 2011, only one out of three Portuguese was satisfied with the functioning of democracy. According to Cabral (1997, pp. 142-148 *passim*; 2000) and Magalhães (2005, p. 974), this is a consequence of the striking levels of socio-economic inequality in the country and the comparatively low level of civic and cognitive skills among the Portuguese, as well as a lack of communication between politicians and the masses.

Since the crisis, this situation has been deteriorating. As the South of Europe is transiting from development to underdevelopment: from political processes dominated by social inclusion to processes of social exclusion; it seems that representative democracy has lost the war against capitalism; and populism is on the rise (Santos, 2016b, p. 260).

1.2 The Political Economy of Austerity

1.2.1 Periphery and Europe

As a semi-peripheral country, Portugal has an intermediate position in the world-system. Semi-peripheral countries act as a centre towards the periphery – particularly in periods of expansion, they serve as chains of transmission for the interests of the centre – and they are periphery to the centre. For centuries, the semi-peripheral position of Portugal was based upon its colonial empire which it began to conquer since the fifteenth century. After the independence of Brazil during the Napoleonic wars, the empire – towards which it acted as a centre – still included Mozambique, Angola, Guinea, Saint Thomas and Prince, East Timor, Macau... At the same time it has kept a dependent position towards England – with which it had close relations since the fourteenth century²⁴. Since the collapse of its colonial empire in 1974, the country has renegotiated its semi-peripheral status by becoming part of European integration in a peripheral position – marked by tourism and emigration – in a context of continuous reduction of national sovereignty (Santos, 2016b, pp. 42-45 *passim*).

Semi-peripheral countries – like Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Greece, Brazil or Mexico, have social conditions similar to the less developed countries: parallel economies, informal

²⁴ The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of friendship was signed in 1373 and is regarded as the world's oldest active diplomatic treaty.

sectors, inefficacy of their democratic institutions, political corruption, labour market segmentation, emigration, life quality deterioration, urban violence, worsening inequalities... (Santos, 2016b, p. 39). Portugal is a weak semi-welfare state compensated by a relatively strong welfare society (Santos, 2016b, p. 42). This means that the lack of social rights is to be compensated by informal community ties and solidarities, particularly in rural areas.

The basic contradictions of peripheral, dependent societies tend to be externally overdetermined. In the case of Portugal, this overdetermination has been guided by the political-economic process of European integration (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 24). Portugal's peripheral and multidimensional status of dependency is the antecedent of austerity politics. According to Reis *et al.* (2013, p. 21), this is particularly the result of the Maastricht Treaty which created internal productive destruction and culminated in record external debt. The Maastricht model compressed the space of manoeuvre of all member states in the Eurozone, but this compression was substantially asymmetric. It penalized in different degrees peripheral countries, condemning them to an exclusion through inclusion (Pureza, 2015a, p. 20). Rather than a policy of convergence, European economic integration boosted internal uneven and combined development. In financial terms, it created a political power-relation of creditor and debtor between centre and periphery (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 21).

Conventional analysis put the burden of the economic problems on the national economic actors, as if it has been the principal responsibility of the national state of not being ready to change from a “country of cohesion” to a “country of the unique currency”. Peripheral countries would have been too easy-going and focussed on short-term politics: structural funds were wasted by focussing on inward sectors instead of those that engaged globalization and European markets, stimulus of consumption rather than investment, cohesion instead of competitiveness. This discourse of culpability will play an important role in legitimizing austerity (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 22). In my article “Framing PIGS: patterns of racism and neocolonialism in the Euro crisis” (Van Vossolle, 2016a), I explored how this process of blaming was essential for the racist framing of the peripheral member states of the European Union, the PIGS (Portugal, Ireland – and/or Italy –, Greece and Spain). This culturalization of politics, which reduced the differences between centre and periphery to certain “cultural characteristics and habits” – as reflected in stereotypes of laziness, non-productivity, corruption, wasteful spending and lying, legitimate a return of colonial dynamics in the Eurozone, through processes of economic dependence, conditional aid and cultural hegemony – was used in Northern Europe to legitimize harsh austerity in the South.

The process of European integration – particularly the asymmetric integration in the monetary union – transferred nearly all essential economic political instruments to the level of the European institutions. These instruments include national currency – and the possibility to have devaluations –, control of capital, the possibilities to create credit, commercial politics, industrial politics and budgetary politics. Deliberative parliamentary politics and national sovereignty lost their grip on those economic policy instruments while the EU institutions have handled them without any democratic mandate nor preoccupation.

As already referred, Reis *et al.* (2013) stated that the European Monetary Union was a quasi-inevitable consequence of the “European act”; a single currency being indispensable for the realization of a single market and free circulation of capital. It was an opportunity to forge a disciplinary mechanism to ensure the necessary neoliberal ruptures in economic politics and externally and quickly impose the model. While this functionalist reading based upon the general interest of capital is plausible, one should not forget the national interests of the leading powers on this integration process. Joining or quitting the euro-zone is rather a political than an economic decision (Krugman, 2012b). One of the main reasons for the Germans to give up their Deutsch Mark – which up until then was one of the most stable currencies on earth –, for example, was not only because the country was guaranteed that the policies of the new European Central Bank would be guided by German *ordo-liberal*, anti-inflationary and independent policies. It was certainly also a consequence of the fall of the Soviet Union, and the reunification process of Germany. The European monetary system could serve as a buffer to absorb the shock of German unification (Reis *et al.*, 2013, pp. 26-28 *passim*).

It is very difficult to calculate the precise costs of remaining within or exiting the Eurozone (Alcidi, Giovannini & Gros, 2012). According to mainstream Optimal Currency Area-theory (OCA) the benefits are obvious: reduced transaction costs, elimination of currency risk, greater transparency and possibly greater competition because prices are easier to compare, and increased intra-European trade; which presumably “[...] corresponds to an increase in mutually beneficial and hence productive exchanges” (Krugman, 2012b). Theorists which are critical of the euro-project, such as Hadjimichalis (2011), on the other hand argued that free trade contributed to the deindustrialization of the peripheral countries. Rather than gaining competitiveness Southern Europe lost their productive industries because a large part of its industries, such as textiles and ceramics, were not ready for free competition in the global market (Hadjimichalis, 2011). Other disadvantages of a single

currency, come from the loss of flexibility due to one-size-fits-all monetary policies and the loss of mechanisms to answer to asymmetric shocks. According to Krugman (2012b) currency devaluations – impossible within a currency area – are the easiest method to “adapt” the economy in periods of crisis.

But more importantly than the general costs or benefits, is how those are spread (Alcidi *et al.*, 2012). It is clear for example that the “winners” of the Euro were primarily the competitive exporting industries and the core economies of the Eurozone (Hadjimichalis, 2011). The perverse effect of European economic integration is that the only policy instruments left on the national level, are fiscal policies – to attract capital – and labour regulation – to lower wages. At the same time, the free market logic prohibited protectionism and guaranteed free movement of capital. The consequence was that international Capital became the factual arbiter between different fiscal and labour regimes. This asymmetry is at the heart of the European crisis (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 23).

1.2.2 Crisis and Austerity

Before the outbreak of the 2008 financial crisis, Portugal was already plagued by severe economic problems and macro-economic imbalances. Olivier Blanchard wrote in 2007 that the country was marked by slow growth, low productivity, large budget deficits, large current account deficits and no fundamental policies to change the situation (Blanchard, 2007). Other peripheral economies of the Eurozone had seen the development of speculative bubbles and a boost in private expenditure funded by cheap credit. But during the decade before the crisis the Portuguese economy, grew by only 0.55% per year between 2000 and 2010 (Reis *et al.*, 2013, p. 24). The increase in labour demand lead to a yearly increase of nominal wages of 6%, which pushed the inflation to an average of 4% per year (Carneiro, Portugal & Varejão, 2014, p. 445).

When the effects of the 2008 financial crisis hit Portugal, Portugal had a minority-government, formed by the PS and led by the prime minister José Sócrates. The governments’ first response to the collapse of international finance followed the strategy of the majority of European governments and the European commission. Trying to smooth the domestic effects of the crisis, the European Commission had appealed for massive public investments to counter the drop in demand and to maintain the stability of the financial sector. Member states were pushed to bail out private banks with public funds if necessary

(Costa & Caldas, 2014, p. 89). In Portugal this was translated in public guarantees for the banks, the nationalization of the bankrupt BPN-bank and anti-cyclic measures to combat unemployment (Costa & Caldas, 2014, p. 92). Together with economic recession and the collapse of tax-revenues, the automatic rise public expenditures due to steep rise of unemployment and the funds destined for the banking sector; led to an increase public deficits and the soaring of public debt (Carneiro *et al.*, 2014).

Due to the worsening financial and economic situation – and particularly the financial speculation against public debt – the economic crisis quickly transformed into a debt-crisis. This accentuated economic and financial disparities in the Eurozone – and the policy-priorities changed. The consolidation of public accounts, containment of debt levels and cutbacks in state expenditure became the guiding principles of public policies. The European Commission and the national governments of Europe – many under pressure of the European Commission – returned to pre-crisis neoliberal policies with redoubled force. Austerity became the leading policy concept in Europe: for liberal policymakers the crisis would be transformed in an opportunity to speed up privatizations, break down the social welfare programs and crush worker’s rights.

In Portugal, the phase of austerity starts in March 2010 with the introduction of four consecutive stability and growth pacts or PEC’s (*Programa de Estabilidade e Crescimento*). For the majority-votes on the PEC’s and the budgets, the Sócrates’ government – which lacked a parliamentary majority²⁵ – had to rely on votes – or at least abstention of votes – of the opposition; the PSD in particular. Each of these four Stability and Growth pacts was re-adaptation to an ever-more difficult economic environment and signified ever more stringent budgetary measures.

On March 12th 2011, hundreds of thousands of protestors took the streets under the slogan “*Geração à Rasca*” (Generation on the Edge). 11 days later – and after the failure of 3 consecutive structural reform-pacts – a parliamentary majority of PSD, CDS, CDU and BE, rejected the new PEC4 with more austerity. The Sócrates-led government resigned. In order to keep its financial obligations towards debtors, the resigning government was forced to accept conditional international financial support, guaranteed by the IMF and the

²⁵ Minority governments are relatively common in Portuguese democratic history. Examples include Guterres I (1995-1999), Sócrates II (2009-2011), Passos Coelho II (2015), Costa I (2015-2019), and Costa II (2019-...). Moury and Fernandes (2018) even argue that in the Portuguese context, these governments tend to be as stable and effective as majority or coalition-governments.

European Central Bank. The financial support was granted under the condition of structural reforms overseen by the so-called Troika, composed by representatives of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The three main establishment parties, PS, PSD and CDS would negotiate with the Troika a detailed plan of structural economic reforms – drawn up in the so-called Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The first negotiations were concluded in May 2011, but it would eventually be the new right-wing PSD-CDS government led by Passos Coelho, which, in consensus with the PS, would implement the MoU. This Memorandum of Understanding would be the guide for the neoliberal austerity measures that would be implemented over the following years with disastrous social, political and economic consequences (Costa & Caldas, 2014, p. 88).

The Eurozone economy shrunk by an accumulated 2.1% between 2009 and 2013, while it had grown a total of 10.6% between 2004 and 2008. The reality was much harsher in Portugal, GDP lost an accumulated 7.6% in those same years while it had been growing an accumulated 7.9 % in the five years before – much less than the European average. While policy-targets in terms of fiscal policy and budget cuts followed the recommendation of the Memorandum, the effects were disastrous: between 2011 and 2012 – instead of 2.1% expected contraction, the Portuguese economy lost 6.3%, it reached 17.4% unemployment versus 13.3% expected and public debt went to 124% of GDP, while 112.2% was expected (Costa & Caldas, 2014, p. 112).

Between 2010 and 2014 nominal salaries dropped by 8% in Portugal. During the same period Greek salaries dropped 27% and Cyprus' 4.2%. During the same period Northern European salaries rose above 5%. This was no coincidence but the conscient consequence of the adjustment programs that were designed to restore competitiveness and “rebalance” trade. This was done by so-called “internal devaluation” – the only method to adjust deficits in trade and balance of payments available in single currency unions like the Euro. Internal devaluation consists in the “devaluation of labour”; cutting costs related to salaries and other costs of labour – such as the reduction of taxes, so-called fiscal devaluation – with the expectation to boost exports, curtail imports and attract investment in search of cheap labour²⁶ (Caldas, 2015, pp. 5-7 *passim*). While internal devaluation was not an openly

²⁶ Monetary or external devaluation – through currency debasement – is, according to Caldas (2015, p. 8), a more better form of restoring the trade balance and competitiveness, it is quicker, more efficient and carries lower social cost. Monetary devaluation is impossible as long as Portugal remains in the Euro, however. The problematic of internal devaluation in single currency areas finds its historical parallel in the gold-

assumed objective of the Memorandum of Understanding – some of the measures were legitimized as a solution against unemployment –, the document was incredibly detailed on matters of internal devaluation, leaving no discretionary manoeuvre for the government nor social partners. At the same time the government was incredibly zealous in its application: all attacks on labour rights were flawlessly transformed in legislation. The conditional measures included a reduction of amounts and duration of unemployment benefits, a reduced compensation for terminations of labour contracts, as well as a flexibilization of individual sackings. It also included a wage-freeze, flexibilization of labour hours and a decentralization of collective contracts and collective bargaining (Caldas, 2015, pp. 12-14 *passim*).

The deficit in the balance of payments reduced with 11% between 2010 and 2013. According to Caldas (2015, p. 16-17), the reduction was the result of a reduction of imports due to the contraction of the internal market, not because export industries would have become more competitive. The internal devaluation did not produce the expected fall in internal prices (Carneiro *et al.*, 2014, p. 444; Hespanha & Caleiras, 2017, p. 47). The new regime evidently failed to deliver on its proclaimed objective to create jobs (Caldas, 2015, p. 14). Besides the direct effects of the profound economic and social crisis, the strategies adopted to answer it, had negative impacts on the public employment services and the efficacy of labour and formation policies. A huge increase of unemployment rate – due to the closing of companies – and a very large increase of minimum wage earners and low quality jobs was the result (Hespanha & Caleiras, 2017, p. 47). While in the Euro area unemployment rates soared from 7.5 to 11.6%, in Portugal it rose from 8.7 in 2008 to 14.1% in 2014. These differences are even bigger when we look at youth unemployment, where rates rose from 25.3 to 34.7% in Portugal.

These were the adverse conditions, particularly among the youth, that sparked the massive protests against austerity that started with the *Geração à Rasca*/Generation on the Edge – demonstration on the 12th of March 2011. These protests – which signalled a profound legitimacy crisis – are the background of our inquiry into democracy.

standard between 1880 and 1914 and during the interwar period. The application of internal devaluation policies had disastrous social, economic and political impact (Caldas, 2015, p. 12).

1.3 Research hypotheses

Throughout this chapter we have seen how Portugal's transition towards democracy has been marked by various contradictions. Until 25th of April 1974, Europe's longest-living dictatorship and colonial power seemed anachronic. A few weeks later the country was the world's hotspot of democratic, revolutionary, and socialist experimentalism marked by nationalizations, land reform and citizen-participation.

In the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution, the project of European integration was essential to guarantee the triumph of a relatively stable parliamentary liberal democracy over other alternative perspectives on democracy that had emerged during the revolutionary period. The newly established constitution guaranteed many of the social conquests of the revolution – such as free education and healthcare. But as Portugal tried to build up a social democratic welfare state, the European community made a shift towards a neoliberal revolution that started to sweep over Europe. European integration would soon be accompanied by a liberal agenda of widespread privatisations and liberalisations that would re-constitute the countries' financial economic elites and quickly would become a fetter for social and economic democracy.

The process of integration of the European Union and the Eurozone – as a peripheral economy – brought Portugal in a strong process of deindustrialization and loss of political economic sovereignty. The country not only transferred legal and political competences to the communitarian level; its political economy would become ever more dependent in questions of debt, finance, European subsidies, emigration and tourism. With its continuing integration in the Eurozone, the country would further lose essential political economic instruments, particularly its monetary policy.

Portuguese democracy – like other European democracies – already suffered for years of increasing legitimacy problems. Electoral participation dwindled. Belief in parties, the justice system and political institutions had been corroded by depoliticization, corruption and inequality. As the European project entered in its worst crisis so far and austerity policies dealt hard blows to social rights, public services and living conditions, also the legitimacy of the liberal parliamentary form of democracy seemed to enter in a serious crisis.

The rest of this thesis will be an inquiry on how this democratic crisis developed. We distinguish two interconnected sub-hypotheses that we will be exploring throughout the rest of our research on the legitimacy of democracy in crisis-environments: Democracy is a

historical and ideological product and social struggles create a disparity of meanings of democracy.

1.3.1 Democracy as a historical and ideological product

Democratic legitimacy is built upon the hegemonic consensus in the way of interpreting “Democracy”. As legitimacy is based upon the shared acceptance of certain norms and goal values (Bodansky, 1999), the existence of democratic legitimacy is thus dependent on the social consensus about these norms. While democracy is hegemonic in the sense that it is a recurring signifier people feel obliged to address in their narratives about the crisis, democratic legitimacy also implies a consensus about what democracy “is” or “should be”. It implies a power, or Gramscian-style power-coalition, built upon a historic agreement about a hegemonic interpretation of democracy.

“Democracy” has been central to the Portuguese governance consensus ever since the overthrow of the authoritarian *Estado Novo* regime, to which it formed a symbolic contrast. Portuguese democracy as we know it, has been built upon the carnation revolution and the subsequent integration in the European union. Consequently the “ideas of the revolution” and “Europe” have been key for the discursive consensus about democracy in Portugal. “The revolution” echoed social justice, equality, the late development of a welfare state with social rights including free education, universal healthcare system etc. – but also anti-fascism and anti-colonialism. “Europe” meant a perspective of economic and technological development, the promise of accessing “civilization”, and opening of new markets for the elites, as well as an escape from the internal economic and social conflicts of the PREC through supra-national governance and subsidies. Crisis characteristically reveal the co-presence in the public sphere of multiple narratives – each of them reflecting specific interests and different ideas about the mode of functioning of the economy and society, as well as different desirable horizons for the future (Caldas & Almeida, 2016, p. 7). The deep economic depression of the Euro crisis put a huge pressure on the democratic consensus in Portugal, as well as on the ideas of “Europe” and “the revolution” which played a crucial role in that consensus.

Throughout the crisis different approaches towards both ideas would symbolize the emerging dissensus on democracy: for one side of the socio-political conflict, Europe “still” meant civilization, financial and economic salvation, competitiveness and a tool for

necessary technical reforms. The other side however, sees Europe as undemocratic, a threat to sovereignty, a core-dominated source of injustice, or even a foreign occupation... At the same time, the ideas of the revolution, in particular its constitution and social rights; are seen by political economic elites as a threat to the Portuguese economy, unsustainable, and a threat to the necessary changes proposed by a democratically elected government. The opponents of austerity, by contrast, see them as a safeguard against the illegitimate government policies, representing “the rights” which are taken away. The constitution represents the resistance against “authoritarian rule” of a “privileged elite”.

Our first sub-hypothesis is therefore that democracy is an ideological concept. Ideology here refers to the medium through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate. Ideology refers to how human beings live their life as conscious actors, making sense of their own actions and those of others (Therborn, 1999, p. 2). According to this approach, the act of conceiving something “as ideology” “[...] is to focus on the way it operates in the formation and transformation of human subjectivity” (Therborn, 1999, p. 2). Ideology – at least within the Marxist tradition – is always built upon a dialectical relation with praxis and institutions (Althusser, 2006; Therborn, 1999; Žižek, 1989). Karl Marx (1998, pp. 41-42) writes, in *The German ideology*:

The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, [...] as they really are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will. [...] It is evident that in all these cases their ideas are the conscious expression – real or illusory – of their real relations and activities, of their production, of their intercourse, of their social and political conduct.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.

The conceptualization of democracy as an ideological concept should thus not be interpreted as an idealistic approach towards democracy – disregarding the practical forms, practices and relations, but rather as a materialist approach in the Marxist sense, which considers the dialectic relation between sub- and superstructure of society, and between human objective living conditions and its subjectivity.

This approach contrasts with comparative and positivist political science; in which democracy is approached as a pure empirical phenomenon and, or, institutional goal. Democracy is approached as de-ideologized concept designating a state or situation that could be objectively defined and measured. This, however, is the arch-ideological position, that departs itself from an unquestioned formalistic approach to democracy and represents the social consensus which has been so far. In this post-political environment, the hegemonic interpretation of democracy has been based on elitist liberal democracy (Santos, 2005). In Chapter 3 we will focus on the historical and political evolution of the conceptualization of democracy and democratic theories. The chapter addresses how different narratives in the social conflict converge with different models of democratic theory. Divergent democratic theories and their historical evolution can therefore be explained to reflect the historical social struggles and the adjacent power relations. Such approach provides a theoretical-historical framework for democratic theory which makes it possible to address the various weaknesses in current mainstream models. It also raises other issues related to science and democratic theory, among them the problematization of any kind of “objective” democratic models – and which role the subjective perspective of the analyst plays, which we will address.

1.3.2 Divergent discourses of democracy

Power-relations are reflected in the dominant ideology and the normativity; within this context, “minorities” are formed and exclusion is generated. These minorities are not necessarily quantitative minorities, but qualitative minorities, in the sense that their material power-position excludes them from political influence. As long as power-relations don’t change and there is no break-up of the consensus which sustains the dominant hegemony; these excluded minorities remain outside the sphere of democratic governance, their demands are not considered as legitimate, and they are placed outside the “arc of governability”²⁷ – to use a fashionable term in Portuguese politics. According to our hypothesis, what matters is therefore not the “state”, but the “process”; not the

²⁷ This term was popularized by an appeal of the conservative party CDS for a consensus in the “Arc of Governability” (Lusa & Sol, 2013). The term was afterwards modified by André Freire (2013) in his appeal of an “Arc of Democracy and Constitutionality”.

institutionalized competition – as in the traditional minimalist approach of democracy – but the change from hegemony to legitimation crisis and the other way around.

In our case, the crisis meant such a break-up of the hegemonic consensus. As a consequence of deterioration social rights, austerity policies and economic distress, diverging potentially legitimate interests emerged. Our third sub-hypothesis is that this dissensus in society is concentrated within the conceptualization of democracy itself, leading to negations of concrete forms democracy and producing divergent narratives and perspectives about what democracy should be. As since long the concept of “democracy” played an important symbolic role in Portugal, both sides of the political conflict of austerity claim to be representatives of “real” democracy. The Trade Unions and the political left claim they are defending democracy, by defending social rights, social justice and sovereignty contrasting it with the undemocratic lack of political choice in the TINA-doctrine and the dictatorship of the financial markets. The *indignados* movement and the *Acampadas* went even further with this idea and demanded “*Democracia real já!*” (Real democracy now!), contrasting direct citizens’ participation, consensus and deliberation, with what they considered as the inherent tendency towards corruption of the representative systems, particracy and oligarchy. At the same time the governing elite consider themselves the only legitimate elected representatives of the people, the personification of democracy and reason. Divergent ideas about democracy have their own historical predecessors and are certainly not totally “new”; but it was the crisis which brought them to the surface and consolidated them into different opposing narratives and discourses. In Chapters 4 and 5 we are going to analyse these discourses. In Chapter 4, our focus will be on the democratic discourse of austerity; how policymakers try to legitimate austerity measures and frame this in democratic terms. In Chapter 5, we will focus on the alternative democratic discourses originating in the protest moments; how new social movements, Trade Unions and parties articulate their discourses on democracy.

1.3.3 Central hypothesis

The central hypothesis of this thesis thus is that democracy is an ideological concept – a recurring (Master-)signifier people feel obliged to address in the context of ideological interpellation – struck by a hegemonic crisis: While democratic legitimacy is built upon the hegemonic consensus in the interpretation of “Democracy”, the crisis and the emergence of

the “fundamental contradictions in society”, broke up this consensus. As diverging potentially legitimate interests emerge, the dissensus in society is concentrated in the conceptualization of democracy itself, producing divergent narratives and perspectives of it.

Sub-questions emerge:

- “Do people frame the questions of crisis-governance within the democratic framework?”
- “Which narratives, models and alternatives of democracy emerge from the social conflict following the economic crisis in Portugal”
- “Are those narratives diverging?”
- “Do these narratives reflect contradicting social interests?”
- “Is there a formation of alternative hegemonies?”

CHAPTER 2 — “CRISIS” IN THE TRANSITION TO “POLITICAL” SCIENCE²⁸

Previous systemic crises – such as the great depression in the 1930’s – have consistently affected the legitimacy of existing governance systems. Taking into account that the general objective of inquiry is the disentanglement of the interrelation between Crisis and Democracy, this chapter focusses on the first “pole” of the relation; the concept of “crisis” as an analytical concept.

“The Eurozone is in crisis”, “the welfare state is in crisis”, “the European economy is in crisis”, “the discipline of economics is in crisis”, “(parliamentary) democracy is in crisis”, “democratic theory is in crisis”... – “Crisis” plays a central role in the narratives addressing today’s political, economic and scientific situation. Crisis refers not only to a moment of turbulence or disequilibrium, but to state of affairs that requires an implicit, decisive and immediate response. Is a crisis “real” or a construction? (Caldas & Almeida, 2016, p. 6). In the post-2008, “crisis-context”, a vast amount of academic work in the area of political science has been concentrated on the effects of crisis; on democracy, on voting patterns, on governance policies, on economic behaviour, etc. In these theories the concept of crisis is usually approached as a given. The “crisis” is an existing or unfolding situation – an economic recession, an outburst in a geo-political tension, and a collapse of trust – that affects other parameters to be measured or analyzed. As we will see further on, this rather positivistic approach tends to lead to the acknowledgement that crisis is a relatively useless device, once you inquire about the concept itself. Hence the approach defended throughout this inquiry will be somewhat different. First of all, the concept of “crisis” will be approached as a “subject”; rather than being solely a concrete, objective thing. By approaching “crisis” as a “subject”, it receives “agency”, that is to say; an “active” framework that structures the way how we perceive, give meaning to and change the way how we treat the things it affects – “democracy” in our case.

Such an approach is not only justified as a general idea that scientific knowledge on crisis improves by the consideration of “another” perspective or dimension of the subject to be researched. We will argue that it is essential, given the epistemological and historical “nature” of the concept of crisis itself; only doing so one can shed light upon the way how crisis functions as a crucial concept for critical and emancipatory knowledge and science.

²⁸ Some early versions of parts of this chapter were published in Van Vossolle (2018).

The first part of this chapter recovers the conceptual history of the concept of crisis. It starts with a superficial illustration of the problematic and controversial character of the concept in mainstream scientific environments; with different authors describing the use of crisis as useless from a scientific point of view. In a first step to understand why it could be useful we dig into the etymological and historical origins of the word crisis. We focus on how crisis is derived from classical Greek mythology and philosophy, and how it's ancient link to the notion of judgement or final judgement, eventually through theological connotations, made it into modern scientific usage, with some idea of "immanence" guiding the apparent opposition between subjectivity and objectivity.

The second part briefly explores the relation between crisis, critique and dialectics in European political philosophy; from Socrates to Marx. Critique has the same etymological origins as crisis. Just like crisis, critique balances between the objective and the subjective. Both concepts are essentially contradictory; like the situation of crisis is opposed to another "normal", "ideal" or "goal" state, the practice of critique is an active form of negation. Therefore dialectics – as the method of thinking through negation and contradiction – is crucial to understand the concept of crisis and critique. This part starts with a discussion of the origins of dialectics and critique in Socratic philosophy which in turn inspired Neoplatonist theology. The core of dialectics in modern philosophy is inspired by Hegel's logic. Just as Plato had done with Socrates, Marx tries to answer the apparent deadlock between positive knowledge and critique but instead of resorting towards idealism – such as Plato and Hegel had done – he conceives a theory in which contradictions are "resolved" through material and political practice.

Based on structure of the dialectical approach, we will then build an argument about how the concept of crisis is fundamentally related to the mutually interacting fields of History, Science, and ultimately to the Political which serves as a sort of dialectical *aufhebung*²⁹ of the others. We do this by concentrating on two fundamental discussions between these fields of knowledge. The first debate is the *metodenstreit*; which took place at the edge between History and Science. For the second debate – at the interaction-point between Science and the Political – we will concentrate on the Schmittean position about crisis – or state of exception in his own terms. We will argue that these three interacting

²⁹ *Aufhebung*, mostly translated as sublation, is the German term used by Hegel to describe the process to overcome the dialectic between thesis and anti-thesis in dialectical thought.

fields of knowledge are ultimately linked to perspectives on scientific transitions between natural, social and political science.

2.1 The scientific concept of crisis

Crisis is a central catchword for examination and interpretation of virtually all areas of life (Koselleck & Richter, 2006, p. 358): social crisis, economic crisis, political crisis, ecological crisis, psychological crisis, epistemological crisis etc. The concept of crisis played a fundamental contribution in the development many fields of knowledge – including politics, psychology, economy and history – as well as their establishment as autonomous disciplines (Koselleck, 2002, p. 238). Analysis, explanation and possible solutions of crisis constituted the building blocks of the works of “monuments” of European social scientific knowledge such as Marx, Freud, Habermas, Arrighi, Gramsci, Poulantzas... But doesn't its inflation and subsequent devaluation affect its usefulness as a tool of analysis? Its gross defining categories and its variety of meanings give mainstream positivist social scientists plenty of reason to question its possibilities to create a systematic and scientific knowledge (Starn, 2005; Robinson, 1968). According to these critics crisis has become an all-purpose slogan or a banal *cliché*. Today's terminology of crisis would be rather activist and “political” than “scientific” (Starn, 2005).

Isn't this the reason “crisis” has no applicability in “modern” behavioural social sciences and game theory? (Robinson, 1968). Is a contemporary use of the concept therefore to be totally dismissed? The combination of the profoundly contested character and scope as a social scientific concept, with its popularity in everyday discourse, are at least an indication of the social and political relevance for a profound discussion on the issue. Such a discussion should include a theoretical delimitation and a discussion about its practical usefulness. Where to begin better than with the history of crisis itself?

Krisis, the Ancient Greek noun, is derived from *krinó/krinein* – a verb which meant to separate, to choose, to decide or to judge (Koselleck & Richter, 2006; Starn, 2005; Roitman, 2011)³⁰. Crisis designated the existence of a situation or moment that showed a

³⁰ In classical Greek the subsequent separation into two domains of meaning—that of a “subjective critique” and an “objective crisis” – were still covered by the same term (Koselleck & Richter, 2006). We can thus observe that the term anticipated an “appropriate judgment” as a crucial dimension on the concept of crisis – this means that the use of the concept of crisis presupposes an ideological perspective.

restriction of alternatives and called for a decision (Koselleck, 2002, p. 237). It is no coincidence that the notion of crisis entered crisis-prone medieval Europe mainly through Jewish and Christian theology, through the Apocalypse in John's revelations in particular. Apocalyptic theological theories have often been the result of great social crises: Adela Collins (1984) argues for example that the story of the Apocalypse itself was the result of a social crisis within Judaism: the revelation deals with the "unbearable tension" perceived by the author between "what was" – a complex situation involving conflict with the Jews, conflict over wealth, precarious and traumatic relations with Rome – and "what ought to have been" – the rule of God, involving the speedy, public and communal vindication of Jesus and his followers (Collins, 1984; Walker Jr., 1986). Is it surprising then that "crisis" – signifying a judgment before God, while at the same time containing a promise of salvation (Koselleck, 2002; Koselleck & Richter, 2006, p. 359; Roitman, 2011) – gained resonance in a European "Dark Age" marked by continuous episodes of pestilence, Viking raids, feudal wars and hunger?

But crisis didn't remain in the theological sphere. In what we today would call the "natural scientific" form, the boundaries between physics and metaphysics were not always as clear as today. The current scientific use of crisis dates back to its medical signification which prevailed since 5th century BC (Habermas, 1975a; Robinson, 1968; Roitman, 2011). Associated with the Hippocratic School (Koselleck, 2002; Koselleck & Richter, 2006, pp. 360-361), crisis denoted a turning point of a disease, a phase of an illness, in which it is decided whether or not the organism's self-healing powers are sufficient for recovery (Habermas, 1975a). The critical process, the illness, appears objective; as empirical deviations from the normal, healthy state of the organism. The patient experiences his powerlessness vis-a-vis the objectivity of the illness, a subject condemned to passivity and temporarily deprived of the possibility of being a subject in full possession of its powers. Crises are therefore associated with the idea of an objective force that deprives a subject of one part of his normal sovereignty (Habermas, 1975a). We would not speak of a crisis however, if death were certain. Crisis is thus never only an objective, external process. In its medical form – like in its theological form – crisis thus designates a phase calling for an irrevocable decision (Roitman, 2011), a call to action and a belief in subjective, human, agency. This apparent contradiction between the loss of sovereignty and the need for choosing or irrevocable judgment, characterizes the paradoxical nature of crisis, which transcends all the aspects of the concept. Likewise, in Aristoteles's introduction of crisis in

the political sphere, in Rhetoric, *krisis* is the translation of judgement, corresponding to three meanings; as a faculty, as a process and as an object (Black, 1978, p. 95; Sloane, 2001, p. 410). In Aristotelean politics, crisis refers to a political decision that preconditions all required legal judgment (Koselleck, 2002) a founding act between the old and the new.

2.2 Dialectics and Critique

Whereas in old Greek theological and medicinal uses, the subjective and objective condition were unambiguously covered by same term of *Krisis*; in modern everyday use we tend to separate “crisis” and “critique”. This separation makes it easier to understand how the interaction between objective and subjective dimensions work. While both terms have the same etymologic origin, the separation gives rises to “crisis” apparently covering a more “objective condition” – a situation of economic recession, failing institutions, high unemployment – whereas “critique” appears to be the “subjective, ideological act” –, an accusation against injustice, unfairness, backwardness etc. (Koselleck, 2002).

Is it because critique, as a verb, is a human practice, a form of resistance against the dominant normativity? Michel Foucault defends that the “art of critique” develops as a counter-weight towards de development of “arts of governmentality” in modern society. From the fifteenth century on, the art of governmentality – which had previously been part of the Christian theology – develops into the different rational sciences and disciplines that structure and reproduce every domain of social life. In an increasingly diversified society – due to a processes of division of labour, rising inequalities and globalization – these forms of rational thought aim to give systematic answers about how to govern children, how to govern the poor, the family, the armies, cities etc. The “art of governmentality” develops into different scientific disciplines of pedagogy, politics, and economics. At the same time develops a “critical attitude” that can be defined as “the art of not being governed like this” (Foucault, 1997).

Much like the art of governance gets secularized through modernity, the practice of critique which used to be directed against religion is becoming secularized. Marx (1977) first systematized this in his introduction to *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*. Famously he wrote that while religious criticism used to be a reflection of “the struggle against the world whose spiritual aroma religion is”; in an increasingly secularized world, the task of critique becomes “[...] to unmask self-estrangement in its unholy forms once the holy form

of human self-estrangement has been unmasked”. “The criticism of Heaven”, thus needed to turn into “[...] the criticism of Earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics”.

We will come back to this later, but the apparent separation between crisis and critique enables us however to understand the contradiction between the positive and negative dimensions within the concepts of crisis and critique itself. As with critique, crisis is fundamentally determined by this contradiction. For Riotman (2011) it is the disjuncture between what “ought” and what “is” that conceives “the formal possibility of crisis”. This contradiction is what drives dialectical methods of thought and with it many of the dichotomies that are at the foundation of social theory. Dialectic philosophy is founded upon thinking through these contradictions. It is based upon oppositions and negations - concepts are put as the interaction between opposing aspects of a common whole, quantity and quality, concrete and abstract, particular and universal, process and moment. Think about the contradictions between the concepts of subject and object, theory and practice, validity and value, intelligible and empirical, transcendence and immanence. Crisis is an exquisite concept that enables us to explore and understands things as the interaction between oppositions.

2.2.1 Socrates – Questioning Discourse

As with crisis, it is common to place the historical and etymological origins of dialectic thought in ancient Greece. As a philosophical concept, critique has been popularized through Plato’s reports on the Socratic method of debate and questioning. In Socrates’ early dialogues dialectic fulfils a “critical function” (Meyer, 1980, p. 284). Socrates was one of the first known thinkers to elaborate on the relation between language, truth, and power. The main idea behind it is the “problematic character” of discourse – *Logos* (Meyer, 1980, pp. 281-283 *passim*). Socrates perspective presupposed that words, discourses³¹, reflected established powers. This meant that answers, positive statements based upon words, reflected the power relations behind the *Logos*. Therefore Socrates was very reluctant to accept answers. According to his philosophical method truth lies, not in the

³¹ Half a century later, Aristoteles considered discourse as the most important condition of the political. Discourse serves to make clear what is usefull and harmful and what is justice and unjust. Discourse is the precondition for his famous “man being a political animal” (Aristóteles, 1998, p. 1253a).

answers, but in the practice of questioning itself. Truth came from questioning of authority socially invested in the leading citizens of the Polis – those that were rarely contradicted because of their social position that validated their discourse. In the end, Socrates paid the political price with his life.

Socrates, however – consistent with his position on the problematic character of the *Logos* – never systematized the *Logos*. He practiced it at a reflexive level and therefore never had a concrete conception of dialectic (Meyer, 1980, p. 283). While dialectics is an essential method for discovery and acquisition of knowledge, as a validating procedure as such, it struggles. Because the method negates positive discourse and knowledge, any positive truth would reflect the *Logos*, and thus be contradictory with the method itself. This makes the transition from the dialectical to the scientific method, with its disciplinary, objective, positive character and description, particularly difficult. The concept of Crisis – build around the interaction of the negative dimension (negative subjective judgement) and the positive dimension (positive objective condition) – has occupied a crucial place in this transition. Throughout history, philosophers have struggled to make this transition; the first was Plato himself, as the one who wrote down Socrates' dialogues, an act in which he thus intrinsically compromised with the *Logos*.

2.2.2 Plato – The idealistic solution

In Plato we get the transition of the conception of philosophy from centred on questioning to an “ontological” conception centred on being; dialectic lost its purely negative character. What made an answer an answer became central to Plato's dialectic. The dialectic question-answer method became the cognitive method – a subjective characteristic –, a science of judgement, in order to arrive at the answer – an objective statement –, rather than just the end: problematizing the discourse (Meyer, 1980, pp. 283-284). Plato thus dissociates himself from Socrates: the ultimate goal of knowledge is to do away with a problem; from where he concludes that “questioning as such is inadequate when it comes to laying the foundation for truth”.

For Socrates the question: “What is X?” is the question presupposed on any question about X: it serves to bring forward the duality about the knowledge and the ignorance – or mere appearance of knowledge – about X (Meyer, 1980, p. 288). But for Plato, the Socratic question can find an objective answer because “if we ask a question about

what X is, we presuppose a thing which exists as an X”; there has to be a prior contact which is presupposed and required “since the question of the being of X bears on X itself”. “In inquiring into what things are, we become conscious of them, and we had to be conscious of some of their properties before asking the question”.

Systematizing these presuppositions about X, brings us to the characteristic idealistic platonic rationalist world of forms. Consequently, in Plato’s approach, truth is no longer based on questions and answers, but on “the objective validity of the assertion”, with rationality having a monopoly of the judgment. In this approach to truth, the epistemological role of the audience is reduced to zero and the questioning itself becomes a mere rhetorical procedure, rather than playing a cognitive role. The dogmatic conception of discourse and knowledge, based upon the transcendental reality will eventually form the base of Plato’s republic and have a lasting effect on neo-platonic Christian theology.

2.2.3 Hegel – Dialectics in Modernity

Thinking about dialectics and the dialectical perspective upon the world today one inescapably arrives at Hegel. His new conception of dialectical logic is best given by the first thesis of his 1801 dissertation: “*Contradictio est regula veri, non contradictio falsi*”/“The contradiction is the rule of truth, non-contradiction is false” (Bordignon, 2012, p. 221). Given the anti-empiricist and idealistic character of his approach, Hegel is considered to be a Neo-Platonist by many. But in contrast with the medieval Christian theologians, Hegel’s dialectical thought rose directly out of the great social tensions that accompanied the rise industrial capitalism. Alienation, modernization, nation states, social revolutions and their reactions – made him think change over time as a dialectical process reigned by conflicts:

The spirit of man has broken with the old order of things hitherto prevailing, and with the old ways of thinking, and is in the mind to let them all sink into the depths of the past and to set about its own transformation. It is indeed never at rest, but carried along the stream of progress ever onward... the spirit of the time, growing slowly and quietly ripe for the new form it is to assume, disintegrates one fragment after another of the structure of its previous world. That it is tottering to its fall is indicated only by symptoms here and there. Frivolity and again ennui, which are spreading in the established order of things, the undefined foreboding of something unknown – all these betoken that there is something else approaching. This gradual crumbling to pieces, which did not alter the general look and aspect of the whole, is interrupted by the sunrise, which, in a flash and at a single stroke, brings to – view the form and structure of the new world (Hegel, 2006, p. 75).

Hegel's systematic application of the method of dialectical thought upon history and social processes – most famously in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* influenced European thought. Ibn Khaldun³² (1987), had done a similar exercise in his 14th century *Muqaddimah* – which, according to some, inspired Hegel – when he pointed towards the importance of economic and political conflict and crisis as the driving forces behind the circular evolution of History. Although repetition and conflict are essential for Hegel's analysis as well, the main difference accounting for the particular importance of Hegel's philosophy, is that Hegel made the dialectic structure the central axis of the framework analysis. He used it as an extraordinary method to unravel and systematize the changing world around him – at the dawn of European industrial modernity. According to Wahl (1982), the contradiction between thesis and anti-thesis, and the mediation that brings about the synthesis, are the abstractions from the fundamental experiential basis of crisis, of human alienation, despair and hope in the epoch of Modernity. History is the field upon which their reconciliation takes place (Roth, 2019, p. 4).

This philosophical holistic framework – laid out in *Science of Logic* (Hegel, 2010) – allowed him to systematize in the same movement reality and how knowledge about reality is constructed through contradictions. Hegel's dialectic epistemology created the possibility of critical theory – an inheritance present in theoretical concepts such as the holistic approach, immanent contradiction, negation and its negation and *aufhebung* – opening the possibility to develop a systemic theory for social change. Hegelian thought provided a vehicle for confronting the historical and for thinking the connection between history and knowing (Roth, 2019, p. 2).

Hegel himself however does not take up the opportunity. Hegel wanted to develop a scientific theory that could account for the “discordant forces which were tearing modern society” in a “united whole”, comprehending the forms taken by human life and consciousness. He did not ask “should things be”, only showing the necessary place of each as a part of the whole picture (Smith, 1996, p. 148). Hegel's conception of science, thus “left no room for critical judgement” (Smith, 1996, p. 148), which made it politically conservative by our, and even by its contemporary standards, as the framework allowed a legitimization of Monarchy and the Prussian state bureaucracy. For Marxists the Hegelian notions of

³² Ibn Khaldun (1987) used the term *Asabiyyah* – which meant something like collective consciousness, state of mind, or ideology, in a similar as Hegel's *Spirit*; and analysed its role in the change, rise and fall of civilizations.

mediations and dialectical change are important, not because they resolve the crisis in a system, but because they point to the closure that can occur through radical historical action (Roth, 2019, p. 2).

2.2.4 Marx – Crisis and Praxis

Just as Plato had done with Socrates, Karl Marx tried to resolve the dialectic approach of his inspirational source. While for Hegel, “[...] humanity, identified as Spirit, just was, and there was nothing more to be said about it” (Smith, 1996), the young Marx developed upon the dialectical framework by placing the mismatch or contradiction between humanity and its inhuman forms as the central category of Truth. Marx criticized the idealist solution for the dialectic in German Idealism – not only in Hegel’s philosophical system, but also in the work of the so-called critical Young Hegelians like the Bauer brothers (Marx, 1976). To Marx, under Hegel, “[...] philosophy has sealed itself off to form a consummate, total world” (Jessop & Malcolm-Brown, 1990, p. 65).

Therefore in its confrontation with the total world, Hegel failed to understand that his philosophy’s activity only appears to be torn apart and contradictory, as a reflection of the world itself torn apart (Marx, 1977). Despite Hegel’s claims to immanence, according to Marx, he created a “[...] metaphysical subject divorced from real historical individuals” (Antonio, 1981). Thus, inspired by his doctoral study of Epicurus’ anti-deterministic materialism – as goes the well known *cliché* – Marx is going to turn Hegel the right side up again. While Marx’s emphasis of analysis remains on the contradiction rather than correspondence between concrete social formations and their ideologies (Antonio, 1981, pp. 332-334 *passim*), he is going to base his dialectics on a “materialist” core. Marx’s dialectics will be based on “[...] the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live” (Marx, 1998, pp. 36-37) – in order to “[...] discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell” (Marx, 2012a), of Hegel’s philosophy.

Marx’s solution for the dialectic – answer to bridge the positive and the negative perspective on society – will be based on revolutionary practice, rather than on the platonic ideal. It combines both the “comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things” and

[...] the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary

existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary (Marx, 1873).

Totality in Marx's dialectics stands for the unity of these two phases – of recognition and negation. “Crisis” stands for the concrete appearance of such totality, as it functions as a moment in which the two phases – objective condition, and subjective judgement – as it “[...] asserts their unity, the unity of the different aspects” (Marx, 1968, p. 505). For Marx these immanent principles – an “immanent grounding³³” given by “critical standards... given in the historical process” itself (Antonio, 1981, pp. 332-334 *passim*) – were necessary weapons in the struggle for progressive social change because they provide basis for critique within historical reality. This element of practical, political and material critique is the main difference with Hegel.

2.3 Crisis, Science and History

The idea to give “crisis” a historical connotation is not limited to Hegel and Marx. Given that the dual character of “crisis” always implies the existence of a comparative state of judgement or differentiation, the question arises “crisis compared to what?” (Roitman, 2011). Or if we take Habermas' (1975a) conceptualization: about which “goal state [*Sollzustand*]” are we talking when talking about a crisis as a “deviation”? Within the paradigm of modernity, the time perspective – marked by an ever faster historical progress driven by globalizing capitalism – plays an essential role in terms of comparison according to Koselleck (2002). Modernity presents itself as an era marked by “a secular movement that sought the demystification and desacralization of knowledge and social organization”. It “[...] embraced the idea of progress, and actively sought to break with history and tradition” (Harvey, 1991, pp. 12-13). It is within this modern context that “crisis” entails a theory of time (Koselleck, 2002, p. 237; Roitman, 2011).

Such theory of time establishes a particular teleology and a moral demand of difference between past and future (Roitman, 2011). The idea of “crisis” tends to conceive the change over time in terms of a radical difference; just as in the theological origin, crisis now predominantly marks out “a new time”, with time as a category of truth. Crisis signifies a historical time “when ‘the real’ is made bare” (Roitman, 2011). World history thus

³³ In the tradition of critical social sciences – “immanent critique” points to the “discrepancy between the basic liberal values of freedom and equality proclaimed by the bourgeois society and the objective realities of economy irrationality (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

becomes judgment of the world (Koselleck, 2002, p. 241), and history itself becomes an acting subject, enforcing a kind of immanent justice. Koselleck thus argues that the concept of “crisis” re-enters modern social sciences through the rising importance of the discipline of history and the historicization of social sciences.

2.3.1 Historism and Science

The debate about the integration of history into science has been split into two apparently opposing positions. One advocated the necessity of scientific laws over historical particularity, the other one advocated the primacy of history over universal scientific laws. The most famous expression of this debate is the so-called “*Methodenstreit*” – an epistemological struggle between methods that lay at the hearth of the establishment of European social sciences in the 19th and the 20th century. The opponents consisted in the so-called German Historical School and the Austrian School. The former had German nationalist and romantic roots and emerged as legal school in opposition to the utilitarian, classical political economy – found in Adam Smith, David Ricardo and others. It used the ideas of historicity and local particularity to criticize the universalisms of “modern” positivist scientific laws. They “blamed economics for being ‘abstract’”. Instead they “[...] advocated a ‘visualizing’ (anschaulich) mode of dealing with the problems involved. They emphasized that matters in this field are too complicated to be described in formulas and theorems and that ‘differences’ cannot be comprehended by a uniform theory” (Von Mises, 1984). According to the followers of “*historismus*”, the scientific laws are themselves a product of history. Thus they are themselves in continuous change and therefore never universal.

The Austrian school, with Ludwig von Mises, Carl Menger and Friedrich Hayek reacted against this perspective, and considered the “ahistorical” Hume, Smith and Ricardo as “[...] the most exquisite outcome of the philosophy of the Enlightenment” (Von Mises 1984). The Austrian theoretical school based its political and economic models on Mengers “Methodological Individualism”; a theoretical perspective which assumes that “[...] every correct theoretical abstraction of social and economic changes is the result of actions of individuals and agents in the economy” (Azad, 2005; Udehn, 2002). This perspective in science is closely linked to the neoclassical/neoliberal ahistorical “*homo economicus*” hypothesis. According to the Austrian school, the German historical particularization

ultimately leads to “as many economic theories required as there are nations and races”, and thus denies the possibility of any “[...] such a thing as an economic science valid for all countries, nations, and ages” (Von Mises, 1984, pp. 7-8). Would it not mean that “[...] there could be no such a thing as a science, other than history, dealing with aspects of human action” (Von Mises, 1984), if we would take the historicists seriously?

The debate between positive science and history was the main inspiration of Karl Popper’s work, which came to dominate the scientific epistemology of the twentieth century. Popper is often categorized in the Austrian and positivist school – although he assumed himself a critic of positivist science, which he vigorously attacked for being metaphysical itself. Popper’s main critique of historicism³⁴ is towards its form as historical positivism that deduces laws of history. The process of falsification is central to Popper’s perspective on science, and as historical laws can never be falsified, they are excluded to be scientific in advance (Popper, 2005).

Popper associates this historical positivism with Marxism³⁵. Doing so, however, he reduces Marxist analysis of history to a very, positive, reductive and structural version of Marx’s approach. The Marxism Popper criticizes is a very odd analytical Marx without dialectics. According to Popper the problem of this historicism lies in the holistic approach of history: as “the whole” is too complex, it can never to be fully known. Therefore all descriptions of reality must be selective; and real “predictions” such as in the historicist approach can therefore never be made. As history is made of singular events, history can only reveal trends: The best historical analysis could give would be a “so-far-unfalsified hypothesis”. Concretely, Popper argues Marx’s “scientific socialism”-thesis which proposes the historical necessity of capitalism revolutionizing into socialism, to be un-scientific, as such hypothesis could never a priori be falsified.

Such a position about mechanic laws of history can be found in some streams of Marxism, but is not necessarily opposed to Marx’s own perspective. The latter’s approach to “the whole” mirrors the Hegelian approach to totality, which according to Hegel cannot

³⁴ Historicism is the approach in social sciences which assumes that “historical prediction is their principal aim” and that this aim is attainable by discovering the rhythms, patterns and trends of History (Suchting, 1972, p. 235). Historicists see history itself as the driving force of the social construction of meanings and try to identify objective forces in order to understand and to account for the emergence beliefs and meanings (Refudeen, 1998).

³⁵ Ironically Marx’s own theoretical approach exactly develops from a critique of both Liberal Economics as the German Historical School (Marx, 2010).

be understood analytically but only through dialectics. If there was one person who has consistently defended that man “made” history, and thus constantly changed it, it was Marx. His development of the concept of praxis, in which objectivity and subjectivity merge into human activity, is the basis of his conception of history. We will come back to this later, but for Marx, history is a political project, which is scientific in so far as science is political.

Popper’s initial approach toward “principle of falsification” is nevertheless rather interesting from a critical perspective: it lays bare some fundamental political aspects of modern scientific knowledge. Falsification is first presented as an alternative to the empirical and positivist logic of the “principle of induction”, as a means whereby science decides upon truth (Popper, 2005, p. 5). According to the positivist approach to science; all objective scientific theory is the product of sensorial observations, and should be able to be tested and reproduced in similar circumstances. Popper argued that the fundamental logical flaw in inductive reason consists in that one can never infer universal statements based upon singular/particular statements (Popper, 2005). Alternatively he proposes a method based on deduction rather than induction. It consists in the testing easily testable singular statements, deduced from a theory. If the decision of the falsification process is positive, the “[...] singular conclusions have been verified, then the theory has, for the time being, passed its test... But if the decision is negative, or in other words, if the conclusions have been falsified, then their falsification also falsifies the theory from which they were logically deduced” (Popper, 2005, p. 10).

In his *Logic of Scientific discovery*, he defines the criterion for falsification as “intersubjectively tested” (Popper, 2005, p. 22). According to Popper, science is what has become “justified”; meaning tested and understood “by everyone so far”. This “intersubjectivity”, “by everyone” and “so far”, are important elements that leave room for a critical appropriation of Popper’s approach. Subjectivity – in contrast to the objectivist approach of the positivists – thus plays a major role, and “by everyone” means that science depends on the existence of social consensus, hegemony and conflict. More-over, the “so far” incorporates a temporal dimension in the conceptualization of scientific knowledge. This definition re-opens the possibility of a historical dimension of science, as different “times” can mean different judgements about what is scientifically true.

It should be noted, that in his polemic with Marxism, Popper later amends these points by giving them a liberal political content. In corresponding footnotes – referring to *Poverty of Historicism* – in later editions, he attributes a failure of scientific evolution

(Popper, 2005, p. 279) to the fact that knowledge is not “free” to advance; as freedom is not guaranteed, the state of art of science can stop or even be reversed. *A posteriori*, in his “Poverty of Historicism” (Popper, 2002) – a critique of Marxism – he also redefines intersubjectivity in a fundamentally more liberal – Habermasean-like – notion by adding the idea of rational deliberation to the definition: “intersubjective rational criticism”. As rational communication – instead of social struggle for example – becomes the ultimate test of validity, he forecloses alternative, anti-hegemonic forms of scientific epistemology and sanctifies hegemonic bourgeois rationality.

Nevertheless, Popper admits that exactly within the context of “crisis”, scientific epistemological consensus is challenged: in such time “conflict over the aims of science... become acute”, then “the ‘classical’ system of the day is threatened by the results of new experiments which might be interpreted as falsifications”... “The system will appear unshaken to the conventionalist... by blaming our inadequate mastery”, others – in which Popper includes himself – “[...] will hope to make new discoveries; and we shall hope to be helped in this by a newly erected scientific system” (Popper, 2005, pp. 88-89). Crisis open up “[...] new vistas into a world of new experiences” (Popper, 2005, pp. 88-89). Isn’t the way how Popper links “crisis” and “falsification” with the ideas of “conflict”, “hope”, “a new scientific (justificatory-normative red) system” to be implemented, against “the conventionalist”, to be achieved in a “world of new experiences”, a perspective very much linked to Marx’s “scientific socialism” and political truth?

2.3.2 From a history of scientific dualities to the current Crisis

In fact, “science” has never been a uniform, well delineated body of knowledge; rather it is a gathering of continuous conflicting world views. The recurring dualities between positive science and negative critique, between classical economics and historicism, and between positivism and Marxism, reflect this general trend in the evolution of sciences. Kuhn (1996, pp. 92-94 *passim*) had conceptualized the history of science as one on scientific revolutions that showed parallels with political revolutions. The paradigmatic transition, or scientific revolution happens in a moment of crisis, as the transition from one scientific paradigm to another. In Kuhn’s work, the paradigm refers to a general approach accepted by the scientific community and “normal science” refers to the application of the paradigmatic theory for the solution and explanation of problems similar to those already solved by the

paradigm (Purtill, 1967). In these paradigmatic transitions, the parties in a revolutionary conflict must resort to mass persuasion and often to violence (Kuhn, 1996, pp. 92-94 *passim*).

In modern social science, the trend of conflict is reflected in mainly two dominant currents. Santos (2000) designates the dominant paradigm in social science as “objective”; characterized by the idea that it is possible and necessary to apply the canon and methodologies that have become standard in natural sciences. Originating in those same natural sciences at the end of the 16th century (Copernicus, Kepler, Galilei, Newton), from the 19th century, greatly influenced by Descartes’ (1637) Discourse on method, this model of rationality extends itself to the emerging social sciences. The positive techno-scientific approach – which Comte (1868) conceptualized as the final historical stage of knowledge, after the theological and metaphysical, emerged as a struggle against all kinds of feudal dogmatisms. These feudal dogmatisms such as catholic theology and honour codes conducted and restrained social life, and legitimized despotism, irrationality and hierarchy. The rise of this modern positive science was the intellectual signal of a rising Bourgeoisie and reflected the bourgeois domination over, and disciplinarization of, nature and all non-civilized non-subjects: including the colonial, women, the insane, animals, children, poor etc. (Santos, 2000). It is best symbolized by the concept of Social Physics in the work of Comte and Quetelet – in which only objective, positivist and empiricist methods can establish objective, universal “natural” laws that govern society and that account for meanings independent of history (Santos, 2000). Today, this ideology of technicity and rationality presents itself as the final stage of human knowledge.

The paradigm is continuously opposed by a tendency that is radically “subjective” and anti-positivist, inspired by phenomenology rather than empiricism (Santos, 2000, p. 67). These phenomenologists are sensitive to the discursive constructions of reality and meaning, and use values to understand history (Refudeen, 1998). This approach tends to claim a distinct methodological status for social sciences. Rather than copying the natural scientific method, its methodology is radically different; it is based upon intersubjective knowledge, descriptive and focussed upon understanding (Santos, 2000); it refuses to propose universal truths and laws.

Both currents have in common a reification of the human-nature divide as a basic pillar of knowledge; that is to say; a naturalization of science; exiting the human, historical subject out of its naturalized scientific knowledge. At the end of twentieth century – in his

analysis of the crisis of the dominant paradigm in scientific knowledge – Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2000) states that this distinction between natural sciences and social sciences – represented within the separation between positivists and anti-positivists in the social sciences – has become unsustainable. This unsustainability expresses itself in the form of a “crisis” of the dominant scientific paradigm. The crisis opens – in Kuhn’s (1996) terms – as a “period of paradigmatic transition” of post-modernity, originating in changing social and theoretical conditions.

On the theoretical field one needs to point towards the great advances in natural sciences in the twentieth century like the influence of Einstein’s relativity theory and the Heisenberg-principle in Quantum physics. Both have had great implications for scientific epistemology as both theories – from a natural scientific point of departure – essentially point towards the relativity of the distinction between subject and object; they showed how our perspective reflects itself in our possible knowledge, complicating the dominant Newtonian paradigm in science (Santos, 2000, pp. 68-70 *passim*).

Santos (2000) does not really develop the socio-economic conditions of this shift here; but further reading of his work shows that he means the dynamic of global capitalism and the resistances it awakens. This capitalist dynamic involves the ever-increasing penetration of the process of capital-accumulation in all spheres of human life, including knowledge and science. Doing so, capitalism profoundly re-structures the socio-ecological relations of our surrounding; that is both our relations with fellow beings as with the non-human: nature (Moore, 2011). Science accompanies the capitalist colonization of nature, playing a vital role in trespassing technical and ideological barriers to its accumulation process, through disciplinarization, structuration and information. At the same time, this process also introduces the social contradictions and crisis-tendencies of capitalism in ever increasing spheres of socio-ecological life. Science – as a discourse and a system of meaning – is not immune for this tendency of resistances; this helps us explain the conflicting narratives about sciences.

Within the context of the unsustainability of the division of natural and human sciences and against the positivist trend to approach social sciences as natural sciences, it would be clarifying to proclaim – as Santos (2000) does – that “all sciences are social sciences”. All, also the “exact” sciences, are products of historical social relations, in the form of narratives, historical processes, technological developments, human experiences and dominant ideologies.

Instead of the scientific continuum between various conceptions of socially determined sciences in which the “natural” plays the role of only one polarity and social the other – we would propose the category of the “political” instead. Rather than in the “social”, it is in the political practice of change that we can find the truly conscious, subjective and collective judgement and practice. Such nature-politics opposition could be surprising but is recurrent in contemporary critical theory – particularly when addressing issues of crisis and neoliberal hegemony: Wendy Brown (2006b) for example uses the conceptualization of depoliticization for the “naturalization” of racial or cultural explanations in media or academic discourses. Erik Swyngedouw (2009) does the same with the issue of climate, opposing depoliticized naturalized Climate-discourses around the Carbon-markets and the Anthropocene to the political Climate-justice movement.

2.4 Crisis, Science and the Political

2.4.1 The context of the Political

Despite its very controversial character, Carl Schmitt has been the major inspiration for the conceptualization of the concept of the political in contemporary critical and democratic theory. In the course of this theses, we will discuss some aspects of the work of Jurgen Habermas, Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, Koselleck, Erik Swyngedouw, Wendy Brown, Slavoj Žižek, Giorgio Agamben, Hannah Arendt and others which in some degree are indebted to Schmitt’s work on the political and the exception. Schmitt was a German jurist and political theorist who throughout his life evolved from a catholic conservative to prominent member of the Nazi Party. He dedicated his work to the relation between science and the political and is particularly interesting because he conceived this relation through the perspective of a critique of liberal ideology³⁶. As a student of Max Weber, Schmitt developed the concept of the Political as an answer to the crisis of the Weimar republic. According to Schmitt, the neo-Kantian methodologies used by Weber and his contemporary liberal colleagues were inadequate to cope with the changing conditions (McCormick, 1999, p. 79). He accused their approach to be “soulless”, reflecting only the dominant thought of

³⁶ For Schmitt the political is something which precedes the moral, aesthetic or economics. As the anti-thesis of liberalism, the Political derives its energy from every religious, moral, economic, ethical, or other anti-thesis (Mouffe 2005, p 123).

depolitical modernist technicism, which reduced humans to mere machines and took away any real meaning in the world and in life.

Schmitt (1996; 2017) wasn't satisfied either with his contemporary resistance to this industrial alienation, which according to him took the form of romanticism. Romanticism's simple negation of modern technical rationality – in the form of aesthetics – neglects the struggle of ideologies. It was therefore incapable to transcend the dualism of soul and soullessness, characteristic of the modern age (McCormick, 1999; Schmitt, 2017). Schmitt resorts to a Hegelian dialectic approach to escape this dilemma. He writes that in contrast to “purely natural-scientific rationalism”, which “could never grasp what is politically at issue, namely, the concrete situation and the concrete moment”, Hegel's

[...] dialectical philosophy of history, if properly employed, provides a powerful means to free the concrete here and now, the *hic et nunc*, from the sphere of irrational intuitions or emotionally guided impressionism, and install man as the master over the irrationality of a fate ordained by God, nature, or providence (Schmitt, 2014, p. 391).

The Political functions as the *aufhebung* between modernity and its dialectical negation, romanticism, between technology and aesthetics, between science and myth.

According to Schmitt, meaning is restored by the political. In Schmitt's view, the Political is defined by the “distinction of friend and enemy”. The political contrast – based upon “decision” or judgement, of “we” in contrast with a “them” – locates meaning in the realm of collective identifications (Furner, 2014; Mouffe, 2005). These shared collective identities are not aimed at escaping reality but to change it.

Schmitt's concept of the political has religious roots. Against the protestant ethic of Capitalism in Weber's work, Schmitt – as a devout catholic – chose the political in Roman Catholic Church – a political institution with religious fervour, giving meaning to man and society, prepared to make alliances and to declare enemies (McCormick, 1999, p. 73). As Schmitt distanced himself from the church, he conceived a Political theology based on nationalism and myth; eventually transforming him from a conservative catholic into a reactionary supporter of nazism. The reactionary content given by Schmitt to the political is undeniable and shows its dangers. The conception of the political as an anti-thesis to the liberal domestication of policies through rational argument and privatization, nevertheless rendered it inspirational for much of our contemporary critical thinking, particularly in times of crisis of a depoliticized neoliberal hegemony.

Like Schmitt, also his Italian Marxist contemporary Antonio Gramsci, finds inspiration for a political philosophy of praxis in the success of the Roman catholic church. The power of religions, particularly the catholic church, consists in energetically feeling the necessity of the doctrinal union of the religious mass, conserving the ideological unity of the whole social and cultural block. The Jesuits are seen as the primary drivers of this equilibrium, which guaranteed them an organic character in terms of philosophy and organizational solidity. The political guaranteed the relation between the intellectuals and the common people in the catholic church (Gramsci, 1978, pp. 17-20 *passim*).

For Gramsci (1978, pp. 21-22), the relation between “superior” philosophy of praxis and “common sense” is guaranteed by the political in the same way as within the catholic church. But the position of the philosophy of praxis – Gramsci’s term for Marxism – is, however, the anti-theses of the catholic one: it has no objective of keeping the “common people” within their primitive philosophy of “common sense”, instead it wanted to bring them into a superior conception of life. It should not be limited to scientific activity, but to form an intellectual moral bloc that enables intellectual advance of the masses.

2.4.2 Crisis, the exception and the political

As we have seen before, Schmitt developed the concept of the political in the middle of the crisis of the nineteen thirties. In the same decade, from Mussolini’s prisons, Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony, to understand Hegemony as a theory in an undecided political terrain (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. XI). The link between crisis, the political and hegemony is not a mere historical coincidence. In this decade, the contradictions of the European capitalist system became undeniable, and the liberal consensus became unsustainable. Schmitt’s concept of the Political emerged at the moment when the laws of the free market exchange and cosmopolitan international law vanished in the polarization between identities of classes, nations and races. The Political served as a critique of the declining liberal hegemony – that was Schmitt’s aim in his critique of liberal technique - but was at the same time the expression of its historical demise – at least temporarily – and its disruption in conflicting ideologies.

Schmitt uses the concept of exception in a very similar way as we have addressed “crisis” so far throughout this thesis, as a moment of disruption of the normal, a need for political, even theological judgement. This state of exception stands in contrast to liberal,

positivist science which intrinsically tries to “banish from the human mind every exception” (McCormick, 1999, p. 223; Schmitt, 1986, p. 41). Schmitt claims that this relation between norm – the normal state, consensus - and exception cannot be understood without dialectics: the exception confirms the existence of the norm and the norm creates the exception (McCormick, 1999, p. 127). According to Schmitt, the state of exception – particularly in his work starting from *Political theology* in 1922 – brings with it the possibility of sovereign powers. Sovereign power concerns law-making authority beyond the law/norm, that can create a new historical political situation that irreversible transforms its nature. Inspired by Schmitt, according to Agamben (2005, p. 40) the state of exception “[...] marks a threshold at which logic and praxis blur with each other and a pure violence without *logos* claims to realize an enunciation without any real reference”.

Crisis thus emerges, when consensus is over, when the choice appears, when the political emerges. This Political transgresses the normal politics – the low policy dimension (Mouffe, 2005). As such the Political applies to scientific paradigms as well. A crisis exists when Hegemony is challenged, thus when the scientific consensus disappears. Rather than a transition from natural toward social sciences, in a crisis, we observe a necessary transition towards a Politization of sciences.

This politicization is not necessarily a fatal barrier to scientific knowledge. On the contrary: Schmitt had defended that in the state of Exception, it is the differentiation between enemy and friend itself that produces meaning (McCormick, 1999, p. 92). If one accepts the premise that “truth” is always partial; “obscuration” – defending the friend-perspective and disconsidering the legitimacy of the enemy one – should be approached as an enabling blind spot for the production of knowledge (Roitman, 2011). The political functions as a filter and structuring principle in the natural chaos of information³⁷. It is within this context that Roitman (2011) claims that “crisis” should be treated as an “enabling paradox”. When in a “critique” – or a Political scientific perspective – crisis is depicted as the logical outcome of historical progress – it de facto obscures the contingent political significance of such critique; but doing so Crisis functions as a lens which makes certain things visible and others not – producing particular forms of knowledge. Crisis thus effectively creates and structures a new Political science.

³⁷ It’s worth referring to Santos’ term “knowledges born in the struggle” (Santos & Meneses, 2019), which emphasizes the importance emancipatory knowledge created through political resistance against capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. It serves as the basis for his Epistemologies of the South, see further.

Can we then neglect the problems with Schmitt's concept of the Political? Above we referred to the reactionary content Schmitt gave to the Political. While the crisis of liberalism was also a precondition for social experiments of the popular fronts, the social welfare state and redistribution policies, one cannot neglect that the way how fascism could bring the crisis towards other-than-progressive political conclusions. As McCormick (1999, p. 112) rightly points out: The concept of "political activity" in Schmitt's work, tends to fall into the trap he so much reproached the political romanticists. That is to say: just as the aesthetics of romanticism, his approach is characterized by the final emptiness of the concept of the Political as such – as "the political is itself devoid of any substantive content". The Political is thus not enough...

The consequence of this "emptiness" is that its conceptual approach can be useful for approaches from all kind of different political perspectives – and can therefore create "monsters". Isn't this described in Gramsci's – Schmitt's contemporary – famous description: "Crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old world is dying and the new cannot yet be born, in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (Gramsci, 1992, p. 33). While the Schmittean interpretation of the political was ultra-reactionary – in the form of a catholic opposition to liberalism – and Schmitt's legal interpretation of crisis, the state of exception, legitimized a fascist regime, it also enabled Schmitt's theory to become particularly relevant for thinking the Political among contemporary progressive theorists.

Many contemporary critical "post-Marxist" theorists used Schmitt to transcend Marx and Gramsci in a post-modern age. The political seemed to be a crucial concept of critique in an age in which a socialist alternative based on the working class was seen as "*passé*", as the category of labour seemed to have become too weak, too accommodated and too conservative to play the role of a universal historical agent; as the driving force of emancipatory change. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (2001) widely acclaimed *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, and Mouffe's further work are a prime example. Schmitt's idea of the political would enable them to transcend the universality of capital, without need of class. Instead they would focus to build alliances between different identities in changing common struggles in a pluralist democratization. The political thus legitimized the dawn of the era of identity politics in political and critical theory and practice.

But as much as Schmitt accused the romanticists of becoming accommodated within liberalism as a mere form of aesthetics, a similar critique could be directed to many

forms of contemporary “critical” identity politics which are based on the concept of the political³⁸. Let us instead do the opposite of what Mouffe, Habermas – whose project was the removal of the “ideological ballast” out of Historical Materialism – and others have done: let us bring Schmitt’s concept of the political back into Marx’s analysis. Given the ideological enmity of the conservative catholic Carl Schmitt towards Bolshevism, an honest “Schmittian reading of Marx” could sound ridiculous, but we believe it could give some of the answers to the theoretical and ideological shortcomings of Schmitt’s theory; and bring some insight for a reconceptualization of “Political” Science.

2.4.3 Marxism as a more than Political Science

Curiously, in a radiobroadcast of 1931, recently republished in english in *Historical Materialism*, Carl Schmitt himself proposed Marxism as the ultimate form of a political science. He considered Marx’s theory and Lenin’s application particularly important in a context in which “the political” was “[...] situated in a seemingly apolitical, economically determined industrial society” (Schmitt, 2014, p. 389). The political – in the form of the radical opposition between Capital and Labour – is the kernel of “Marxist... science” (Furner, 2014, p. 374).

But Marx is more than just Political (Furner, 2014). The most fundamental difference between Marx and Schmitt lies in the points of departure for the analysis of modernity. Schmitt, influenced by Weber, considered technicity the driving force behind modernity. Schmitt focus on “technicity” – the general phenomenon of economic-technical thought or and rationalization – which incorporates both the dynamics of market and bureaucracy (McCormick, 1999, p. 45) allowed him to claim that Marx, and the communists, ultimately shared the same cultural principles, of technical development, as the bourgeois society. Such a culturalist characterization of technicity conceived “the political” as the mythical anti-thesis of “scientific”. In Schmittian terms, a real “Political science” would therefore be impossible, and Political knowledge is condemned to mythical meanings. Not so for Marx.

A return to Marx – with a re-adaption Schmitt’s conception of the political – would in our perspective be a more fruitful approach. Instead of technicity, Marx projected the

³⁸ For a further discussion of Laclau and Mouffe’s work, cf. Chapter 3.2.3.

relations of production – capital, with its processes of accumulation, commodification and resistance against it – as the driving force behind modernity and the processes of alienation³⁹. In fact, Marx took a much more consequent “Schmittian” position than Carl Schmitt; the differentiation between Capital and Labour – the enemy and friend according to the class-perspective – brought “the political” to the root itself of the historical process behind modernity. Marxism thus assumes a true political ontology based on the category of labour. Not only does this make the analysis of modernity more consistent than Schmitt’s; it also permits to differentiate between “science” as a method and form of knowledge – and the effective driving force of alienation; that is Capital.

Without question, also for Marx (1998) in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, every truth is “practical” and “political”. The second thesis reads: “The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. *Man must prove the truth* – i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice” (Held, 2013, p. 190; Marx, 1998, p. 569). As in Carl Schmitt’s “political activity”, Marx’s truth is a political and historical practice. But Marx’s focus on labour, capital and the relations of production also give more material “substance” to the political, than “myth” can ever provide. Praxis brings material resources and historical agents “within” the process of a dialectical analysis.

Even Schmitt (2014, p. 390) acknowledges this in his analysis of Marx and Hegel, when he says that Socialism is “[...] not simply any possible type of criticism of the ills common to all epochs. It is not compassion for the unfortunate and the poor, struggle against injustice, resistance and rebellion”. Schmitt (2014, p. 390) admits the merits of this Marxist “Scientific” dimension, meaning that the Political is planted in “[...] a concrete rational consciousness of one’s historical situation as a whole, and, following from this, the claim to shape the entire situation of humanity in accordance with this consciousness”. The communist doctrine towards crisis completely changes the relation between the normal and the exception, and so, according to Schmitt (2014, p. 390): “The concepts of truth and science in Marxist scientific socialism can only be understood from such a dialectical philosophy of history”.

³⁹ This is the project of Political Marxism and Ellen Wood’s (2016) repoliticization of Historical Materialism in *Democracy against capitalism*.

This doesn't foreclose the element of "political myth". Myth plays an important role in the scientific Political struggle; particularly in the conception of class opposition and class conscience. It is present in the popular transformation from "*Klasse an sich*" to "*Klasse für sich*", and in the universalization of its claims as historical agent – from a particular material interest towards a universal truth. This political process and the struggle for truth that later would characterize Gramsci's conception of Hegemony, is already present in this lengthy but revealing quote from Marx's (1977, p. 140) *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*:

No class of civil society can play this role without arousing a moment of enthusiasm in itself and in the masses, a moment in which it fraternizes and merges with society in general, becomes confused with it and is perceived and acknowledged as its general representative, a moment in which its claims and rights are truly the claims and rights of society itself, a moment in which it is truly the social head and the social heart. Only in the name of the general rights of society can a particular class vindicate for itself general domination. For the storming of this emancipatory position, and hence for the political exploitation of all sections of society in the interests of its own section, revolutionary energy and spiritual self-feeling alone are not sufficient. For the revolution of a nation, and the emancipation of a particular class of civil society to coincide, for one estate to be acknowledged as the estate of the whole society, all the defects of society must conversely be concentrated in another class, a particular estate must be the estate of the general stumbling-block, the incorporation of the general limitation, a particular social sphere must be recognized as the notorious crime of the whole of society, so that liberation from that sphere appears as general self-liberation. For one estate to be par excellence the estate of liberation, another estate must conversely be the obvious estate of oppression.

The subaltern class perspective by definition represents a particular point of view and defines the field of visibility. It thus rejects an "objective-scientific" perspective as a hegemonic bourgeois "normality" that hides its "real interests" (Löwy, 1978b). The alternative perspective is political, subjective and "hypercritical" – as the overcoming step of critique/crisis. In contrast the bourgeois "objectivity", the particular proletarian perspective gains its truth-dimension by the objective possibility of being transparent (Löwy, 1978a, p. 32). For Marx, who theorizes from the proletarian position – that is to say starting from the material interests of the category of Labour – economic crisis functions as a moment when this "real" is made transparent: the truth of the contradictions of the capitalist form of production – deriving from the fundamental opposition between Capital and Labour – emerges through the crisis.

Gramsci (1992, p. 156) wrote that "[...] a theory is revolutionary precisely to the extent that it is an element of total separation into two camps, to the extent that it is a peak inaccessible to the enemies". By "politicizing economics", by choosing sides, through the focus on labour – as a subjective negative human element – at the core of capitalist

reproduction in the form of value-formation and commodification (Löwy, 1978a, pp. 72-73), Marx introduced class-struggle into the very heart of economic critique of capitalist reproduction. By doing so, Marx was able to historicize capitalism. In other words, instead of presenting the capitalist market-mechanisms as positive natural laws to be discovered; his approach revealed it to be a contingent social formation whose present and future depended upon a political conflict. By placing it in relation to other historical modes of production, he opened a possibility for change. The concept of crisis, also in Marx, plays a crucial element here, particularly in the form of revelation of the true political conflict. In Marx's (1968, p. 500) own words: "In the crises of the world market, the contradictions and antagonisms of bourgeois production are strikingly revealed"^{40 41}.

2.4.4 Frankfurter School, Crisis and its rupture

In the post-crisis era – in a context of betrayal of the social-democracy and the frustration of the German revolution and the Stalinization of the soviet revolution, the most well-known exponent of critical theory – the *Frankfurter Schule* – struggled to cope with the relation between crisis and dialectics. Political events and revolutionary practice had not coincided with the expectations derived from the Marxist theory of the day (Held, 2013, pp. 17-23 *passim*). The fact that dialectical materialism was confronted with a complete loss of scientific and critical credibility due to its incorporation in the ideological legitimation of a particular autocratic regime (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 89) led to various adaptations of the critical approach in which Marx and Hegel's logic remains present. Critical theory tries to overcome the subjectivist/objectivist polarization. It overcomes the positivist and the humanist knowledge through a theory of political action (Morrow & Brown, 1994, pp. 53-60 *passim*), meaning that "[...] the critical theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding

⁴⁰ In a quote – wrongly attributed to Marx by David Held (2013, p. 191) –, Lenin (1966) goes further within this logic and proclaims: "Revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that there is absolutely no way out of the crisis. This is a mistake. There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation... To try to 'prove' in advance that there is 'absolutely' no way out of the situation would be sheer pedantry or playing with concepts and catchwords. Practice alone can serve as real 'proof in this and similar questions'".

⁴¹ The "revelation" – character – derived from Marx's immanent critique is, through the intellectual influence of Marx on economics and social science, reflected in many contemporary mainstream uses of the concept of crisis. In contemporary economic discourse, crises – for example, when a financial bubble bursts – divulge the alleged false value based on speculation and reveal true value, the fundamentals of economy (Roitman, 2011). "Crises surface when the balance between supply and demand, between production and consumption, between the circulation of money and the circulation of goods are disturbed to such an extent that recessions and deterioration become visible everywhere" (Koselleck, 2002, pp. 242-243).

of a single existential judgement” (Horkheimer, 1976, p. 227; Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 97) in which the unifying elements are that a part of the critique is introduced at the metatheoretical level, as well as a practical commitment to social criticism and advocacy (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 110).

Some of them were inspired by George Lukács’s (1971) critique in *History and class consciousness* of the “determinist” and “positivist” interpretation of historical materialism by “orthodox Marxism” which neglected the central importance of human subjectivity. According to Lukács (1971), who like Schmitt had been a student of Max Weber, there is no objective reality which social theorists can passively reflect upon. Instead, the theorist is a participant in a continuous class conflict. Historical materialism has thus for Lukács – in contrast to both “orthodox marxists” – which considered historical materialism a predefined historical theology, and Habermas, who later tried to depoliticise historical materialism – no meaning outside the struggle of the proletariat. The Marxist claim to objectivity and truth, can never be separated from the practices of a particular social class. But, Lukács argued that “the standpoint of the proletariat” and consequently Marxism, transcends the “one-sidedness” and distortions of other social theories and class ideologies, because of its role as universal social class (Held, 2013, p. 21).

The early Horkheimer – in contrast to other members of the Frankfurter school and his own older pessimist perspective – still defended a theological-political class perspective close to that of Lukács’ “standpoint of the proletariat”. He defended that the practical role of the theorist was to articulate and help develop class consciousness (Held, 2013, p. 23).

To all those who are primarily concerned with the unhampered development of human potential and of justice, these classes must appear as the decisive structural principle of our time, for the realization of such goals depends on their elimination. There are other differences, other structural principles which, given the same interest in the free development of men and justice, may appear as fundamental as social classes... Nevertheless, the distinction according to social classes is superior to the other points of view, for it can be shown that while the elimination of classes would entail a change in the other antitheses, the reverse is not true...The elimination of classes is therefore the decisive principle... (Horkheimer, 1978).

From the nineteen thirties onwards, however, the Frankfurter Institute for Social Research’s, and the most influential currents in critical thought have shifted away from Marx’s political perspective and retroceded to Hegelian idealism to overcome the differences in social theories through an interdisciplinary approach inspired by the holism and

dialectics⁴². After the Second World War, the destructive political experiences of fascism and the loss of faith in the degenerated Stalinist Soviet Union led to a definitive departure from traditional Marxist doctrines. Held (2013) exemplifies this with Horkheimer focussing on “remembering”, “recollecting” or capturing a past in danger of being forgotten, and Marcuse’s defence of personal gratification and individual self-emancipation (against those who would simply argue that liberation follows from changes in the relations and forces of production).

The most significant example is Horkheimer and Adorno’s (2002) *Dialectic of enlightenment*. In this work, they developed a purely negative perspective on knowledge in general. The first chapter of the *Dialectic* uses Hegel’s claim that there is an internal relationship between Enlightenment and an ethic of utility and terror (Held, 2013, p. 151). According to their new perspective; knowledge and rationality were only possible through alienation and control. Therefore rationality and enlightenment always led towards totalitarianism; Fascism and Stalinism were thus seen as the ultimate result of enlightenment. Hegel’s dialectic perspective would thus be transformed in a purely negative dialectic, with no space for an *aufhebung* to resolve or escape the historical contradictions as Marx had proposed. Given the importance of *aufhebung* for the notion of Crisis and for critical social theory in general; this meant an intellectual closure of the possibility for emancipation. The work of Horkheimer and Adorno thus signifies a fundamental pessimistic rupture with the Marxist and critical tradition so far. By focusing on the critique on all forms of domination and by at the same time refusing to specify “what is to be done”, they “[...] antagonize all those who seem to require a hard and fast doctrine to guide their action” (Held, 2013, p. 353).

The restructuring of the political economy in post-war Europe, and state-intervention detaching crisis-tendencies from class tensions, strengthened the rather cynical perspective of the “Frankfurter School”, and opened the way to the “cultural” – and thus depolitical – drive in critical studies. Another way was taken by Habermas, who was not as pessimistic as Horkheimer or Adorno were in the latter part of their lives, and accused them of undervaluing democratic traditions (Held, 2013, p. 252; Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 144). In his book *Legitimation crisis (Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus)* – Habermas

⁴² Horkheimer (1993, p. 11) saw this as “[...] a reformulation on the basis of the new problem constellation... of the old question concerning the connection of particular existence and universal Reason, of reality and Idea, of life and Spirit”.

(1975a) explores how the apparent overcoming of capitalism's underlying class contradiction through state intervention and the rising importance of technology turned "advanced" capitalism vulnerable to other kinds of crisis tendencies (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 186).

Habermas was inspired by James O'Connor's 1973 *The fiscal crisis of the state*. O'Connor (2002, p. 8) argued that to ensure mass loyalty and retain legitimacy – as a consequence of the contradictions of capitalist production –, the state must pay the cost of those who suffer the "cost" of economic growth. Over time, the development of capitalism led to a decline of the family, communities and other non-capitalist spheres of production which had a vital role in the reproduction of life and value. This led to a huge increase in the aggregate of social needs and a tendency of an ever-larger majority of the people becoming dependent on the state. This results in a budgetary or fiscal crisis; the crisis of the state being the expression of the crisis-tendencies of capitalism itself (O'Connor, 2002, p. 40).

Also for Habermas, crisis tendencies manifest themselves at the point of their political eruption – that is, the point at which the existing political system is delegitimized. Habermas distinguishes four possible crisis tendencies: Economic Crisis, Rationality Crisis, Legitimation Crisis and Motivation Crisis (Habermas, 1975a, p. 145; Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 187). Economic crises obey the logic expressed in the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, in which the state either mediates or acts as collective capitalist [*Gesamtkapitalist*] who makes the accumulation of capital the substance of political planning. These crises will assert themselves as a social crisis and lead to political struggles in which class opposition between owners of capital and masses dependent on wages again become manifest. The crisis logic is itself altered by the displacement of the contradictory steering imperatives from market commerce into the administrative system. Political crisis exist in the form of so-called rationality crisis – in which the administrative system does not succeed in reconciling and fulfilling the imperatives received from the economic system, leading to a disorganization of the state apparatus and the way it manages the spheres of life – or in the form of a legitimation crisis – in which the legitimizing system does not succeed in maintaining the requisite level of mass loyalty. The latter places into question the structure of the depoliticized public realm and, thereby, the formally democratic securing of the private autonomous disposition of the means of production (Habermas, 1975a, pp. 45-47 *passim*, 60). Socio-Cultural Crisis Tendencies manifest themselves in socio-cultural system which is responsible for the social integration of a society and translated into withdrawal

from the existing order and lack of motivational commitment (Habermas, 1975a, p. 48; Held, 2013, p. 258).

Legitimation crises result from a need for legitimation that arises from changes in the political system (even when normative structures remain unchanged) and that cannot be met by the existing supply of legitimation. Motivational crises, on the other hand, are a result of changes in the socio-cultural system itself, becoming apparent at the level of cultural tradition (moral systems, world-views) as well as at the level of structural change in the system of childrearing (school and family, mass media). In this way, the residue of tradition off which the state and the system of social labour lived in liberal capitalism is eaten away (stripping away traditionalistic padding), and core components of the bourgeois ideology become questionable (endangering civil and familial-professional privatism). On the other hand, the remains of bourgeois ideologies (belief in science, post-auratic art, and universalistic value systems) form a normative framework that is dysfunctional. Advanced capitalism creates “new” needs it cannot satisfy (Habermas, 1975a, pp. 48-49).

The ever-stronger focus on legitimacy, legitimacy claims and communication will put Habermas on a road to a critical research program focussed on a rationalistic and communication-based approach to politics. He aimed for a theory of knowledge that should be able to escape the charges of being either the ideology of the working class or the dogmatic claims of elitist speculative philosophers – referring to analytical philosophy. According to Habermas, one of Marx main deficiencies was that he conflated both interaction and labour into the category of social praxis, thus reducing communicative action to instrumental action. Habermas will give primacy to the former – which he considered to be the basis of the communicative and symbolic activities through which life was constituted (Morrow & Brown, 1994, pp. 144, 155). Habermas is going to rescue the communicative aspect in what would be his linguistic turn. Accordingly a focus on consciousness and knowledge based on material conditions would be misplaced; language itself is the basis – or the medium through which we represent reality (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 154).

Habermas never developed an explicit ontological position. Although his fundamental distinction between work and social interaction assume one (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 155). It will serve as the basis for his “reconstruction of Historical Materialism” which preserves the structure of the Hegelian Marxist critique of reason but rejects the primacy of labour. It considers epochal changes based on changes in normative structures rather than on the relations of production (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 171). This new “credible” historical evolutionism is guided by a practical interest in emancipation on which rational grounds for knowledge can be formulated. Owing to its reflective status, he considers this theory of social evolution also informative for purposes of political action (Habermas, 1975b; Held, 2013, p. 270). Such approach – going beyond objectivism and

relativism – avoids the extremes of anti-foundational postmodernism (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 165) as its critical realism presupposes a reality outside discourse, even if it can only be known through it. According to Habermas, we cannot know Being itself, because our knowledge is always mediated by interpretation. Habermas’ critical theory recognizes that science is ultimately based upon a social consensus mediated through language (Morrow & Brown, 1994, pp. 155-165 *passim*). Habermas (1991) grounds the possibility of rational argumentation in the creation of the public sphere dominated by rational deliberation. This created the democratic potential to finish the enlightenment project of human emancipation, and will serve for Habermas’ approach to deliberative democracy, as we will see in the next Chapter 3.2.2. While Habermas’ analysis of the legitimation problems of late-capitalism serves as an inspiration for our analysis of the democratic crisis, his assumption of rational grounds separated from the category of labour as an ontological foundation distances Habermas’ model of democracy from Marxism and a “Political” scientific approach to democracy, as proposed throughout this chapter.

2.5 Crisis, Critique and Political Science now

Throughout this chapter, we have seen that the concept of crisis is full of contradictions. These originate in the old meaning of the Greek concept of crisis, or *kritein* – which involves both an objective and subjective dimension, a moment of choice. Instead of seeing the contradiction as an ambiguity, a confusing element and thus a limit to its scientific usefulness – as do many scientists, this chapter explored the clarifying potentiality in the contradiction itself.

To do so, we first explored how crisis is intimately linked with critique and contradiction on the basis of a historical analysis of these concepts and a brief exploration of their use in the history of European thought; particularly in dialectical thinkers from Sócrates to Marx. We have argued that understanding and using the contradictory concept of crisis enables us to approach two fields of knowledge that are often seen as standing in an epistemological opposition towards science: namely the field of history and the field of politics. We saw how crisis offered a way out of the *methodenstreit* between the arguments of particularities of knowledge by the historicists and the search for universal laws by the positivists. Crisis marks the temporal coincidence of the political need of universal truths, as

well as the knowledge of their own historical particularity, and with it the possibility of political change.

The potentiality of crisis to reintroduce the political and the historical in scientific knowledge is even more important in our contemporary context of – declining – neoliberal hegemony which portrays our reality as being post-historical and post-political; post-historical, as in Fukuyama's (1989) claim of the end of history, post-political in the form of technocratic policies, accepted by almost all sections of the political spectrum. Crisis crush hegemony in the sense that it reveals that the post-political consensus is no longer possible, and political conflict appears. More than in any other context, crisis opens the way for a historical and political form of science. In a crisis-context, we see the true antagonistic political emerge – in contrast with the agonistic version that Chantal Mouffe and others developed for a period of liberal-democratic consensus. (cf 3.2.3) While these contradictions can be canalized in different forms of identities (of class, race, nationality, ideology); they become at least temporarily irreconcilable during crises.

Crises are not emancipatory as such though. Despite the important theoretical contributions for the critique of liberalism and the conceptualization of the Political; Schmitt's own political stance also showed that crisis, the state of exception and the political can be profoundly reactionary. The political opening of hegemony is not necessarily filled with an emancipatory content – it is not only the possibility for a “new world to be born”, it is also “a time of Monsters” (Gramsci, 1992, pp. 32-33). Crises can legitimize profoundly exclusive and fascist reactions, such as in the European refugee crisis or the rise of nationalism and populism in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. In our contemporary context, crisis has also been used to legitimize further neoliberal policies – rather than a dying of the old society in a Gramscian sense, the time of monsters is a temporal strengthening of the old. Naomi Klein's (2008) *The shock doctrine* was a first example of how neoliberal globalization used exceptionalism and crisis-situations to further the interests of global financial capital. António Casimiro Ferreira (2011) and José Manuel Pureza (2015b) also made this case in their analysis of Portuguese austerity. In his book *Linhas vermelhas*, Pureza (2015b) for example defends the hypothesis that austerity and the Euro crisis represent a new configuration between crisis and exception which he denominates as “crisis-as-politics”: instead of crisis being just a “moment of disruption of the normal”, crisis became a political strategy by the elites to destroy an existent normativity: under the disguise of a momentous exception, exceptionalism is normalized and becomes permanent.

Crisis thus requires the question of choosing sides in science. Reiterating the introduction: instead of removing the “ideological ballast” of historical materialism; when analyzing concrete crises, such as the “crisis of democracy” or “legitimation crisis” of the state, one should defend that the “ideological ballast”, and with it a political practice, is the most valuable critical and crucial element in the whole approach, without which the whole theoretical approach makes no “sense”.

CHAPTER 3 — DEMOCRATIC THEORY: HISTORY AND CRISIS

The emergence of the Global Financial crisis, the Euro crisis and the emergence of the Occupy movements and the Arab Spring have heated up both public and academic debates around issues of democracy. For nearly two decades, democracy had not been questioned. But this has been an extraordinary situation; at least for two centuries, democracy has been a highly debated concept. Democracy was even among the iconic examples of what Gallie (1955/1956, p. 172) famously proposed as “essentially debated concepts” meaning that “[...] different persons or parties adhere to different views of the correct use of some concept..., to use an essentially contested concept means to use it against other uses and to recognize that one's own use of it has to be maintained against these other uses”.

During the crisis, the definition of democracy has become ever more problematic. Could one speak of “democracy” when policies are controlled by foreign institutions and dictated by financial markets? Do we define democracy based solely on the electoral system? What about those claiming “*Democracia real já!*”⁴³ against elected governments? If two thirds of voters don't even vote; can we call it democracy? Who is the “silent majority”, that does not participate in the democratic game? Should democratic policies be guided by those who have been elected 3 years ago or by the “mob” taking the streets today? And what with “democratic” governments that implement policies that break their electoral promises? Or with a prime minister that bases his legitimacy on ex-ante electoral results, but denies the legitimacy of ex-post electoral accountability, as was the case in Portugal?

The complexity of these questions obliges us to abandon the idea of “democracy” as an ideal, metaphysical concept. Instead a more productive approach would be to focus on the interactions between historical political events and the conceptualizations of democracy itself. Throughout this chapter, democracy will be approached as a contested concept; contested not just theoretically within the academic literature of democratic theory, but rather as a product of historical, material, social and political struggles, and an ideological construct through which we make sense of and try to change the world.

⁴³ “Real democracy now!” was one of the iconic slogans of the indignado-movement against austerity and the “political cast” in the Spanish state and inspired the Portuguese movements (Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017).

This chapter starts with a historical analysis of democratic theory and its merits to analyse and present alternatives to the post-2008 crisis of liberal democracy. It develops the state of art of democratic theory starting from the classic liberal theories until today, with a focus upon the present dominant models; the empirical and neoclassic models of mainstream political science, the discursive and agonistic theories of democracy in the current critical approaches. This chapter will argue, that in order to present an alternative view towards the current standstill, critical approaches – which we will argue have not been immune to neoliberal hegemony – will have to break with the Fukuyaman post-political and post-history framework which dominates contemporary social theory. Corresponding to the analysis of crisis we pursued in the previous chapter, the answer lies in the historicization of democratic theory itself; placing it as a changing super-structural governance-legitimizing ideology in the evolution of modern capitalism.

Throughout this chapter, we will discuss the interconnected historical developments of democratic theory and democratic practices relevant for the discussion of democracy within this research. A concise state of art of the different schools of democratic theory will be followed by a historical materialist approach of the interaction between capitalism and democracy and ideology within the core countries of the modern capitalist system.

3.1 Schools and Waves of Democracy

Libraries are filled with a wide range of literature on democracy, setting out countless contradicting theories and approaches about the concept. Leonardo Avritzer's (2002) sums up a few of them: Democratic Elitism (Schumpeter, 1976), Liberal Utilitarianism (Downs, 1957), Republicanism (Arendt, 1972; Rousseau, 2001), Pluralism (Dahl, 1971), Critical Social Theory (Habermas, 1998), among others. In his classic *Models of democracy*, David Held (2006) elaborates *grosso modo* upon eight different models about democracy: Republican conception of self-government community, Liberal democracy, Marxist conception of democracy, Elitist democracy, Pluralism, Legal democracy, Participatory democracy and Deliberative democracy.

Traditionally, overviews and categorizations of these theories are presented in a chronological order, as if they would be part of a theoretical evolution; with democratic theory evolving following the contradictions between the existing democratic theories, rational arguments and the empirical democratic realities throughout the centuries. In other

cases, the history of democracy is approached based on the evolution of civic participation and electoral models. While not adhering to such a pure evolutionary model of the history of democracy, we'll use a historical perspective to provide a reference to incorporate the different models in this chapter. The following summary, will be based upon the historical categorization by Samuel Huntington's (1991) "democratization waves". His book starts with a reference to the Portuguese revolution and thus has a symbolic connection with Portuguese democratization. According to Huntington's (1991) *The third wave*, the history of democracy in the twentieth century follows a pattern of ups, in which countries tend to democratize, and downs, in which countries tend to fall into dynamics of de-democratization and return to dictatorships. Huntington (1991) distinguishes three of those waves, intercalated with two reverse waves. These three waves coincide with three big debates in democratic theory distinguished by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2005).

3.1.1 From the classic approaches to world war

The first wave of democratization coincides with what historians, like Eric Hobsbawm (1994), have called the long nineteenth century. Rooted in the American and French revolutions, and ending with the rise of fascism in the 1930's, the first wave is primarily a European and North-American phenomenon (Huntington, 1991). Its initial, classic, democratic ideas were still intimately linked with the values of enlightenment, such as Rousseau (2001) and Montesquieu (1989). Early modern democratic theory primarily opposed authoritarian rule – based upon theology and descent – which had dominated Europe for centuries. According to David Held (2006, pp. 29-36 *passim*), the republican ideas of the renaissance found their origin in the Italian city states of the late eleventh century, who were inspired by the rediscovery of old Greek literature. Among those republicans, Held (2006) distinguishes two traditions: the developmental theorists – inspired by the heritage of the Greek polis – who stress the intrinsic, pedagogic value of political participation for the development of citizens as human beings and protective theorists – inspired by the republic of Rome and the balances between institutions – who stress the instrumental importance of participation for the protection of citizens' aims and objectives, and their personal liberty. The developmental republicans saw political participation as an integral part of the good life and served as inspiration for Rousseau, while the protective republican ideas would inspire Machiavelli and Montesquieu's separation of powers (Held,

2006).

In his classic “The social contract” – published in 1762 –, Rousseau (2001) argues that the state develops when human beings exchange their “state of nature” – a time where humans were fundamentally equal and free –, for civil governments as an answer to “[...] individual weaknesses and egoistic desires, common miseries and natural disasters” (Held, 2006, p. 45). Such government should develop through a “social contract”: a universally recognized, not always formally stated, agreement in which “[...] the realization of their capacity for reason and their fullest experience of liberty could be achieved only by the establishment of a system of cooperation upheld by a law making and enforcing body” (Held, 2006, p. 45). Rousseau thus saw free citizenship as the direct involvement in creation of the laws which regulate their lives, and thus excluded representation. For Rousseau, citizenship is a collective practice based upon a collective rationality: decision-making should follow the “General will” – a public common good –, and not “The will of all” – the private aggregation of individual wills (Held, 2006; Rousseau, 2001).

Rationality and the separation between public and private would play a vital role in distinguishing the common good from any particular interests of the citizens in further republican and liberal democratic theory. Held (2006, p. 59) defines liberalism broadly as “[...] the attempt to uphold the values of freedom of choice, reason and toleration in the face of tyranny, the absolutist system and religious intolerance”. Liberalism is the ideology of the new Bourgeoisie and presupposes that citizens should be free to pursue their own preferences in religious, economic and political affairs and therefore advocates for a constitutional state, private property and the competitive market economy. Liberal democratic theory faces the dilemma of finding a “[...] balance between might and right, power and law, duties and rights” (Held, 2006, p. 59). The state must have a monopoly of coercive power to secure “free trade”, business and family life. Simultaneously it must be contained so that its agents do not interfere with the political and social freedoms of individual citizens. For some early modern theorists, like Hobbes, this means that individuals need to surrender their rights of self-government to a powerful single authority – the *Leviathan*. This is opposed by John Locke: law-making and enforcement are transferred to government, only to secure the conditions for freedom so that the private ends of individuals may be met in civil society. For the classic liberals, property exists prior to society and government; civil society and government. Citizenship, which bestows upon the individual both responsibilities and rights, thus only exist to preserve “life, liberty and estate”. As a theory of the proprietors, liberal

theory of the epoch was elitist: legitimate government did not take into account political liberties of working class, women and coloured people, nor was it based upon regular elections nor universal suffrage (Held, 2006, p. 64). Like in the theories of Mill and Bentham, these new liberal democratic theories came up in order to meet the requirements of upcoming market logics (Held, 2006; Macpherson, 1977).

The rationalistic conception of democracy became increasingly unsustainable during the traumatic political-economic developments from the first world war onwards – at the advent of what Huntington would categorize as the first “reverse wave”. Despite this “reversion” of democratic regimes returning to a state of dictatorship, the period signified a new fruitful time for democratic theory. Santos and Avritzer (2005) point towards challenges of the interwar period and the conflicts during the crisis of the thirties as a major influence for the current mainstream theories about democracy. It is the time of the first big debate of the twentieth century democratic theory: Is democracy desirable? The debate involves the discussions on bureaucracy and authority in the works of Weber⁴⁴, but also the debates between Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt and the elitists such as Schumpeter and Michels (Santos, 2005). Weber saw democracy as a necessary counterbalance against the bureaucratization of society (Maley, 2011; Santos, 2005, pp. X-XI). Michels (1968) theorized about the “iron law of oligarchy” which concludes that in any democratic organization the rule by an elite is inevitable.

Another development is the analysis of the early scholars of the Frankfurt School – which we discussed in Chapter 2.4.4: in the so-called new mass-society, with politics dominated by mass-parties and mass media, the forms of individual rationality became untenable. Given the vitality of rationality, which served as the basis to find a common good and common will, for early liberal-democratic theory, the latter entered in a severe crisis (Avritzer, 2002). Elites would control the populations and make them “irrational” (Avritzer, 2002, p. 14). For many intellectuals, the massive mobilizations – in which group identifications and collective authority played a major role – posed a threat to the functioning of democratic institutions and the democratic consensus. According to Avritzer (2002, p. 13), Carl Schmitt was one of the first to warn about the consequences of the introduction of mass-parties and extended democracy which would obstruct rational political discussion. These new political parties would only defend their particular interests instead of rational

⁴⁴ A similar debate is also found in the work of John Stuart Mill (Held, 2006, p. 85).

policies for the common good:

The development of modern mass democracy has made argumentative public discussion an empty formality. Many norms of the contemporary parliamentary law, above all provisions concerning the independence of representatives and openness of sessions, function as a result like a superfluous decoration [...]. The parties [...] do not face each other today discussing opinions, but as social or economic power groups calculating their mutual interests and opportunities for power (Schmitt, 1988, p. 6).

During the crisis of liberal democracy in the nineteen thirties, different enlightenment values seemed to become incompatible among each other: projects for social equality seemed to endanger the liberal ideas of individual political freedoms. Among democratic theorists this all created a mistrust in the “demos” itself (Santos, 2005). It is one of the reasons that Hannah Arendt (2016) is going to advocate the strict separation of the social question from the political question in her republican theories. She is worried about the growth of totalitarian mass movements of Nazism and Stalinism (Arendt, 1973). According to Arendt, social necessities create irrationally and a potential for violence and should thus be kept outside of the political sphere. She argues that such totalitarian tendencies derived from the social question are present at least since the French revolution. The dominance of the social question over the political question of citizens rights and liberties, is what since Robespierre has brought revolutionary processes to terror and doom (Arendt, 2016, pp. 54-57 *passim*).

In retrospective, democratic elitism, based upon Joseph Schumpeter’s (1976) *Capitalism, socialism, and democracy*, emerged as the most influential theoretical answer to these popular challenges. Schumpeter claimed that the classical substantive approach of democracy is unworkable because of the inability to get to know the general will. For a workable democracy to function, democracy must be narrowed down to a method for selection of ruling elites. According to this theory, democracy should be approached as a formal method by which the citizens should be able to choose representatives among free competing political parties. Elitist democracy – also referred to as minimalist or procedural democracy, because it restricts democracy to free elections – became the most influential form in the post-second world war period⁴⁵.

Following the experiments of fascism, Nazism, Stalinism, civil wars, the Holocaust and WWII, liberal representative democracy seemed to emerge as “the least-worst system” at the advent of the Cold War. Winston Churchill famously called it “[...] the worst form of

⁴⁵ A further development of the minimalist conception of democracy can be found in Chapter 4.2.4.

Government except all those others that have been tried” (Raymond, 1992, p. 124). The traumas of the Second World War and the Holocaust, as well as the new power balance between East and West, gave rise to a diversity of other liberal democratic theories about democracy in Western political mainstream. Some of them, like Downs (1957) are extensions of Schumpeter’s theory of an electoral market towards a full-fledged utilitarian economic theory of democracy, with the introduction of the valuation of political apathy (Avritzer, 2002; Mouffe, 2000, p. 82). Others, such as Hannah Arendt’s liberal constitutional approach towards freedom and human rights, gave particular importance to constitutions, international law and universal citizen’s rights that should protect democracy from majorities – from the classical common will. A combination of the elitist approach and the influence liberal democracy laid the base for the pluralist nature of the elites in Robert Dahl’s (1971) work (Santos & Avritzer, 2005).

3.1.2 Lessons from the “South”

The period of the Cold War meant a period of relative stability between Western liberal democratic model and the popular democracy model of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, social struggles were contained under the liberal-democratic consensus and the welfare state of the post-war years in Western Europe and the USA. In between, this equilibrium created space for the development of alternative models of democracy, parallel to the hegemonic model. Among those are the models of participative democracy and developmental democracy (Santos & Avritzer, 2005, pp. X, XXXV). Most of the challenges and innovations to democratic theory found their origins in the peripheries of the capitalist world. The colonial wars and the processes of decolonization in what would commonly be called the Third World or the “Global South”⁴⁶, as well as the civil rights movement in the United States, gave rise to different articulations of racial and anti-colonial theories with democracy. We can find some of these in the works of Aimé Césaire, Malcolm X and Franz Fanon (2005). The dependency school and those who in Wallerstein’s (2002) tradition studied (semi-)peripheral countries of the World-system brought important contributions, even if many didn’t make it to mainstream political theory.

⁴⁶ In his own approach to the concept of non-imperial “Global South”, Santos (2007, p. 22) tries to unify both kind of peripheral struggles, as he conceives “Global South” not just as a pure geographic construct, but rather as a metaphor of unjust and systemic human suffering provoked by global capitalism and colonialism.

Malcolm X criticized American democracy – which he rejected as the ideology of the ruling race and class – from the perspective of the poor black masses by pointing out the inconsistency between the universal principles proclaimed by the ruling race/class and its actual practice (Rabaka, 2002). In his famous speech “The ballot or the bullet”, Malcolm X (1966, p. 31) states: “This so-called democracy has failed the Negro. And all these white liberals have definitely failed the Negro”. Behind “one of the rottenest countries on earth” – which disguises itself as a democracy – “[...] is a system of exploitation, of outright humiliation, degradation, discrimination” (Malcolm X, 1992, p. 47). It “[...] represents itself as the example of freedom, the example of democracy, and can go all over this earth telling other people how to straighten out their house, when you have citizens of this country who have to use bullets if they want to cast a ballot” (Malcolm X, 1966, p. 50). For the black population, democracy is nothing more than a police state (Malcolm X, 1966, p. 66).

Frantz Fanon (2005) approaches existing democracy starting from a Marxist perspective; democracy as a bourgeois class-project but problematizes the specific differences between the metropolitan and the colonial context. When bourgeoisies are strong, they maintain the pretence of “universal democratic ideas”; even if they are fundamentally racist, it is a racism of contempt which “[...] manages to remain consistent with itself by urging the subhuman to rise to the level of Western humanity that it embodies” (Fanon, 2005, pp. 109-110). The new bourgeoisies in the developing countries, economically powerless, unable to establish coherent social relations based on the principle of class domination, just mimic the European democratic phrases but prove incapable of minimum forms of humanism. Politically, these colonial bourgeoisies choose the easiest solution, the single-party system with flawed parliamentary rules (Fanon, 2005, p. 110). Like Fanon, Huntington (1991), came to the conclusion that democracy is a very difficult project in the neo-colonial world. Huntington defended the temporary sacrifice of democracy for the need of stability in developing states. Fanon (2005) argues that this stability is impossible because the neo-bourgeoisie cannot generate stability nor development, as they are no more than the indirect government of the metropole (Adam, 1993, pp. 502-504 *passim*).

Over a long period of time the colonized have devoted their energy to eliminating iniquities such as forced labour, corporal punishment, unequal wages, and the restriction of political rights. This fight for democracy against man’s oppression gradually emerges from a universalist, neoliberal confusion to arrive, sometimes laboriously, at a demand for nationhood. But the unpreparedness of the elite, the lack of practical ties between them and the masses, their apathy and, yes, their cowardice at the crucial moment in the struggle, are the cause of tragic trials and tribulations (Fanon, 2005, p. 97).

For a real anti-colonial democratization, Fanon theorizes about democracy from a participatory perspective in which democracy transcends the right to vote in a political system but should include a rights and responsibilities for citizens. If a decolonization⁴⁷ is to be judged authentic, the new government is to be open, accountable, and participatory (Adam, 1993, p. 506). It is well-known that according to Fanon (2005, p. 3), such anti-colonial project “[...] can only triumph if we use all means to turn the scale, including, of course, that of violence”⁴⁸. It is therefore no surprise that according to Fanon armed citizens are the best guarantors of democratic rights. He envisions militia training and participation as an informal school for civic and patriotic consciousness, literacy education, as well as technical and organizational know-how (Adam, 1993, p. 507).

During the so-called “second reverse wave of democratization” which saw different military right-wing coups bringing down elected progressive governments in Southern America, the elitist approach became first heavily challenged. Democratic elitism was criticized for being unable to distinguish between democratic and authoritarian elites and its inability to understand the role in mass mobilization in the working of democracy. It was accused of not being able to understand the difference between anti-institutionalisms which destroy the political process and “[...] forms of collective action of voluntary associations, social movements and other forms of participation” which form a key element of democracy. It thus missed the crucial role of collective action for the maintenance of democracy (Avritzer, 2002, p. 24).

This leads to the second big debate in twentieth century democratic theory; one about the structural conditions of democracy and its relation to capitalism. The debate involved theorists such as Moore, O’Donnell, Przeworski and Wood. The so-called school of “Democratic transition” (O’Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead, 1986; Schmitter & O’Donnell, 1986)⁴⁹, tried to adapt elitist democratic theory to the reality of the Global South. Essentially they acknowledged the role of authoritarian elites in Latin America (Avritzer,

⁴⁷ Fanon’s anti-colonial theory will inspire Santos to develop his concepts of the abyssal line; which separates the metropole where conflicts are solved by regulation, from the colony where social conflict is resolved through violence. In this context, modern Western theory is a form of abyssal thinking in which the colony is an unthinkable ground for democracy (Santos, 2007). As an alternative he proposes the concept of Epistemologies of the South: “[...] a crucial epistemological transformation is required in order to reinvent social emancipation on a global scale. These evoke plural forms of emancipation not simply based on a Western understanding of the world” (Santos, 2016a, p. 18).

⁴⁸ In the French edition: “[...] *ne peut triompher que si on jette dans la balance tous les moyens, y compris, bien sûr, la violence*” (Fanon, 2011, pp. 452-453).

⁴⁹ Also Giner (1986) and Maxwell (1986; 1997) for the case of Southern Europe and Portugal.

2002, p. 27). Schmitter and O'Donnell (1986, p. 16) for example distinguish three positions of the peripheral elites *vis-à-vis* democracy: anti-democratic “Hardliners”, moderate “Blandos” and a “real democratic opposition”. Only the latter believed the electoral system to be the best form of democratic legitimation (Avritzer, 2002, p. 28). Transition theorists argue that a reconfiguration of anti-democratic attitudes of elites during economic conflicts and crises – in which elites saw their political-economic interests challenged by the popular classes – undermine the possibility of democratic systems in the periphery.

Democratic theory should therefore focus on practical implications and to be modelled towards gradual “democratic transitions”; defined as periods “[...] in which an institutional arrangement aiming at the establishment of political competitiveness between democratic and authoritarian political actors is reached” (Avritzer, 2002). These periods are needed to build mutual trust between classes in such a way that anti-democratic elements disappear (Avritzer, 2002; Schmitter & O'Donnell, 1986). Democratization can therefore not be defined on the basis of in a set of empirically identifiable variables – such as in Lipset's (1959) work on the prerequisites of democracy – but only as a long process of persuasion and forcing non-democratic elites into democratic attitudes within democratic institutions (Avritzer, 2002, p. 27; Rustow, 1970, pp. 344-345). Transition theory nevertheless remains very institutionalist and elitist: popular masses are given only a secondary role – not even a democratizing role per se, but rather one of negotiation between democratic and authoritarian elites (Avritzer, 2002). It is therefore not surprising that someone as Przeworski (1985) – who has been involved in the transition school – ultimately remains an apologist of a minimalist conception of democracy (Przeworski, 1999).

3.1.3 The end of history

The empirical positivist school of political science – with a prominence of the Comparative Political Science approaches – is probably the most influential contemporary scientific approach towards the study of democracy. The “empirical political theory” is an adaptation of the elitist, aggregate democratic model (Mouffe, 2000, pp. 81-82). It integrates the “empirical” critique made by the transition school – which criticized the elitist model because of inconsistencies in peripheral economies and its inability to explain the return to authoritarian rule. These empirical schools had their predecessor in Seymour Lipset's (1959) study about the social requisites for democracy. Based upon a comparison between

countries, this study claimed that democracy – particularly in less developed economies – had serious difficulties to survive because of conflicts generated by uneven distribution of wealth (Avritzer, 2002, p. 25).

Authors such as Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi (2000) have used similar research designs to demonstrate how economic development affects democratic legitimacy, comparing growth and levels of democracy in a number of countries and/or over historical epochs. In a similar way, Lijphart (1984; 2012; 1994) studied the influence of various electoral designs on the working of democracy, and their tendency towards majoritarianism or consensus-based democracy⁵⁰. The most influential example of such approach of the interaction between economic development and democracy is Huntington's (1991) *The third wave*, which we have used as a chronological reference throughout this chapter. In this work, Huntington makes a historical comparison of the number of nations which are considered democratic. Being democratic is defined in dichotomous terms of stability and open, free and fair elections on the level of the nation. From these data he conceives the three waves democratization and two reverse waves we have discusses above. He also derives two conclusions: economic growth raises the *per capita* Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creates the economic possibility to “afford” democratic governance. The bigger the wealth, the easier it is to find compromises about distribution without harming the economy. A second conclusion is that rapid economic growth changes power relations, and gives rise to political tensions that disrupt the prevailing normative order. Particularly for authoritarian regimes, this latter condition could be problematic; which means that economic growth tends to lead to democratization (Fraser, 2001; Huntington, 1991).

Huntington's (1991) third wave started with the Portuguese revolution in 1974, which brought down the fascist *Estado Novo* regime. As the authoritarian state was replaced by a provisional government composed by socialists and communists and everywhere organisms of soviet-like democratic participation emerged, nobody would have thought that the third wave of democratization would be marked by the hegemonization of liberal democratic model and its articulation with neoliberalism. Neoliberalism emerged as an answer to the worldwide collapse of profits (Roberts, 2012), the crisis of the welfare-state,

⁵⁰ According to Lijphart (2012, p. 158), proportional representation and larger electoral circumscriptions led to coordinated and compromise-oriented consensus democracies while smaller circumscriptions and first past the post systems lead to majoritarianism – the competitive and uncoordinated rule of majorities.

the oil-crisis and debt crises (Palley, 2005) of the seventies and early eighties. It is based upon the liberal ideas of individualism and free trade developed by the Austrian and Chicago School. Neoliberal ideology sustains a perspective that a society is most efficient when public policies are based upon market-efficiency and individual competition (Palley, 2005). The Chicago ideology – with its focus on problems of debt, inflation and money, hence called monetarists – gained traction under the Reagan and Thatcher administrations. Backed by neoclassic economic “science”, the scope of liberal democratic politics became increasingly restrained by the ideal of a minimal state. The scope where democratic policies applied would be radically reduced with constant attacks on the social-democratic welfare state and through policies of privatization and liberalization.

Two factors reinforced the hegemonic position of neoliberalism and the liberal-democratic model. First there is the collapse of the Soviet Union and the evolution towards a monopolar world. Neoliberal capitalism lost its main geopolitical, economic and ideological alternative. The disappearance of the bipolar power-equilibrium between West and East – and with it between social classes – reduced the room for manoeuvre for the reformist social-democratic parties and Trade Unions. Particularly in Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union foreclosed the possibility of a “third way”, of a mixed economy and the defence of the social welfare policies. At the very moment that Giddens (2013) came to popularize the term, the former social democratic parties, such as New Labour, accepted the neoliberal premises.

A second factor was the process of economic globalization and progressive liberalization of trade – actively promoted by the IMF, WB and WTO – under the Washington consensus. Neoliberal globalization made government policies ever more dependent on the goodwill of financial markets and international financial institutions. This situation was famously labelled as a “Golden Straitjacket” by neo-Keynesian Thomas Friedman (2000). This straightjacket had the following “golden rules”: the private sector is seen as the primary engine of economic growth. Inflation has to be maintained low. Policies should shrink the state bureaucracy. Public budgets deficits and public debt should remain as low as possible. Trade tariffs should be lowered or eliminate, and restrictions on foreign investment should be eliminated. Economic policies should prioritize the increase of exports, and state-owned industries, banking and telecommunications should be deregulated and privatized. Capital markets should be deregulated and currencies should be stabilized and easily convertible. Pensions should be privatized etc... As we have seen in Chapter 1, in

Europe this process was speeded up by the European integration, with the implementation of the Common Market, and the monetary integration since the Maastricht-treaty. Politically, the result has thus been a strong reduction of the political spectrum and a compression of the public sphere:

On the political front, the Golden Straitjacket narrows the political and economic policy choices of those in power to relatively tight parameters. That is why it is increasingly difficult these days to find any real differences between ruling and opposition parties in those countries that have put on the Golden Straitjacket. Once your country puts it on, its political choices get reduced to Pepsi or Coke (Friedman, 2000, p. 106).

Neoliberal reforms transformed the political citizen into an individual homo economicus; a depoliticized subject whose “freedom of choice” obeyed to the rational laws of supply and demand, as consumer and producer in a world market economy. The result has been designated as a “post-political” or “post-democratic” (Mouffe, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2007; 2011) world, in which management took the place of politics (Rancière, 2005).

3.2 The crisis of Democracy and its alternatives

Huntington’s (1991) above mentioned “third wave” is thus marked by two paradoxes: a first contradiction appears between the global spread of democracy as a universal principle of governance and the dramatically decreased scope of democracy, or what has been called “low-intensity democracy” (Gills & Rocamora, 1992; Santos & Avritzer, 2005). A second paradox consists of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Leonardo Avritzer (2005) designate as the “double pathology” of liberal democracy, consisting of a “pathology of participation” (p. XXXVI) – which describes the phenomenon that people do not want to participate in democratic decision making, indicated by dramatic increase in levels of abstention (Pinto *et al.*, 2013; Santos & Avritzer, 2005) – and a “pathology of representation”: “[...] the fact that citizens feel themselves less and less represented by those they have elected” (Santos & Avritzer, 2005). In such circumstances, it is not surprising that populist – mostly right-wing anti-immigrant forces – have arisen in the past decades. The paradoxes gave rise to academic debates around concepts such as the “gap between citizens and politicians”, “good governance”, “populism”, “electoral fragmentation”.

As a consequence, there has been a debate about democratic legitimacy in political science literature (Magnette, 2003; Santos, 1995b, p. 286), particularly around the European

governance structures. Debates concentrated around the apparent inadequacy of the national state and national democracy in addressing the new context of supra-national integration, Europeanization and globalization. The debate had been fuelled by increasing abstention in European elections, critiques of the “undemocratic” institutionalization of the union and rising Euroscepticism.

Empirical political theory and comparative political science have all remained firmly in the liberal democratic tradition. One fundamental problem haunts these models in addressing the crisis: all are based on arbitrary, formal and elitist definitions of democracy (Cheibub, Gandhi & Vreeland, 2010). Huntington (1991), for example, uses a definition of democracy which among other things excludes dynamics on international and local levels, the scope of decision-making, participation and redistributive aspects of democracy. The models also tend to use teleological conception of progressive democratization over time and development. Some of this literature has tried to address the problematic of democracy by framing problems of scale or through the conception of different “dimensions” of democracy (Cheibub *et al.*, 2010; Rosanvallon, 2013). In an attempt to make a “compromise” and to “complexify” apparently inadequate classical and competitive approaches, authors such as Schmidt (2013) and Rosanvallon (2013) distinguish the inputs, output and other legitimacy dimensions of democracy. But the most influential currents in political theory built their theories explaining the progressive universalization of the principle of democracy, without profoundly discussing the concept of democracy itself. This a crucial theoretical flaw; not only because democracy is a fundamentally contested concept, but particularly for the analysis of crisis of democracy in which meanings of democracy tend to undergo drastic changes.

Authors critical of the dominant liberal approach have pointed towards other deficiencies. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Leonardo Avritzer (2005), the academic and public ideas about democracy got stuck in two hegemonic trends of contemporary democratic theory. The first is a gradual abandonment of social mobilization and collective action as a constituent part of democracy. The second is in the focus on representation as the heart of democracy, privileging the elitist solution over citizen’s participation. These critiques opened up space for new alternative approaches, such as Republicanism and Critical Social Theory (Avritzer, 2002). Here we discuss what we consider the four main critical models, identified by Chantal Mouffe (2000) as the

“aggregative model”, the “deliberative model”, and her own “agonistic model”, as well as de Santos’ model of “demodiversity”.

3.2.1 Participatory Democracy

While Rousseau’s participatory conception of democracy was one of the most influential at the onset of modernity, it did not prevail. The emergence of a complex form state administration and the role of specialized bureaucracies in the modern state brought difficulties for the implementation of such model (Santos & Avritzer, 2005, p. XXIX). The decades after the Second World War were furthermore marked by the idea that “excessive” participation – particularly the Bolshevik revolution and the mass rallies of Nazi Germany – could have dangerous consequences. But the growing “crisis of democracy” from the late 1960s (“government overload” and “legitimation crisis” theories) onwards originated in new participatory models of democracy. The contemporary participatory models build upon the traditions of revolutionary and popular participation and ideas of direct democracy and radical republicanism found in authors such as Rousseau and Marx for example. “Participatory democracy”, would become the alternative model of the “New Left” regarding the crisis of the welfare state and post-war democracy. The defence of participative democracy, allowed them the move beyond the opposition between orthodox Marxism and liberalism (Held, 2006). According to David Held (2006, p. 211), there are two major changes emphasized by the New Left:

[...] the state must be democratized by making parliament, state bureaucracies and political parties more open and accountable, while new forms of struggle at the local level (through factory-based politics, the women’s movement, ecological groups) must ensure that society, as well as the state, is subject to procedures which ensure accountability.

The principles of participatory democracy can be summarized as the direct participation of citizens in controlling key institutions of society – including on their workplaces and local communities –, the reorganization of the party system by guaranteeing accountability and participation of the membership and minimizing or eradicating bureaucracy. At the same time conditions of participation should be guaranteed through redistribution of material resources and public services – such as child care – and by guaranteeing openness of information, while allowing institutional openness for different experimental political forms (Held, 2006).

Like the developmental republican tradition, Pateman draws upon Rousseau and J. S. Mill, to argue that participatory democracy is a pedagogic experience of active and

knowledgeable citizenship: besides bringing a sense of political efficiency and sovereignty in relation to the centres of power, it fosters human development, a sense of collectivity (Held, 2006; Pateman, 1970).

Participationists were aware the institutions of direct democracy or self-management could not just replace the state. Without representation, bureaucracy would fill the gap. For theorists like Macpherson (1977), participatory democracy is thus complementary to representative democracy, and aims to extend the realm of democracy from voting every few years in elections to participation in decision-making in all spheres of life (Held, 2006). The participatory model has the social objective to combat the apathy and disconnection of the poor masses in most liberal democracies, by applying democratic practices in people's everyday life, or thus by extending democratic control to those institutions in which most people live out their lives (Held, 2006; Pateman, 1970, p. 104).

The models of participation were particularly successful during the processes of democratization in the global South in countries like in Brazil, Mozambique, India and South Africa. Most experiences took the form of participatory budgeting and became possible during the "third wave" of democratization in the 1980s and 1990s (Santos, 2005, p. XLVI). According to Santos (2005, p. XLV), their success is related to the ability of the social actors – in particular social movements – to transfer practices and information on the social level to the administrative levels in those countries. The involvement of citizenship allowed to counterbalance the state bureaucracies that had been inherited from the dictatorships. In a historical context which had been marked by violence, participatory democracy also allowed the recognition of an alternative citizen's identity for those who had always been excluded from any form of democratic inclusion (Santos, 2005, p. XLVII). Participatory democracy and participatory budgets (PB's) enabled to embrace the complexity of struggles, and served as a platform for the articulations among "new" identities based on gender, informal classes, and ethnicity, with "old" collective identities linked to Trade Unions, liberation movements or to the political parties of the "old" left (Santos, 2005, p. XLVIII).

PB's have traditionally been initiatives of progressive political parties: in Porto Alegre, the city that stands out as one of the major successful examples of PB in literature, the Workers' Party fulfilled this role. In Kerala it was the Communist Party of India. Participatory budgeting combines forms and elements of representative and participatory democracy at the local level – and as it involves a broad public debate on the rules of participation, deliberation and distribution, it is commonly called participatory

proceduralism (Santos, 2005). Between 1997 and 2000, participatory budgeting was introduced in 140 Brazilian municipalities (Santos, 2005). According to Davidson (2018), today these practices operate in approximately 1500 cities around the globe.

In practical terms, participatory budgets are usually characterized by the openness of participation all citizens, a combination of direct and representative democracy that attributes to the participants themselves the definition of the internal rules. At the same time the allocation of the resources for investments is usually based on the technical and legal demands of the government (Santos & Avritzer, 2005, p. XIII). Participatory budgets proved to be capable of handling the complexity of state administrations. At the same time that they renovated political agendas by introducing new principles of justice in the distribution of public resources (Santos & Avritzer, 2005, p. XIII).

Participatory democratic practices have nevertheless revealed to be vulnerable on two different levels. First because of the strong contestation by exclusionary elites in the peripheral countries where they have been implemented. These elites traditionally do not accept lower class people in the same spaces, and thus tended to delegitimize participatory experiences (Santos, 2005, p. LII). Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2005, p. LV) warns us also that these new forms of participative democracy are not only an innovation, but can also be part of a process of co-optation of social groups, adulteration and an integration in institutional contexts to an extent where it can erase its democratic and emancipatory potential. Davidson (2018, p. 556) for example shows how the Participatory budget of Vallejo, California, emerged from a national-wide fiscal crisis and austerity. It lacked explicit redistributive intent, instead it was a pragmatic response to severe political and fiscal problems and participation provided a democratically legitimate cover.

3.2.2 Deliberative Democracy

Another of the theoretical models that emerged around the concern about the apathy and lack of interest in public life of the electorate is deliberative democracy. Deliberative democrats are equally concerned about participation; they thus do not pretend to limit democracy like the elitists do. But at the same time, the deliberative model is preoccupied by eventual harmful influence decision-making by irrational masses would be guided by unbridled desires, individual interests, ignorance and short-sided views (Held, 2006, pp. 231-234 *passim*). Instead of building their idea of democracy around the actual or empirical will

of those engaged in politics, they build it around what they will call “reasonable political judgement” and “reflective preferences”. Deliberativists argue that decisions should be based upon opening spaces for critical and rational argumentation rather than for direct participation. According to deliberativists, the source of legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals, but rather the process of its formation, that is, deliberation itself (Held, 2006, p. 233; Manin, 1987, p. 351). In conformity with the elitist critique of classic democratic theory, deliberativism disconnects the idea of common good from the means to reach it. The model is thus an expanded form of proceduralism. But it approaches proceduralism as a societal practice rather than just a method for the constitution of government (Santos, 2005, p. XLIV). According to Avritzer and Costa (2004, p. 706), this enables them to overcome the debate between elitists and participationists through a legal sphere of interaction between movements, groups and associations and the political organization.

Habermas and Rawls have provided much of the intellectual apparatus of deliberative democracy (Medearis, 2005). Habermas’ (1991; 1998) theory about the Public Sphere and communicative action has inspired a whole generation of authors. In his project to defend the emancipatory role of European enlightenment, Habermas tries to recover the link between democracy and liberalism. As we have seen in the previous chapter, he turns to a reconstructed “historical materialist” analysis of democracy, while at the same time rejecting “its philosophical ballast” (Gunaratne, 2006, p. 1; Habermas, 1985, p. 383; Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 187). Leaving behind the intellectual and political perspective of the working class, he defends the historical co-originality – and thus a possible reconciliation – of fundamental individual rights and popular sovereignty. Both are considered inseparable: self-governance is needed to protect the rights of freedom of the self-governing people, while these rights provide the conditions themselves to make self-governance possible (Habermas, 1998; Mouffe, 2000).

As the bourgeois rule is not based upon direct control, like the absolutist state, but through the economic domination in the private sphere, its relation to political power is different from other classes in history. The capitalist renounces direct personal exercise of government. Rather, the bourgeoisie demands the right to know what the state does with its taxes, giving a public character of the relation between the state and society. Tracing back to bourgeois traditions and the advent of commercial capitalism in the 17th century, Habermas (1991) argues that there developed a space for free and rational discussion about

the execution of power in between the private sphere and the state. A decoupling of the reflexive capacity of the individual from his direct material interests and a separation of domestic economic interests from subjectivity takes place in the spaces. Habermas locates the origin of the concept of this “public sphere” and deliberative democratic practices in the bourgeois saloons coffee-bars and an ensemble of voluntary associations which constituted a civil society, disconnected from market and state (Avritzer & Costa, 2004, p. 707; Habermas, 1991). The public sphere concerns a discursive space (Habermas, 1991) where political decisions should be reached through a process of deliberative discussion among free, equal and reasonable citizens (Habermas, 1998; Mouffe, 2000, pp. 81-87 *passim*). The face-to-face interactive conceptualization of democracy enables the incorporation of new forms of civil participation and republicanism in democratic theory, through “communicative action” – a politization through language and rational understanding which makes it possible to reach a generalizable interest (Avritzer, 2002, pp. 40-42 *passim*).

Ideally, this requires an “ideal speech situation” in which all arguments and interests can be rationally balanced. Habermas and his followers are not naive to deny the obstacles to the realization of such an ideal situation. John Rawls’s (2009) original position and Jürgen Habermas’s ideal speech situation were exactly developed to integrate the “social point of view” in their models of deliberative democracy (Held, 2006, p. 239). The obstacles are conceived as “empirical” ones – given the practical and empirical limitations of social life – , and thus the ideal speech situation is kept as a “regulative idea” (Mouffe, 2000, p. 88).

As such ideal speech situations never existed, the deliberative model has been extensively criticized for being elitist. By insisting that actors in the deliberation process should not depart from public reason, they rigidify some of the structural disadvantages that marginalized groups confront. As exponent of the Frankfurter School, Habermas should have known the structural power relations that mould ideologies and discourses, but in his deliberative-democratic writings, he is silent about such structural disadvantages (Medearis, 2005, pp. 62-64 *passim*). As the public sphere and rationality are essentially “Eurocentric”⁵¹, “national”, “bourgeois”, and “patriarchal”, the application of deliberative models tends to reproduce a capitalist, sexist, racist, Eurocentric and colonial normativity (Avritzer, 2002; Gunaratne, 2006). Gunaratme (2006) identifies the critiques of Giddens,

⁵¹ Habermas himself has said that his work is of importance only to Western societies because of its Eurocentrically limited view; and that “modernization” is not synonymous with “Westernization” (Tong, 2000, pp. 10-11).

Kaufman, Huang, Tong and Chakrabarty on the Eurocentric character, while feminist Iris Marion Young (2011) for example argues how “neutral argumentation” is profoundly patriarchal. According to Nancy Fraser (2007), the model is also too much focused on the nation state and not adapted to the era of Globalization. By different degrees of linguistic and rationalist exclusion of women, non-western cultures and epistemologies, lower social classes etc... it means that about 4/5 of the world population is pre-emptively barred from fully participating in the democratic discourse (Santos, 1995c).

Other opponents, like Slavoj Žižek have argued that Habermas theory is essentially “postmodern” – because the transition of the “left” from Marxist historical materialism, describes an actual historical process which essentially accepts the liberal capitalist economy “as the only game in town” (Butler, Laclau & Žižek, 2000, p. 95). When Habermas detaches the question of deliberative democracy from the structural social inequalities of capitalism – in his attempt to “free” historical materialism from its ideological “ballast” – he foreclosed the emancipatory potential of his “radical” democratic criticism (Gunaratne, 2006, p. 135; Habermas, 1985, p. 383). This detachment allowed the theory to become mainstream and central within the liberal canon of democracy despite its critical origin.

3.2.3 Agonistic Democracy

Since the linguistic turn in critical social sciences in the seventies and eighties, “discourse” has become accepted as a central issue by scholars of social movements and democratic theory (Medearis, 2005). Not only Habermas’ turn to Communicative Action and the deliberative model was a consequence of this turn. Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) *Hegemony and socialist strategy* has been the ground-breaking work in this field⁵². Laclau and Mouffe’s model is also the fruit of a transition towards a post-Marxist analysis. But rather than abandoning the “ideological ballast”, they are going to reframe an emancipatory theory based upon a creative reinterpretation of Gramsci. Also in their work, the social is conceived as a discursive space. They privilege the idea of “political articulation” and “hegemony” over the “Hegelian/naturalistic” categories of traditional Marxism (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). As Mouffe (2014) puts it:

⁵² Laclau and Mouffe’s approach on social movements, discourse, populism and Hegemony had a direct influence of on *Indignados/Podemos* in Spain for example.

[...] society is always politically instituted and that what is called 'the social' is the realm of sedimented political practices, practices that conceal the originary acts of their contingent political institution. As the temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices, every order is the expression of a particular structure of power relations. What is at a given moment accepted as the 'natural order' is always the result of sedimented hegemonic practices.

Laclau and Mouffe's re-conception of hegemony is based upon "structural undecidability" in the "construction of a hegemonic subject". They claim that their focus on "contingent articulation" enunciates the true central dimension of "politics": accordingly hegemonic transitions are fully dependent on political articulation and not upon entities pre-constituted outside of the political field – they specifically refer to class interests. The hegemonic subject is thus not necessarily linked to the Hegelian notion of Universal class, nor the Marxian notion of Proletariat as a universal class: "[...] for it does not result from a ultimate human reconciliation leading to the withering away of the state and the end of politics: the hegemonic link is, on the contrary, constitutively 'political'" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, pp. X-XII *passim*).

According to Laclau (1986), from its very beginning, Marxism was forced to recognize a fundamental asymmetry between effective conscience of the actors and what should have corresponded to their historical interests. According to Laclau, the Marxist tradition made the mistake not to conduct a rational critique of the notion of interests; but instead reaffirmed their existence through the distinction between "*Klasse an sich*" and "*Klasse für sich*". In our contemporary reality, this would have not only become still more complex due to the dissolution of fixed identities, such as "worker" or "*petit-bourgeoisie*"⁵³ but Laclau (1986) also argues that the use of the "European" classical category of working class is profoundly Eurocentric and inadequate for the analysis in peripheral areas of the world.

A key characteristic of the new social movements is that a set of distinct subject positions – depending on residence, institutional apparatuses, different forms of cultural, racial and sexual oppressions – have turned into issues of conflict and political mobilization. This led to an inversion of the notion of classical subjectivity. Instead of regarding the subject

⁵³ An important critique to Laclau's approach is that he opposes the contemporary complexity of society with a very simplified non-complex perspective on the industrial society. He defends that our complex contemporary society has eclipsed these identities, while ignoring that the notion of working class has always been a historical form political articulation. Rather than implying that those categories disappeared, one must consider if they still make sense today. Given that world has never known a stronger disparity between capital and labour, and that capitalism colonizes aspects of social life in unprecedented forms; I consider the categories even more useful than in the nineteenth century.

as the source of signification to the world; one focusses on the changing positions of the subject as part of a structure. This structure, or set of different positions, is what Laclau (1986) defines as “discourse”. The linking up between different contingent, non-predetermined positions is what Laclau and Mouffe (2001) call articulation. Articulation happens through the constitution of a chain of equivalences – the equivalence reflects the plurality of the demands. Chains of equivalences can only exist within an unstable tension between the extremes of subordination versus autonomous empowerment of demands. The chain depends on the presence of a “dichotomic frontier”: a political separation of identity. Without it, the equivalent relation would collapse, and the identity of each demand would be exhausted in differential particularity (Laclau, 2005, pp. 129-131 *passim*).

Hegemonic articulation thus works upon dialectic between difference and equivalence. The aspect of difference is determined by the particularity of each individual and situation. Equivalence occurs through the articulation of those particularities in a situation of antagonism. To transcend this antagonism, one body needs to represent universality. This is what Mouffe and Laclau called the hegemonic relation (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. XIII). This, of course also applies to the classic Marxist approach in which the antagonism is provoked by capitalist exploitation which obliges the affected particular subjects to collaborate. Through this antagonism, one particular position – the worker – takes the representation of universality to transcend the existing capitalist hegemony. The characteristic difference of Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001, p. 2) post-Marxist approach lies in the end of the ontological centrality of the working class.

Laclau and Mouffe (2001) open up their approach for every kind of potential political conflict. As the articulation of social reality never acquires a point of total closing; the position of the subject always denotes a certain degree of openness and ambiguity. One of the reasons is the existence of rival hegemonic projects which put structural pressure on the same democratic demands. So they always remain what Laclau (2005, pp. 129-131 *passim*) calls “floating signifiers”⁵⁴: signifiers whose meaning is suspended because the meaning is indeterminate due to the existence of alternative equivalent frontiers.

⁵⁴ The floating signifier structurally differs from the empty signifier: the empty signifier “concerns the construction of a popular identity once the presence of a stable frontier is taken for granted”. The floating signifier “tries to conceptually apprehend the logic of the displacement of that frontier”. Both are hegemonic operations and are partial dimensions in the constitution of identity which largely overlap (Laclau, 2005, 133).

The classic example by Laclau (2005, p. 4) of this articulation is Populism, which is constituted by the affirmation of social differentiation and the logic of equivalences. The totalizing dimension of the social is based upon basic opposition of the “people/oligarchy”, “nation/imperialism” etc... These imaginary dimensions define crucial points around which a new political horizon is organized: the leader, the armed forces or an appeal to technical knowledge and economic development. According to Laclau (1986) the radical democratic potential of new social movements in this conceptualization of populism resides in their aims being implicitly undetermined and radically open towards society – in so far that each “global” social arrangement only represents the contingent result of a bargaining process between a plurality of actors and spaces; and not a basic category which in itself would determine the significance and limits of each of those spaces.

Based on the discursive approach, and upon the Marxist critique that the deliberative school accepts a “liberal modus vivendi”, post-Marxist theorist Chantal Mouffe (2000, p. 83) developed her influential “agonistic model of democracy”. Mouffe and Laclau’s agonistic democracy is often contrasted with Habermasian deliberative democracy. Similarities include the critique of aggregative models and the assumption that political identities are not pre-constituted, but are constituted and re-constituted in the public sphere as Politics plays a crucial role in shaping of political subjects. Both approaches also aim to include the many different voices, and thus widen the field of democratic struggles.

But the differences are crucial. Central to Mouffe’s (2000) approach are two critiques of the deliberative approach: first she criticizes the unsustainability of the separation between public sphere – where rational agreement and liberal justice reign – and private sphere – where pluralism dominates. She also argues that the separation between “procedural” and “substantial” elements of democracy cannot be maintained (Mouffe, 2000, p. 97). Second, more fundamentally, she criticizes the fact that deliberative theory denies the fundamental tension between the logic of democracy and the logic of liberalism⁵⁵. Chantal Mouffe (2000, p. 93) argues that this tension can never be eliminated; it is inherent to liberal democracy and can thus only be negotiated – any compromise being a temporary respite in an ongoing confrontation. In *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001) had defended that the main question is not how to eliminate power from democratic decision-making – such as in the liberal approaches of Jürgen Habermas’ (1998)

⁵⁵ Mouffe (2000) sees the contradiction between two ideological concepts, not between the infrastructural logics of capital-accumulation and democracy.

“ideal speech situation” or John Rawls’ (2009) “original position”. The antagonist approach forecloses the possibility of any final reconciliation, rational consensus or fully inclusive “we”, on which the Habermasian model is based. The Habermasian non-exclusive public sphere is thus a fantasy (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. XVII). Instead of ideal speech and consensus, power and antagonism are at the heart of democratic politics. The challenge for democratic theory is, according to Laclau and Mouffe (2001; Mouffe, 2000, pp. 99-100), to make power more compatible with “democratic values”.

It brings her to the conclusion that in order to “take pluralism seriously”⁵⁶; democratic theory has to abandon the dream of the possibility of a rational consensus, instead it has to be “repoliticized”. Her approach emphasizes the difference between “politics” and “the political” (Mouffe, 2000). For the concept of “the political”, Mouffe gets the inspiration of Carl Schmitt (2008), as we have discussed in Chapter 2.4, which defends that political conflict is based upon the unescapable categorization of Friend-Enemy. Parallel to Schmitt’s ideas, she defends that liberal hegemony has depoliticized “politics” in democratic theory. Democratic theory thereby reflects the acceptance of the liberal world order in the same way as the “third way” and centre left parties have accepted in the post-Cold War Europe.

While also criticizing liberalism, in opposition to Carl Schmitt, Chantal Mouffe (2000) remains faithful to the democratic idea. In order to politicize, or to radicalize democracy, one needs to incorporate “the political” into democratic “politics”. To preserve the democratic horizon, one must transform the category of “enemy” in “adversary” – while not reaching the level of the formalist “competitor”. She claims thus to re-incorporate the “antagonistic” dynamics into an “agonistic” model of politics instead of the liberal pluralist “aggregative” politics. For Mouffe (2000), the essential difference between enemy and adversary lies in the idea of “liberal democratic tolerance”. This presupposes a shared acceptance of the ethical-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality, with adversaries disagreeing upon the meaning of these concepts. In contrast to the aggregative model, which is based upon rational conciliation, the key to agonistic pluralism is that “agonistic confrontation is in fact the very condition of existence”.

⁵⁶ Due to its essentially contested nature, Dryzek (2016, p. 357) even argues democracy cannot be approached as a regular Human right; instead “The right to democracy must instead be understood as the right to engage the contestation at the core of the concept, through formative agency that determines what democracy should mean in practice in particular contexts”.

Mouffe (2018) proposes to understand the post-crisis events which signified a crisis of the neoliberal hegemonic formation as a “Populist moment” in which the central axis will be between right-wing and left-wing populism. In this interregnum – following Laclaus’s (2005) *On populist reason* –, the political frontier is to be built upon a “populist transversal mode”, which does no longer correspond to social sectors defined in sociological terms. As a fruit of neoliberalism, it is to be based upon new forms of subordination that have emerged outside of the productive process with demands around environment, sexism and racism.

This strategy should take the form of an antagonism between “people” and “the oligarchy”. It should be able to put a halt to the rise of right-wing populism. The difference lies between the left and the right form of populism lies in the composition of the “we”. Right-wing populism is based upon the idea of “national sovereignty” and restricts the democratic rights to the “nationals”. Left-wing populism recovers democracy to deepen and extend it through a diversity of trajectories. The construction of a “people” in a transversal way, with the aim of creating a popular majority independent of previous political affiliations, is “[...] what distinguishes the populist political frontier from the traditional one of left and right” (Mouffe, 2018, p. 83).

When austerity policies began to affect broad sectors of the population, this led to a political awakening with the various Occupy movements such as in Syntagma Square in Greece and 15M in Spain. Mouffe’s (2000) approach refuses the opposition between these movements and parties, as we will see later on in Chapter 6.1.2. She affirms that the refusal of some social movements to go “beyond politics signifies” is a form of political withdrawal, which is itself a reflection of neoliberal hegemony. Mouffe’s hope for her left-populist strategy focussed on the emergence of a new type of radical populist party which articulates with the social movements – and which she saw in the form of *Syriza*, *Podemos*, *La France Insoumise*, *Die Linke*, Corbyn’s transformation of the Labour party, Sanders success in the USA and *Bloco de Esquerda* in Portugal.

3.2.4 Demodiversity

A fourth approach which engages with the diversity of social struggles in order to radicalize democracy, has been developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ concept of demodiversity. It was developed to describe “the peaceful or conflictual coexistence of

different democratic models and practices”⁵⁷ (Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 70). Santos get his inspiration from the field of ecology. His ecology of knowledges contrasts with the monoculture of modern science and the predatory character capitalism has towards nature and society. Ecologies are based upon heterogenous plurality and sustainable interactions (Santos, 2007, pp. 22-23). Within his framework of ecology of knowledges, he proposes forms of diversity against monocultures. In a similar way the concept of demodiversity is essentially developed as a critique of, and preferable alternative to the hegemonic concept of liberal, representative Western democracy that presents itself as unique and universal since the 1990s.

In *Democratizing democracy* (Santos, 2005, pp. LXI-LXIV *passim*), demodiversity is conceptualized in a negative way: as a “loss”. A comparison between studies and debates on democracy between the 1960’s and 1990’s brings him to the conclusion that there is global loss of diversity in democratic practices during this period. In the 1960s, the hegemonic model of liberal democracy seemed, as a democratic practice, to be confined to a small corner of the Western world. Outside Western Europe and North America there existed other political practices that claimed to be democratic in the light of autonomous criteria, distinct from those underlying liberal democracy (Santos, 2005).

The peaceful or conflictual coexistence of different democratic models and practices only gave way to the imposition of liberal democracy as the unique and universal model at the end of the second half of the last century (Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 70). The collapse of the Soviet Union and the transformation of liberal democracy into political conditionality of structural adjustment program’s by the World Bank and IMF under the Washington consensus, were the main drivers to convert the liberal model into the single universal model during the “third wave”.

In *Democratizing democracy*, Santos (2005, p. LXIV) refers to two interrelated reasons why the loss of demodiversity is a negative development. First, because liberal democracy represents a specific cultural constellation of Western modernity. In a multicultural world, the implementation of a unique Western model is imposed by force and reproduces colonial and imperialist relations. The existence of demodiversity creates possibility for intercultural dialogue, cultural hybridization and convergences. The second

⁵⁷ Our translation. In the original: “A *coexistência pacífica ou conflitual de diferentes modelos e práticas democráticas*” (Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 70).

reason is that non-compliance between “democracy as ideal” and “democracy as practice” is pushed to the extreme (Santos, 2005, p. LXV): really existing democracy is so far removed from the democratic ideal that it does not seem to be more of a caricature of it and contributes to the delegitimation of democracy itself. Recovering demodiversity is thus, according to Santos (2002, p. 177) one of the main tasks of the theorist, because, in his words: “[...] in the coexistence of opposites – the hegemonic and its antithesis – lies the social and epistemological opening that creates spaces for ‘unsuspected emancipations’”.

Within critical democratic theory and its application to analyse and transform current democratic experiences, Santos’ approach to democracy is sometimes contrasted with Laclau and Mouffe’s approach. Juan Carlos Monedero (2017, pp. 194-195) summarizes the debate between the approaches of the concept of democracy between Laclau and Santos as follows: Laclau’s hypothesis approaches democracy as an empty signifier. Therefore it is necessary to empty the concepts of their concrete practices so as to be able to add and construct an identity based on polarization – or based upon the Schmittean concept of the political in Mouffe’s work: democracy is as “they” (the caste) against “us” (the people under construction). According to Santos’ hypothesis, however, a democratic alternative is based – not on the emptying of concrete experiences, but into helping translate them in the search for a political harmony based by shared causes (Monedero, 2017). Boaventura de Sousa Santos disagrees with Laclau that democracy, emancipation, liberty, and equality are empty signifiers. He states that their condition of void only exists because their substantive contents have intentionally been emptied by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy, or are continuously filled in different ways. Democracy has been emptied by socio-economic redistribution policies and lack of policies for respect of cultural diversity (Santos, 2016b, p. 259; Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 32). The core of political struggle must be against the emptying of these concepts.

But is Santos’ demodiversity a political goal or a mere empirical phenomenon? How does demo-diversity relate to crisis? And what are the emancipatory possibilities of the different existing alternatives to the status quo of representative democracy as we know it? As all sides of the conflict claim democracy; social and political conflict is projected into different approaches to the concept of democracy itself. Liberal democratic hegemony dissolves into the emergence of a series of practices and different narratives – conflicting with each other. Thus, demodiversity emerges as the fruit of the crisis itself.

It is important that this demodiversity does not arise as a political or moral goal but as an empirical reality, a temporary stage in search of a new hegemony. Demodiversity itself reflects the crisis of the liberal-democratic model, but following the logic of Ellen Wood (1998; 2016), it also reflects the weakness of the left to present a working-class democratic alternative that is capable of overcoming liberal democracy and capitalism.

3.3 Crisis of the Alternatives and a restart of history

Contemporary democratic theory has tried to answer to the delegitimation of electoral politics with different alternatives, such as participatory experiments, focus groups... But until the 2008 global economic crisis, most issues linking democracy with political economy remained virtually unquestioned. In the previous chapter, we have seen that periods of crisis are key moments for understanding historical processes. Crises are moments when the contradictions expose themselves and truth can be revealed. The contradictions in the state of democracy revealed themselves during the crisis which started to unfold since 2008, when the apparent success story of the European integration collapsed in the aftermath of the Global Economic crisis. During the initial phase of the crisis and the subsequent European austerity-policies, the questions of democracy and legitimacy became increasingly problematic (Scharpf, 2012; Schmidt, 2013), bringing “democracy” back in the centre of public and academic debate and political struggles. At the same time the problems with neoliberal representative democracy became much clearer. From the start of the crisis authors, like Bosco and Verney (2012) or McGiffin (2011) have even been warning about the dangers of what could be considered a “democracy without choices”, or “a bloodless *coup d'état*” in the Eurozone. The decade that followed the crisis has been marked by an increased polarization. It gave rise to new protest movements around the globe; from the Occupy wall street, the Arab Spring and the *Indignados*, over the yellow vests in France, up the recent popular uprisings in Chile, Ecuador, and the Middle East. The decade also saw the electoral triumph of authoritarian and populist politicians such as Trump, Boris Johnson, Orban, and Bolsonaro.

As with previous systemic crises – such as the great depression in the 1930’s –, the Euro crisis did not only affect the legitimacy of existing governance systems, it also tested the established models of democratic theory and the potential for new ones. In this research our perspective on democratic theory is based upon the assumption that the historical evolution of the models of democracy is born out of the social struggles themselves. The

appearance of new social movements and rising protests – many claiming the banners of “real democracy” in peripheral European countries – has led to new ideas and an opening of the public debate around alternative perspectives and critiques to the dominant approach. The context of the crisis and the concept of crisis will play a crucial role in our analysis.

The current “state of democratic theory” reflects liberal hegemony, even among its critics. I argue that we can find some liberal core in all of them; not only in democratic elitism of Schumpeter (1976) and Przeworski (1999) and positivist empiricism as in Huntington (1991) but also in the critical alternatives we discussed above such as deliberativism in Benhabib (1996) and Habermas (1998) and even in the radical and agonistic schools such as in early Žižek (Sharpe & Boucher, 2010; Žižek, 1989), Butler *et al.* (2000), Laclau and Mouffe (2001). While criticizing the liberal approach, the latter critics generally aren’t prepared to leave liberal ethics; or they do not really offer a strategy and an alternative political economy to sustain alternative forms of democracy. Even Santos (2005) admits that the concept of “democratizing democracy” represents only a temporary answer to the lack of alternatives to capitalist globalization, in a time when the socialist alternative is not on the political agenda. By detaching democracy from the organization of the political economy; democratic theorists restrict “themselves to idealist models and pragmatism”: by proposing the agonistic horizon, Chantal Mouffe for example fails to push her own logic of confrontation as the very condition of existence of democracy, to its end. Putting the transition from antagonistic to agonistic struggles as a precondition for democracy, brings the idea of democracy back within the existing liberal consensus about what the “democratic game” is.

If democracy is to be limited to the “democratic game” – with predefined rules –, we lose sight on the historical fact that the politics of democracy and democratization have always been about the ideological – often violent and “anti-democratic” – confrontation about the rules of the game themselves. One cannot detach the conquest of universal male suffrage from the Bolshevik revolution and the general strikes at the end of the first world war, for example. A democratic horizon, like Mouffe’s, based upon “liberty and equality” – the acceptance of “the rules of the game” or institutionalization of democratic procedures – only reflects the ideological hegemony of an epoch. Instead of being the fundamental element of democracy, the rules of the democratic game have always been a compromise that prevented or slowed down further democratization. The rules of the democratic game

are a conservative reaction against social emancipation – a form of Gramscian passive revolution⁵⁸.

While authors of the school of deliberative, radical and agonistic democracy, and in lesser degree demo-diversity, celebrate internal conflicts as “true” democracy, this article anticipates that the fundamental social conflicts – the fundamental tensions of capitalism – ultimately lead to legitimation crises (Habermas, 1975a) characterized by hegemonic breakdown of the existing rules of the democratic game. To understand the phenomenon of democracy in such a crisis-context, it is important to conceptualize democracy outside of the established rules of the democratic game. Even more important than the currents in democratic theory, this research suggests that the “anti-currents” – those that reject given democratic rules, are essential to understand democracy in history.

A look into democratic history shows the antagonist or negative current is constitutive of the political and of democracy: the “negation of democracy” – the contestation of a certain normativity as democratic, the continuous contestation of the existent democratic rules, the refusal to accept, struggle outside and against the democratic rules – is an integral and fundamental part of democratizing practices and democratic change. This brings us back to the approach we advocated in the previous chapter; one based upon dialectics, negativity and the Political of Carl Schmitt. We argue that the unwillingness of democratic theorists like Hannah Arendt and Chantal Mouffe to cross the liberal boundaries – for the obvious “dangerous” political connotations of Carl Schmitt who inspired both – limits their theoretical approach: the contestation and fundamental critique of bourgeois liberal democratic rules and ethics should be at the heart of any emancipatory democratic theory. A fruitful approach to the question of democracy should therefore start with an historical analysis of the impossible relation between capitalism and democracy – as theorized by Karl Marx (Held, 2006), and introduced in Chapter 2 as the political science par excellence in the context of crisis. In order to rescue democratic theory from the neoliberal democratic paradox at “the end of history” and save the emancipatory role of the democratic idea it once had, one has to reclaim its history and refocus on the social struggles that moulded and contested it.

⁵⁸ Gramsci’s concept of passive revolution “[...] refers to the capacity of dominant classes in periods of crisis and societal transformation to preempt, deflect or absorb revolutionary struggles ‘from below’ and reconfigure the state and the economic structure ‘from above’ to their advantage”. It serves to understand the different capacities of elites in exploiting changes in global capitalism and adapting to popular pressures (De Smet & Bogaert, 2017, p. 212).

3.3.1 Capitalism and Democracy

Capitalist and democratic relations are structured antagonistically. Capitalist socio-economic relations are structured around the private ownership of the means of production, the exploitation of wage labour and commodity exchange (Mandel, 1982). These ultimately constitute two predominant and opposing social classes; the bourgeoisie and the working class. The class-position determines the power of a citizen in a capitalist society. The wealth and property of the capitalist class, guarantees the fulfilments of the individuals' will, needs and freedoms on the marketplace. The individuals who are not part of this class, see the fulfilment of their desires curtailed by the lack of purchase power on the marketplace and their freedoms restricted through the discipline of the labour-contract and the need to survive. Democratic relations, based upon the principles of popular sovereignty and equal decision-making capacity between citizens have a naturally opposed logic. This is why Marx defended that true democracy was impossible under capitalism (Held, 2006). But democracy as we know it – as a governance mechanism in modern societies – also has developed with, and because of, the dynamic of the capitalist political economy. Robert Dahl (1999, p. 187) therefore calls the relation between capitalism and democracy one of “antagonistic symbiosis”⁵⁹.

In the core countries of the capitalist World system, the historical link between the developing bourgeoisie and liberal democracy, that would reach its full developed form in the 19th century, found its origin in the revolutionary class-character of the bourgeoisie within feudal societies. Swedish sociologist Goran Therborn is one of the main sources of this theory. In feudal aristocratic societies, the property-system had been predominantly based upon inheritance laws and family property rights. At the same time, relations of social reproduction were based on personal allegiance and serfdom. The aristocratic ruling class ruled on the basis of theological legitimation, family rights, bloodline and military force (Therborn, 1999, pp. 55-61 *passim*). Because feudal lords were not owners of the means of production, they had to rely on the powers and means of the state to extract surplus labour

⁵⁹ According to Dahl (1999) this is due to: Poliarchic democracy only survived in market societies because market-capitalism creates certain basic breaches which are favorable to democratic institutions; including control through market competition, a tendency for economic growth, creation of a middle class, a sphere to externalise complex economic decisions. Democracy and market-capitalism limit each other continuously, creation of inequalities limits democratic potential. Capitalism unfavorable to development of democracy beyond polyarchy.

of the serfs (Santos, 1995c, p. 414). This relation structured feudal relations between the state and the economy.

As an exponent of increasing trade, manufacturing and urbanization, a new powerful, rich class – the bourgeoisie⁶⁰ – began to develop within the urban centres of feudal societies. Soon enough the interests of this bourgeoisie became incompatible with feudalism. The aristocratic institutions became a fetter for the development of capitalist enterprise and capital accumulation; serfdom limited the availability of free labour and feudal decentralization limited the possibilities of free trade and investment.

Goran Therborn (1977, pp. 29-31 *passim*) enumerates the reasons why the transition from feudalism to capitalism provided a push towards democracy:

1. Capitalism creates the conditions favourable for popular and violent struggles: notably capitalism created the organized working class and creates tendencies of inequalities and crisis which provoke popular revolt. These tend to lead to democratization;
2. The Bourgeoisie needed popular support for national unification – needed for the development of industry – and to break the remnants of feudalism. The concept of democracy addressed the citizens as subjects of history, and enabled the bourgeois classes to build a necessary ideological hegemony⁶¹ based upon rationality. The new social relations were legitimized on the basis of free contracts/exchange/competition and efficiency, instead of blood-rights and inheritance, serfdom and theological legitimation. The idea of a sovereign rule by will of god was replaced by the idea of sovereignty of the people and democracy;
3. Capitalist development and growth creates room for concessions to popular demands and taxation;
4. The bourgeois rule is impersonal rule, which makes that it thrives independent from who has political power: while feudalism would have been incompatible with the rule of a peasant party, capitalism is perfectly compatible with government of a Labour party;

⁶⁰ Bourgeois literally means people of the Burgh or City – etymologically comparable with citizens.

⁶¹ Hegemony is here used in its Gramscian notion, “Power changes through rearticulation of daily social relations” (Butler *et al.*, 2000; Gramsci, 2011).

5. The tendencies of capital towards internal competition, which creates a peacefully disunited ruling class without a single centre and therefore needed an independent elective, deliberative and representative machinery.

3.3.1.1 Liberalism and the separation of the Political and the Economic Sphere

In her historical inquiry of democracy, Ellen Wood (2016) searches for the similarities and differences between old Athenian democracy and modern liberal democracy. Three of the most relevant differences are their different stand towards representation, the inexistence of liberalism in Athens and the formal character of modern democracy.

In contrast with the formal democracy under capitalism in which civic equality can coexist with social inequality and leave economic relations between elites and labouring multitude in place (Wood, 2016, p. 212). Athenian democracy was more substantive, in the sense that political equality coexisted with and transformed socio-economic inequality – even if this happened at the expense of the slaves which were excluded from democratic participation (Wood, 2016, p. 202). It is therefore that the notion of “the common good” in democratic theory gains a very specific “abstract character” in modern democracies. Such abstract character did not need to exist in Athenian democracy; common good was a social practice. Under liberal democracy it gains an abstract character because it needs to unite such extremes of social inequalities and conflicting interests (Wood, 2016, p. 212).

The absence of liberalism in Greek antiquity is another of the major elements that distinguishes modern democracy from Athenian democracy. According to Wood (2016, pp. 229-233 *passim*), liberal ideology has actually an aristocratic origin. It emerged as an opposition by the feudal aristocracy to the emergence of the centralized state and absolute monarchy. This opposition which can be traced back to the *Magna Carta*, the 1688 struggle for rights of parliament and the revolt of Cromwell in England, for example. The idea of liberty – safeguarding feudal liberties and powers – in liberal democracy is thus rooted in pre-capitalist privilege against sovereignty and certainly not democratic in their intent. This liberty was later on reflected in the idea to make government taxation or involvement in the regulation of property dependent on the representation and control by the propertied classes on government: “No taxation without representation” would found the basis of parliaments and voting right restricted by property. While later on, liberalism was reappropriated for more democratic purposes by progressive forces since the seventeenth century – notably in

the notions of universal civil liberties and human rights (Wood, 2016, pp. 203, 208), the identification or even substitution of liberalism with democracy was according to Wood a counterrevolutionary project. By shifting the locus of power from lordship to property, capitalism separates property from privilege: the benefits of privilege give way with pure “economic” advantage (Wood, 2016, pp. 203, 208).

Under capitalism, the state guarantees the public enforcement of the law of property. Class relations reproduce themselves in the private realm of the factory. This leads to the conceptualization of relations of production as an economic affair between private individuals of the civil society (Santos, 1995c, p. 414) and thus to the establishment of the economy as a separate private sphere (Wood, 2016).

Karl Marx proposed this dichotomy in terms of civil society and the state, reflecting the dichotomy between structure and superstructure. Civil or Bourgeois society – *bürgerliche gesellschaft* – was the sphere of action of socio-economic transaction, the sphere of the bourgeois historical subject, a “natural state” of the egoistic individual (Bobbio, 1997, pp. 27-31 *passim*). The State on the other hand is part of the superstructure: above the bourgeois society, the State becomes “a separate entity, beside and outside civil society”, “[...] the form of organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests” (Marx, 1998, p. 99). Given the subjacent class struggle, the institutionalization of the political sphere tends to represent an equilibrium between class relations. Subordinate classes in the bourgeois society, in particular the working class take only “[...] a small part in determining the existence of law and the state” (Marx, 1998, p. 349). Marx exemplifies this in his work about the civil war in France. He claims the Bonapartist regime rested upon an equilibrium;

[...] not directly involved in the struggle of capital and labour; it professed to save the working class by breaking down parliamentarism, and, with it, the undisguised subservience of government to the propertied classes. It professed to save the propertied classes by upholding their economic supremacy over the working class; and, finally, it professed to unite all classes by reviving for all the chimera of national glory [...]. In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired [...]. Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself (Marx, 2012b, p. 36).

Following Marx, many authors, including Karl Polanyi (2001), Jürgen Habermas (1991) and Ellen Wood (2016), have theorized how the separation between the public and private sphere – mirrored by the ideological division between the political and the economy – is distinctive of modern capitalist society. This separation originated in the essentially

liberal preoccupation to keep the absolutist sovereign out of the local affairs of the feudal lords and then out of the private bourgeois affairs.

Later with the emergence of a new dominant class-struggle – between Bourgeoisie and Proletariat – the separation restricted the influence of the upcoming politically organized working class in the economic sphere and thus influenced the processes of capital accumulation. Capitalism is unique in its ability to maintain private property and surplus extraction without the proprietor needing direct political power. Commodity-fetishism naturalized the capitalist economic exploitation in the private realm of civil society (Santos, 1995c, p. 414). At the same time, the state can ostensibly belong to everyone, notably through universal suffrage (Wood, 2016, p. 40).

The bourgeois state – in contrast to the feudal state – tends to be governed by impersonal rule; with a constitutional and public character – instead of the private legal possession of any specific group (Santos, 1995c, p. 415). But this “democratic rule” in the public sphere only exists at the expense of the coercive rule and exploitation in the private sphere.

According to Therborn (1999, p. 62), the separation of the spheres serves as the basis of what he called the “constitutive ego-ideology” of the capitalist ruling class – that is its discursive rationale of existence, which he separates from its class alter-ideology, the rationale for domination and exclusion accepted by the dominated in the form of rights and obligations. This separation between relations of production as an economic affair between private individuals of the civil society and political participation of citizens is naturalized and legitimized by commodity fetishism (Santos, 1995c, p. 414). In the private sphere, the rule of the capitalist class is based upon the ownership of the means of production whose intrinsic character is irrelevant as its acquisition is ruled by market exchange. The universal objective of this ownership according to market laws, is to make profits as efficiently as possible. This structures social relations with members of other classes as well as of its own class. This leads to a focus on “[...] juridical equality, unequal rewards for unequal competitive performances, [...] and a consciousness of the prices of objects and men”. This requires a subjection to and qualification for rational calculation, orderliness, thrift and continuous effort (Therborn, 1999, pp. 57-58). This “despotism of the workshop” (Mandel, 1982, p. 243; Santos, 1995c, p. 415) and the dictates of market through the necessities of competition and profitability is a coercive force, “[...] capable of subjecting all human

values, activities and relations to its imperatives to a totalitarian extent that no ancient despot could have ever dreamed of” (Wood, 2016, p. 254).

The public sphere would become the privileged space for the new democratic ideology and political activity; a sphere which according to Habermas (1991) found its origin in the development of new media – books, papers and political pamphlets – and in the emergence of the Bourgeois saloons; gatherings of high-class people who opened their houses for public debates about public affairs, sciences, culture etc. The restricted debates – the illiterate popular classes were excluded – of the public sphere came to be the basis of the deliberative aspects of democratic procedures which were particularly dominant in the early parliamentary traditions. They are the basis of parliamentary discussions, as well as of several liberal democratic theories, of which Habermas’ communicative action, which we referred to above, is the most well-known example.

In the public sphere, democracy played a crucial role as an ideological concept in the struggle between the developing bourgeoisie and the established aristocracy, as it allowed had to win the battle within the civil society (Butler *et al.*, 2000, p. 47). Linking the rising bourgeois classes with other layers, such as peasant and workers, it enabled the bourgeois revolutionary class to canalize the social misery of the poor into a social force able to end the fading feudal governance and push towards a bourgeois revolution. This consisted in the establishment of the modern bourgeois state, with the institutionalization of national markets, the establishment of a power structure with a centralized bureaucracy, the unification of territories and languages within the state and the development of a national ideology and institutionalization of bourgeois democracy. Instead of blood-rights, inheritance and theological legitimation, rationality became the measure of all things in the new bourgeois hegemony. Social relations were to become legitimized based upon individual freedom and equality. The idea of a sovereign rule by the will of god was replaced by the idea of sovereignty of the people and democracy.

3.3.1.2 The making of the working class

The democratization of democracy was a result of emancipatory struggles of other social classes and groups in society. The ascendance of the power of the organized working class had probably the deepest influence on the history, institutionalization, and role of democracy.

According to Marx' *Capital*, the relative exploitation of the worker – through the production of surplus-value – is the driving force behind the general law of the capitalist accumulation process (Mandel, 1982; Marx, 1982). In order for this process to take place, it needs the availability of a starting capital and the existence of free labour. Neither were widely available at the dawn of capitalism. Under feudalism labour was usually not free: it was subjected to serfdom or community services. And if it was “free”, it was usually very scarce on the market, as people only worked as much as they needed to live; and preferred to use their labour power working on common lands and with their own tools. To constitute the working class, a massive process of proletarianization had to take place, a process which removed the obstacles to labour in order to constitute itself as a universal commodity. Therefore the constitution of the working class as class, is the consequence of a process of capitalist development that takes place before the “normal” accumulation process: the so-called Primitive Accumulation.

Free workers, in the double sense that they neither form part of the means of production themselves, as would be the case with slaves, serfs, etc., nor do they own the means of production, as would be the case with self-employed peasant proprietors. The free workers are therefore free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With the polarization of the commodity-market into these two classes, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are present. The capital relation presupposes a complete separation between the workers and the ownership of the conditions for the realization of their labour. As soon as capitalist production stands on its own feet, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a constantly extending scale. The process, therefore, which creates the capital-relation can be nothing other than the process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of his own labour; it is a process which operates two transformations, whereby the social means of subsistence and production are turned into capital, and the immediate producers are turned into wage-labourers. So-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. [...].

To become a free seller of labour-power, who carries his commodity wherever he can find a market for it, he must further have escaped from the regime of the guilds, their rules for apprentices and journeymen, and their restrictive labour regulations. Hence the historical movement which changes the producers into wage-labourers appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and it is this aspect of the movement which alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these newly freed men became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And this history, the history of their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire (Marx, 1982, pp. 874-875).

Karl Polanyi (2001) illustrated this process in his *The great transformation* with the disappearance of the commons and the introduction of the “new poor laws” in Great Britain. With the ascendance of “[...] the accumulation of capital, the class struggle develops, and hence the class-consciousness of the workers as well” (Marx, 1982, p. 808). The constitution of the working class and the development of the antagonism between capital and labour

forced democracy to change from a creation of counter-aristocratic hegemony, to become the institutionalization of a new social (class-)struggle.

3.3.1.3 Citizenship and representation

According to Ellen Wood (2016), the process of producing the individual citizen, is the same one that produces free, abstract Labour in the economic sphere. The individualized citizen emerges through the alienation of the peasant from his means of subsistence and its social, juridical and political ties of the village community – the classic example being the enclosure movement in England (Wood, 2016, pp. 209-211 *passim*). Just as the process of proletarianization created free labour, based on free contract, the dissolution of traditional prescriptive identities represented an advance for these new free and equal individuals. But their new power and citizenship entitlements were accompanied by the separation of the economic and the political. The devaluation of citizenship is an essential attribute of modern democracy marked by “devaluation of the political sphere” the subsequent enslavement of the labouring citizen in the depoliticized market (Wood, 2016, p. 211).

The only relation the labouring citizen retains with the political sphere is one of representation. In the Athenian world, representation was considered as an oligarchic tendency in public affairs, the restriction of the government to a small group of subjects. Representative democracy is according to Wood (2016), an American novelty. As the American federalists wanted to sustain a propertied oligarchy with the electoral support of the masses, they saw a large republic desirable to make representation unavoidable: representation was thus conceived as a filter or guardian of the public will – the very antithesis of *isegoria*⁶², because it favoured the propertied classes (Wood, 2016, pp. 214-217 *passim*).

But even representation was denied to the working class for most of its history. Even if we leave aside the denial of female suffrage – who compose the majority of the working class – universal male suffrage was only secured in most European countries after the First World War. Representation had been restricted to those owning property and paid poll taxes. People who lived in poverty or were economically dependent on employers would

⁶² *Isegoria* is an old Greek concept that denominates the principle of equality of right to participate in the assembly of the citizens.

not have been able to take rational and independent political decisions and were thus denied the right to vote. The “democratic” character of the early bourgeois societies would be considered profoundly anti-democratic by our norms. Not only were they profoundly unequal. They practiced harsh repression against unions and political organizations. They were moreover often profoundly racist, sexist, anti-semitic, and highly exclusionary in every way. Even the restricted political right of democratic participation only applied to rich, white and male citizens. The extension of citizenship and democratization was essentially the fruit of posterior social struggles; particularly of struggles against capitalism.

3.3.2 Socialism and Democracy

The separation of the political and economic sphere is characteristic for liberal capitalist societies. The overcoming of this separation has been crucial for any attempt of political democratization under capitalism. Commonly, this separation tends to be mirrored in a separation of political struggle on one hand and economic struggles on the other. Political struggles concern formal rights of deliberation, representation, citizenship, formal equality... while economic struggles concern issues of inequality, enough food, salaries, living conditions etc... Within class struggle this separation is historically expressed in the phenomenon of “economism”. Economism is the “natural” focus by the working class on purely economic demands such as pay-rise and job-security. This economism, which is particularly characteristic for the Trade Union movement corresponds to the divide capitalism produces in the arenas of action.

As we have seen, however, at the same time, the separation of these spheres has only been possible by processes of primary accumulation in which the state intervenes on behalf of the expropriating classes in a coercive way. This brings us to Marx’s conclusion that the secret of capitalist production is a “political one” (Wood, 2016, pp. 19-21 *passim*). While capitalism tends to separate those struggles, the continuing national and international integration of the capitalist economy demands an increased intervention of the state in planning and containing class conflict. Sub-ordinate social classes tend to discover this political aspect of the economic struggles in periods of crises. This is the reason why during crises, it is the state, and not the private economic society, that tends to become the prime target of resistances and political revolution (Wood, 2016, p. 47). Wood (2016, p. 48) argues that the very differentiation of the economic and the political in capitalism is precisely what

makes the unity of political and economic struggles essential. The unity of these economic struggles with political struggles for emancipation under capitalism is what makes socialism and democracy historically synonymous⁶³ under capitalism.

Throughout the next pages, we are going to address, in a more or less chronological order, some of the most important concepts and debates within the history of socialism on the issue of democracy. This overview has not with the historical and political detail many of those debates deserve; but at least highlights some of the most important issues; essential for a contemporary historically informed Marxist approach to democratic socialist strategy.

3.3.2.1 Dictatorship of the proletariat

The term “dictatorship of the proletariat” is probably the most controversial expression within Marxist terminology. The term has gained this controversial connotation due to the historical circumstances – particularly of Stalinism. It was nevertheless coined by Marx to address the question of socialism and democracy; in itself this would make it an essential starting point of analysis. Given the philosophical link we addressed in the previous chapter between crisis, state of exception, sovereignty and dictatorship; a discussion of the term is even more important.

For Marx the term dictatorship of the proletariat equalled socialism; that is a transitionally period in which the working class becomes the ruling class until class distinctions disappear and the state “withers away”. Democracy thus undergoes a transition from capitalism to communism (Lenin, 2015, p. 127). Marx and Engels, nor even Lenin, wrote down a plan of what such “dictatorship” would look like. The term was a political abstraction, as there had been no practical examples of such a dictatorship. The only examples Marx and later Lenin could rely on were their own contemporary contradictory experiences, the Paris Commune for Marx, and the Russian Revolution in Lenin’s case (Balibar, 2017). According to Dimitrios Kivotidis (2019), the Paris Commune allowed both Marx and Lenin to demonstrate the dialectic between democratic form and revolutionary content. In the contemporary everyday meaning of the term – in which dictatorship and democracy appear as two incommensurable opposites – the Paris Commune would not be characterised as a dictatorial regime today. Rather it would be seen as a form radical

⁶³ Santos (2003, p. 67) defines socialism as “limitless democracy”.

democracy in which popular representation and participation extended to the bureaucracy and the judiciary; through universal suffrage; the strict accountability and revocability of delegates; abolition of the division of powers between legislature and executive in favour of legislative dominance and the abolition of internal hierarchies within the state and the replacement of the army by the “people armed” (Kivotidis, 2019). The Paris experiment served as a historical confirmation of what Marx and Engels had written in *The communist manifesto* more than two decades earlier: “The proletariat can only come to power through the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie... to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy” (Marx, 2013, pp. 77, 93). Lenin (2015) quotes Marx:

The Commune... appears to have replaced the smashed state machine “only” by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this “only” signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of “quantity being transformed into quality”: democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer a state proper (p. 18).

The dictatorship of the proletariat represents simultaneously with an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists (p. 126).

According to Marxist theory – both in Marx and Engels, as in as Lenin – State power the political power of a single class. In modern society, marked by the antagonism between capitalist bourgeoisie and proletariat, State power is held in an absolute way by the bourgeoisie. As state power is constantly menaced by the development of the class struggle, it has to adapt to particular forms to be preserved. Accordingly the only possible historical “alternative” to the State power of the bourgeoisie is an equally absolute hold on State power by the proletariat. There is however no “guarantee” of success of a proletarian revolution, nor is it possible to predict the moment nor the particular form in which this will happen (Balibar, 2017).

Marxist theorist Rosa Luxemburg – who is often cited as one of the first Marxists warning of an authoritarian turn in the Soviet Union – warned, in her analysis of the Russian Revolution, about the dangers of conceptualizing dictatorship and democracy as opposed to each other. She not only dismissed the reformist stand of the social democrats that favoured “democracy” – liberal democracy in the end – against revolutionary dictatorship. Simultaneously, she warned against the concentration of power in a handful of men in the

Russian Revolution, which would be a dictatorship of the bourgeois model. This brought her to this very useful summary of the relation between dictatorship, democracy and socialism.

Socialist democracy is not something which begins only in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created... (and), in the interim, have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators. Socialist democracy begins simultaneously with the beginnings of the destruction of class rule and of the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power by the socialist party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat. This dictatorship consists in the *manner of applying democracy*, not in its *elimination*, but in energetic, resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society, without which a socialist transformation cannot be accomplished. But this dictatorship must be the work of the *class* and not of a little leading minority in the name of the class – that is, it must proceed step by step out of the active participation of the masses; it must be under their direct influence, subjected to the control of complete public activity; it must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of the people (Luxemburg, 2004b, p. 308).

For Etienne Balibar (1977, pp. 8-10 *passim*), the key misunderstandings around the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat is that it would be some kind of finished program conceptualized by Lenin. Derived from such misconception it could be conceived as a political “option” in the transition towards socialism, on equal terms and opposed to a “democratic” option of transition. Balibar warns that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a policy or a strategy involving the establishment of a particular form of government or institutions but, rather it is a historical reality which has its roots in capitalism itself. It covers the whole of the transition period to communism, which begins to develop within capitalism itself, in the struggle against it. It is thus not a path which can or must be “chosen” under certain historical conditions (e.g., in the “backward” Russia of 1917) and can be rejected for another, “democratic” path, in politically and industrially “advanced” Western Europe. As it is not a matter of choice, it can also not be “abandoned”, any more than the class struggle can be “abandoned”, except in words and at the cost of enormous confusion.

Dictatorship⁶⁴ is used by Marx, Engels, Luxemburg and Lenin to address the sovereignty of the proletariat. It should be noted that from a perspective of legal theory the meaning does not fully coincide with the Schmittian use of the term. Carl Schmitt used the term in the Roman sense; that is: the dictatorship as a temporary situation in which one person is given full sovereignty in a state of exception in order to defend the constitution and restore order and normality (McCormick, 1999). In the Marxist interpretation of the term,

⁶⁴ The Gramscian concept of Hegemony is theoretically not alternative nor opposed to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, rather it is “[...] the doctrine of hegemony is a complement to the theory of the State-as-force” (Thomas, 2009, p. 65).

dictatorship is not a conservative institution that serves to restore “normality”. Instead it addresses the concept of sovereignty to fundamentally change society, to create history.

3.3.2.2 Reform or Revolution

Many socialists however, rejected the concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Eduard Bernstein, who with *The prerequisites for socialism and the tasks of social democracy* wrote a profound revision of Marxist theory in 1899, became their most important theorist. In *The prerequisites of socialism...* – also translated as *Evolutionary socialism* –, Bernstein (1909, p. 145) doubts the revolutionary character of the proletariat and promotes universal franchise and social reforms as an alternative to violent revolution. Bernstein’s refutation of some of the basic premises of revolutionary socialism are fruit of his discordance with Marx’s theory of crisis of capitalism. He doesn’t see any tendency for ever-deeper crises, and thus no moment of truth of capitalism that would lead to a dictatorship of the proletariat (Bernstein, 1909, pp. 73-94 *passim*). In his book, Bernstein (1909, p. 103) also puts into question the proletariat as class, emphasizing its internal diversity and contradictory interests – in contrast to the homogeneous class capitalism would have created according to the communist manifesto. This diversity would create different demands and outcomes in life. Socialism is thus according to Bernstein (1909, p. 95) much wider than class struggle in modern society: it takes the form of various explanations; it can be a state power, but also a movement, perception or an aim, equality, justice, cooperative economics⁶⁵. Reformist social democrats – among them also contemporaries as Vandervelde and Kautsky – only talked about the dictatorship of the proletariat to dissociate themselves from it, thus leaving behind the essential element which distinguishes proletarian revolution from bourgeois reforms (Balibar, 1977, p. 17).

Ironically, it was in the aftermath of the first world war and because of the first effective socialist revolution and attempt to create a dictatorship of the proletariat in 1917 Russia – led by Lenin and the threat of revolution in other West-European countries, that the power-relation between classes changed and the reformist trend of social-democracy could attain considerable concessions within the sphere of liberal democracy. Against those reformists, Marx (1982, p. 184), had already warned that all the social rights, their

⁶⁵ Note the similarities with Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) conception of socialism in the rest of this thesis.

“formulation, official recognition, and proclamation by the State”, were however only the result of a long struggle of classes disguised by a “Parliamentary fancy”. The economic and political elites in western-Europe quickly went over to the implementation of universal (masculine) suffrage in parliamentary elections to co-opt the aristocracy of the organized proletariat. In the imperialist countries, social concessions were made to the strengthened and confident working classes. This would eventually lead to welfare societies. In those countries, the formal democracy under capitalism gained some substance with the diminishing inequalities and the integration of the working class in the management of the capitalist political economy – even if that political economy did not fundamentally change. The politicization of the economic struggles led to what (Bobbio, 1997, p. 156) called the transfer of democracy from the political to the social sphere or civil society. But this transfer occurred at the expense of imperialism.

3.3.2.3 Imperialism, periphery and democracy

The co-optation of social democracy in Europe at the end of the First World War entangled the question of democracy with imperialism and colonialism. According to various Marxist theorists, the partial substantive democratization – that benefitted the working class without the need for a revolution – was made possible at the expense of the peripheric areas of capitalism (Bukharin, 1977).

Around the period of the first world war, the theories of Imperialism by Hilferding (2019), Lenin (1999) and Luxemburg (2016) tried to explain how the dynamics accumulation would give rise to imperial conflicts. Hilferding argued that the emergence of finance capital in the early 20th century intensified nation-state competition and imperial practice (Willoughby, 1995). For Lenin, Imperialism is the highest stage of Capitalism, and is marked by the domination of financial capital which takes control of the state and its international relations. Lenin’s theory implied that a country could never develop without breaking out completely of capital accumulation (Willoughby, 1995). For Luxemburg (2016), the dynamics of imperialism and violent appropriation by capital are a permanent continuation of what Marx saw as the first phase of capitalist development; the stage of primary accumulation in which Capital was constituted and workers and materials are drawn into the accumulation process by brutal violence. For Luxemburg capitalism never actually stopped this process of accumulation by dispossession, the looting of colonies, wars,

resources, and nature. She considers it as an ever-continuing process, parallel and interconnected to the normal accumulation of capital which is based on the surplus-value extraction of the working class. Or as David Harvey (2005, pp. 140-141) says: Capitalism needs something “exterior” to itself in order to stabilize internal contradictions and conflicts.

Whatever the primary driver – underconsumption or overaccumulation – or the historical specific character of imperialism; both Lenin (1999, pp. 108-109) and Luxemburg (2004a, p. 327) consider the phenomenon of imperialism as intrinsic to capitalism. Both attribute the “betrayal” of social democracy and their nationalist cooperation in the first world war – the German SPD in particular – to the incorporation of the reformist leadership of the working-class movement and the labour-aristocracy into the capitalist state. Under this “betrayal”, is considered the foregoing of the task of internationalism and revolution. Instead the leadership opted for chauvinism; showing how the German workers were “good patriots” by supporting the imperialist war. From the perspective of the working classes in imperialist countries, imperialism brought certain advantages; it was translated in rising salaries – which led to the integration of the working-class organizations in the bourgeois state apparatus. Nearly all workers’ and mass organizations became constitutive parts of the capitalist system⁶⁶ (Bukharin, 1977, p. 24). With the possibilities of capital accumulation limited at home due to a strengthened working class, rising salaries, social rights and concessions made to national labour; national capital had a stronger incentive to search for potential profits outside its borders. Whether it is in search for new markets and demand, the export of capital and investments or the need for appropriation of cheap resources and nature; the national state puts its coercive power behind the interests of national capital.

It is within this context of imperialism that the specific relation between democracy and periphery emerges. In a world divided by spheres of influence of the great imperialist nations, democratization has had specific obstacles in peripheral, colonized and dependent countries. It is within this context that the discussion about the relation between “democratic demands” and “socialist demands” in Marxist theory emerges.

The idea of “democratic demands” comes from the Marxian category of bourgeois-democratic revolution. Democratic demands were historically linked to the emancipation of the progressive bourgeoisie against feudalism and absolutism, whereas socialist policies are

⁶⁶ In Belgium, the integration of the social-democratic – investments by the cooperative Bank of Labour – which managed and invested the savings of the socialist workers even invested in slave plantations in the colonies.

focussed on the overthrowal of capitalism. As socialism could only develop from capitalism – capitalist development creates the working class and the material conditions for socialism – many Marxists had defended that there is a teleological evolution of stages of development which should orient policies of socialists: in countries that still lived under feudal or absolutist conditions, socialists had to defend the need of the establishment of democratic capitalism. Only after its establishment, when contradictions of capitalism were ripe, socialist demands would come to the forefront (Laclau, 2005, pp. 125-127 *passim*).

The theories of uneven and combined development and permanent revolution of Leon Trotsky (2015) problematized this and have since been the main Marxist inspiration to analyse democracy and periphery. Trotsky's (2015) approach was inspired by the critique of colonialism by Parvus (1907) and by the experiences of the Russian Revolution in 1905 and 1917: in countries that were underdeveloped and dependent within the capitalist world system in an imperialist stage of development, the national bourgeoisies were too weak, dependent and reactionary themselves to lead a traditional liberal bourgeois revolution. Also Fanon (2005) noted that in the (neo-)colonial world, the local elites are no more than dependent representatives of the colonizer, whose economic interests don't depend on the independent development of a national political economy but upon the sacking of the country by imperialist interests. In this context, according to Trotsky (2015), the only progressive and revolutionary class could have been the working-class. It was the only class, who in alliance with the peasantry, was able to carry out the historical tasks of the bourgeois revolution. As imperialism does not provide the conditions for an independent liberal bourgeois development, these "democratic" demands would automatically get an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and thus socialist character. This is the heart of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution; by virtue of the law of uneven and combined development, "[...] democratic and socialist revolutions would fuse into a single process whose outcome would be workers' power" (Callinicos, 1982).

With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses (Trotsky, 2010, p. 310).

More than a century passed since the emergence of the theory. But according to Löwy (2010, p. 145), the idea of Permanent revolution is still indispensable for a radical political strategy. The system is still characterized by unevenness between center and

periphery, between the highly industrialized countries and the “underdeveloped world” of the Global South – and these dynamics still influence the forms and practices of democracy today.

3.3.2.4 Discourses on Parliamentarianism

The defeat of revolutions in Western Europe after the first World War and the triumph of reformism sparked a renewed debate among Marxists about the stances towards democracy and parliamentarianism. Discussions on the issue of parliamentarianism dominated the “The Second Congress of the Communist International, July 19-August 7, 1920”. German left-wing communists had emphatically rejected “[...] *all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete*” (Lenin, 1966, p. 56).

Nikolai Bukharin⁶⁷ (1977, pp. 20-21) distinguished four different positions on the question of parliamentarianism within the socialist movement. First is the position of the reformists which was dominant in most of the worker’s parties and organizations. They believed that peaceful transformations to socialism were possible through legal reforms on the basis of parliamentary democracy. Just like the traditional organisations of the working class grew into the capitalist and imperialist system, a considerable part of the parliamentary representatives of the working class and the factions of the workers’ parties grew over into the bourgeois parliament: “Instead of being something that was directed against the system as a whole in general and against the bourgeois parliament, they became a component of the parliamentary apparatus as such”. All other three currents agree that parliamentarianism is not a means to lead to communism.

Radically opposed to the reformist position are the anti-parliamentarians – which is according to Bukharin (1977, pp. 30-31) the legitimate child of the opportunism and parliamentarianism practiced by the social democrats. Within these anti-parliamentarians, exist essentially two groups which use different arguments for their parliamentarianism. The antiparliamentarians-on-principle were anarchists and the Trade Unionist opponents of the political action of the workers parties. Among them were the North-American International Workers of the World (IWW) who voted against the concluding *Theses on the communist*

⁶⁷ Nikolai Bukharin was a Russian Bolchevic who wrote extensively on imperialism, editor of *Pravda* after the October revolution; he was executed by the Stalinist regime in 1938.

parties and parliamentarism at the end of the congress. The anarchists and syndicalists declare themselves to be against any agency of power.

Italian socialist representative Amadeo Bordiga (1977) contrasts this anti-parliamentarism with his own version which he claims to be “[...] based on the Marxist critique of bourgeois democracy”. According to Bordiga (1977), bourgeois democracy and parliament democracy function as an indirect defence of capitalism. It should therefore be the first bourgeois institution to be destroyed, long before the construction of any worker’s state or transition to communism. It is necessary to break with the lie that tries to make people believe that every clash of the hostile parties, every struggle for the conquest of power, must be played out in the framework of the representative democratic mechanism, in election campaigns and parliamentary debates (Bordiga, 1977).

The importance ascribed to electoral activity contains moreover, according to Bordiga (1977, p. 43) a double danger: “[...] on the one hand it gives the impression that that is the main activity, and on the other it absorbs all the party’s forces, which paralyses the work of all the other branches of the Party”. Therefore Bordiga (1977) defends to boycott elections and the bourgeois democratic institutions – particularly in Western Europe, where bourgeois parliamentarism has the strongest ideological position. Communist parties would according to Bordiga never achieve anything great... “[...] if they do not base their work directly on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the workers’ councils and abandon any contact with bourgeois democracy” (Bukharin, 1977, p. 33).

Against Bordiga’s position, Lenin (1966) wrote well-known pamphlet entitled “‘Left-wing’ communism – an infantile disorder”. He considers Bordiga’s perspective one of weakness: how could the working class trust a revolutionary leadership if that leadership considers itself too weak to confront capitalism in its own parliament? Moreover, the appeal to advance the council alternative to parliament does not make sense if these worker’s councils do not exist: “Parliament is a product of historical development which one cannot abolish from the world until one is strong enough to scatter the bourgeois parliament” (Lenin, 1977, pp. 51-52). Like historical experiences do not arise in an artificial way, we cannot artificially create soviets. In the same debate with Bordiga, Bukharin (1977, p. 33) stated:

[...] we cannot organise the workers’ councils straight away in every country. The councils are fighting organisations of the proletariat. If no conditions exist to carry out this direct struggle, there is no sense in setting up these councils. Then they are transformed into cultural appendages of other institutions which become absolutely reformist... And none of these organisations yet exists at all, they are not yet given realities. But the bourgeois parliament is a given reality.

While rejecting the reformist, parliamentary road to socialism, Lenin (1966, pp. 56-65 *passim*) criticizes the anti-parliamentarian because they conflate two different meanings of “parliamentarism being obsolete”. While parliamentarism may be in theory historically obsolete; as an element of bourgeois, decadent capitalism, it is not politically obsolete in practice because large parts of the working class still believe in bourgeois democracy.

A part of the proletarian petty bourgeoisie, the backward workers and small peasants, all these elements really think that their interests are represented in parliament, and one must combat that through work in parliament and teach the masses the truth through facts. The backward masses cannot be taught by theory, they need experiences (Lenin, 1977, p. 52).

Only going through this pedagogical experience, the organized working class will be prepared to adopt a council-based regime and dissolve the parliamentary regime (Lenin, 1966, p. 59). For the time being, Marxists should thus participate in electoral struggles and campaigns to prepare the dissolution of parliamentarism from within. In some cases, only if one is a member of parliament – even within the most counterrevolutionary parliaments – can one combat bourgeois society and parliamentarism. Revolutionary crises present themselves as parliamentary crisis and require a “combination” of mass action outside a reactionary parliament with an opposition sympathetic to the revolution within it. At the same time a ruthless and uncompromising criticism should be directed – not against parliamentarianism or parliamentary activities – but against those leaders who are unable and “unwilling” – to utilise parliamentary elections and the parliamentary form in a revolutionary and communist manner (Lenin, 1966).

3.3.2.5 Popular Front and United Front

After the consolidation of the Bolshevik Russian Revolution and the subsequent failure of revolutions to take place in Western Europe, discussions about tactics focussed on political articulation dominated the twenties and thirties. Among them, the most important one is probably the debate between the tactics of United Front and the Popular Front.

The United Front is first explained in theses of the fourth congress of the Communist International in 1922 (Riddell, 2011). After the failure of the German revolution, it was seen at the time as the only way of guiding Communists in the right direction, towards winning the majority of workers. It is presented as a political tactic to unite all the forces of the working class – implying all Trade Unions and parties that defend the working class,

including the social democratic, anarchist and catholic workers' associations⁶⁸ – against capital. This tactic of political articulation should not be focussed on “electoral combinations” of leaders in pursuit of one or another parliamentary aim, but should be approached as a process which happens from below, while rejecting an “[...] organisational fusion of all the ‘workers’ parties” (Riddell, 2011, p. 1158). Trotsky (2007, p. 10) called it “[...] the tactic of fusing the masses on the basis of transitional demands”. The idea behind this tactic, is that the practice of the struggle would eventually lead to socialist conclusions as a workers' government can be neither won nor maintained without a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The united front tactic is simply an initiative whereby the Communists propose to join with all workers belonging to other parties and groups and all unaligned workers in a common struggle to defend the immediate, basic interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie. Every action, for even the most trivial everyday demand, can lead to revolutionary awareness and revolutionary education; it is the experience of struggle that will convince workers of the inevitability of revolution and the historic importance of Communism.

The main aim of the united front tactic is to unify the working masses through agitation and organisation. The real success of the united front tactic depends on a movement “from below”, from the rank-and-file of the working masses. Nevertheless, there are circumstances in which Communists must not refuse to have talks with the leaders of the hostile workers' parties (Riddell, 2011, pp. 1157-1159).

In debates within Marxism, the tactic of the United Front is often contrasted, but also sometimes confused with the tactic of the Popular Front. The practical origins of the Popular Front – Front Populaire – lie in France. In 1935 leaders of the communists and socialists started talks about joint political action in order to counter the growing French fascist movement – these would eventually lead to the popular-front governments under leadership of Leon Blum. The tactic was replicated in republican Spain, in which communists joined forces with anarchists, social democrats and liberal republicans in government to counter the fascist reaction. It was officially recognized by the communist international as its official doctrine at the congress in 1935, presented by Giorgi Dimitrov⁶⁹. Communists called for a new “Peoples' Front”, which did not distinguish its allies upon a basis of class – like the united front had done and which included communists, socialists and Christian-democrat workers – but included all progressive forces willing to join in the

⁶⁸ From 1929, the Catholic Church – particularly in France – recognized the right of Catholic workers and Trade Unions to form a united front even with socialist workers and Trade Unions on economic questions, even if subject to captious and restrictive interpretations (Gramsci, 2011, p. 353).

⁶⁹ This tactic had to replace the ultrasectarian Third Period line which had dominated the Comintern after the – which set revolution as the immediate goal and defined Socialists and Social Democrats as social-fascists. He denounced this approach.

struggle to defend democracy against fascism. It included all liberals, republicans and progressive sections of the Bourgeoisie. It was generally applied, from labour conflicts, over international brigades to electoral contests. In the US, this tactic even led for communists to give critical support of Franklin Roosevelt (Barrett, 2009, pp. 531-533 *passim*).

According to Barrett (2009), the popular front tactic was driven by three factors: rank-and-file agitation “from below” within the various national sections of the movement; internal debates and factionalism within the leadership of the Comintern; and the USSR’s pursuit of security in the face of Nazi aggression. The popular front was an extreme turn-around in relation to ultra-sectarian Third Period line which had dominated the Comintern after abandoning the united front at the end of the nineteen-twenties. This “third period”-line, had followed the first consolidation of Stalinism. Its primary goal was the elimination of direct political enemies on the left; its doctrine set revolution as the immediate goal and defined Socialists and Social Democrats as class-enemies, branding them as social-fascists (Barrett, 2009, pp. 531-533 *passim*).

Other Marxists – particularly from the left opposition in the communist parties, which crystallized around the figure of Leon Trotsky who would be banned from the Soviet Union after Lenin’s death – had remained loyal to the former United Front tactic of the 4th Comintern congress. They had criticized the “third-period” line as sectarian, and after the Comintern’s U-turn, they criticized the popular front tactics. They argued that the popular front tactics represented a drive towards class-collaboration and opportunism which would not only abandon the Marxist perspective of socialism and dictatorship of the proletariat as equal to “real democracy”. But they also argued that this popular Front tactic would prove ineffective against fascism. The choice between the tactics of popular front and the united front marked the internal strife between Marxists about the question of democracy since the nineteen thirties. While the Comintern-loyalists defended democracy against fascism at all cost; the left opposition argued that fascism was the consequence of the irresolvable contradictions of capitalism and liberal democracy itself; and that an interclass front weakened and confused the working class: fascism had to be confronted by the working class and the left based upon a program of social emancipation – and eventually revolution.

While the Comintern-loyalists were able to crush their united front opponents – in many cases through physical elimination and show-trials – the popular front tactic was not able to stop the rise of fascism across Europe. Experiments of popular front in Spain and France were eventually defeated. In many countries the old “democratic” capitalist elites

became supporters of fascism – rather than defenders of liberal democracy – while communists became the primary targets of repression.

The official doctrine of the Popular Front tactic ended abruptly in 1939, when the Kremlin and its allies would make another U-turn: the *Molotov-Von Ribbentrop* non-aggression pact between Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union retracted the Moscow-loyal communists from the antifascist struggles. After the defeats of the popular fronts and the failed negotiations on a collective security treaty with the allied forces in the context of the Western Antiappeasement policies, Stalin saw in the pact with Hitler the best insurance for geo-political survival. The pact would be short-lived, and operation *Barbarossa* – the German invasion of the Soviet Union – would re-establish the alliance between the Soviet Union and the liberal-democratic powers.

In the context of the cold war, pure geopolitical interests, determined by well-agreed spheres of influence between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, would regulate the strategies of communist parties towards liberal democracy. In the Western liberal capitalist sphere, communists defended a stageist approach towards democracy which followed to some extent a logic similar to the popular front: liberal parliamentary and formal democracy and capitalist modernization were defended as a temporary goal or stage. This democratic stability would prepare for a socialist transformation in an undefined future. In its own sphere of influence, Soviet Union would – often by military force – impose one-party Stalinist regimes modelled to itself. These “popular democracies”; were legitimized by a substantive redistribution of wealth, while denouncing “bourgeois” notions of individualist liberty and formal freedom.

Both sides of the iron curtain defended different perspectives on democracy and human rights reflecting their own ideologies and geopolitical and economic interests. This balance between West and East and between Capital and Labour, allowed for the development of the so-called European Social model, with different forms of welfare capitalism or Welfare-state regimes (Esping-Andersen, 2013). Some de-commodification of society (Esping-Andersen, 2013, p. 3) and a so-called “social citizenship”, based upon rights of education, health and social security were implemented. It created the conditions for some kind of “real political citizenship” (Wickham, 2002, p. 2). In Europe – and to a lesser extend elsewhere –, this social equilibrium created the space of a trans-class institutionalization of a democracy with different “dimensions”. The formal democratic dimension was based upon parliamentary representative systems with the inclusion of the workers, women etc. The

substantial dimension of democracy consisted in the institutionalization of the social conflict through the creation of social rights and the social welfare systems. It also created the space for the emergence of trans- or extra-class-conflicts and political movements; sometimes labelled as post-materialist movements. Among them are the conflicts about race, gender and ecology, emerging through their own interaction with the capitalist political economy, seemingly independent from class. The Popular front doctrine remained a spectre guiding many marxist and post-marxist organizations and intellectuals throughout the decades after the second world war. Long after more precise formulations have been forgotten, the strategy and the ideal of the Peoples' Front remain. Barrett (2009, pp. 543-546 *passim*) argues that the roots of the civil rights movement, many of the roots of the modern feminist movement and the new left are located in the Popular Front organizations of the postwar period. They will also influence eurocommunism and the left-populist approach to democracy.

The struggle for inclusion of these sub-altern identities (Santos, 1998) – and thus of further democratization – was the consequence of a massive inclusion in the working-class through massive proletarianization of women and organized mass migration from the peripheries. As social conflicts immersed in a capitalist society, they present their own contradictions – such as the rising objectification of women and human trafficking, as well as the rise of racism, islamophobia and the electoral rise of the extreme right.

3.4 Inquiring about democracy in today's crisis

Throughout this third chapter we have seen that democracy has been an essentially contested concept throughout modern history. At least for two centuries, theorists have engaged with democracy – as ideal or materiality, as utopia or dystopia – and developed dozens of theories and approaches. Among them are classical republicanism, utilitarianism, elitism, constitutionalism, anti-colonialism, empiricism, liberalism, deliberative approaches, participatory approaches, agonism and socialism.

From the second chapter we take that every form of scientific knowledge is not only historical, but also political, and that crises have the property to expose not only the internal contradictions of processes on a certain moment; they also require taking a position. We had concluded that Marxist approach is the political scientific approach par excellence, and that throughout the history of capitalism; the opposition between capital and labour served as the basis for a political ontology in which the opposition itself serves as an axis upon which

meaning, knowledge and science are created. Particularly at the end of a period of 30 years of neoliberal hegemony, with capitalism going through a severe crisis; the Marxist literature on democracy becomes relevant again.

If we start from the premise that today's "[...] struggle for democracy [...] is in what it will mean" (Žižek, 2006, p. 37) or that democratization consists in "[...] a dispute on the meaning of democracy" (Santos & Avritzer, 2005, p. XLV), Ellen Wood (1998, p. 134), reminds us that we should not forget that the struggle between capitalism and socialism can be conceived as a struggle between different forms of democracy. We have seen how the relation of struggle between capital and labour has been mediated through democracy, how capitalism protects itself by dividing the political from the economical, how representative democracy is in the oligarchic interest of capital and how the composition of the individual liberal citizenship mimics the composition of the alienated worker.

In her polemic *The retreat from class*, against Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001), Ellen Meiksins Wood (1998, p. 135) proposes that the problem of analysis of democracy and political strategy is much more than a linguistic problem. The task of the theorist – according to Wood (1998, p. 153) – is not to empty democracy from the specific content of the ideological formulas but to explain the specificity and particularity of their content. Only doing so, one exposes that what seems to be universal – capitalist democracy – is in fact particular. That is; one should not abstract the ideological concept from its own specific historical conditions that represent particular class interests into so-called universal principles accessible to rearticulation. Instead one must explore the historical conditions that made possible the generalization of a certain interest of a particular class and conferred it universality (Wood, 1998, p. 153). The line separating one democracy from the other, lies at the point where fundamental class interests diverge. The very diversity of meanings of the concept of democracy shows us the differences between bourgeois democracy and other forms. The capitalist claim of exclusive ownership over democracy rests on the conflation of the various meanings according to Ellen Wood (1998, p. 134).

In the first chapter of this thesis, we have already laid out the historical particularity of democracy in Portugal. In the contemporary crisis of democracy, the task for the theorist, is to lead the crisis of this democracy back to an opposition between capital and labour, and between capitalism and socialism. The theorist needs to condense historical experiences of the working classes and debates about socialist strategies and tactics into political knowledge that can be used to build alternatives for a fundamental change within the contemporary

crisis of capitalism and parliamentary democracy. From the marxist perspective, the objective of this thesis is thus unavoidably, not only to expose how, but also to come to discuss the strategies of how to get to an alternative universal notion of democracy. At the same time, it needs to alert for the dangers of co-optation and ideological confusion.

Throughout this chapter we have substantiated our central hypothesis that democracy is an ideological concept, and the expression of historical class-struggles. The crisis of democracy is therefore a crisis of capitalist hegemony. While democratic legitimacy is built upon a hegemonic consensus in the interpretation of “Democracy”, the crisis expresses the underlying fundamental social contradictions, leading to a break-up of the previously existing hegemonic consensus. As diverging potentially legitimate interests emerge, the dissensus in society is concentrated in the conceptualization of democracy itself, producing divergent narratives and perspectives of it.

In the next two chapters we will expose the various meanings of democracy during the crisis in Portugal. In Chapter 4, we will analyse the discourses of the political and economic elites regarding their meanings of democracy. In Chapter 5, we will inquire into how the opposition and protestors against austerity see democracy. We will interview various key-players, representatives from social movements, unions and parties. We will try to address the following sub-hypothesis we proposed in the introduction:

- “Do people frame the questions of crisis-governance within the democratic framework?”
- “Which narratives, models and alternatives of democracy emerge from the social conflict following the economic crisis in Portugal”
- “Are those narratives diverging?”
- “Do these narratives reflect contradicting social interests?”
- “Is there a formation of alternative hegemonies?”

CHAPTER 4 – THE DEMOCRATIC DISCOURSE OF AUSTERITY

Throughout the last two chapters we have focussed on several interactions between language and politics. We discussed the problematization of the “*logos*” by Socrates according to whom the structure of argumentation, words, discourses, reflected established power relations. We focussed on the linguistic turn in critical theory which recognizes that science is ultimately based upon a social consensus mediated through language (Morrow & Brown, 1994, pp. 155-165 *passim*). Habermas’ critical theory – probably still the most influential theory on language and democracy – assumes a reality outside, but defends that we cannot know this real being itself, because our knowledge is always mediated by interpretation and language. The only thing we can know is the communication itself. We assumed this conundrum is the consequence of his ontological rejection of labour as the primary political category of knowledge.

Our approach by contrast is based upon the assumption upon this original Marxist political ontological assumption: that is, we assume a “reality” of political conflict, or better, of political economy. Within this perspective, language – and thus ideology, discourses and science – have a dialectical interaction with political economy. Discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned: linguistic-discursive textual structures are attributed a crucial function in a social production and reproduction of inequalities, power, ideology, authority. And at the same time power and control are manifested in language (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25; Wodak, 2011, p. 51). In last instance, this interaction is determined by political economy or class struggles, but language also reflects and influences these struggles. Today’s discourse is socially characteristic of economic, social and cultural changes in late modernity (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 4). Therefore, an analysis of the various discourses on the question of democracy and their relation with class interests and political economy is from utmost importance.

The biggest difference between the approach that will guide our analysis in this chapter – Critical Discourse Analysis – and Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) theory of discourse – the most influential in critical democratic theory – is that the objects of analysis in our method are the oral and written discourses within their social context as reflections of social conflict, rather than that all the social is considered to be considered as a discursive construction (Brito, 2016, p. 49).

Democratic theory literature has produced a vast array of studies that address the relation between liberalism and democracy, as we have seen in Chapter 3. The search for solutions of the crisis involves the affirmation of new interpretations and new diagnostics of the crisis. This will be our focus in the next chapter, but the first step towards these affirmations is the study and scrutiny of the crisis-discourse which still predominates the public space (Caldas & Almeida, 2016, p. 10). In this chapter, we will analyse the discourses of the political and economic elites regarding their meanings of democracy. We will focus on the articulation between contested neoliberal austerity policies and the democratic discourse to legitimize them.

In this chapter, we will not repeat the whole political-economic context we have given in Chapter 1, but based on the previous Chapter 2 on the concept of crisis, we will need to start with a recapitulation of the context of economic crisis in Portugal and the different ways to approach this particular crisis. The perspectives on the crisis are strongly connected to the respective perspectives upon democracy. We focus on the main concepts and pillars of neoliberal ideology in general. We define and historicize neoliberalism and analyse how depoliticization and culturalization play an important role in its legitimation and reproduction.

In a third part we focus on how democracy is used to legitimize the government and its neoliberal policies. We distinguish the formal approach, the substantive approach and the exceptional approach. In the fourth part we illustrate these findings based on a critical discourse analysis of interviews with two of the main neoliberal policymakers responsible for neoliberal austerity-measures in Portugal. We will analyse how strategies of depoliticization, formal legitimation and exceptionalism play a role in their legitimizing discourses. At the end we try to summarize the main characteristics of what can be named the democratic discourse of austerity.

4.1 The context of Democratic Rhetoric: three ways to read the Crisis

The Global financial crash of 2008 eventually translated into a worldwide economic crisis. One of the main poles of crystallization of this crisis was Europe. A deep recession affected the European economies, characterized by a collapse of the financial sector in consequence of the banking sector, an economic recession, a steep rise of unemployment, a collapse of tax-revenues and a rise of automatic public expenditures leading to a rise of

public deficits and a soaring of credit. These events occurred in different speeds in different parts of the eurozone, resulting in different realities between the core and the periphery. While the average unemployment rates in the Euro-area soared from 7.5 to 11.6%, in Portugal's rates rose much more: from 8.7 in 2008 to 14.1% in 2014. These differences are even bigger when we look at youth unemployment, where rates went up from 25.3 to 34.7% in Portugal. The eurozone economy shrunk by an accumulated – 2.1% between 2009 and 2013, while it had grown a total of 10.6% between 2004 and 2008. In Portugal, GDP lost an accumulated 7.6% while it had been growing an accumulated 7.9 % in the five years before (Eurostat, 2020).

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the affirmation of this situation as a crisis requires a moral judgement; an – ultimately political – perspective that interprets this objective situation – and from there leads to action. To contextualize the different democratic perspectives on the crisis, it is important to briefly distinguish the three main perspectives of political economic analysis: the Neoclassic perspective, the (neo)Keynesian perspective and the Marxist perspective.

4.1.1 The Crisis through a (Neo-)classic lens

Neoclassic economic models of economics are the dominant framework in the traditional business schools, as well as among most European policy makers, particularly in the EC. They are called neo-classic models because they recovered and reinterpreted theories of classic economic liberalism, most notably the works of Adam Smith (1976) and David Ricardo⁷¹. According to Arnsperger and Varoufakis (2006), neo-classic economics is based upon three methodological premises: methodological individualism – assuming a *homo economicus* hypothesis⁷², methodological equilibrium, and methodological instrumentalism – assuming a maximalization of preference satisfaction.

These neoclassic models are the successors of the Monetarist models of the 60's and 70's. The latter were based on Friedman's critique of Keynesianism. Monetarists didn't doubt the effect of government intervention on economics, but did not believe these effects would be desirable. Lack of information, slowness, inflation and the unreliability of

⁷¹ According to many people, these reinterpretations are very one-sided. Adam Smith for example never proposed the “invisible hand” of the market as a transcendental measure of truth.

⁷² On the relation between *homo economicus*, methodological individualism and science, cf. Chapter 2.3.1.

politicians – arguments of the so-called Public Choice theory – would make any public intervention in the economy harmful (Heylen, 2014, pp. 57-58). Neo-classic models, and their most important theorist Robert Lucas, go further in their critique of Keynesianism. Because of the lack of micro-economic foundation, Keynesian models would be totally useless to understand economics (Heylen, 2014, pp. 58-59). The neo-classic general demand curve assumes rational expectations and perfect flexibility of salaries and prices. According to neo-classic economists, every attempt by governments to “stabilize” the economy would be pointless at best. On the contrary, every government intervention will cause more price uncertainty (Heylen, 2004, pp. 563-565).

According to this reading, the crisis is a consequence of state failure and wrong – national – public policies. These failures include spend thrifty governments, a too-large – and privileged – public sector, unsustainable social security systems, and uneconomic, corrupt and irrational behaviour of public agents. The result is a lack of competitiveness and too high levels of public debt. These systemic state-failures are then revealed throughout the crisis by the judgement of the markets. When investors understand the real risks of their financial investments; states lose access to the financial markets and enter in financial and economic collapse. A crisis is thus a moment of reckoning with irresponsible state behaviour; the financial markets are the ultimate judge.

One neoclassic policy explanation for the 2008 global financial crisis is for example:

[...] that economic policies, including the 2008 tax rebate and the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)... and other US policies significantly contributed to the recession. The common argument here is that these policies distorted incentives through their deficient design and also increased uncertainty about the underlying economic environment (Ohanian, 2010, p. 61).

Another reading through the neoclassic lens is that the Euro crisis is created by a

[...] misallocation of the factors of production. These were caused either by labour market reforms or by perverse effects of financial integration and the adoption of the euro: low interest rates created by the monetary union have lowered productivity by inducing capital misallocation (Bagnai & Ospina, 2017, p. 113).

The discursive success of neoclassical economics gave it an effective – politically driven – stranglehold over alternative economic models (Arnsperger & Varoufakis, 2006, p. 6). This neo-classic perspective is hegemonized into an idea of common good by the so-called “trickle-down economics”. This argues that the profit accumulation drives the production of wealth and economic efficiency which makes that, in the end, everyone benefits. The neoclassical model of economic theory is translated into neoliberal politics.

The solution for the economic crisis can be found in “obeying the judgement of the markets” and decreasing government interventionism in the economy. This is primarily in the interests of private companies and financial markets – guaranteeing them minimal levels of state-involvement in the economy as well as financial solubility of investments and debts. Policy-guidelines include cutting government expenditures, reducing the primary deficits and privatizing public services, as well as by internal devaluations – meaning the reduction of labour cost by reducing wages and taxes, and making labour more flexible. During the global financial crisis and the subsequent Eurozone crisis, this perspective was sustained by the studies of Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff (2009; 2010), in *This time is different* and the subsequent policy-paper “Growth in a time of debt” which draws a correlation between high levels of (public) debt and low levels of economic growth. The study sustained a turning point – at around 90% – from which point “median growth rates fall by one percent, and average growth falls considerably more”. Reinhart and Rogoff’s work would be mobilized as the scientific legitimation or austerity policies during the crisis.

4.1.2 The Crisis through a (Neo-)Keynesian lens

The neo-Keynesian perspective is the mainstream opposition against the neoliberal approach. John Keynes’ (1997) *The general theory of employment, interest, and money* is the most influential economic theory borne from the great depression. Keynesians assume that markets are full of failures. This require public steering to “save” them. Traditional Keynesians believe that government should fine-tune economic output levels through budgetary and monetary interventionism. Neo-keynesians accept some of the critiques by the neo-classic economists, and are somewhat restrained on the level of fully fledged state interventionism. They prefer “coarse tuning” over fine-tuning; cancelling out only the big output imbalances. Since the implementation of the Maastricht treaty, many Keynesians have been critical to European economic policies, particularly towards the inflation-control-directives of the European Central Bank, as well as to the European Growth and Stability pacts (Heylen, 2004, pp. 39-40).

The Keynesian and neo-Keynesian approach is not so much critical of capitalism as such, but of the neoliberal approach for being auto destructive. The ideological historical origin of Keynesianism is based upon a class-compromise with historical origins in the 1930s. During the great depression it attempted to bridge the interests of the industrial

bourgeoisie and the working class. In this sense the Keynesian perspective represents a trans-class perspective. It has been the hegemonic economic perspective since the post-second World War Bretton Woods conference in 1944. Bretton Woods created an international financial system linked to the dollar, with capital controls and guaranteed by the international monetary fund, the World Bank and the general agreement of transfers and trade. It legitimized the large economic post-war reconstruction programmes, the development states in the periphery and the welfare state in the core countries of the world system. Financial crisis – as opposed to overproduction crisis – were relatively rare under this system (Harvey, 2011, p. 32). This perspective has been losing strength with the advent of neoliberalism and the crisis of the welfare state in the 1980s, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the acceleration of neoliberal globalization. It only returned to the centre of academic and popular debates during the apparent practical failure of the neoclassical models and the austerity measures. Major figures of the Keynesian approach today include Paul Krugman (2012a; 2012b; 2015), Joseph Stiglitz (2002; 2013) and Paul De Grauwe (2010; De Grauwe & Ji, 2013) – as well as Piketty (2014) and Wolf.

In the short aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008, Stiglitz (2013) described what he called a “new Keynesian consensus”: everyone saw the crash as the sign of a bloated and dysfunctional financial system that had misallocated capital. Rather than managing risk, deregulated financial markets had created systemic risk. Financial deregulation – together with easy money – had contributed to excessive risk-taking. Monetary policy would be relatively ineffective in reviving the economy, even if still-easier money might have prevented the financial system’s total collapse. Thus, greater reliance on fiscal policy – increased government spending – would be necessary.

According to this perspective, the financial crisis was caused by a credit bubble, bad loans in the housing market and trade imbalances between geopolitical rivals. At the level of the eurozone, the Euro crisis which unfolded in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, was caused by structural financial trade imbalances between member states of the European Monetary Union. This was caused by differing economic conjunctures and a lack of fiscal transfers that served as a buffer. Keynesian economists blamed the lack of European economic government and financial integration, the lack of a coordinated answer to the banking crisis and the irrational austerity policies for worsening the structural problems of the Union (De Grauwe, 2010; De Grauwe & Ji, 2013; Krugman, 2012a).

Thus, according to the Keynesian perspective, when the bubbles of financial speculation burst, the crisis revealed the disastrous effects of different neoliberal policies, particularly the unsoundness of financial liberalization. At the same time, the Euro debt-crisis showed the failures of the liberal designs of a monetary union. As a solution for the crisis, neo-Keynesians proposed fiscal stimulus, public investments or even nationalizations, higher salaries to increase purchase power, stricter financial regulation, and international integration.

4.1.3 The Crisis through a Marxist lens

Marxist economic theory is often reduced to misstated and oversimplified formulae such as the “progressive immiseration of the working class” and “ever-worsening economic crisis” (Mandel, 1982, p. 23). Marx nevertheless never predicted any sudden and automatic collapse of the capitalist system in one “final” crisis, due to a single economic ‘cause’ (Mandel, 1982, p. 83). Marx (1982, p. 209) describes capitalism based upon the immanent contradictions of the commodity form: “These forms therefore imply the possibility of crises, though no more than the possibility”.

Based upon an extensive study of Marx’s *Capital*, a critique of the works of Smith (Luxemburg, 2016, pp. 21-41 *passim*), Ricardo and Sismondi (Luxemburg, 2016, pp. 119-152 *passim*), and an extensive study of the history of crisis of capitalism between 1815 and 1908 (Luxemburg, 2014, pp. 461-484 *passim*), Rosa Luxemburg (2016) concludes that the problem of capitalism must be considered a part of the periodic cycle and crises, that crisis do not constitute the problem of capitalist reproduction in itself (p. 11), but that crisis is a method to “get to the bottom” of the problems of capitalism (p. 355). The life purpose of capital is profit – capital accumulation. Capitalist production only begins in a historical sense when exploitation goes beyond the simple distribution between the values to the workers’ produce and the cost of productive capital. This means that in the production process, there is a need to reserve a certain part of the value for accumulation. But one of the problems for capitalism, according to Luxemburg, is that on the consumption-side of capitalism, there is a need to be able to find consumers for this surplus-production of value, which in a capitalist society cannot be either capital nor labour. Who will be the consumer for societies’ commodity production that must be sold to make accumulation possible? (Luxemburg, 2016, p. 357). Since the very beginning, capitalism has relied upon an exchange relationship with

other forms of external societies – a metabolic (*Stoffwechsel*) mechanism. As these processes of exchange ran up onto “difficulties” of natural economy and frozen social relationships, Capitalism has relied on “heroic measures” of political force and violence. The export of accumulated capital and the search for costumers in non-capitalist lands led to the ruins of indigenous production, stripping them bare and subjecting them to oppression. But as the non-capitalist world becomes ever smaller, the competitive battle between groups of capital leads to “worldwide economic crisis, wars and revolutions”. Through this process, capitalism paves the way for its own downfall, either trough the fact that it cannot continue its imperialist drive beyond the point that the world consists solely of capitalists and wagemworkers and with it accumulation will be no longer possible. At the same time it sharpens class contradictions to the point of rebellion of the international proletariat against the continued existence of capitalism (Luxemburg, 2016, p. 361).

David Harvey (2011, p. 47) expands this argument: an examination of the flows of capital reveals for him, six potential barriers to accumulation which prolonged produce a crisis:

i.) insufficient initial capital ii.) scarcity or political difficulties with the labour supply, iii.) inadequate means of production – the so-called natural limits. iv.) inappropriate technologies and organizational forms versus resistance or inefficiencies in the labour process and vi.) a lack of demand backed by money to pay the market⁷³.

Capitalism has so far survived many predictions of its imminent demise (Harvey, 2011, p. 47). According to Harvey, financial crisis serve to rationalize the irrationalities of capitalism – reconfigurations and new models of development. There is no evidence that this crisis political project of free market neoliberalism will fall by itself. How to get out of the crisis depends on the balance of class forces (Harvey, 2011, pp. 10-12 *passim*).

Inspired by Luxemburg, David Harvey (2011, pp. 15-30 *passim*) defends that since the crisis of 1973-1982, capitalism has been confronted with a serious underlying demand problem: how to absorb greater and greater amounts of capital-surplus in the production of goods and services. We got “a world awash with surplus liquidity” with ever less surplus capital being absorbed in production and global profit margins falling. Growth is running

⁷³ This expansion is questioned by Marxist economist Michael Roberts (2018) in a recent debate with David Harvey. While Harvey argues that Marx did not strictly have a “labour theory of value”, but rather goes far beyond Ricardo’s, as according to Marx value is only realized in the Market. Roberts argues that Marx had a labour theory of value, but that opposed to Ricardo, this was based upon abstract Labour, rather than concrete labour – for which Roberts claims to have empirical evidence. Based upon this perspective, Roberts (2012) ground his crisis theory uniquely upon Marx’s law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, while Harvey brings in other factors.

into serious environmental, market-, profitability and spatial constraints (Harvey, 2011, pp. 28-30 *passim*). In the last 30 years, capital could only escape the crisis through wage stagnation, by “going global” – neoliberal globalization, particularly through the integration of women of the south in the world economy (Harvey, 2011, pp. 15-16), and through privatization and financial deregulation (Harvey, 2011, pp. 24-28 *passim*). Neoliberal policies have since been designed to recover the profit margins; these included wage repression (illustrated in the rising wealth inequalities since that epoch) through attacks on the labour unions, flexibilization of labour, cheap labour influx through immigration of second-class labourer/citizens and trade globalization on the one hand, and attacks on the indirect wages through dismantling the welfare state and the collapse of state investments on the other hand. Lower purchase power and lack of public investment had been compensated through financial deregulation and an enormous inflation of private investments based on high-risk credit. These policies gained track with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the main geopolitical and ideological enemy of the capitalist West, leading to neoliberal hegemony and the weakening of the labour movement. With it, it also took away the power relation that sustained the social compromise and the Keynesian policies of the welfare state.

Neoliberal financialization was thus born out of capitalist necessity. It was this financialization and the increased leverage of financial institutions that would eventually bring banks into trouble in the 2008 crisis (Harvey, 2011). Financialization reached its limits in the crisis. It revealed the unsustainability of these policies, as the ever-growing financial credit system – fictitious capital that has ever-fewer links to the material “real” economy – could not endlessly expand.

While Marxists thus recognize some of the Keynesian critiques of neoliberalism, they also understand the neoliberal critiques of Keynes within the capitalist context. This duality is overcome by historically grounding the validity and critiques in their particular position through a class analysis of the capitalist system. While the Marxist perspective takes into account the neoliberal and Keynesian perspectives, it rejects the depoliticized character of both; it historicizes them and instead looks upon the economic crisis with a political alternative by grounding the legitimacy of the anti-capitalist perspective in the interests of the working class. The solution of the crisis – and in particular the material social effects on the working people – thus exists in the anti-capitalist struggle and overcoming the capitalist

production process in order to create an economic system in which the drivers of the economy are the interests of the workers.

4.1.4 Democracy in times of Austerity

As we have seen in Chapter 1.2.2, the first governmental response towards the crisis was an expansionary one, based on the Keynesian perspective on the crisis. The Portuguese government of José Sócrates translated the appeal by the EC for massive public investments in public guarantees for the banks, the nationalization of the bankrupt BPN-bank and anti-cyclic measures to combat unemployment (Costa & Caldas, 2014, pp. 89, 92). The anti-cyclic answer was short-lived though, and the neoliberal or neoclassic perspective returned as the dominant framework for both policy-makers and technocrats to frame the crisis. When the economic crisis transformed into a debt-crisis – the national governments of Europe – under pressure of the European Commission – returned to pre-crisis neoliberal policies with redoubled force. Austerity became the leading policy concept in Europe. In Portugal, the phase of austerity starts in March 2010 with the introduction of the subsequent PEC's (*Programa de Estabilidade e Crescimento* – Stability and Growth). Given its minority position in parliament and the explosion of social protests in the streets, the PS-minority-government was incapable of implementing ever more stringent budgetary measures. The government fell in March. Eventually it would be the new right-wing PSD-CDS government led by Passos Coelho, in consensus with the PS, that would implement the structural economic reforms in exchange for loans to guarantee financial stability (Costa & Caldas, 2014).

During the Global Financial Crisis and the subsequent crisis of the Eurozone many had proclaimed the bankruptcy of neoliberalism itself, as economic theory and ideology. The Global Financial Crisis had shown that financial deregulation brought capitalism to the brink of collapse, that low wages provoked lack of demand and that private banks and companies could only avoid bankruptcy through state-interventionism and public investment. The proclamations applied to the European Monetary Union, which had been based upon neoliberal principles of budgetary balance, debt-control and wage-depression (Seymour, 2014).

But instead of the collapse of neoliberalism we got Austerity. After the collapse of the financial system, the shadow-banking system regrouped – resisted critiques and eluded

all attempts to impose new regulations. It showed itself capable to impose its power and hegemony through the implantation of austerity in Europe (Louçã & Ash, 2017, p. 28). What is Austerity? For the Right, the argument is simple: Austerity means that one cannot spend more than you take in; a principle of sound finances. One should tighten belts and clear, or at least control, public debts as quickly as possible (Seymour, 2014). Austerity stands for a principle of sound financial practices and public policies that follow the basic argument of the infamous paper of Reinhart and Rogoff (2010) which would guide EU-policies in the following years.

While Austerity policies are legitimized as a form of spending cuts that would help the economy; within the given economic and political reality it has the opposed effect. There is a wide-spread consensus among economists that austerity measures are pro-cyclic policies and actually deepen economic recession (Krugman, 2015; Stiglitz, 2014). Austerity creates a negative spiral in periods of economic downturn: lower public investment and lower wages create lower consumer demand, which in itself creates lower private investment. Why did policymakers then choose Austerity over expansionary policies, and what is the relation between Neoliberalism and Austerity? Richard Seymour (2014) argues that Austerity is not just a continuation of neoliberal policies of permanent austerity: it is a new phase of neoliberalism in form of its own exception. The neoliberal content of the austerity-measures is far from new, but through austerity it returns in a radical form in the crisis (Ferreira, 2012, p. 69).

From the onset, the austerity measures and structural reforms were met with a large social resistance. There are different arguments why austerity is perceived as incompatible with democracy: Austerity forecloses political alternatives, the policies are imposed from outside, austerity is criticized as unconstitutional, austerity attacks the social rights which are the basis of social democracy and the post-war democratic consensus of the welfare state, huge crowds protest on the streets claiming they are the people and want “Real democracy now!”.

The implementation of the austerity measures, has however not been accompanied by a discursive abandonment of the idea of democracy by policy-makers. Perhaps the only exception being former PSD opposition leader, Manuela Ferreira Leite, who asked

“Wouldn’t it be a good idea to have 6 months suspension of democracy in Portugal?”⁷⁴ (Lusa, 2008) at the outbreak of the global financial crisis in November 2008. Throughout the crisis-period, policymakers have generally claimed democratic legitimacy for those measures and upheld them against criticism. Policymakers thus articulated the discourses about democracy and austerity.

4.2 Elements of the Austerity-Hegemony

In social theory, it is common to address problems of legitimation, dominant ideas, consensus, discourses, and ideology in terms of hegemony. Hegemony refers to the phenomenon when one social class exerts power over another social class beyond coercion or law, through cultural consent and recognition of leadership. The term was first used by Plechanov in 1905 (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. XII; McLean & McMillan, 2003), but the term became particularly well-known in political theory due to the works of the Italian communist leader Antonio Gramsci. According to Peter Thomas (2009, p. 60), hegemony was originally a theory “[...] forged to theorise and guide the proletariat’s alliance with other subaltern classes” – a class alliance of the proletariat with other exploited groups, above all the peasantry, in a common struggle against the oppression of capital (Anderson, 1976, p. 19). Only after 1922, Hegemony appeared as “the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat”, in which the bourgeoisie confined “[...] the latter to a corporate role by inducing it to accept a division between political and economic struggles in its class practice” (Thomas, 2009, p. 57).

Gramsci valorised civil society and his first model of Hegemony had even excluded the state from a consideration of the foundations of bourgeois power; his second model corrected such one-sidedness, by proposing the simple preponderance of the state. Bourgeois hegemony was now seen as being “[...] co-present in civil society and the State alike” (Thomas, 2009, p. 66). Ideology is thus shared between civil society and the State: while violence pertains to the State alone (Anderson, 1976, p. 32).

⁷⁴ Our translation. In the original: “[...] não sei se a certa altura não seria bom haver seis meses sem democracia” (Lusa, 2008).

One of the basic elements of Hegemony, according to Gramsci (2011, p. 173) is common sense. Common sense⁷⁵ is contrasted to the “good sense” of philosophy. Philosophy is the critique and the overcoming of religion and common sense. Common sense is a historical product and the ideas of everyday life. The ideas of Common sense – its language, associations and arguments – offer a whole interpretative repertoire which constructs, regulates and controls the available knowledge about what surrounds us delimiting the terms of public debate and preventing us to think beyond these same ideas (Soeiro *et al.*, 2013, pp. 5-10 *passim*).

Every social stratum has its own “common sense” which is ultimately the most widespread conception of life and morals. Every philosophical current leaves a sedimentation of “common sense”: this is the document of its historical reality. Common sense is not something rigid and static; rather, it changes continuously, enriched by scientific notions and philosophical opinions which have entered into common usage. “Common sense” is the folklore of “philosophy” and stands midway between real “folklore” (that is, as it is understood) and the philosophy, the science, the economics of the scholars. “Common sense” creates the folklore of the future, that is a more or less rigidified phase of a certain time and place (Gramsci, 2011, p. 173).

According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1995c, p. 46), modern science appears as to be built against common sense, which it deems as superficial and illusionary. As common sense signifies the obvious and obviously useful knowledge against the incomprehensible and prodigious knowledge of science, and science thrives on “the prejudice of pretending to have no prejudices”, they appear as opposed to each other. They nevertheless entail each other and are part of the same cultural constellation of capitalist modernity.

Common sense is practical and pragmatic. It reproduces knowledge drawn from the life trajectories and experiences of a given social group, and asserts that this link to group experience renders it reliable and reassuring. Common sense is self-evident and transparent. It mistrusts the opacity of technological objectives and the esoteric nature of knowledge, arguing the principle of equal access to discourse, to cognitive and linguistic competence. Common sense is superficial, because it disdains structures that cannot be consciously apprehended, but for the same reason it is expert at capturing the horizontal complexity of conscious relations both among people and between people and things. Common sense knowledge is nondisciplinary and non-methodical. It is not the product of a practice expressly devised to create it; it reproduces itself spontaneously in the daily happenings of life. Common sense accepts what exists as is. It favors actions that do not provoke significant ruptures in reality. Finally, common sense is rhetorical and metaphorical; it does not teach, it persuades (Santos, 1995c, p. 47).

⁷⁵ According to Trotsky (1986, pp. 24-25), common sense is the “[...] lowest form of the intellect is not only necessary under all conditions but under certain conditions is also adequate. Common sense’s basic capital consists of the elementary conclusions of universal experience: not to put one’s fingers in fire, whenever possible to proceed along a straight line, not to tease vicious dogs... and so forth and so on. Under a stable social milieu common sense is adequate for bargaining, healing, writing articles, leading Trade Unions, voting in parliament, marrying and reproducing the race”.

Ideas of “common sense” have been widely used to legitimate austerity measures: the country/we lived above our means, debts should be payed, the social welfare is unsustainable, we all have to contribute..., or some of these common sense examples. While common sense can be an expression of bad faith of some individuals of groups, it is not when the contrast between common sense and good sense is manifest among massive parts of the population. It is the expression of more profound contrasts in the historical-social order (Gramsci, 1978, pp. 13-14).

As a consequence of the crisis of 2008, for some time it appeared as if there would be an imminent intellectual defeat of neoliberalism due to the exposure of its irrationality. But instead the crisis brought austerity and limitless “state of exception” that emptied democracy and created a new transfer of wealth from labour to capital, in the name of “the common good” (Soeiro *et al.*, 2013, pp. 5-10 *passim*). Impoverishment and austerity were presented as inevitable, it was repeated in political discourse, reproduced in everyday life and reinforced by the media. “Common sense” is the most powerful motor for fabrication of consent. The efficacy of this is based upon the simplicity and the moral weight of their formulations. Even if citizens do not explicitly support it, it creates resignation (Soeiro *et al.*, 2013, pp. 5-10 *passim*). The contradictions of common sense can be exposed by confronting it with reality and relying on “good sense” of the citizens. This good sense explains the surges of social mobilization and resistance against domination. According to Soeiro *et al.* (2013, p. 11), the rupture with the common sense, is the first step to build another emancipatory common sense. Santos (1995c, p. 48) defines this emancipatory common sense as “[...] a discriminating common sense constructed so as to be appropriated in a privileged way by the oppressed, marginalized or excluded social groups, and actually strengthened by their emancipatory practice”⁷⁶.

In order to analyse the democratic discourses of austerity; we will define and develop some of the basic aspects that support this contemporary common sense. In the first part we come back at neoliberalism as an ideology and develop it further. We also concentrate on two aspects which are linked to the way neo-liberal hegemony works: depoliticization and culturalization. The second part of this section will analyse what we consider to be the three dimensions on which this austerity-democracy is based: substantive legitimacy, formal legitimacy and the idea of exception. These elements sometimes appear

⁷⁶ Chapter 5 will focus on the democratic discourses that can serve as a base for such an new emancipatory democratic common sense.

synchronized, sometimes in apparent opposition to each other, but they all play a crucial role in sustaining hegemony.

4.2.1 Neoliberalism

Common sense has been synonymous for neoliberalism for some time. Developed by the political and economic elites to overcome the crisis of the 1970's (Mylonas, 2012, p. 648), the neoliberal discourse has been the hegemonic legitimizing discourse in recent decades. As we have seen in the introduction of this chapter, neoliberalism is a reaction against the Keynesian welfare state economics and find its theoretical base in the Chicago School of political economy, with authors such as Von Hayek, Friedman, among others (Brown, 2003).

A large body of literature has been written to analyse, describe and criticize neoliberalism. Important authors include David Harvey, Slavoj Žižek, Chantal Mouffe, Eric Swyngedouw, Wendy Brown. In his *A brief history of neoliberalism*, David Harvey (2007, pp. 2-3) describes:

[...] neoliberalism [is] in first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.

In popular usage, neo-liberalism is equated with a radically free market. But more than that, it is successful political class project that coalesced in the crisis of the 1970's to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites. Almost all states have embraced, sometimes voluntary, sometimes by external coercion, some version of neo-liberalism and implemented practices of deregulation, privatization and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision (Harvey, 2007, pp. 13-19 *passim*; 2011, p. 10).

It includes a maximized competition and free trade achieved through economic deregulation, elimination of tariffs, and a range of monetary and social policies favourable to business, linked to the vicissitudes of globalization or to International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies (Brown, 2003). It

[...] is a discourse which is backed by the strength of all the economic and social forces (the banks, the multinational companies, politicians, and so on) who are trying to make flexibility – the new global capitalism – even more of a reality than it already is. Neoliberal discourse contributes its own particular, symbolic, form of strength to the strength of these social forces (Fairclough, 1999, p. 72).

According to Brown (2006a), neoliberalism is more than a set of free market economic policies that dismantle welfare states and privatize public services in the North, make wreckage of efforts at democratic sovereignty or economic self-direction in the South. It is not just an ideology stemming from or masking an economic reality, but is a specific form of expressly amoral normative political reason organizing the political sphere, governance practices, and citizenship; a political rationality that governs the sayable, the intelligible and truth criteria:

Neoliberalism casts the political and social spheres both as appropriately dominated by market concerns and as themselves organized by market rationality. That is, more than simply facilitating the economy, the state itself must construct and construe itself in market terms, as well as develop policies and promulgate a political culture that figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life (Brown, 2006a, p. 694).

According to Marion Fourcade-Gourinchas and Sarah Babb (2002), critics of neoliberalism have understood the neoliberal transformation as a manifestation of the increasing control of capital over labour or the imposition, by international agencies and financial institutions, of disciplinary policies (e.g., conditional loans, retaliation measures) that ultimately serve the interest of the world hegemonic power, the United States.

One of the main drivers of this process has been the process of Globalization and Trade Liberalization pushed by the World bank and the IMF. The push for trade liberalization is supposed to enhance a country's income based on the Ricardian schema of comparative advantages: "[...] by forcing resources to move from less productive uses to more productive uses" (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 59).

Advocates argued that neoliberal measures simply "work" better than statist ones; neoliberalism moved the analytical focus away from economic debates to normalization in business school education and the training and practices of business community of "experts" with "technical knowledge": executives, managers, analysts, traders, market experts... (Louçã & Ash, 2017, pp. 187-188; Springer, Birch & MacLeavy, 2016, p. 324). Neoliberal discourse legitimizes phenomena through "[...] macroeconomic and neoliberal parlance, giving rise to a dehumanizing narrative that reduced the human story to its economic constituents, at the expense of any social or political traits". It affects how citizens view one another, as well as the available opportunities for social and political change: "[...] the belief in the absence of political alternatives would lead citizens to shy away from an angry response to the current crisis" (Temple, Grasso, Buraczynska, Karampampas & English, 2016, p. 570).

4.2.2 Depolitization

In the context of the rise of neoliberalism, different theorists have focussed upon the concept of the Political and depolititization, as central for a critique of the capitalist, and specifically the neoliberal, discourse. We have already discussed the Schmittean model of the Political in Chapter 2, of which Chantal Mouffe's approach is probably the most well-known contemporary example. Another model is without doubt Rancière's. Rancière criticizes the agonistic schema of the Political, particularly the notion of antagonism where the "content" is irrelevant. He argues that Politics has its own universal measure, that is: equality (Rancière, 2011, p. 4). Rancière starts from a rather Aristotelean approach politics, starting from a human as a political animal who was an interest in co-governing his polis (Aristóteles, 1998, p. 1253a).

According to Rancière politics begins with "the emergence of an active agent without a place in the social edifice, demanding to be included in the public sphere, to be heard on equal footing by the ruling oligarchy: being recognized as a partner in political dialogue. But against Habermas, political struggle is not a rational debate between multiple interests but... the struggle for one's voice to be heard and recognized as the voice of an equal partner" (Žižek, 2004, pp. 69-70).

This is not just a question of mutual incomprehension that can be managed through a Habermasian communicative act, but rather an expression of a "mécontente" (the original title of Rancière's book on politics, problematically translated as "Disagreement"), a misunderstanding that is "constitutive" (Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 126).

This event-based approach to the political is also found in Badiou according to whom the political emerges through the process of political subjectivation: by the appearance of those who disrupt the state of the situation in the name of "equality", "the people", the "common" and "the democratic" (Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 124).

The concept of the Political is contrasted with the conceptualization of politics – or police. Politics, or Policymaking (*la politique* in French) refers to public management; the power plays between political actors, everyday choreography of negotiating, formulating and implementing rules, tactics, institutions and technologies of governing which give society some form of temporal coherence. Police, or Policing, refers in the work of Rancière to hard and soft technologies of administration, all the activities which create order (Swyngedouw, 2009, p. 128). The Political, on the other hand, refers to the agonistic struggle about the fundamental questions around the environments we inhabit how to produce them. There is a tendency of the former to suture and ultimately foreclose de latter (Swyngedouw, 2014).

Swyngedouw (2009; 2014) defines the concept of depoliticization based on Chantal Mouffe's (2005) and Slavoj Žižek's (2000) approach of The Political. Depoliticization or the post-political is here used as a container concept which according Swyngedouw (2009, p. 602) means “[...] a reduction of the political, it evacuates if not forecloses the properly political and becomes part and parcel of the consolidation of a post-political and post-democratic polity”. Depoliticization takes the form of the increasing domination of a series of interrelated managerial and technical forms of governance aimed at maintaining and nurturing uninterrupted accumulation of economic wealth. Politics is “[...] reduced to the administration and management of processes whose parameters are defined by consensual socio-scientific knowledges” (Swyngedouw, 2009, p. 602). Depoliticization is characterized by Swyngedouw as the externalization of problems which are integral/inherent to the relations of global neoliberal capitalism. Or as Žižek (2000, p. 198) puts it: “In post-politics, the conflict of global ideological visions embodied in different parties which compete for power is replaced by the collaboration of enlightened technocrats, economists, public opinion specialists...”. According to Norman Fairclough (1999, p. 78),

It is part of a widely observed narrowing down of the political spectrum – parties are becoming increasingly similar in their policies, and the differences between them are increasingly differences of style... the predominance of a single economic-political discourse across the political spectrum.

This depoliticization is coherent with the ideas of New Public Management to which most of the right and the social-democratic policymakers adhered in the last decades. Managers are seen as the ideal policy-makers, while “politicians” – and particularly democratic demands – are reduced to “[...] the fat that has to be cut from the overweight state”⁷⁷ (Pureza, 2015b, p. 91). Swyngedouw (2009, p. 613) sums up the elements characterizing a post-political conception of post-democracy: 1. The externalization of problems which are integral/inherent to the relations of Global neoliberal capitalism, while side-effects are portrayed as a total threat; 2. Populist politics that elevate the interest of an imaginary “the people” to a universal level and therefore foreclosing the “opening spaces that permit the universalizing of the claims of particular groups or classes”; 3. The “enemy” or the target of concern is continuously externalized and disembodied. The “enemy” is always vague, ambiguous, unnamed and uncounted and, ultimately, empty; 4. The target of

⁷⁷ Our translation. In the original: “[...] ‘os políticos’ – e sobretudo, as exigências da democracia – são descartáveis como ‘gorduras’” (Pureza, 2015b, p. 91).

concern can be managed through a consensual dialogical politics and, consequently, demands become depoliticized and politics naturalized.

Whereas it could have been expected that such rhetoric would be under strain in the aftermath of the financial crisis (O'Rourke & Hogan, 2012, p. 4). The market driven neoliberal discourse did not weaken. One of the first elements of this depoliticizing discourse on the nature of the crisis was the characterization of the Eurozone crisis as a debt-crisis (Mylonas, 2012). As such the crisis appeared as the consequence of bad public governance; whereas the capitalist crisis, the role of the financial markets, the role of the monetary choices and inequalities was fundamentally ignored (O'Rourke & Hogan, 2012). It transferred the structural responsibility of capitalism for the socio-economic failures towards the state, "overconsuming" citizens and the government.

4.2.3 Culturalization

One of the aspects of this depoliticizing discourse is the culturalization of politics⁷⁸. Brown (2006b) and Mamdani (2004, p. 17) define "culturalisation of politics" as a discursive process that reduces every culture to "[...] a tangible essence that defines it and explains politics as a consequence of that essence". This process "[...] analytically vanquishes political economy, states, history, and international and transnational relations. It eliminates colonialism, capital, caste or class stratification, and external political domination from accounts of political conflict or instability" (Brown, 2006b, p. 20). At the same time that it divests liberal democratic institutions of any association with culture (Brown, 2006b), ignoring liberalism is culture: the culture of the dominant classes in the core of the world system. The presented solution for the wrong political-economic "culture" that led to the exceptional state, is literally to "liberalize" it, through privatization, individualization, transparency and political reform. It is within this context one should think of concepts as "a new political culture", a new work-ethic, flexibilization of labour, anti-corruption, making the state more efficient etc...

For centuries Northern Europeans have described the Mediterranean people as a lazy culture. Some place it in the second modernity, the moment when the core of the world system and its ideological center moved from the Iberian Peninsula to North-Western Europe

⁷⁸ These paragraphs are based upon an article I published in *Patterns of Prejudice*. Cf. Van Vossolle (2016a).

(Santos, 2012), others point towards the importance of the Napoleonic wars as a crucial moment in the constitution of the Mediterraneanist image (Herzfeld, 1984). Consistent with 19th century racist ideology, Western Europeans have been classified on the hierarchical scale moving upward from dark-skinned and passionate Southern Europeans to the fair-skinned and reasonable Northerners (Goldberg, 1993). It sought to present European culture as “pure” in origin and, especially, free from oriental influences (Van Vossolle, 2016a).

The identity of “Mediterranean” was built upon the contrast with “European”. The culturalization of the Mediterranean, or Mediterraneanization, has been characterized by a typical exoticism. For centuries long, millions of northern Europeans have associated the word Mediterranean with the eternal dream of the perfect holiday, poetry, visual art and music. Its people are what the northerners are not: talkative, emotional, civilized, passionate, tanned. Nowadays “Mediterranean” has developed into more of a folk-concept founded upon tourism and a general interest in roots and tradition. Mass tourism – a consumer activity mainly practiced by citizens of the Global North – has commoditized this interest in the “exotic” cultural diversity, being reified into a known consumable object, as if the Mediterranean world would have been a theme-park (Frykman, 1999).

This racist imaginary has historically been strengthened by the mutual migratory relations between periphery and core. The huge emigration wave of the nineteen sixties – due to the political repressive regimes, the harsh poverty and the lack of perspectives for economic development – has been repeating itself recently. In the “highly developed” receiving countries, those people have been frequently confronted with racism and were treated as second-class citizens – to an extent that “black people” from the former colonies in the Netherlands, for example, even tended to consider them as black, basing this designation on common experiences of colonial and Mediterranean immigrants (Essed, 1991).

This Mediterraneanisation has not been restricted to popular discourses, it has also colonized social sciences in particular anthropology. Before the popularization of the concept of PIGS by the *Financial Times* during the recent crisis, the “exotic” concept of the “Club Med” and the concept of PIGS, already existed in economic discourses during the 80’s and 90’s (Lopreite, 2011). At the same time the comparative Political Science tradition, the mainstream of Political Science, tended to categorize the South of Europe as undemocratic part of Europe – with Spain, Portugal and Greece having experienced military,

fascist dictatorships until the seventies – a categorization based upon cultural values and underdeveloped from the economic perspective underdevelopment.

During the years of economic boom during the nineties and the beginning of the millennium, the racist imaginary remained hidden under the surface. The flooding by structural funds, the diving interest rates following the implementation of the Euro, and the highest growth rates in the Union, deflated the existing xenophobic framework about the European periphery. For a decade, Ireland and Spain were symbols of neoliberal success.

Following the great recession, the peripheral countries of the Eurozone were put in the position of scapegoat for the economic crisis and the near collapse of the Eurozone. A cultural narrative re-emerged, which placed the origin of the crisis in Athens (Bohle, 2010; Lapavitsas, 2010; Mylonas, 2012) and the rest of the periphery. It purports to explain the current situation as the effect of corrupt local politicians, irresponsible behavior of citizens and consumers, state inefficiency, low productivity combined with uncompetitive high wages, misuse of EU structural funds etc.

Such “cultural” explanations – which can be found in both central as to a certain extent in peripheral countries – reproduce the old dogma of “blaming the victim”. In line with our theoretical model, not the structural problems of the Eurozone and the global financial and economic system are seen as the origin of the problem, but their victims, the populations of the debt-economies themselves. If it is not because of certain “cultural characteristics and habits”, such as alleged laziness (Bohle, 2010), non-productivity – “with easy jobs and retirement at 42” (Bratsis, 2010) – corruption, wasteful spending, inefficiency and lying (De Grauwe, 2010; Lapavitsas, 2010), a purported “Mediterranean mix of indiscipline, extravagance and outright corruption” (Bohle, 2010), it is because they are irresponsible (Hadjimichalis, 2011) and ignorant for choosing the wrong political representatives.

These “cultural” explanations – originated in north-European prejudices towards the South and are made compatible with neoliberal discourse. It includes attributing the exceptional state of the southern economies to the idea that they would have lived “above their standards” (Mylonas, 2012). This in turn is attributed to cultural prejudices as laziness, non-productivity, wasteful spending and lying, forming a “Mediterranean mix of indiscipline, extravagance and outright corruption” (Bohle, 2010). The recent financial crisis and the consequent social conflicts in the Eurozone have strengthened these discursive tendencies towards the peripheral countries of the Eurozone.

This rhetoric has a clear underlying political interest: that is to strengthen the arguments for the imposed social cuts. The Euro crisis forced the core countries to “help” the periphery. Two things should be said about this aid: first, that the EU proved unable and unwilling to handle the crisis as such. Only when the crisis proved to transcend the particular case of Greece – and the core banks could be endangered – a “solution” was found to contain it (Hadjimichalis, 2011). The bailouts can never be seen as a gift; they were not designed in order to guarantee the ability to pay civil servants’ salaries and social expenses. They were designed temporarily to save the countries with solvability problems in order to guarantee the solvability of the debt held by German and French banks (Lapavitsas, 2010). The “aid” allowed Germany and France to design an indirect bailout mechanism.

The financial “aid” was portrayed and broadly perceived as a transfer from core working class taxpayers to peripheral corrupt states and their “lazy, lying” populations. In reality it was a transfer from mainly core working class taxpayers, in the form of state warrants, to mainly core banks. By bailing out the peripheral states, it forced the German and French workers to bailout their own banks; not directly as in 2008-2009 banking bailouts, but through mediation of Greece and the other PIGS (Douzinas & Papaconstantinou, 2011). Austerity was thus legitimized through a form of collective cultural guilt. Right-wing politicians of Peripheral countries in the Eurozone have reproduced this framework in their electoral campaigns during the crisis: “The intervention of the Troika was *our* own fault”, “*We* were living above our standards” (Van Vossolle, 2016a).

The above forms of legitimation are not necessarily linked to democratic legitimation of capitalism. Forms of neoliberalism, depoliticization and culturalization of politics do happen in authoritarian regimes and dictatorships. The first implementations of neoliberalism were in fact introduced in authoritarian regimes in the neo-colonial world, such as the Chicago-boys experiments in Chile after the military coup by Augusto Pinochet in 1973 (Fourcade-Gourinchas & Babb, 2002, pp. 545-549 *passim*). It was only later on, with Margareth Thatcher’s conservative victory in 1979 United Kingdom, that the neoliberal revolution reached democratic states. In the next paragraphs we will analyse traditional methods of democratic legitimation. The first two are also considered traditionally as two different “dimensions” of democratic legitimation, as referred to in Chapter 3.1.3: formal, procedural or input methods of democratic legitimacy and substantive or output methods of democratic legitimacy.

4.2.4 Formal Democracy

The formal perspective has been dominant in the neoliberal discourse about democracy. The theoretical background of the formalist rhetoric is based on Joseph Schumpeter's (1976) minimalist model of democracy. Unsatisfied with the classic republican model of democracy based on Rousseau's "*Volonté Generale*", Schumpeter tried to constitute an "applicable model of democracy". He did so, through the reduction of democracy to the method of electoral competition. Instead of an end in itself, democracy becomes just a method to legitimate policy. Policies are legitimized through a form of market-mechanism; like an aggregate of consumers, citizens, decide through a competition of votes between different political players. The role of the people is to "produce a government", acceptance of leadership, is the true function of vote. According to Schumpeter (1976), such approach leaves room for the vital role of leadership; it theoretically enables group-wise volitions to be formed and represented by leaders competing for votes; votes are an electoral incentive for good governance.

In his more recent defence of this approach, Przeworski (1991, p. 10) defines democracy as "[...] a system in which parties lose elections". The minimalist approach presupposes regime and policy change and conflict between interests without violence and bloodshed. The mere prospect that government may change, results in a peaceful character of the regulations of conflicts. It is thus implicit to the formal view of democracy that elected officials regularly face re-election or removal at the end of their term, and that the fear of removal will motivate representatives to act responsibly and respond to the public's desires (Jacobs & Shapiro, 1994, pp. 10-11). Voting also legitimizes coercion; it constitutes "flexing muscles", as the majority represents a power relation and coincides with the physical force of the citizens. The electoral process generates the information of this power relation (Przeworski, 1999, p. 39).

The formal democratic discourse thus legitimizes policies purely on the base that those executing these policies have been democratically elected; that they are supported by a parliamentary majority. It limits democracy to voting procedures, rule of law, freedom of expression, etc, thus narrowing democracy down to the electoral act by which citizens every 4 to 5 years have the right to choose their representatives from recognized political parties.... Such perspective neglects the democratic substance of government activity between elections (Jacobs & Shapiro, 1994, pp. 10-11).

The chosen representatives have then the right to conduct “responsible” policies that abide the rules of predetermined international treaties – with their area of power increasingly limited by the primacy of the market in ever increasing areas of social life. In the case of the European countries under Troika governance, these limitations have been brought to their limits; through the limitation of political sovereignty by globalization, the agreements with the troika and the power of financial markets due to their influence on state finances and debt. Elections legitimized these policies of the executive until the end of the legislature. Substantive resistance against these policies, that goes further than symbolic protest and tries to influence policies, therefore is accused of not respecting democracy.

4.2.5 Substantive Legitimation

The substantive view about democracy criticizes the narrow perspective laid out by the minimalist perspective. Macpherson (1977, pp. 5-6) for defines the substantive view of democracy as “[...] a quality pervading the whole life and operation of a national or smaller community, or if you like a kind of society, a whole set of reciprocal relations between the people who make up the nation or other unit”. For Box, Marshall, Reed and Reed (2002, p. 611),

[...] substantive democracy may be summarized as a setting in which people may, if they choose, take part in governing themselves with a minimum of interference or resistance (for example, from economic or other elites, or administrative “experts”), and without being required to assume in advance a uniform or universal set of constraints.

The classic approach towards substantive democracy is a republican one, based on citizen’s participation in the management of their community and constructing a common interest. Adams, Bowerman, Dolbeare and Stivers (1990, p. 220) argues that separating of the procedural and substantive leaves unanswered questions about “[...] outcomes, conditions of people’s lives, and realization of all people’s political potential that made democracy a politically explosive concept in the past”. Box *et al.* (2002) consider this republican form of substantive democratic discourse as intrinsically opposed to neoliberal policies – or New Public Management –, because it tries to collapse the government’s sphere of republican participation. Through the neoliberal discourse we are relegated to represent the democratic pole within a tension between bureaucracy and democracy. Neoliberal discourse appeals to the public at large and to those in government, whose charge is to make the government “run better” and “cost less”.

Jakobs and Shapiro's (1994) approach to substantive democracy, on the other hand, is an empirical one. Substantive democracy is based upon public opinion research. Policies are substantively democratically legitimate when they reflect public opinion. Substantive democracy refers to how much public opinion is reflected in decision-making between elections. Within this approach, there are two dimensions of substantive legitimacy, depending on if change in public opinion occurs after (leadership) or before (responsiveness) a change in policy. Substantive democratic legitimacy can thus be achieved by policies reflecting public opinion or by public opinion reflecting the policymakers that mobilize the public behind their policies through superior skill and knowledge (Jacobs & Shapiro, 1994).

The empirical approach is the only approach of the two, which permits some kind of substantive democratic articulation with austerity. Within the neoliberal era, with a balance of power strongly in favour of capital, substantive legitimation of the system (Paterson, 2010), could partially be provided by higher rates of growth entailed by globalization and market liberalization. According to the neoliberal economic thought, austerity eventually provides the bases for growth and individual wealth. The basic idea is: "while politics shrinks, the economy grows" (Bello, 2006, p. 16). People are offered a piece of capitalism, and everyone approached as a shareholder or rentier, so that even while the rates of exploitation rise and social benefits were cut down, they could grab a chunk of the profits created by it (Graeber, 2012, p. 376). Typically, this specific substantive legitimation is projected into the future.

The policies of the memorandum brutally affected fields that considered as substantive elements of democracy, such as social welfare. Moreover, the Troika included a reduction of the state and its budget, a reduction of voter's sovereignty through foreign and European control on policies, privatization of important public services... The external supervision by the Troika, the stricter control by the European Commission on the national budgets, and the rising dependence of the ECB for financing, has led to decreasing room of manoeuvre for national political actors and for substantial legitimation of their decisions. The consequence is not only that the democratic institutions themselves get de-substantiated, what is perceived as democracy itself can lose its legitimacy.

4.2.6 Exception as a Rule

A third way to legitimize austerity within a democratic discourse is to portray the situation as a temporal exception to the rule in order to protect the democratic rule. Like we have argued in Chapter 2.5, the crisis is used as a political opening to impose exceptional measures which would have been difficult to attain in a context of normality. According to this democratic exceptionalism, a practice or situation is democratic, as long as it is necessary to preserve or found a democratic state. These extraordinary politics “can be prior to and below instituted politics, within it, and on its fringes”. This moment of founding – tied to concept of “legitimacy” in the work of Weber and Schmitt precedes a moment of “institutionalized politics or normal law-making” (Kalyvas, 2008). It is a legitimation which is by definition at the boundary of democracy itself.

Schmitt (1986) famously stated that sovereignty was defined by those that decide upon the state of exception. The state of exception is the state in which normal constitutional politics is in a situation of crisis, and a sovereign intervention is needed to restore the rule of law. It is based on the original Roman interpretation of dictatorship. The state of exception, and sovereign powers, are thus legitimated in order to restore the rule of law – in our own example democratic normality (McCormick, 1999).

This concept of exception has been a founding principle for the implementation of neoliberal policies. Since the 1980’s right-wing dictatorships in Latin America had been the first laboratories of neoliberal policies. Those first experiments didn’t need to bother about the articulation between neoliberalism and democracy. In *The shock doctrine*, Naomi Klein (2008) explains how the triumph of global free market ideology was implemented at the expense of democracy, rather than through. Economic and financial shocks were used to oblige third world countries to implement the so-called Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP’s) of the IMF and World Bank. Social and economic disaster were the opportunity to implement SAP’s that included privatizations, trade liberalizations... but also some form of liberal democracy, in order to access the needed credit lines.

But the exception-discourse would be essential in democratic regimes. The exception serves as a transcendental and legal basis to reconfigure the power relation between the elected (members of parliament, union representatives...) and non-elected (financial markets, international financial institutions...) (Ferreira, 2012, p. 67). The South

European austerity measures have been the latest adaptation of this exceptional approach of neoliberalism towards democracy.

Austerity creates and deepens its own situation of exception on the political level. In *Linhas vermelhas: crítica da crise-como-política*, José Manuel Pureza (2015b) claims that the crisis of debt in Portugal was transformed into a politics of crisis. The devaluation of labour – through cuts in salaries, pensions and public services was legitimized “[...] through invoking a permanent state of exception called crisis”⁷⁹ (Pureza, 2015b, p. 96). In their analysis of the conflict between the Portuguese constitutional court and the Portuguese government over the austerity measures, Ferreira and Pureza (2013) show how exceptionalism is a juridical and rhetorical use of crisis as a political strategy used for the liberal transformation of society and the economy. Passos Coelho’s government framed judges that would obstruct the necessary measures for “economic rationality” as “constitutional activists”. Such framing opens the gates for extra- or supra-constitutional values that guide the austerity politics (Ferreira & Pureza, 2013, pp. 260, 271).

4.2.6.1 There is no alternative

From the onset of the Euro crisis, policymakers and opinion makers used the speculative pressure financial markets, European laws and procedures, the Troika, and neo-classic economic theories portrayed as economic “laws” to create a situation of exception which discredited all political alternatives to austerity. Accompanying austerity policies, the austerity discourse appears as a radical form of the neoliberal discourse which “[...] eclipses the possible policy alternatives and implies the denial of the primacy of the political” (Borriello, 2017, p. 242). The austerity discourse thus delegitimizes alternative perceptions of reality through permanent coercion and through the interiorization that there are no alternatives (Ferreira, 2012, pp. 44, 60-65 *passim*).

There is no Alternative – or TINA in short – became iconic as a catchphrase by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who used it to legitimize the profound economic reforms in the 1980’s, which included privatizing public services, breaking the miners’ strikes and the failed introduction of the poll-tax. Since the 1980’s, TINA became the symbolic cornerstone to legitimize the neoliberal doctrine that had become hegemonic

⁷⁹ Our translation. In the original: “[...] *alicerçado na invocação de um estado de exceção duradouro chamado... crise*” (Pureza, 2015b, p. 96).

in the form of the Washington consensus in the 1990's (Harvey, 2007, p. 13). Within the Euro crisis and accompanying Austerity, the symbolic catch-phrase "There was no Alternative" entered public debate as a unquestionable "fact", used by policy-makers legitimized the austerity measures.

The concrete examples of TINA-discourse were very frequent in the public sphere during the crisis in Portugal. The media themselves have played an important role in enforcing this consensus. Caldas and Almeida (2016) analysed the discourses in the Portuguese economic press during the period of the crisis. Recurrent themes in the narratives of the crisis were guilt, inevitability and sacrifice: "The state, but also 'we', would have lived 'above our possibilities'". It is a short step from guilt to inevitability. "We have spent too much, we indebted ourselves. Now our lenders demand us austerity and spending cuts. No need to blame or resist them, we need them, we need to obey"⁸⁰ (Caldas & Almeida, 2016, pp. 6-7, 24).

On 14 October 2011, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, then public opinion-maker, ex-president of PSD and the future president of the Republic, affirms that "In the situation we have gotten in, *there is no alternative* to control the deficit and the public debt"⁸¹ (Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa..., 2011). One month later the minister of parliamentary affairs says to understand the frustration of the Portuguese people, but defended that "there is no alternative" to the path the government is following. Minister Relvas stated that "During the last years we have spent what we had and what we had not, we let unemployment boom, we let public debt increase and the measures that are being taken, are reformist and have the objective to correct the path that has been followed over the last years"⁸² (Governo reitera..., 2011). He repeats this the next month when he is questioned about the installation of new toll-ways: "[...] the Portuguese have to understand that the government *has no alternatives* to the introduction of toll-ways, as it is forced to 'pay the debts others have assumed'. Relvas

⁸⁰ Our translation. In the original: "*O Estado, antes do mais, mas também as famílias e as empresas – isto é, 'nós' – haviam gastado acima das nossas possibilidades*"; "*Gastamos acima das nossas possibilidades. Endividámo-nos. Agora, os credores exigem-nos poupança, cortes na despesa. Não vale a pena acusá-los a eles. Resistir-lhes. Precisamos deles. Temos de obedecer*" (Caldas & Almeida, 2016, pp. 6-7, 24).

⁸¹ Our translation. In the original: "*Na situação a que chegamos, não há nenhuma alternativa para controlar o défice e a dívida pública*" (Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa..., 2011).

⁸² Our translation. In the original: "*Nós ao longo dos últimos anos gastámos o que tínhamos e o que não tínhamos, deixámos disparar o desemprego, deixámos aumentar a dívida e as medidas que estão a ser tomadas são medidas reformistas e que têm um objectivo corrigir o rumo que foi sendo seguida ao longo dos últimos anos*" (Governo reitera..., 2011).

recognizes that these are ‘difficult times’ but ‘there is no alternative’⁸³ (Lusa, 2011). The same rhetoric is repeated by the then president of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, who expressed his confidence in the “wisdom” and the “good sense” of the Portuguese: “The people can disagree on this or that measure, but in the end, they know *there is no alternative* to the path of budgetary consolidation and structural reforms. The enormous majority of the people know this”⁸⁴ (Lusa, 2012). The same message is given by the government to the “social partners”; the executive “reinforced” that “[...] *there is no other path* than that of austerity”⁸⁵ (Governo reafirmou..., 2012).

This rhetoric is reinforced by economists supporting the government’s policies: “But is there any alternative to austerity?”. This is how Teodora Cardoso, president of the Council of Public finances, answer starts her answer to an interpellation by PS member of parliament João Galamba. For her there is no other path to be followed, warning that any “[...] alternative to austerity implies more financing, and more financing means more debt and any kind of increase of debt ‘means aggravating the problems of the economy’”⁸⁶ (Redação/VC, 2012). In *Jornal de Negócios*, economist Vitor Bento stressed that “there is no alternative to austerity”, as in Portugal, “[...] since 1995 we have been increasing the gap between internal spending and the income we got, which means that the difference only can be sustained if there is someone financing that difference, with external money”⁸⁷ (Laranjeiro, 2013).

⁸³ Our translation. In the original: “[...] *os portugueses têm de perceber que o Governo não tem alternativa à introdução de portagens, já que é obrigado a ‘pagar as dívidas que outros assumiram’ [...] ‘tempos difíceis’ mas ‘não há alternativa’*” (Lusa, 2011).

⁸⁴ Our translation. In the original: “*As pessoas podem discordar desta ou daquela medida, mas no fundo sabem que não há alternativa a um caminho de consolidação orçamental e reformas estruturais. A esmagadora maioria das pessoas sabe isso*” (Lusa, 2012).

⁸⁵ Our translation. In the original: “[...] *alguns parceiros sociais explicaram que o executivo reiterou que não há outro caminho se não o da austeridade*” (Governo reafirmou..., 2012).

⁸⁶ Our translation. In the original: “*Qualquer alternativa à austeridade implica mais financiamento. E mais financiamento implica mais dívida. [...]. Tudo o que signifique aumentar a dívida significa agravar o problema da economia*” (Redação/VC, 2012).

⁸⁷ Our translation. In the original: “*Não há alternativa à austeridade [...] desde 1995 temos vindo a aumentar o ‘gap’ entre a despesa interna e o rendimento que temos, o que significa que essa diferença só se consegue manter desde que haja quem financie, com dinheiro externo, essa diferença*” (Laranjeiro, 2013).

4.3 Critical Discourse Analysis of two policymakers

Inspired by the work of Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Althusser, as well as Habermas' Theory of communicative action (Blommaert, 2005, p. 27), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA*) is one of the most common schools to analyse language as a social practice. Its intrinsic relation to crisis and critique, the assumption of political commitment⁸⁸ (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 23-24), and that its foundational work – Fairclough's (2001) *Language and power* is a study of neoliberalism and Thatcherite rhetoric – make CDA* the best methodology for our inquiry into the democratic austerity discourse.

According to Jan Blommaert (2005, p. 30), Norman Fairclough's (1992) *Discourse and social change* and Chouliaraki & Fairclough's (1999) *Discourse in late modernity* provide the most elaborate and ambitious attempt for methodological blueprint of Critical Discourse Analysis. In Fairclough's model, discourse is seen in terms of processes and changes in hegemony, including “[...] large-scale hegemonic processes such as democratisation, commodification, and technologization” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 30). Fairclough (1992) distinguished 3 dimensions of the discourse: (1) Discourse-as-text – which focusses on linguistic cohesion and structure. One example is the use of the passive form of verb, which obscures the political agent; (2) Discourse-as-discursive-practice – which focuses on how discourse is consumed, produced, distributed in society's macro-conditions; and (3) Discourse-as-social-practice – designate the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse operates, through the construction of alliances, through integrating classes through consent, the rearticulation of orders of discourse; it focusses on the Hegemonic struggle and discourse as part of social change, the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, as well as attempts to control and resistance... (Blommaert, 2005, p. 30; Fairclough, 1992, p. 93).

Each of these three dimensions should go through three phases: description, interpretation, explanation. The phase of description focuses on the textual-linguistic features of the material. The researcher adopts the participants' categories in his description, making his/her interpretive framework explicit. The interpretive phase concerns the way in which participants understand discourse on the basis of their cognitive, social, and

⁸⁸ The political commitment dimension of CDA* lies in the fact that CDA* looks towards subversion within this dialectic of Discourse: empowering the powerless, giving voice to the voiceless, exposing power abuse and mobilizing people for social change (Blommaert, 2005).

ideological resources, by means of categories and criteria provided by participants. This requires a degree of distancing between the researcher and the participant: such interpretations display ideological framings: “[...] participants ‘reproduce’ elements of social ideologies through everyday interactionally organized interpretive procedures”. In the explanatory phase, the researcher draws on social theory in order to reveal the ideological underpinnings of lay interpretive procedures. Social theory creates the distance necessary to move from “non-critical” to “critical” discourse analysis: transcending the limitations of lay consciousness about the ideological dimensions of discourse (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 29-30).

4.3.1 Democratic Austerity Discourse as Text

Our textual analysis is based upon interviews⁸⁹ with two key players in the implementation of austerity measures: Mr. Abebe Selassie, president of the IMF delegation in Portugal and Maria Luís Albuquerque, finance-minister of the Passos Coelho’s government⁹⁰. The interviews were semi-structured, and thus included more structured and unstructured parts. The structured component was composed by a list of topics, which took the form of precise questions, without a too rigid framework of the interview, allowing up new topics, that may lead to areas of inquiry not previously considered (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Layton-Henry, 2004, p. 12). Our interviews were conducted around 4 leading questions: “What is your opinion about the state of democracy in Portugal?”, “What is the impact of the crisis on democracy in Portugal?”, “How do you define Democracy?” and “What is your opinion about the anti-austerity movements and those claiming ‘Real Democracy now!’?”.

⁸⁹ Interviews:

13/3/2013 Interview by Jonas Van Vossole with Mr. Abebe Selassie, president of the IMF-delegation in Portugal, and one of the high officials of the Troika. Cf. Attachement 1.

3/3/2017 Interview by Jonas Van Vossole with Mrs. Maria Luís Albuquerque, member of parliament for the PSD. She was State secretary of Treasure (2011-2013) and Minister of Finance (2013-2015) during the Troika intervention. Cf. Attachement 2.

⁹⁰ Getting access to elite interviews is usually a hard job which requires negotiation and strategy (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Layton-Henry, 2004, pp. 208-211 *passim*). As I started this research in collaboration with the University of Ghent, and as an associated researcher of the Ghent Association for Studies on Parties and Representation, I presented myself as a Belgian researcher and economist – associated to the University of Ghent. After many trials, the interview with Mr. Selassie was conducted during his mission in Lisbon in 2013. Mrs. Albuquerque only granted the interview after she had left office; she had refused several times before due to the political sensitivity of the questions.

As a political representative of the country, Mrs. Albuquerque usually uses the “we”-perspective during the interview, she blames “us” – “the country” for the existing problems. Albuquerque restricts her judgement of the state of democracy on the relation between government and parliament, and between majority and minority in parliament. She states that the state of democracy under the Passos Coelho’s government was in “good shape”, “because members of government were transparent in their communication with the parliament”. She contrasts this with the posterior Costa-government. That government would have been much less democratic because of the back-door minority-government agreements which would “restrict parliamentary scrutiny”. The rules imposed by the Memorandum of Understanding during the crisis “did not put any obstacle to democracy” because “the parties that negotiated the memorandum represented 85% of the members of parliament”; “its program and execution were thus from a popular vote perspective, totally legitimate”. Some “restrictions of national sovereignty in the agreement were consequence of a situation of pre-bankruptcy; but were necessary as a bankruptcy would pose a *real threat to democracy*”. It was “not the international institutions that obliged us to accept the money, *we* created this situation”. The imposed reforms were “necessary to correct the structural problems of the Portuguese economy and the rule of law”. She claims Portugal as a “western democracy”, which she defines as “a representative system” of “free elections” and “checks and balances”. She thinks it is “normal” that there is a “reaction” in “situations of crisis” because they create “multiple victims”. It is important that policies give attention to the most vulnerable. But “some groups” defend a “rupture with the regime”, and want to pass to a “more direct form of democracy”. This is not our “successful” “Western model of democracy” Portugal has had for forty years and brought most “peace, security and prosperity”. This “rupture of regime”, “including what is designated as capitalism” is “wrong and dangerous” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

Selassie frames things in a third-person perspective, as an external objective analyst. If we concisely summarize the interview, Mr. Selassie “frames things through an economic lens” but thinks democracy is “in relatively healthy state”: Portugal seems a “very harmonious and consensual society”, although the “deep crisis” has “put strain on the body politic” and the “political discourse”. The “institutions are still there”. The crisis is creating more “difference between parties” and there is “a blame-game going on”, and it is “not easy to see the path forward”. There remains a “broad-based consensus” for “some elements in the program”, which “differentiates Portugal from other countries”, like Greece “which has

a history of political violence” and this “stands Portugal well”. An important aspect is the “role of civil society”, like “a lot of charities related to the church”, “caritas”, “not very political, community-based networks” which “provides the fabric of support” – things that did not “work in Greece and Spain”. The “institutions”, “in terms of parliament, freedom of speech”, “constitutional court”, “checks and balances”, “remain in place”. Given the “increases in taxes”, “user fees”, “unemployment”, “inequality”; the protests are “understandable”, but in the “very deep economic crisis”, “the measures were unavoidable”. “We have been asked for technical assistance”. “It’s for the government to have the political debate, it’s the parliaments’ and governments’ will”. The government was “democratically elected”, so it is not technocratic. But whether “it’s a technocratic or a democratic elected government”, you have “very limited budgetary tools, policies, to overcome the crisis”: “there is no way out” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

4.3.2 The Discursive practice in the Interview

While both Maria Luís Albuquerque and Abebe Selassie had a prominent role in the implementation and legitimation of the austerity measures, the context of both interviews is different. There is of course a difference in timescale between the two interviews: the interview with Mr. Selassie was taken 13 March 2013 at the Ritz Hotel in Lisbon. Mr. Selassie was in Lisbon in the context of the 7th evaluation of the application of the agreed measures in the Memorandum of Understanding. The interview with Mrs. Albuquerque was taken on 3 March 2017 in the buildings of the Portuguese Parliament; the interview is taken after a change in government and government policies, when Albuquerque was no longer finance minister in the PSD/CDS-PP government led by Passos Coelho but one of the key figures of the opposition against the so-called *Geringonça*-government⁹¹ led by António Costa.

The political role between the two figures is also relatively different. Abebe Selassie is a “foreign technician” and high-level international employee. He is not a direct player in the Portuguese political game, he does not need to get re-elected; there is no need for any form of substantial democratic legitimacy. He admits having very little direct knowledge of Portuguese politics and history. He is the representative of a foreign international institution,

⁹¹ Cf. Chapter 8.

his sole mandate is to control the implementation of the technocratic structural measures included in the Memorandum of Understanding, guaranteeing the financial stability of the government budget in order to warrant the sustainability of the financial investments of the troika.

Maria Luís Albuquerque was Secretary of State of the Treasury of the Passos Coelho's government since 2011 and became the Minister of Finance in the same government on 1 July of 2013 after a government crisis which caused the exit of previous finance minister Vítor Gaspar in June 2013. Both Vítor Gaspar and Albuquerque had refused to concede an interview in 2013, when the interview of Selassie was conceded. Probably this was the case exactly because of their different role in the political process. Albuquerque was not solely a technocrat – although as we will see, she is an economist and was a university professor before and makes use of a similar discourse. She was first of all an elected politician who was more than Selassie under direct democratic scrutiny, in a period in which the government was strongly criticized. Albuquerque only conceded the interview in March 2017, more than a year after exiting the government, and now firmly in an opposition role as member of parliament for the PSD. When finally conceding her ability for the interview she reported that “not exercising government functions certainly facilitates my answers” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

During the interview, Albuquerque was much more comfortable with her own discourse. She articulated her answers in a coherent political discourse, was confident and answered without need to think a long time and her answers were extensive with more factual foundation. Selassie's answers were short, with a lot of long pauses, admitting lack of knowledge. He questioned various times if he was the right person to answer the questions. Factual foundation of Selassie was rather technical and economic – in this own technical area of knowledge his side-answers were much more exhaustive.

4.3.3 Democratic Discourse as social practice: Explanation

As we have seen, both interviewees have had different social roles in the implementation of austerity measures. These differences are reflected in the way how they frame their answers: when asked about the “state of democracy”, Albuquerque mainly focusses on the parties which at the moment of the interview were part of the new government agreement, but at the time of the Troika-period were the opposition. She

focusses on the “parliamentary debate” and the “disrespect for the parties that today [2017] compose the opposition and the use of force of the majority to block minority rights” as opposed to the “attitude of great respect” and “transparency” to describe the situation under the PSD-CDS government. She warns the majority that “majorities are conjunctural” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

She focusses on the role of the radical left – both the Communist Party as the anti-austerity movements as the biggest dangers for democracy. Democracy is presented as a synonym for “the regime” and “what is called capitalism”. She designates the PCP as “totalitarian” and equally dangerous for democracy as the extreme right parties in Eastern Europe. She affirms that the only reason this not being recognized by the general public, is because the Portuguese democracy is generally inclined to the Left, because it was born out of a movement against the extreme-right dictatorship of Salazar’s *Estado Novo* (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

When asked about the “state of democracy”, Mr. Selassie thinks that it is “relatively healthy”, that “in normal times”, Portugal “seems a very harmonious, very consensual society”. There is even a “broad based consensus” “for some elements of the program”, which he thinks is “something that stands Portugal well and probably differentiates Portugal from other countries”. He acknowledges that the “economic crisis is putting a strain on the political discourse”, creating “more differences between parties”. But “the institutions are still there” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

Common elements in Mr. Selassie and Mrs. Albuquerque’s definitions of democracy include this focus on institutional characteristics: Albuquerque’s discourse focusses on “representative government”, “free elections”, “checks and balances”, “transparency”, “government”, “democratic alternance”, “majorities and minorities”, “law”, “democratic rights”, “parliamentary debate”, “parliamentary control” “democratic choice of representatives”, “electoral mandate”, “parties”, “program”, “power”, “institutions”, “pillars of democratic regime”, “western democracies”, “capitalism” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017); Selassie’s discourse is less extensive and focusses on “institutions”, “constitutional court”, “checks and balances”, “parliament”, “parties”, “peaceful”, “freedom of speech” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013). Absent from the argument are characteristics as “social welfare”, “social rights”, “inequality”, “participation” etc.

About the social movements opposing the austerity-policies under the ideas of “real democracy”: Albuquerque starts to acknowledge that it is important to protect the most vulnerable people in society, “but, ...” – “movements that defend a rupture with the regime” “in which I include what is denominated as capitalism”, “and want to pass from a representative democracy to a more direct form of democracy” – are “wrong and dangerous” according to her. Some propose “alternative models within a revolutionary logic, in some cases case alternatives that have proved very bad in the past, and in other cases one cannot even understand what they are proposing – they are against everything, and in organized societies, this is a path which can be very dangerous” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

What struck me immediately, in the case of Mr. Selassie, was the lack of knowledge of and of a personal relation with the political and social situation of the country. The technical background of these highly qualified officers of international institutions, allows such ignorance of the social reality to be considered acceptable, as it translates the countries problems in what are considered objective economic statistics. At the same time, there was a kind of self-censorship about sensitive issues, such as structural problems of the Eurozone, expressed by silences.

This brings us to the following intertwined elements that sustain the discourses on democratic legitimacy of the Troika and Governments policies: Depoliticization, formal legitimation and exceptionalism.

4.3.3.1 Depoliticization

According to the IMF official, the crisis was the consequence of “drying up of financing flows” and the policies were design to meet the need to “reduce their imbalances”. At the same time the austerity program is portrayed as a form of aid to “try and to provide temporary financing”, to relieve the pain. At the same time the “program has sought to protect the minimum levels of benefits, the minimum levels of pensions”, it “ensures... the social protection is at the core helping the poor”; portraying the anti-social character of austerity would thus be “unfair”. He states that the political debate is too much “a little bit of a blame game” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

At the same time, Selassie portrays the role of the Troika as a-political and good-governance advice: “we form judgments on what is reasonable and what is not reasonable”.

The troika only gives “technical assistance” and gives “advice” on “what kind of financing there is”. This also means that the political decision is restricted to “how you get there” which is “ultimately a decision that has to come from here (the national government)” as long as it “was reasonable” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

According to Mrs. Albuquerque, the loss of sovereignty as a consequence of the austerity program “was the consequence of pre-bankruptcy”. It was the only “alternative to a situation in which the country lost its capacity to finance itself”. That would have been the “real threat to democracy”. She blames the “political errors” – as opposed to good governance – for bringing the country “in such situation”. The errors of the austerity program, if they existed, were “committed in good faith” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

4.3.3.2 Formal Legitimation

Selassie admits that the crisis and the necessity of austerity “puts a strain on the political discourse” and it “puts a strain on the body politic”. Policies are restricted due to “very limited budgetary tools”. However, to his surprise “the institutions are still in place”; “The democratic institutions remain in place; If we think in terms of parliament, freedom of speech, constitutional court check, checks and balances...”. It is “normal” that people protest, but as long as the “numbers are endorsed by parliament”, there is no problem. He looks even surprised about “how broad-based consensus there has been”, acknowledging that this is “something that stands Portugal well” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

There is no problem for the democratic legitimacy, which he considers as “relatively healthy”. Furthermore, “the adoption of the fiscal compact”, “and of course the annual budget, are approved and ratified by parliament”. As long as “the government [is] democratically elected”, according to this official we cannot see an opposition “between technocracy and democracy” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

Mrs. Albuquerque argues that the elections of 2011 took place after the first agreements on the adjustment program and that the parties – PS, PSD and CDS – that supported the program gathered 85% of the members of parliament. According to her, that “means that from a popular vote-perspective, the program and its execution were legitimate”. The relation between government and parliament forms the basis of her arguments about

democracy: her government always showed “respect for the parliament”, “members of government were accountable to parliament” etc. (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

4.3.3.3 Austerity as an exception

In the discourse of Mr. Abebe Selassie, there is no exceptional way of legitimizing the austerity measures. On the contrary, the measures are framed as consensual and social protests as normal: The “institutions are still there”, despite the crisis and the society is relatively calm and peaceful. The situation is contrasted to countries where the situation is much more explosive, like Greece. Comparisons between resistances is attributed to differences in “culture” (A. Selassie, personal communication, 13 March 2013).

While Mrs. Albuquerque criticizes social movements that stand for a “rupture with the regime”, she nevertheless legitimizes her own politics based upon the framework of the exception: as the crisis is an exceptional situation which requires emergency measures, the suspension of normal rules, outside intervention and some kind of sovereign powers are legitimate to restore democratic normality. She frames the situation as of “extreme difficulty”, a situation of “near-default” which the “the loss of the country’s capability to finance itself autonomously, was a real threat to democracy”; a situation in which “democratic values are challenged”. From the perspective of the exception, it is the normal situation before which is framed as problematic: “The political errors committed in the past that left the country in this situation were the *real threat* to democracy”, according to Albuquerque. The execution of the program which “put limits to liberty and degrees of freedom of decision-making” is needed “to get a clean exit”. Those who don’t agree, “just do not assume the responsibility” (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

Moreover she argues that her government efficiently used this situation of exception to do “many other things; put in practice many other reforms which according to us are fundamental to correct structural problems of the economy and the rule of law in Portugal”. She does thus affirm that the crisis opens an opportunity for sovereign powers. The exception creates the possibility, not only to restore normality; but to create a fundamentally different norm (M. L. Albuquerque, personal communication, 3 March 2017).

4.4 An austerity-definition of democracy in crisis

The implementation of the austerity measures has not been accompanied by a discursive abandonment of the idea of democracy by policy-makers. Throughout the crisis-period and in the interviews, policymakers have generally claimed democratic legitimacy for those measures, and upheld them against criticism. Perceiving the need to legitimize the implementation of harsh austerity measures with a democratic discourse, policy-makers thus entered in a discursive – political – exercise of trying to articulate the discourses about democracy with the need of austerity. Throughout this chapter we analysed this “democratic discourse of austerity”: the discursive way to articulate the meanings and practices of democracy with the austerity reforms in the context of the Portuguese crisis between 2011 and 2015.

We analysed the basic concepts of Hegemony, Austerity and Neoliberalism, and how these are legitimised through the depoliticization and culturalization of political problems. The arguments are then articulated through their discursive incorporation into the formal and substantive democratic dimensions of democracy. Elements of depoliticization and formal democratic legitimation are predominant. Depoliticization can be found in technocratic arguments, “economist” discourse, the framing of “exceptionality”, the use of the concept “good governance”, the transfer of responsibility to other/external actors (to Troika, national government of financial markets), the irrationalization of any political alternative... On the other hand, power and policies are repeatedly legitimized based on formal democratic procedures, particularly on the basis of the law, elections, parliamentary majority, ratified treaties and constitutional judgements. Substantial elements on the other hand, are very limited as “circumstances” of crisis don’t allow such legitimation.

This perspective very much resembles the traditional, neoliberal paradigm of democracy we have described in Chapter 3.1.3. The Austerity-model of democracy reflected the liberal-democratic model which had been hegemonic since the end of history in the 1990’s. While the acceptable political spectrum is reduced through the “Golden Straitjacket” (Friedman, 2000, p. 16) of the financial markets – this form of democracy is presented at the same time as universal and non-ideological. It fits into the post-political and post-democratic (Mouffe, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2007; 2014) and low-intensity (Santos & Avritzer, 2005) form of democratic ideal.

At the same time, it strongly reflects the exceptionalism which is intimately linked to the crisis-perspective, as we have argued in Chapter 2.5. Exceptionalism and crisis not only legitimize the application of austerity measures that would shock with the existing normativity of formal and substantive dimensions of democracy. Exceptionalism also legitimates the “necessary” transformation of society and democracy towards a new normal; giving policymakers sovereign powers that supersede existing democracy.

CHAPTER 5 — THE ALTERNATIVE DEMOCRATIC DISCOURSES: WE WANT “REAL DEMOCRACY”

Out of Chapters 2 and 3 we concluded that democracy is an ensemble of ideas, discourses and practices that under certain favourable conditions can function as a hegemony and legitimize capitalism. The history of democracy and democratic theory is a history of renewed adaptations and rearticulations of these ideas, discourses and practices. Legitimacy crises are moments when the hegemony is broken, and the crisis of capitalism is translated into a crisis of its governing democratic discourse, practices and institutions. In the previous chapter, 4, we discussed how the political elites framed their perspective on democracy in the context of this legitimacy crisis. In this chapter we will analyse how the legitimacy crisis manifests itself empirically: first as a complete delegitimation of the existing structures and ideas of existing democratic hegemony.

The economic and financial crisis which affected Portugal in 2011 brought representative democracy in a serious legitimacy crisis. Huge demonstrations and other forms of protest rocked the country between 2011 and 2013. This chapter starts with a chronological description and discussion of the main protest movements that questioned the austerity policies. Then I'll discuss the interviews with the activists that were collected on those demonstrations. 67 short interviews with activists and protestors focus on their perspectives on the state of democracy in Portugal, how they perceived the influence of the crisis in Portugal and how they conceived their ideas of democracy. In these interviews, one observes a complete rejection, by activists, of the state of liberal democracy at the time. The main reasons for this rejection are the perceived lack of social rights, accountability, legitimacy, freedom of speech, sovereignty, participation and respect for the constitution.

Secondly, the delegitimation of the existing structures and ideas of existing democratic hegemony, manifests itself in the emergence of alternatives to the traditional representative form that governed Portugal since the constitution of 1976. A wide range of different conceptions of democracy emerges. This chapter distinguishes and elaborates three, more developed democratic conceptions encountered during this research: the *Acampada* autonomous movement, the Occupy movement influenced by the Spanish 15M; the radical Trade Union democracy in which the Lisbon Docker's union took the lead and the left parliamentary alternatives presented by the PCP and the Left Block. At the end we'll discuss

the possible articulations between these discourses and the possibility for a unified alternative.

5.1 From Crisis to Protest: an overview

Protest is a delegitimation practice. Widespread protests are often the most visible sign of the delegitimation of a system as a whole. The austerity policies were confronted by a long wave of protests. These protests have been extensively analysed on an international scale, where these protests are often compared to the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the different anti-austerity protests in the context of the Euro crisis. José Soeiro (2014), Camargo (2014), Fonseca (2016), Accornero & Pinto (2015) and Baumgarten (2013) give a chronological perspective of how these different organizations developed through the period of 2011-2013, and how the focus of the mobilizations changed from more spontaneous forms of action and protest into actions organized by the more institutionalized sectors of the left.

The demonstration of 12 March 2011 – *Geração à Rasca*, which was directed towards the PEC IV, the fourth austerity reform by the PS-government led by José Sócrates, was the first gigantic moment of these protests (Camargo, 2014). The demonstration called Generation on the Edge – *Geração à Rasca* – was called for under the banner of “democratic, laic, a-partidarios and peaceful”. It was a relatively spontaneous movement, not mediated by any organization, called by four young activists, against the precarious working conditions of the youth in the context of rising unemployment and emigration (Fonseca, 2016, pp. 165-168 *passim*). It converged groups that were previously difficult to mobilize, like the precarious youth. Its focus on issues of representative democracy, precariousness and a critique of the political caste – found a broad echo in various social organizations (feminist, LGBT...), organized sectors of the left (including the Left Bloc) and even sectors of the right and the extreme right (Fonseca, 2016; Soeiro, 2014). According to Soeiro (2014), its programmatic “fluidity” or “inclusiveness” contributed to its mobilizing strength as well as to its political fragility – its echo with the extreme right was found uncomfortable by the organized themselves. It was able to become one of the biggest demonstrations in Portuguese history. But its efficacy to influence the political course was dependent on the redefinitions made on the political field based upon power relations between institutional agents (Soeiro, 2014). The broad social climate of protest against further austerity, as well as the lack of

parliamentary support – following Pedro Passos Coelho’s⁹² declaration that the PSD would not tolerate further austerity (Camargo, 2014, p. 137) –, eventually led to the fall of the PS government in less than two weeks. New elections in June would eventually bring a new right-wing PSD-CDS government led by the same Pedro Passos Coelho as prime minister to power. As research shows (Freire, 2016; Freire *et al.*, 2015; Magalhães, 2014) the victory of PSD and CDS should not be seen as a support for more right-wing neoliberal policies. It was rather the result of an electoral rejection against the incumbent’s performance and four consecutive austerity programs.

Meanwhile in Spain, young people had taken the streets in massive numbers on 15th of May 2011 under the slogan “*Democracia Real Ya!*” (Real democracy now!). Influenced by the Arab Spring, the “*Indignados*” – like they called themselves, protested against rampant unemployment – particularly among youth – and the corruption of the political system. As a consequence of the demonstrations, and influenced by the events on Tahrir Square in Egypt, some of the participants started to camp at Puerta del Sol – *Acampada del Sol* – in Madrid (Camargo, 2014). This form of prefigurative protest – which focused on democratic participative decision-making in assemblies and living together based on solidarity while reclaiming and occupying the public space – inspired other cities in Spain and throughout Europe – including Portugal (Soeiro, 2014).

In Portugal, similar encampments – or *Acampadas* – surged in various cities, particularly in Porto, Coimbra and Lisbon. They, however, never reached the strength of the movement in Spain (Soeiro, 2014). The *Acampada do Rossio* in Lisbon started on the 20th of May with 37 people sleeping on the Rossio square – a practice which continued for 12 days (D. Fonseca, 2016; Soeiro, 2014). According to Camargo (2014), most of the participants were highly educated, but the crisis had frustrated their perspective to have a decent future. At its peak, more than 500 people participated in the assemblies (Camargo, 2014). After frictions between the organized political left and anarchist-leaning activists, the *Acampada do Rossio* quickly split. Parallel to it “*Indignados Lisboa*” was formed, but both had a reduced expression, at least in numbers. Most of the participants were young, precarious and unemployed or students (Soeiro, 2014).

⁹² Pedro Passos Coelho, then leader of the opposition, and the future prime minister, justified the vote of no confidence in the Sócrates’ government, based on its opposition towards PEC IV, which he considered a “[...] set of new gravious and extremely unjust measures” (Lourenço, 2011; Our translation. In the original: “[...] *novas medidas gravosas e extremamente injustas*”).

While the *Acampadas* had no clear political conclusion, they regrouped a new layer of activists and opened some new political spaces (Camargo, 2014). On 10th of July, elements of the *Acampadas* organized an international meeting in Lisbon with 130 activists which had its most practical result the organization of the “Global day of action” on 15th October – which saw actions and demonstrations organized in 961 cities over 82 countries (Soeiro, 2014). For the organization of this demonstration in Portugal a platform with the same name – *15 de Outubro* – was launched with representatives of a wide range of social organizations (Camargo, 2014).

While internationally, the date of 15 October 2011 gained prominence through the appeal of Occupy Wallstreet in the USA, in Portugal, the participation of the demonstration of 15 October had been strengthened by the announcement of new austerity measures in the first state budget presented by the Pedro Passos Coelho government. The measures included the cut of two months of pay for public workers (Soeiro, 2014). 15O, as it was usually referred to, was the first big mobilization after the Memorandum of Understanding, signed between the Troika and parties PSD, PS and CDS on 17th of May 2011 (Fonseca, 2016).

There were local demonstrations in the cities of Angra do Heroísmo, Braga, Coimbra, Évora, Faro, Ponta Delgada, Santarém and Porto, among others. In Lisbon the demonstration mobilized around 100.000 people (Soeiro, 2014). Behind the slogan “we are the 99%”, three key ideas were defended in the 15O manifesto: participative democracy, transparency in political decisions and the end to precarity in people’s lives. According to Camargo (2014), amidst the success of the mobilization weaknesses of the platform emerged. A violent confrontation between different political strategies of the participating organizations – particularly some trying to control the platform by imposing a majority – led to the practical end of the inter-organizational platform as such, which became particularly apparent in the demonstrations of the second general strike of the 22 March 2012.

On the 24 November 2011, CGTP and UGT, had called the first general strike against the austerity measures of the Passos Coelho’s government. It was only the seventh general strike since the Portuguese democratization in 197, and only the third one jointly called by both Trade Union confederations. Apart from its success in participation, the strike was particularly relevant for the fact that it had been sustained by a call of the 15O platform. This explicit participation of social movements led to the first ever organization of a demonstration on a General strike in front of the *Assembleia da República* – the Portuguese parliament. According to Soeiro (2014) this was a clear signal of a first concrete alliance

between “old” and the “newest” social movements. A tension – between Trade Unions and new social movements – has been structural throughout the protests (Fonseca, 2016).

When CGTP called for a new general strike on the 22nd of March 2012 – this time excluding the UGT confederation – it took the initiative to launch itself a demonstration on the day of action: the first time it did. According to Fonseca (2016), this was the consequence of the success of the previous mobilization, combined with the fact that if CGTP wouldn’t organize one herself, the demonstration would be organized anyway. As a matter of fact, 15O platform, which had organized the demonstration on the 24 November, had already called for a demonstration on the same place and taking the same route as the one of CGTP. The organized left in the 15O platform split over the issue. The radical leftist morenoist MAS – *Movimento Alternativa Socialista* – accused the CGTP of only organizing the demonstration in order to control the bottom-up movement inspired by the social movements; to control the speakers and prevent any dynamics outside of its own control. *Precários Inflexíveis* (PI), a social movement around young precarious workers – and close to *Bloco de Esquerda* – and UMAR, a feminist organization, two of the more important organizations of the 15O platform, abandoned the call for the separate demonstration and wanted to join the CGTP-demonstration in a question of class unity. MAS accused them of accused of opportunism and treason. To make matters worse for the idea of a unified anti-austerity struggle, the social movements PI and UMAR, were eventually physically banned from the Trade Union demonstration by the union security-people when they tried to join it with their own banners.

After the internal strife in the 15O platform, some of the protagonists involved in the previous mobilizations launched a separate platform to organize a new demonstration named “*Primavera Global*” – Global Spring –, on the 12th of May 2012, to mark the anniversary of the *indignados*-movement in Spain. The protest took place in Braga, Coimbra, Évora, Faro, Porto, Santarém and Lisboa, though with considerably less people (Soeiro, 2014).

During the summer, a group of 29 activists launched a new appeal for a demonstration, under the title *Que Se Lixe a Troika, Queremos nossas vidas de volta* – “Fuck Troika, we want our lives back”. This demonstration, which was launched as a critique to the foreign political intervention by the Troika, and as an appeal for human dignity and to end austerity. The mobilizing statement said: “The austerity they are imposing upon us

destroys our dignity and our lives, it does not function and it destroys democracy”⁹⁴ (Manifestação..., 2012). Different tendencies of the previous nucleus of anti-austerity mobilization remained, but a more “reformist” stance prevailed which emphasized the need for healthy relations with the CGTP and the political left (Fonseca, 2016, p. 286). The appeal group of *Que Se Lixe a Troika*, which counted on representatives of various organizations of the left, including from the PCP and the Left Bloc, would strongly resonate, materializing in the biggest demonstrations since the beginning of the protests, with more than one million participants in around 30 cities across the country (Soeiro, 2014). The success of the mobilization was in part due to the announcement of the changes in the Unique Social Tax (TSU) by the Passos Coelho’s government. This tax-break for companies was financed by a rise in the contributions by the workers and provoked wide-spread social anger – also among sectors which are traditionally on the right (Soeiro, 2014).

From this point on, the same group – QSLT – took the lead in organizing most of the protest actions with a big impact. These included the cultural demonstrations – internationally articulated in the “Global Noise” event – on the 13th of October 2012 and the “*Que se Lixe a Troika! O Povo É Quem Mais Ordena!*”-demonstration in Lisbon on the 2nd of March 2013, which mobilized more than 1.2 million people in more than 20 cities, according to the Left Bloc. The latter demonstration was the culmination of a longer period of symbolic actions, called “*Grandoladas*” (Camargo, 2014) – which consisted in interrupting public appearances of policymakers through the singing of the song “*Grândola, Vila Morena*” – the song which had announced the carnation revolution in 1974.

The push towards a stronger collaboration was evident in October 2012, when the leaders of the M12M joined others close to the CGTP, the PS and *Bloco de Esquerda* in organising a “Democratic Congress for Alternatives” (*Congresso Democrático das Alternativas*) (Accornero & Pinto, 2015b). The initiative involved members of parliament of *Bloco de Esquerda* and PS, ex-president Mário Soares, ex-CGTP leader Carvalho da Silva and public intellectuals such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Manuela Alegre and José Reis. On October 5th, 1700 people with different backgrounds in academia, parties and social movements met at the *Aula Magna* of Lisbon in its first act. The fundamental objectives of the proposed alternative would be to take the economy and society out of the suffocation of austerity and debt by denouncing the Memorandum, develop the economy to reduce external

⁹⁴ Our translation. In the original: “*A austeridade que nos impõem e que nos destrói a dignidade e a vida não funciona e destrói a democracia*” (Manifestação..., 2012).

dependency, valorising labour and protecting the environment, defend the social welfare state and reduce inequalities, build a full, participative and transparent democracy and give Portugal a voice in Europe and the world (Declaração do Congresso Democrático das Alternativas, 2012). The CDA organized various major conferences and published reports on policy alternatives in 2013, 2014. In 2015 it would organize the conference “governing on the left”. Some see in the articulation between different political players the basis of the collaboration among the parliamentary left that would eventually lead to the PS-government in 2015 (Congresso Democrático das Alternativas chega ao fim, 2016; Sabariego & Matos, 2018).

In the meanwhile, CGTP took part in the organization of the first general strike with European dimensions, organized by the European Trade Union Confederation – which took place on 14 November 2012. In Portugal, the appeal of the Trade Unions was supported by many social movements, including *Precários Inflexíveis*, *Estudantes pela Greve*, the remains of the 15O Platform, the dockworkers union, and *Movimento 12 de março*. The strike was marked by police violence in a move to criminalize the social movements (Soeiro, 2014). The last major standoff between unions and the government – excluding the struggles of dockworkers movements – was the CGTP demonstration of *Ponte-a-pé*⁹⁵ on 19 October 2013. The Government prohibited the demonstration for alleged security reasons, and a judicial and mediatized battle ensued between the government and unions. In the end the unions were forced to back down, and limited the protest to a small symbolic demonstration in the rain. After the lost confrontation between the CGTP union leadership and the government around the demonstration of *Ponte-a-pé* in the Autumn of 2013, no new large-scale demonstrations or strikes were registered. From now on the union’s hope for political change would be channelled towards electoral change instead of street mobilisation (Van Vossole, 2020).

5.2 Questioning the protestors

For this research we did 67 short interviews⁹⁶ with people who were present at 8 different protests against the austerity measures between 31 October 2012 and 26 October

⁹⁵ *Ponte-a-pé*, a wordplay which signified both kick the government out (*pontapé*), as pass the bridge on foot (*ponte a pé*).

⁹⁶ The transcripts of the interviews can be found in attached to.

2013; 6 of those protests in Lisbon, 2 in Coimbra. Some were conducted at social movement demonstrations, others were at Trade Union demonstrations and picket-lines. Interviewees were selected randomly on the locations among the protestors, and they were just identified by first name and age. The interviewees were between 17 and 81 years old, with an average of 41. All short interviews were based on three open questions: What do you think about the state of democracy in Portugal? Did your opinion change in the recent period? How would you define democracy? Through its wide range of freedom for participants to express their opinions, it brought the potentiality to diversify the narratives in a relatively short interview time.

The empirical data of this study are based upon a long-time personal involvement and experience as an observer and activist in different protest-activities in crisis-ridden Portugal. These include the assemblies-movements, such as the *Acampada de Coimbra*, in which I participated for nearly 1 year and visits to meetings of the *Acampada do Rossio* and *Indignados de Lisboa* and a dozen national-scale demonstrations, organized by Trade Unions in Porto, Lisboa and Coimbra and other entities such as the 15O platform and *Que Se lixe a Troika* (QSLT). It also includes active participation in the picket lines of 3 general strikes in Lisbon together with activists of the STML, the Lisbon Council Workers' Trade Union, and participation in the student movement in Coimbra. The practices and obtained knowledge reflects to some extent the methods of Participatory Action Research (PAR) – active participation in the co-construction of knowledge, promotion of self- and critical awareness, that leads to individual and social change and building alliances between researchers and participants (McIntyre, 2008, p. IX).

Those interviews were afterwards – in the period after the protests – complemented with 6 longer, qualitative interviews (Yin, 2011, pp. 134-140 *passim*) with key players in the social conflict, of different social-political backgrounds; representing social movements, Trade Unions and parties. These interviews served to deepen some of the reasonings, as well as to illustrate the three alternative discourses of democracy. These will be discussed at the end of this chapter. The interviews, with open ended answers aim at understanding participants on “[...] their own terms and how they make meaning of their lives, experiences and cognitive processes” (Brenner, 2006, p. 357; Yin, 2011, p. 135). Analysis of these interviews is roughly based upon the dialectic-relational critical discourse analysis we laid out in the previous chapter. The interviews are aimed at a deeper understanding of the

foundations of the ideological narratives about democracy and understanding the different arguments.

5.2.1 The State of Democracy

The first question – “What do you think about the state of democracy in Portugal today?” – was directed to check the hypothesis of rejection towards the existing liberal democracy. The objective was to understand if and how the idea of crisis had affected the narratives and judgements about democracy.

In order to systematize the way how protestors regarded democracy, the answers to the first – “What do you think about the state of democracy in Portugal?” – were divided according to 4 different positions: the first position includes all answers that include the denial of the existence of democracy. Their denial included judgements such as: “laughable”, “a fiction”, “beheaded”, “failed”, “dictatorship”, “no practice”, “decadence”, “a lie”, “a hypocrisy”, “a farce”... One of the respondents even responded that “the people should unite for a *coup-d'état*”. In a second category we included all judgements that acknowledged the existence of democracy in Portugal, but judged its condition as negative or degraded. Judgements include: the state of democracy is: ... “sick”, “very ill”, “degraded”, “weak”, “bad”, “very bad”, “questionable”, “relative”, “degraded”, “needs to be rethought”, “not very democratic”, “could be better”, “a misery”, “not for the people”, “a theft”, “not in its best condition”, “negative”, “threatened”, “not the one I wanted”, “a little damaged”, “masked”, “deteriorated”, “mostly formal”, “degenerated”, “wounded”.

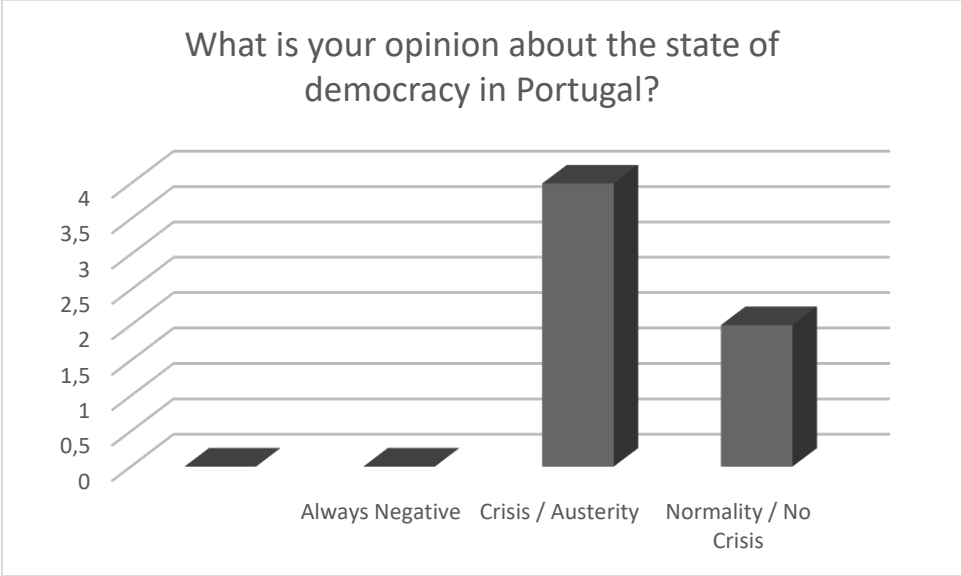
People that judge democracy in a relative positive state constitute our third category. These people voiced the argument: “There continue to be elections”, “people have the right to express themselves”, “Democracy is the best system, despite its weaknesses”. “Formally, things work out well”, “Democracy works”, “despite the deplorable state of the Country”, “the alternative is totalitarianism”. In most cases there still exists some nuances however because the state is not judged as ideal: democracy “should be improved”, “politicians should keep their promises” and “there should be more participation”, for example.

Two participants didn't want to answer or evaded the questions. Ango, female, 41 years didn't want to give her personal opinion on the state of democracy, but stated she was “really against this system”, and she “wouldn't pay taxes for this government” (Ango,

personal communication, 2 March 2013). Carlos, male, 38 years, said everything was a “problem of mentality and a problem of values”, that we give too much importance to “money and luxury” which “in the end is not so important”. “People are manipulated” in a “consumption society” (Carlos, personal communication, 26 October 2013).

Overall respondents had a very negative opinion of the state of democracy during the austerity years. Out of the 67 respondents, 19 – reported that there is “no democracy” in Portugal. 41 of the respondents – judged it to be “in bad condition”. 5 of the respondents reported a relatively positive judgement about the state of democracy. 2 of the respondents evaded the question or refused to answer. Given the fact that the interviews were taken on protest activities, and a negative judgement of the austerity policies was the primary reason to be present, a negative judgement about government policies could be expected. More surprising is the consensus with which these negative judgements are projected upon the idea of democracy itself.

GRAPHIC 1 – WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL?



Source: The author.

In the interviews, respondents that reported a negative judgement on the state of democracy, have given a wide array of reasons why they did so. We have divided those reasons in the following – often overlapping – categories, ranked from the most-mentioned to the least-mentioned⁹⁷:

⁹⁷ These categories are often overlapping.

Lack of social rights: the most common argument to prove the lack of democracy among protestors is the lack or deterioration of social and workers' rights. According to the protestors, the state fails to deliver fundamental social rights such as health and education. Workers' rights are under attack by government policies; there is a generalized attack on the rights and freedoms to strike. Salaries are low and are decreasing. People complain they cannot live, cannot put bread on the table, they don't earn to eat. Without social rights there can be no democracy. Democracy only exists for the rich; there is a lack of social and economic democracy. Economic power dominates political power. Crisis is only for the small ones. The situation is unjust. Politicians are only puppets of economic power.

Lack of accountability: the second most common argument is the lack of political and financial accountability. Respondents complain that their elected representatives don't keep electoral promises – particularly because the PSD promised it would make no more cuts nor impose more taxes during the runup for the 2011 elections. People complain about a climate of political immunity, which entails large scale incompetence and corruption... "Frustrated expectations" lead to a "distance between citizens and their political representatives" who "do not listen". Politics is reduced to a "theatre". There is a lack of respect for the popular will.

Lack of legitimacy: popular discontent as such is presented as an argument against the government: an absolute majority of the population rejects the measures; and this is manifested through protests.

Lack of Freedom of Speech and freedom of information. Lack of information and political culture of citizens. Promiscuity between politicians and media-editors. Media are dominated by specific economic interests. People are afraid to express their opinions, and fear repression at the workplace. Respondents mention the pressure against strikes and a general criminalization of protest: even symbolic protest is confronted with repression.

Lack of national sovereignty: unelected transnational organizations decide policies. Policies are not the people's will, but the will of the Troika. The real decisions are made in the headquarters of the European Commission, The International Monetary

Fund and The European Central Bank, all outside of Portugal. The Portuguese don't govern Portugal.

Lack of Participation. Popular intervention is low and decreasing. There are no real mechanisms of participation. Lack of referenda, and if they exist, they are "only about symbolic or identitarian matters, never about things like austerity or the Euro". People should come more to the streets.

Lack of respect for the constitution: the government does not respect the constitution and politicians argue that the rights guaranteed by the constitution are unsustainable; that the constitution needs to be set aside in order for the budget to work out. Whoever violates the constitution is starting a dictatorship. A last category is the lack of security, stability.

Only 5 respondents affirmed that democracy was in a good or reasonable shape. Of those four, only João, 47, responded straightforward that: "There exists democracy; people can express their will, have rights and duties" (João 1, personal communication, 25 April 2013). The reasoning of respondent Nuno, 34, defended the existing form of democracy, despite its weaknesses and errors as the best system he knows. Democracy should be perfected, but it should be defended against all those who portray it as weakened; because those defend other forms of society that are not based on the will of the people (Nuno 1, personal communication, 14 November 2012). The two other respondents; João 23 and Marta 31, acknowledged the overall existence of democracy, but complained about the lack of participation; its usurpation by parties and the lack of social justice (João 2, personal communication, 26 October 2013; Marta, personal communication, 2 March 2013). Miguel, 33, says that "on the functional level; everything is all right; and that if democracy is in bad shape, it is because people don't know how to behave" (Miguel, personal communication, 14 November 2012).

5.2.2 Perception of Change

When we asked if peoples opinion about democracy had changed recently, people gave different discourses of comparison. Most were directed towards the austerity measures; other comparable answers invoked the external intervention of the Troika and the financial crisis... All thus compared the crisis of democracy to the state without austerity – it was that difference that led to a politicization of the question of democracy. One respondent told us:

“Everything changed. Crisis, crisis is only for some, sadly... only for the small ones. For the big shots, there is no crisis” (Laurentino, personal communication, 14 November 2012). Another one says “Democracy is easy to apply in a situation of prosperity, when some issues are never questioned” (João 3, personal communication, 31 October 2012).

The other main point of comparison was the Portuguese revolution and the 25th of April. One in every five of the respondents evokes the date in some way during the interview. For many of the respondents – particularly the older generation – the 25th of April of 1974, and the social rights built up in the years after the revolution, serve as the landmark of democracy in Portugal. “I lived the 25th of Aprils and helped to build this democracy myself... and now I see we are really retreating”, says one of the respondents (Noela, personal communication, 16 February 2013). “I was born before 25th of April... and it’s really very different... we won a lot, particularly as women... And now we are losing our rights again, in health, education...” says another one (Maria, personal communication, 16 February 2013). Some even invoke the loss of democracy as a reversal to the time before the revolution: “Only the secret police is missing” (“*Só falta a Pide*”), one of the respondent says (Manuel 1, personal communication, 31 October 2012).

Of the 67 respondents, 41 respondents, or nearly two thirds, answered that their perspective upon democracy had de facto changed in the recent period. 15 respondents, answered that their perspective did not change, while the other 5 were unclear in their answers. The content of their answers revealed however, that the narratives behind these judgements differed dramatically within categories. The best way to bring these differences to the surface is through a quantitative categorization of the responses along two axes. One axis measures the degree of perception of change in the state of democracy; answers were categorized according to the options “My perspective on the state of Democracy Changed”; “It changed more or less/no idea”; and “My perspective on the state of democracy did not change”.

A second axis measures the degree according to which the crisis or austerity conditions were seen as a trigger for a possible change in perspective on the state of democracy. The categories were divided in three options: “Normality/no negative mention of Crisis”, “Crisis or Austerity measures played a decisive role in the change of perspective on democracy” and “The crisis played no role; my perspective on the state of democracy has been negative for a longer period”.

TABLE 2 – DID YOUR OPINION ON DEMOCRACY CHANGE DURING THE CRISIS?

	Change	NA	No Change
Always Negative	0	0	7
Crisis/Austerity	39	4	1
Normality/No Crisis	2	2	7

Source: The author.

62 respondents were categorized in these 9 categories according to the 3 axes. The large majority (39/62) of the responses could be categorized in some way as “Democracy changed for the worse because of the crisis or austerity measures”. These included all people that in their association of democracy and time referred to crisis; austerity, troika or worse social economic conditions. Alfredo, 68, is an example: “Of course my perspective on the state of democracy changed; because I don’t name this democracy anymore, what we got. Democracy with this woman, with Merkel, telling us what to do with our country? Our country is not ours anymore; it is of Germany, and Belgium; and Italy and everywhere” (Alfredo, personal communication, 14 November 2012). Laurentino, 47, is another example: “Everything about the state of democracy changed; completely... with the crisis. Crisis only for some, unfortunately, only for the small ones. For the big shots, there isn’t any crisis. Who earns well has no crisis” (Laurentino, personal communication, 14 November 2012).

Fifteen correspondents declared the exact opposite of the majority, namely that their perspective about democracy didn’t change at all in the recent period. For these respondents, the crisis itself had no effect on their perspective about the state of democracy. Curiously these 15 respondents fell evenly in two categories were totally opposed to each-other, however. Seven respondents answered that their perspective on democracy didn’t change; and that democracy stayed in place, institutions worked. Seven other respondents on the other hand answered that their perspective on democracy didn’t change because they already had a negative judgement about the state of democracy in Portugal before the crisis started. At best, the austerity policies are a confirmation of their pre-existing perspective.

The discourse of the first seven mirrored the previous hegemonic elite discourse about democracy. One example is Marta, 31, that declared: “My perspective didn’t really change, because we continue to have a state of law. Our civil rights remain there, they are respected. The problem is that we have had some real problems, of the economy, that make our lives more difficult. But my perspective continues that democracy is an imperfect system; but probably the best we have” (Marta, personal communication, 2 March 2013).

The other remaining seven had an “I told you so”-attitude: for them the crisis only revealed a truth which existed for a long time. One example is João, 44, who declared that his perspective did not change, he “had this perspective since many years. Now it is demonstrated ever more; isn’t it? Thus nothing really changed. Democracy is a farce, as it has always been” (João 3, personal communication, 31 October 2012).

In relation to change, it becomes essential to know if it was people’s perspective that changed or was it their material reality? It becomes fundamentally a relation between substructure and ideology: some people stress how their own idea about democracy as theory or ideal did not change; but that the state of democracy changed fundamentally. Ana, 38, states: “My perspective democracy did not change, but the state of affairs did. I think that democracy is something which is very difficult to achieve, and now is ever more difficult to achieve. Everytime it is ever more questioned” (Ana, personal communication, 14 November 2012). Francisco 51: “My view didn’t change. What changed, to my opinion, is democracy itself. I consider myself a democrat. I continue to believe in democracy... In this democracy though, not” (Francisco, personal communication, 16 February 2013). Other people have been self-reflexive about their own consciousness and express the way how their own view about democracy changed with the crisis. For some this changed consciousness is attributed to studies or their own empirical experience. The crisis had a sort of pedagogic role.

In a situation of hegemony and normality, both objective condition and subjective perspective on democracy should coincide. By objective condition one should consider the existing democratic institutions: elections, parliamentary control, social redistribution. The subjective perspective covers the overall popular ideological/moral acceptance of what democracy should be. Since the end of the cold war and the establishment of liberal democracy as the hegemonic model of democracy on a global scale; this coincidence has been the case. In its objective form, liberal democracy was present – at least in Europe and Portugal. The liberal democratic institutions stood in for universal democratic institutions; there were elections; working parliaments etc. At the same time, the subjective condition: liberal hegemony dominated peoples’ perspectives on democracy: liberal democracy was presented as “[...] the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 4).

5.2.3 Redefining Democracy

The third question – “How do you define Democracy?” – was only introduced in the questionnaire from the start of 2013⁹⁸. The objective of this third question was to enrich the apparent rejection of the actual state of democracy; to check out if and how the rejection of the state of democracy created confusion to the respondents’ own perspectives on democracy and if the respondents were conceiving alternative forms of democracy.

There is a considerable number of respondents that even after having explained why “this is no democracy”, have difficulty in explaining what democracy really is. “I cannot answer to that question”, “This is a difficult question”, “This is a complex question”, “I have to think” and “I’m not the best person to answer this question”, where some of the answers. This means that while people reject the existing state of democracy, there is not necessarily a clear idea how it should or could be different. This could be interpreted as a reflection of disappearing hegemony; a sense of void, while no alternative is ready yet to fill its place.

Others have an idea about how democracy should be different but place it as an ideal disconnected from their contemporary reality. Answering to the question on the definition of democracy; it is noteworthy that a considerable number of the respondents use the conditional form when referring to democracy: “Elected people that *would* respect the opinion of the people”, “The people *could* choose representatives that would take decisions and *would* defend the interests of the people”, “I *would* define democracy as a political system that gives equal voice to all”, “*Supposedly* it should be exercised by those democratically elected”. The same logic is applicable for those that bring a straightforward definition, immediately followed by a “but...” or an equivalent structure that denies the first part of the definition in practice: “Democracy is the government of the people, theoretically. *But*, what is happening is that those that are elected do not represent the interests of the other, but of an elite”.

Some people defined democracy in abstract terms of the state, system and institutions without the (self-)identification of the subjects of democracy, but the overall majority of the respondent defined democracy in terms of power of “The people” (*o povo* –

⁹⁸ This limits the number of respondents to 30. The timeframe is also restricted to the second, downturn phase of the protest, which could have affected the results.

60/67 respondents), “We” (18/67), and “people” (*pessoas* – 11/67), “citizens” or “population” (2/67).

Surprisingly – given the critique of liberal democracy in the answers to the first question and the reasons of this rejection – only one in four participants referred specifically to any form of substantive content in their definition of democracy. One would have expected more answers like “Democracy is being all equal, all having food, all having shelter”, “Democracy is our well-being”, Democracy is a social-welfare state in which the general population chooses who governs, “Democracy should be a better living condition for us, living with health and peace”.

Half of the respondents define democracy referencing to formal aspects of democracy, without any references to political output or so-called substantive dimensions of democracy. Democracy is defined as “participation and representation”, “elected people that respect the opinions of the people”, a “political system that permits an equal voice to all citizens”, a “state of law where people have rights and obligations”. One of the respondents even introduced his answer as: “not going into an extremely political definition”, democracy is “voting rights”.

This means that the wide range of reasons people used to argue that “there is no democracy” in the first question – namely social rights, participation, mobilization, freedom of speech – are only very scarcely reflected in their own positive definitions of democracy. One could say that this is reflecting the same “void” or social disarticulation of discourses, as we found in the answers proposed before.

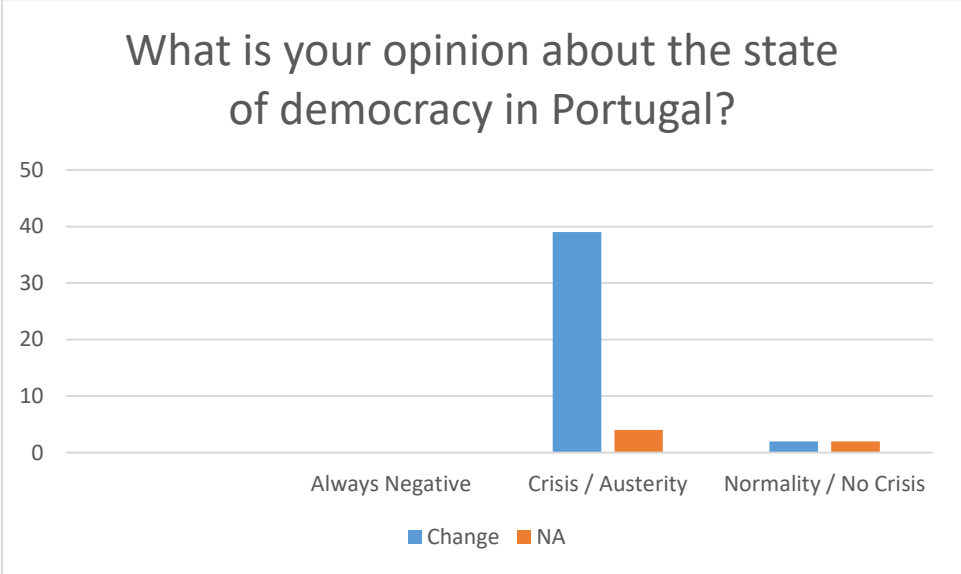
5.2.4 Change over time

Taking a second look to the data of the first question, there seems to be considerable change seems to occur over time. The sample is too small for significant statistical conclusions; and comparisons are thus rather a form of illustration than hard evidence. But if we split the interviews according to the year they were taken – 37 interviews were taken in 2012, 30 in 2013 – a surprising pattern surfaces.

If we take only the interviews taken in 2012, the number of respondents that deny the existence of democracy as such rises from 28% in the overall period to 17/37 (46% in

2012), the “bad state” category lowers from 61% to 49%⁹⁹. People included in the first two categories, with negative judgements about the state of democracy, total up to an incredible 95% of the respondents. If we take the interviews taken in 2013, however, the number of respondents that deny the existence of democracy falls dramatically from 46% to 7%, while the “bad state” category rises from 49% to 77%. In a short period of time the radical rejection of the state of democracy seems to be overturned into a more nuanced narrative.

GRAPHIC 2 – WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL? BY YEAR



Source: The author.

One should note that the interviews in 2012 were taken over a smaller window of time: 4 days of protest over 2 months in 2012 against 4 days of protest over 9 months in 2013. The protests in 2012 also had a more direct impact and confrontation. They were directed against concrete cuts in the proposed budget; the new TSU, and involved a general strike. The protests in 2013 were more symbolic, platform mobilizations, including the 25 April remembrance March, as well as the *Que se Lixe a Troika* mobilizations.

However, there appears to be a relation between the way how people evaluate the state of democracy and the period of mobilizations: in the upswing of the protests, there is a much clearer rejection of the state of democracy; while during the downswing – and the lack of immediate concrete alternatives – left people with a less radical judgement on the state of democracy. At the start of this chapter, the chronology of the protests and emergence of

⁹⁹ While the number of correspondents is too small for representative conclusions, for illustrative reasons I nevertheless prefer to use percentages for comparing the two time frames.

social movements, provided the background of the clear rejection of the state of democracy by the protestors. The crisis became an acute existential crisis of the liberal democratic discourse. The crisis – compared to the pre-austerity period or sometimes compared to legacy of the 25th of April – is perceived as a pedagogic moment in which the truth of democracy is revealed. People themselves have difficulties in providing discursive alternatives, however. This difficulty exemplifies the “void” created by the crisis. The void is a situation in liberal democratic hegemonic breakdown and the open competition of different competing and articulating democratic alternatives. In the following section we are going to study three of these alternatives.

5.3 From Protest to Democratic Alternatives

As previously mentioned, “There is no alternative” has been for more than three decades the symbolic catchphrase to legitimize neoliberal democratic hegemony (Harvey, 2005, p. 13). But is there democracy without alternatives? One of the demonstrators of *Que se lixe a Troika*-movement – on 26 October 2013 – carried the slogan: “*Não há becos sem saída*”/“There are no dead end streets”. From a theoretical perspective, there certainly is no crisis without alternatives, because crisis is defined by the acute need for and external intervention or decision, as we have discussed in Chapter 2. During this research we came across various forms of alternative democratic discourses and practices that proposed themselves as forms of alternatives for the hegemonic form of democracy in crisis. We will limit ourselves to what could be described as three main forms we encountered: the “*Acampadas*”, Trade Union democracy and parliamentary alternatives. By no means these “alternative models” exclude other forms of democracies, nor do they preclude overlapping elements and discourses among them. As we will see, these empirical “models” overlap with different theoretical perspectives we find in democratic theory and in the history of democratic development as described in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

The models have been enriched with another six, more extensive interviews we conducted. In addition to the questions used in the shorter interviews about the personal definition of democracy, its state and evolution, more specific questions were used, in particular aiming at the alter-ideological conception of the questions of democracy: for example: “How do you think “the other side” sees democracy?” or “Do the concrete actions of the other side in the social conflict influence democracy?”. In these interviews we address

the narratives involving “democracy” around specific cases (*Grandoladas*, Constitutional Court); but also about the recent elections and the high degrees of abstention. All these conversations thus take the form of semi-structured interviews, with some flexibility in the questions. The 6 actors in the protests were CD and CVB, activists of the popular assembly of Coimbra: António Mariano, president of SEAL, the dockers’ union; Mário Nogueira, president of FENPROF, the teacher’s union; José Soeiro, member of parliament for the BE; and Miguel Tiago, member of parliament for the PCP.

5.3.1 The *Acampadas*

The *Acampadas* – or encampments – were the most emblematic form of anti-austerity protest. Like the worldwide Occupy movement (Castañeda, 2012), these Portuguese *Acampadas* were inspired by the Spanish *indignados*-movement; which itself had been inspired by the Arab Spring (Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017). The main characteristic of the Occupy movement was reclaiming and Occupying public space (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012). Directly inspired by the Spanish 15M occupation of Puerta del Sol in Madrid, protestors occupied Rossio-square, in the center of Lisbon in May 2011. At the start of the *Acampada* movement there were even more Spanish people involved than Portuguese (Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017). The inspiration was a consequence of active communication strategies through social networks and the emergence of transnational networks of activists (Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017; Díez García, 2017). Baumgarten and Díez García (2017) defend that the Spanish inspiration was particularly important because it imported their framework of democracy onto Portuguese reality. The major *Geração à Rasca* (Desperate generation) protest, had taken place on 12 March 2011, some nine weeks before 15M occupation of the Puerta del Sol in Madrid, but had not led to the council-like experiments as in Madrid (Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017). Besides the importance of its numbers – with around 300.000 participants, one of the largest in Portugal since the revolutionary period of the nineteen seventies –, the *Geração à Rasca* protest has been particularly important for the fact that the mobilization was more or less spontaneous, and independent from traditional organizations with its slogan: “a secular, non-partidarian and pacific protest”. It characterized the “end to a period of about 35 years in which the Trade Unions were the only actors capable of organizing mass demonstrations” (Accornero & Pinto, 2015a, 2015b; Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017; Estanque *et al.*, 2013). Still, at

the beginning, this protest mobilization had framed social discontent in terms of lack of jobs; lack of a perspective of future, homes etc. – not in terms of democracy or democratic alternatives. It was the influence of 15M and *Democracia Real Ya* in Spain that placed the problem of austerity and economic hardship as a question of democracy (Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017). After May 2011, the Occupying movement spread through the rest of the country, involving a lot of new activists and groups. Inspired by the movement in Spain and the Rossio encampment, popular assemblies were founded in many of Portugal’s major cities, including in Porto, Angra do Heroísmo, Braga, Évora, Faro, Ponta Delgada and Coimbra (Alípio *et al.*, 2013; Soeiro, 2014).

This study is particularly focussed on the Popular Assembly of Coimbra; the “*Acampada*” which I followed through participant observation. In the process of this research two of its key-participants were also interviewed. Inspired by those who were camping in dozens of cities throughout Spain, nearly a hundred people gathered in Praça 8 de Maio, a central square in front of Coimbra’s city hall on the 20th of May 2011. Inspired by the practices of collective discussion in Madrid; the participants quickly concluded that they wanted more than just to show solidarity with the *Indignados* in Spain; they wanted “real democracy” for their own lives as well: “[...] different from that which is reduced to a vote every 4 or 5 years, a democracy that is authentically by the people and for the people” (Alípio *et al.*, 2013, p. 359). The participants decided to meet every afternoon on that same square: *Acampada de Coimbra* was born. From May 25 to July 5, Praça 8 de Maio was permanently “occupied”¹⁰⁰; with hundreds of people participating in the many activities and debates and dozens of people participating in the overnight camping. Participation started to decrease in June. At the end of June, it started to become almost impossible to sustain the overnight occupation and on the 5th of July, it was decided to stop the camping decamp and to reorganize. Instead, from then on, weekly assemblies would be held. In February 2012 the name would eventually be changed to *Assembleia Popular de Coimbra* (Alípio *et al.*, 2013).

The founding manifesto of *Acampada de Coimbra* does not directly refer to the concept of crisis itself; only indirectly by referring to the economic system and economic hardship as a justification for action: “We join the struggle for the freedoms repressed by the economic system: we reached a limit and cannot cope anymore with that a few fill their

¹⁰⁰ The occupation was rather symbolic, a permanent presence by a few dozen protestors was guaranteed. The place was not “occupied” in the sense that it would have prevented use of the square for “normal” activities and traffic.

pockets and live as kings while the others, the majority, have to tighten their belts” (Manifesto Primavera Global, 2012).

In the interviews, the importance of the crisis for a change in conscience and an emancipatory potential among the activists becomes clearer.

CD (personal communication, 19 February 2015) says: “The crisis led a lot of people to question themselves because they feel it. In this sense the crisis can lead to a bath of democracy: people get involved, have more attention, can filter easier... Theoretically, the crisis can be positive, although this is ambiguous because also the opposite can happen: it can breed hatred...”.

CVB (personal communication, 26 February 2015) said that while “for the government the crisis has been an excuse to steal democratic power of the people...; on the other hand the crisis led to a surge of lots of social movements and an increased political participation. If people would not have been confronted with the extreme situation of the crisis, probably they would not have participated in demonstrations... The confrontation with extreme situations raised the level of consciousness, and this could have been positive if further developed”.

5.3.1.1 Real Democracy

Due to its focus on horizontal procedures, the Occupy movement is often associated with anarchism and council communism. Morgan Gibson (2013, p. 339) defines anarchism as: “[...] a sophisticated ideology premised on opposition to externally imposed hierarchy”. Its existential core is the teleological pursuit of individual freedom, in which the individual is seen to possess intrinsic moral worth; a view which is expressed most clearly by one of the foremost theorists of anarchism Mikhail Bakunin. Anarchism is anti-state and anti-government: Anarchists regard the state as “[...] the primary perpetrator of coercion and the most egregious example of externally imposed hierarchy” (Gibson, 2013, p. 340).

She argued however that the occupy movement was anarchist rather in its praxis – expressed particularly in its pursuit of direct democracy and refusal to engage with state-capitalist institutions, rather than ideologically. Activists in the movements as such only very rarely referred to anarchist theory or theorists – as opposed to socialist activists engaged in the movements. The Occupy movement refused to formulate a predetermined program for social change or make reformist demands of the status quo (Gibson, 2013, p. 346).

As a consequence the lack of concrete proposals, and with it a very unelaborate discourse about what democracy would exactly be, is one of the main characteristics of the whole occupy movement (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012; Rohgalf, 2013). Even if the whole encampment movement was built around the slogan of a “Real democracy now!”. In the

concrete case of Portugal, the only reference of the popular assembly of Coimbra to democracy is relatively vague for example: “We believe that through our struggle for the ‘public’ and ‘common’, the seed of a new democracy can be spread. An inclusive democracy, where values of auto determination (or autonomy), equality and liberty are the main guidelines to build a society for all”¹⁰¹ (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

About what that alternative democracy would be, CD (personal communication, 19 February 2015), activist of the popular assembly of Coimbra, is afraid to say “silly things”. She defined democracy vaguely as: “Democracy is a state in which the community can choose its future based on a system of representation; but real democracy should enable more freedom of choice than we have now. Real democracy does not create political careers”. According to CVB (personal communication, 26 February 2015), another activist, “we need another form of democracy” because the “party-system is exhausted, perverted to such an extent [...]. The parties we know are so deformed that it is impossible to trust them”. “The markets rule and the governments just manage a little bit, we never vote for the people that take the real decisions”. That other form of democracy is defined as “all have the same power... being equal, effectively equal”.

Instead of a defined model or program, “real democracy” was rather a practice and a negation of the existing forms of representative democracy. According to Rohgalf (2013, p. 155), instead “the idea of a process is implied” with “[...] a community always in the making, being nothing but the sum of actions of its members” and instead of “concrete goals of the occupation”, “an open discussion process”. Democracy is thus often framed more as a question of practice and through a negative definition: as what it is not. A widely shared scepticism towards the state, bureaucracy, and party politics as well as representation, hierarchies, and power in general, dominated the Occupy movement (Rohgalf, 2013). Instead, another model of democracy is championed that cherishes participation, immediacy, diversity, and “horizontality”, i.e. the absence of hierarchies: a democracy of assemblies, where people decide personally on the issues by which they are affected – a democracy of the many as we may call it for the sake of brevity (Rohgalf, 2013, p. 152).

¹⁰¹ Our translation. In the original: “*Acreditamos que da luta pelo ‘público’ e pelo ‘comum’ poderão ser lançadas as sementes para ma nova democracia. Uma democracia inclusiva, onde os valores da autodeterminação (ou autonomia), da igualdade e da liberdade sejam as linhas condutoras da construção duma sociedade para todas e para todos*” (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

Democracy in practice consisted in the process of decisions that were made through daily and later weekly assemblies. One of the basic principles of the popular assembly was that all the decisions were made by consensus – not by voting, according to the idea of building an inclusive space of democratic participation where everyone’s ideas and opinions are fully taken into account (Alípio *et al.*, 2013, p. 359). The process of voting is rejected because it is seen as exclusive, oppressive towards minorities, individualistic – weighing individual opinions of people in a quantitative form.

The assembly’s democratic practice rejected representatives or formally elected leaders – even if some activists played this form of organic role by taking most of the initiatives and leading the debates. The *Acampada* claimed to work without “owners or leaders, but rather to be fully horizontal”. Its guiding principles were “direct participation in the process of decision-making”; rejection of all representation, whether it comes from “parties, unions” or “other representatives that want to do it [decide] on our behalf”; consensus; and self-management (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011; Alípio *et al.*, 2013). The horizontality of this democratic practice, meant that the assemblies used to take long hours for decisions to be taken, if they were ever made. The participants preferred not to take decisions, rather than deciding against the will of one or more participants.

This non-exclusionary element also meant that democratic decision-making could not be separated from all other aspects of life. People could not be excluded for being a mother or for being hungry: therefore, the process of decision-making included the need to at the same time resolve these issues missing in the present order of things, through alternative economies, sharing, mutual aid.

What started with a concern to create spaces of free debate and free speech, came to claim itself as a real, or prefigurative form of social alternative to the society in crisis: Besides the popular assemblies; its participants organized a free tribune and often debates and workshops developed in a complete “alternate society” with places to study, sleep, cook, a popular library, an area for children. It was a prefiguration of an alternative “society in which the capitalist logic of profit is rejected, and was run according to principles of solidarity, autonomy, decentralization” (Alípio *et al.*, 2013). Political discussion was combined with shared community dinners, and plans were made for community gardens.

5.3.1.2 Prefigurative democracy

The politics of prefiguring a new society (and its contradictions) instead of making demands on the state; and the importance of ritualising and institutionalising protest; were without doubt a major distinguishing element of the Occupy movement as an alternative democratic practice (Butler, 2011; Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012). Prefiguration¹⁰² is the term used by activists and scholars for a protest practice that embodies the change which activists want to see on a larger scale (Maeckelbergh, 2009; Rohgalf, 2013). It is an enactment of the ultimate values of an ideal society with the very means of struggle for that society (Maeckelbergh, 2009, p. 67). Instead of a coherent program or discourse, the democratic alternative consists in an idea of democracy through practice or performance: “the idea of creating a microcosm of what democracy really looks like” – assemblies of citizens and bodily experiences is a way to make “the people”, i.e. the invisible sovereign of modern democracies, visible and tangible (Rohgalf, 2013).

When formal institutions seem to fail, prefigurative initiatives are alternative strategies that seek autonomy beyond nation-states, international financial institutions, global corporations, and neoliberalism, while at the same time going beyond the institutionalization of social movements and their reproduction of authority and oppression (Soares, 2017, p. 527). Like in other countries, prefigurative initiatives have existed for decades before the anti-Austerity movements that started in 2011. The most common initiatives in Portugal, in the last years, were according to Monica Soares (2017, p. 522) social centres in urban areas like the well-known Fontinha school in Porto, ecovillages and parallel currencies.

According to Judith Butler (2011, p. 4), the Occupy-moment is “[...] the time of the popular will, not a single will, not a unitary will, but one that is characterized by an alliance with the performative power to lay claim to the public in a way that is not yet

¹⁰² Prefiguration is a practice which finds its origin in the alter globalization movement and became dominant in the Occupy movement. It is loosely inspired by anarchist influences, like David Graeber's. In many contemporary theories, it functions as an alternative to the perceived failure in Historical materialist analysis and political strategy of Marxism and revolution in the previous decades. “As no promising future is in sight, hope for change focuses on the present. The alternative has to be put into practice here and now and cannot be postponed to some later date”. According to Maeckelbergh (2009, p. 67), prefiguration functions as an alternative to the “[...] possible legitimization of terror in the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat that is supposed to end exploitation and suffering... in contrast, prefiguration does not allow for such tactical aber-rations from one's own ideals: ‘[I]nstead, the struggle and the goal, the real and the ideal, become one in the present. [...] It is an enactment of the ultimate values of an ideal society with the very means of struggle for that society’”. Prefiguration tactics eclipses the opposition between means and ends, struggle and goal of emancipation (Rohgalf 2013).

codified into law, and that can never be fully codified into law”. Inspired by Hannah Arendt’s (2013) analysis of the Greek Polis and the Roman Republic in *The human condition*, Butler raises the importance of performativity – more even than deliberation as such – as a key aspect of democracy. The public place, the place of democratic confrontation, is a “space of appearance”; “the Polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together” (Arendt, 2013; Butler, 2011).

Morgan Gibson (2013) sees this performativity as a practical re-enactment of the anarchical social forms that rejected of the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat. Accordingly, “[...] individuals and communities should simultaneously decide upon and live (prefigure) social arrangements, rather than having them imposed from without or after a revolutionary moment”. Conforming with the anarchist conceptions of political power, Occupy did therefore not seek to engage with the state nor make demands of it in pursuit of social transformation (Gibson, 2013, pp. 342-345 *passim*).

But is the *Acampada* the real democratic alternative it aspires to be in its manifesto? In the interviews, after months of experience, the interviewed participants are rather sceptical. *Acampada* activist CVB (personal communication, 26 February 2015) thinks that in the long run we should generalize the experience. “Participating in the Assemblies informs people, provides them with knowledge and capacity to horizontally discuss issues. It raises political and civic consciousness”. “Probably the popular assembly has more impact on those that participated in it than on society in general”. “But not now: we could not replace the government by a form of assembly model”, because people don’t participate; society doesn’t learn them to participate”. Based on “lived experience”, CD (personal communication, 19 February 2015) claims that:

[...] while some participants thought the experience of the assembly could be an example for society, being part of it, I can say that it is extremely complicated. While we were small in numbers, things were still done more or less... But thinking to use the same kind of methods of discussion and decision making at state level is extremely complicated; even impossible.

Rohgalf (2013) comes to a similar conclusion: while the democracy of the many can work in social movements it cannot serve as a real model for a democracy at a larger

scale. At worst according to Rohgalf (2013) prefiguration can even prevent fruitful social analysis and effective political struggle¹⁰³.

One can conclude that the democratic perspective of the *Acampada* movement was based on the distrust in the party politics and parliamentary representation. Its emergence signified not only the crisis of liberal democratic democracy, but also of its traditional democratic opposition. To be an alternative to the hegemonic model of liberal representative democracy in crisis, democracy should be transformed through practices of citizens themselves; democratic participation itself is pedagogic basis for real citizenship and real democracy. The basis of this democratic experience is the practice of discussion and deliberation and finding a common ground, or consensus that can include everyone and excludes no-one. In order to exclude no-one, the process of deliberative democracy must go together with practices of solidarity and alternative economies. Given their isolation, this need for practice is translated in a form of public prefiguration: the *Acampadas* represents the model as an alternative to the society as the whole. The *Acampada* democratic model was thus based on the occupation of the public sphere, participation, horizontality, deliberation, consensus, prefiguration and alternative economies.

5.3.2 The Trade Union Alternative

While the upsurge of protest is widely symbolized by the mobilizations of those new protest movements, Trade Unions had the central role in the resistance against austerity. On overall levels, this “old” style of politics of labour unions, provided most of the mobilizing capacity (Accornero & Pinto, 2015c). Given their importance and the fact that most of the interviews were taken on strikes or demonstrations organized on the initiative of the trade unions, trade union aspects regularly were part of the respondent’s conceptualization of democracy. 15 of the respondents defined democracy in terms that had something to do with Trade Unions. Some focussed on the practice of struggles; the procedural aspect of what democracy is; participation through social struggle, strikes, demonstrations and meetings. Lack of democracy is attributed to the lack of Trade Union rights, pressure against Trade Union organization, against workers’s meetings on the work-places, restriction of their right to strike etc. In his worried statement on the state of

¹⁰³ In Chapter 6, we’ll return to the political problems of the emptiness and depolitical characteristics of the *Acampada* model of democracy.

democracy, one of the respondents, Manuel, 37 years old, for example, declared that “One day, one cannot even organize a picket line” (Manuel 2, personal communication, 14 November 2012). Another; Tiago, 50, stated that “There is repression; they try that people don’t organize meetings and strikes”, while at the same time the lack of democracy is expressed in the lack of time for his family life (Tiago, personal communication, 14 November 2012). Trade Union activity is presented as the source of democratic legitimacy: Jorge, 66, for example states: “They [The government] don’t represent the will and interests of Portuguese people – the latter manifests itself through demonstrations, concentrations strikes and other forms of protest” (Jorge, personal communication, 27 November 2012).

Other interviewees focussed on the outcome or substantive dimensions of Trade Union democracy; social and labour rights are framed as the essence of democracy. Lack of democracy is attributed to the loss of social and labour rights – fruits of decades of Trade Union struggles. Nuno, 45 years old, for example stated: “In day-to-day life, people are being robbed of things essential to their existence, basic primary things like education, health and other things in the work sphere” (Nuno 2, personal communication, 27 November 2012). Clara, 28; “The government violates workers’ rights and liberties; that is not democracy” (Clara, personal communication, 27 November 2012). Margarida 56: “Democracy should be a better living condition for us; living with health and peace, live better, produce, work...” (Margarida, personal communication, 26 October 2013).

These Trade Union-aspects are recurrent with two key-Trade Union figures we interviewed for this research: Mário Nogueira, president of the teacher’s Union FENPROF and António Mariano, president of the dockers’ Union SETC. Mário Nogueira defined democracy as based not only upon representative democracy, but also upon the “relationship with workers’ representative organizations” and “people’s daily lives, the responses they have – namely the most fragile – in terms of public services, to the level of health, education”. He acknowledges retreats of democracy in terms of limits imposed on social bargaining and the loss of quality in public services and salaries (M. Nogueira, personal communication, 28 September 2020). As we will also see further on, António Mariano, argues in terms of citizen rights, job opportunities, health, education and the right to decide upon one’s own destiny and life: no democracy is possible as long as governments design their policies based on foreign interests and big business interests instead of their populations (A. Mariano, personal communication, 26 February 2015).

While Trade Unions had lost the monopoly of social protest due to the emergence of the *Geração á Rasca* and the *Acampadas* movement, and were less emblematic, they continued to be the strongest force against austerity: in numbers of participation, number of protests and real impact on society and the economy. They organized national and regional demonstrations, and a record number of sectorial and general strikes. While Trade Unions lost a significant amount of influence and members over the last decades, they could fall back on organized structures, wide-spread social penetration and a history of conquests of the past. They had a crucial role of unifying the struggles, and bringing the mass of the working class – particularly public sector workers in the resistance against austerity (Accornero & Pinto, 2015a, pp. 408-410 *passim*).

A considerable part of the citizens protesting against the measures did so through the framework of the Trade Unions. Not only did Trade Unions mobilize members and colleagues directly on their workplaces, through workers' commissions and picket-lines; the national protests mobilized a lot of non-unionized citizens. Through these mobilizations and agenda-setting, Trade Unions determined their consciousness, demands and forms of action. It is thus not surprising that many of the interviewed protestors framed their ideas about democracy through a Union framework.

But the relation between unions and democracy goes further than this circumstantial coincidence. While Rational Choice theory - which approaches democracy as a historical accident in the search for the maximalization of individual utility – sees unions as market-imperfections which are essentially anti-democratic, and some post-modern theories have approached unions as mechanisms of domination which are becoming increasingly superfluous, most democratic theory incorporate unions incorporate Unions as a positive and essential part of democracy, according to Geoffrey Wood's (2006, pp. 19-36 *passim*) informative overview. These include the Weberian perspective on the dynamics of bureaucratization and representation and internal and external democracy in Unions, social movement unions theories, and regulationist theories that promote more accountable and sustainable economic policies (Wood, 2006, p. 35).

Visser and Ebbinghaus (2000, p. 6) consider that Trade Unions are among the principal and most influential actors in democratic politics. Within the framework of traditional representative democracy, unions are active agents that recur to different forms of pressure on governments, parliament and public institutions, and sustain and finance candidates, parties and even referenda. But the democratic role of the Trade Unions goes

much further and has been key on the democratization of society that predates universal suffrage (Costa, 2011). According to the works of Visser (1995, pp. 37-38) and Visser and Ebbinghaus (2000, pp. 4-6 *passim*) on European Trade Unionism; Trade Unions have historically occupied a crucial role in the workers' movement to promote mass democracy, based on a universal emancipation of the working classes. As the main organisations of the working classes, they have been protagonists of rebel mobilisations destined to claim rights for the most disfavoured layers of society (Ross & Martin, 1999, p. 2). In the struggles to broaden political democracy to the disfavoured classes, Trade Unions have developed historical alliances with political parties and served as the basis for different forms of democratic practices.

The model of the German social-democratic party – founded in 1869 – as a political voice of the working class and Trade Unions, influenced by the ideas of Karl Marx, is an important example (Costa, 2011). It would eventually lead to the expansion of parliamentary democracy to include votes and representatives of the working classes and Trade Unions. During the 20th century, in many north European countries, Trade Unions have become central pillars of social democracy and the welfare state, examples are to role of unions in co-management of corporations in Germany (Müller-Jentsch, 1995), or the structures of social management in what is called by Devos, Mus and Humblet (2011) the neo-corporatist pacification democracy of Belgium.

But Trade Unions – particularly revolutionary Trade Unionism at the beginning of the 21st century (Costa, 2011) – also left openings to go beyond parliamentary democracy. Rosa Luxemburg (2007, p. 169) stated that class demands of Trade Unions will eventually create the need to do so “[...] because every direct mass action of the period of open class struggles would be at the same time both political and economic”. She developed the traditional Trade Union method of the Mass strike as an alternative social, democratic and pedagogic practice to go beyond parliamentary politics:

It is true that these men [Bernstein, David... rightwing social-democrat parliamentarians] saw the desired civilising and mitigating of the class struggle in the light of petty bourgeois democratic illusions – they believed that the class struggle would shrink to an exclusively parliamentary contest and that street fighting would simply be done away with. History has found the solution in a deeper and finer fashion: in the advent of revolutionary mass strikes, which, of course, in no way replaces brutal street fights or renders them unnecessary, but which reduces them to a moment in the long period of political struggle, and which at the same time unites with the revolutionary period and enormous cultural work in the most exact sense of the words: the material and intellectual elevation of the whole working class through the “civilising” of the barbaric forms of capitalist exploitation (Luxemburg, 2007, pp. 163-164).

During the post-Second World War period, the European Trade Union movement is marked by three phases; a period of strong mobilization in the sixties, a period of consolidation of social negotiations and agreements in the nineteen seventies and the surge of neoliberal neo-Fordism from the eighties onwards (Ferreira, 2004; Santos, 1995a). According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1995a), the historical development of Trade Union practices in Portugal is somewhat different from the rest of Europe, due to its semi-peripheral position. In Portugal, during the sixties, Trade Union activity is mostly restricted to difficult, clandestine organization during the extreme-right Salazar dictatorship. The seventies were marked by the revolution; the frustrated dream of socialism marked the establishment of liberal parliamentary regime. When finally, the moment of consolidation of social agreements and embryonic social welfare state could be attained in the eighties; the neoliberal reforms were already at the door; with the first bailout and structural adjustment program agreed with the IMF (Santos, 1995a, p. 132). Subsequently Portugal has relative advanced social rights, but those workers' rights are continuously and massively violated.

When approaching the concept of democracy in Trade Unions, theorists usually distinguish between internal and external democracy (Harcourt & Wood, 2004; Santos, 1995a). According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1995a), external democracy derives from the double primary function of Trade Unions: the struggle for social rights and collective negotiation with employers and the state. Internal union democracy is based on close incorporation of the membership in decision making, on unity and solidarity, on general assemblies, on the election of union representatives and on referenda on important decisions.

Much of the institutionalist, rational choice and elitist literature assumes that internal union democracy is detrimental for wider democracy in society and vice-versa, because of stronger unions would imply "excessive demands" and neo-corporatist tendencies (Harcourt & Wood, 2004, pp. 4-5). More radical social theory sees no such contradiction; indeed, it tends to see both internal and external democracy as interdependent: internal democracy refers to the processes of decision-making within the Union, how leaders are elected, agenda's set and struggles organized – which have been essential to guarantee external democracy. Internal democracy serves to counterbalance the danger of the creation of autocracies and oligarchic privileges within the union structures (Santos, 1995a, p. 136).

Active democratic participation of its members, also avoids that Trade Unions are reduced to pure chains of transmission of political parties¹⁰⁴ (Santos, 1995a).

Trade Unions are a “voice” which articulates interests and claims (Teague, 1999, p. 55). This voice gives workers the opportunity to overcome their unequal individual condition in confrontation with employers on the labour market (Offe & Wiesenthal, 1980). Freedom of association, Trade Unions organization, realization of collective demonstrations and strike action are the main characteristics of this form of collective action which conserve their importance, even in contexts where the representativity of workers by Trade Unions could be doubted (Costa, 2011; Rogers & Streeck, 1995). Based on the double function of struggle and negotiation, there are two different trends of Trade Unionism: Trade Unionism of contestation and Trade Unionism of participation which are reflected in different forms of Trade Union democracy. They reflect two apparently oppositional political perspectives about change in society; if the role of Trade Unions is to civilize capitalism or build a social alternative to it (Santos, 1995a).

5.3.2.1 Trade Unions and Social Movements

According to Santos (1995a, p. 135), Trade Union democracy is strengthened through the transformation of worker’s identity into citizen identity: in contemporary societies, Trade Unions can only fulfil their role as representatives of the demos through the unions’ involvement in broader struggles against alienation such as consumer rights, ecological rights, cultural rights etc. During this process, Trade Unions need to articulate themselves with other progressive social movements, such as consumers: feminists, anti-racists and ecologists.

In the literature, this aspect of union democratization is designated as “Social Movement Unionism (SMU)” (Dibben, 2004, p. 286; Engelhardt, 2017b, p. 92). SMU is a union practice that goes beyond the politics of a concrete enterprise or sector, and helps to build broader structures of resistance for common aims (Engelhardt, 2017b, p. 93; Engeman, 2015, p. 2). Or as Turner and Hurd (2001, p. 12) put it: SMU encompasses Trade Unions or labour organizations that orientate their structures and members on “[...] building networks

¹⁰⁴ In Portugal the CGTP is traditionally linked with PCP, while the UGT is linked to the PS.

with different active groups and educate their rank and file members to prepare for and intervene in social movements”.

Since the birth of the new social movements in the 1960's, these alliances have never been easy. The new social movements brought creative forms of activism, new discourses and democratic forms of organization – against the “old” bureaucratized movements and workers' parties. The unions have always looked with distrust and scepticism towards these movements that actively distanced themselves from the “working-class vanguard” and proposed new contours of social conflict (Estanque, 2008; Harcourt & Wood, 2004).

The crisis and austerity strengthened interorganizational competition between unions and social movements for the same social basis – precarious workers in particular. The perspective on competition worsened the traditionally very suspicious stance of Portuguese Trade Unions towards collaboration with other social movements (Fonseca & Estanque, 2018, pp. 219-220). Fonseca (2016, p. 278) describes how Trade Union activists look towards what they call “inorganic movements” – such as the 150 Platform: they are unpredictable, have lack of identifiable organisation structures and accountability, a lot of internal ideological heterogeneity, and too radical. For social movements on the other hand; cooperation could also bring the threat of institutionalization (Dibben, 2004, p. 297).

For the Unions the institutionalization of the struggles is key in the realization and defence of what they consider essential parts of democracy – public services, worker's rights etc. FENPROF-leader Mário Nogueira, one of the interviewees for this research, stresses this stark difference in approach:

What really distinguishes the union movement from these types of movements is the fact that the union movement has an organization, is based on an organization and a structure that succeeds and remains...
In the most difficult moments, the union movement gains even more importance. It is present and shows its face, goes to the fight and he has to come out in public and to be able to denounce and to be able to demand.
In other moments when these movements appear, things end up being easier. In these moments people are more attentive, they are more easily available [...] more available to protest. [...].
Some emerge out of opportunism in some contexts they can even mobilize, but they disappear as quick as they appeared. [...].
I give more value to Trade Unions, not just because I am a Trade Union leader, but because I think that the answer Trade Unions give is a permanent answer, and people need this answer whole the time (M. Nogueira, personal communication, 28 September 2020).

According to Anne Engelhardt (2017b) and Dora Fonseca (2016), the protests against austerity, however, were marked by impressive examples of “Social Movement

Unionism”; with Trade Union structures deciding to approach social movement activists and support them. As traditional democratic institutions showed themselves incapable in accommodating traditional Trade Unions demands – for more jobs, dignified work, greater social justice, fighting precariousness, transparency etc. – in separate form, they were articulated in a common opposition to austerity (Fonseca, 2016). Dora Fonseca (2016, p. 183) uses Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) framework to show how this identification in a common opponent turned them equivalent, accentuating their differentiation in relation to the system – and creating an articulation between Unions and Social movements. A frontier was made between those that opposed austerity and the institutions that were responsible for it. The conflict between capital and labour became strongly interlinked with demands for more and better democracy, which were transversal in all the protests (Fonseca, 2016, p. 184). SMU developed links between union militants and social activists that still remain and can be valuable for further protest movements in Portugal (Engelhardt, 2017b).

5.3.2.2 The example of the Dockworkers

The Lisbon Dockworkers’ Union SETC (*Sindicato dos Estivadores, Trabalhadores do Tráfego e Conferentes Marítimos do Centro e Sul de Portugal/Union of Dockworkers, Transport and Maritime Workers of the Center and South of Portugal*)¹⁰⁵ played a vanguard role during the wave of protests against austerity. Being independent of the two main union confederations CGTP and UGT gave them more freedom. Their union conflict at the time was not so much a protest against austerity; it had very specific aims around the working conditions in the Portuguese ports (Fox-Hodess, 2017). They were involved in four years of conflict about working standards and collective bargaining agreements with the government and private port companies as well as against the privatization of the port management (Engelhardt, 2017b). SETC did not just mobilize its affiliated members for continued strike actions over a long time. To combat the public media campaign against them; they followed a strategy to broaden the support for their struggle through alliances with social movements: they participated and supported the demonstrations against austerity organized by social movement activists as well as on the issues of housing and precariousness. Anne Engelhardt

¹⁰⁵ SETC became SEAL (*Sindicato de Estivadores e da Atividade Logística/Union of Dockworkers and Logistical Activity*) in 2016 when workers from other Portuguese ports joined the Union.

(2017a, p. 46) explains how doing so the dockworkers of Lisbon became the most visible example of Social Movement Unionism in Portugal:

On September 15, 2012, the dockworkers started to present themselves as a bloc on the *Que Se Lixe a Troika* demonstration. From that day on, the SETC was active almost every week in nearly all demonstrations that took place until November 14, where they also had a strong bloc in the demonstration of the general strike. Furthermore, the dockworkers started to support protests for social housing and recently organized a countrywide demonstration against precarious working conditions in Portugal.

The Portuguese dockworkers had few resources and were labouring under the adverse political and economic circumstances of the Troika memorandum. But according to Fox-Hodess (2017), they were ultimately successful due to their union's structure and leadership orientation which allowed to build shop-floor power. The result of their struggles – the re-employment of sacked precarious workers and the recognition of collective bargaining – was not only a victory for the workers immediately involved – it was also an important boost for national and international labour movements more broadly (Fox-Hodess, 2017).

President of SETC-SEAL, António Mariano (personal communication, 26 February 2015), was one of the key players in the austerity struggles that we interviewed for this research. According to him, there is “no democracy in Portugal”. As economic interest groups have taken over power and the government policies have nothing to do with electoral programs and promises, representative democracy ends the day votes are counted. The parliament and president are reduced to pure “decoration”; Elections lead to vitiated results, that are unable to be posteriorly controlled. At the same time, the unions need to fight against the attempts to take away Trade Union and organization rights.

Mariano (personal communication, 26 February 2015) understands democracy as “government by the people and for the people”: more concretely democracy as the possibility of workers to organize, discuss and work on their future, their conditions of job security and financial conditions to sustain their lives. For the dockworkers, there seems no separation between internal and external democracy; their own democratic and participatory practice is the way how they want to see society. Some parallels exist with the prefigurative practices of the *Acampadas* movement, with the difference that the *Acampadas* projected their practice as a utopian ideal for society, while for the unionists it are their everyday, material, working practices needed for survival. About the direct internal democracy of the *Acampadas*, Mariano (personal communication, 26 February 2015) believes in it as a practical role model for society:

We practice democracy here – in our Trade Unionism. Among us, dock workers, all important decisions are made in assemblies, we work from the basis. We have power exactly because of our basis; it gives our union much more strength than relying just on our elected mandate. Democracy is the possibility of the affected by political positions to participate in the decision making.

In our own sphere, as dockworkers, internal direct democracy is practical and demandable. Workers participation through its class organization, with decisions made in assemblies, as we defend, is the only way.

Even if participation in Portuguese society has tended to decrease again since the big demonstrations of 2011-2012, the work needs to be continued: Mariano (personal communication, 26 February 2015) believes that like prefigurative politics of the *Acampadas*, one needs to spread the ideas by example of action and behaviour that bring results.

Through these methods we guaranteed participation of the workers and guarantee a sindicalization rate of 100% – while the average level in Portugal is closer to a shameful 10% of the workers. Our workers are a sample of society, from the extreme right to the extreme left. We don't want to know about people's party or religious options – those aspects are left outside; here we join and discuss collectively our future.

Mariano acknowledges that there has been a Trade Union tradition in Portugal to keep distance from social movements but SETC did things different by approaching those movements. The objective was not only to strengthen these movements with Union support and give them more visibility, but also because it enabled the dockers to pass their own claims in a more efficient way. Mariano (personal communication, 26 February 2015) declared:

Maybe we are not so radically anti-parties and anti-parliament as those movements, but we think that power should be continuously pressured – and there we find ourselves aligned on the level of our struggles and aims: be it on the level of environment, lay-offs, housing, unemployment and precariousness. Our struggle for job-security, collective wage agreements, against a differentiation of contracts between workers and for the integration of precarious workers is very much aligned with the struggle of the movements against precariousness and unemployment.

One can conclude that, while Trade Unions have lost their monopoly on social protest, they still have a central role, and through it define citizens perspectives on democracy. The aspect of participation and democracy as a continuous practice is very important aspect of Trade Union Democracy as an alternative. Rather than the utopian prefigurative version of the *Acampadas*, the practices of the unions are more a form of day-to-day work, alliances with parties and social movements – Social Movement Unionism – are not only a political ideal, but a matter of strategic survival.

5.3.3 The Party Alternative

Political parties are often perceived as the main institutions of parliamentary representative democracies. According to Russell J. Dalton, David M. Farrell and Ian McAllister (2011, p. 3), for example, it “[...] is a well-established position of party theorists that these entities have played a crucial role in the establishment and proper functioning of democracy”. They exemplify with other theorists like James Bryce (1921, p. 119), who defends that “[...] parties are inevitable: no free country has been without them; and no one has shown how representative government could work without them”. Max Weber (1990, p. 35) who states that political parties are “[...] the children of democracy, of mass franchise, of the necessity to woo and organize the masses”, or Schattschneider’s (1977, p. 1), “[...] modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties”.

The party-based electoral model of democracy coincides with the mainstream democratic discourse we have analysed in Chapter 4. It reflects the hegemonic approach to democracy of the last decades. Political parties – in a very specific form – have colonized the idea about democracy since the 19th century. According to Dalton *et al.* (2011, p. 6), political parties emerged as the primary linkage mechanism for facilitating the representative process:

Within the mass population, parties simplify the choices that are open to voters, thereby reducing the policy complexity of modern government into a small number of options that voters can easily understand. Parties educate citizens into the advantages and disadvantages of the policy choices that are on offer. Not least among their roles within the mass population is the expectation that political parties will mobilize citizens to actively participate in the political process, thereby creating long-term stability for the political system as a whole.

For that same reason intra-party competition is the corner stone of the minimalist model of democracy in the works of Schumpeter (1976) and Przeworski (1999).

Can parties be a democratic alternative to liberal representative democracy? Today’s crisis of democracy is also a crisis of political parties. Research has shown that the identification of citizens with parties and membership of parties is in decline over the last decades (Dalton *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, we have seen that during this crisis, the contestation of government policies is translated into a rejection of the idea of party-representation itself. The non-partidarian social movements like the *Acampadas* are an expression of this crisis. This is a recurrent phenomenon: as Daalder (2002, p. 47) points out that party-systems were blamed for the crisis of parliamentary democracy of both France as the Weimar republic in the nineteen thirties.

How do parties adapt to the crisis of the party-legitimacy and the crisis of representative democracy we have discussed before? Cristiano Gianolla (2017, pp. 87-90 *passim*) defends that the political crisis of liberalism is one of lack of political participation: while mass workers'-parties of the past granted possibilities for political participation of the masses, the focus on the individual voter in neoliberal representative democracy and the destruction of the welfare state, has eroded this participative aspect. In his research he showed how *5 Stelle* in Italy and AAP (*Aam Aadmi Party*) in India (Gianolla, 2018), but also *Podemos* in Spain looked towards a party-renewal based upon internal democracy. Giving members a stronger internal power and opening the membership to wider society should bring with it a wider participation and legitimacy¹⁰⁶.

A survey among party members from 2014 confirmed that also in Portugal a high proportion of members were unsatisfied with intra-party democracy (Lisi, 2019, p. 152). Mainstream parties attempted to strengthen their social legitimacy through the “outsourcing” of the political program to polling agencies, and measures of internal democratisation through change in the recruitment processes and participation of members. This had limited effects and criticisms emerged regarding the low competitiveness of leadership competitions and the lack of internal debate (Lisi, 2019, pp. 152-155 *passim*).

Is there a possible democratic alternative based on parties to transcend the crisis of liberal representative democracy? Can there be an approach of democracy that does not abandon the idea of parties as a basic pillar of democracy – while rejecting actual existing democracy? The left-wing parliamentary opposition parties – and particularly anti-capitalist parties have since long needed to cope with this difficult balance. It suffices to remind the historical debates between anarchists and socialists, and the dilemma’s about parliamentarianism within the communist international we referred before¹⁰⁷. These problems become more acute in times of crisis.

¹⁰⁶ One should note that, according to Gramsci (2011, pp. 323-324) – just like I illustrated for the case of the Unions –, party democracy and democracy are two separate and sometimes opposed things: “To acquire democracy within the state it may be necessary-indeed, it is almost always necessary-to have a strongly centralized party; and furthermore, questions of democracy and oligarchy have a precise meaning which comes from the class difference between leaders and members. The question becomes political... centralization must take into account that in popular parties education and political ‘apprenticeship’ take place mostly through the active participation of members in the intellectual discussions-and organizational life of the parties”.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Chapter 3.3.2.4.

The previously proposed idea – that parties are the cornerstones of democracy – presupposes a very specific model of democracy and parties. It presupposes democracy to be a modern parliamentary representative form of democracy. And it presupposes an electoralist form of political parties. Both presuppositions are not unquestionable. There are forms of democratic decision-making that are not based on parties or representation: participatory democracy, deliberative democracy or even presidential systems that do not need parties. Neither the Greek polis nor the first European parliaments had clearly defined parties, as we know them. Even in mainstream theories of democracy, its predominance is a relatively recent phenomenon: David Held (1999) still considered them “[...] the most extraordinary and unaccountable phenomenon that has yet appeared in human affairs” (p. 161 *apud* Daalder, 2002, p. 39).

It also presupposes parties with an electoral character that abide a democratic consensus; but this is not necessarily the case. Even if parties have an important role to form and represent opinions in society, this representation does not necessarily pass through electoral legitimation: parties can have an anti-democratic, extra-parliamentarian or a revolutionary objective. A logical consequence is thus that there possibly exists an alternative party-perspective to democracy that goes beyond the dominant liberal democratic discourse. It is this perspective we will analyse here.

5.3.3.1 Parties and Portuguese Democracy

We have seen, in previous chapters, that parties played an important role in the establishment and the working of Portuguese democracy since the revolutionary process of 1974. While in most European countries, historically, parties have been at the margin of the law due to liberal principles of non-interventionism from the state (Rashkova & Van Biezen, 2014, pp. 266-270 *passim*), in Portugal parties are hard legal structures since its democratization in 1974. Portugal is one of the earliest European countries to have strong party regulation, its law regulates virtually all aspects of party activity, organization and behaviour (Van Biezen & Casal Bértoa, 2014, p. 76). Portuguese parties are thus organized by the law and in the constitution, which controls its recognition, its internal structures and its finances. While this legal structure ensures political rights to parties, it also forcefully institutionalizes them much further, and makes them much more dependent on the state than in other countries. According to Van Biezen and Casal Bértoa (2014, p. 79), changes in

party-laws were specifically aimed to “democratize” the parties on the Portuguese left. On the other hand, until 2015, the parties on the left of the PS had never participated in any government agreement – due to orthodoxy and unwillingness to compromise, and the unwillingness of the PS to collaborate with parties on its left (Freire, 2019, p. 62).

Another feature of the Portuguese party-system is its long term stability: except for the foundation and enduring success of the Left Bloc since 1999, the party-landscape has remained more or less the same for the last 40 years in terms of parties and party-representation into parliament¹⁰⁸ (Jalali, 2019, p. 82). Over the last decades, government policies would be dominated by the parties of the so-called “*Arco de Governação*” – “Arch of Governability” – which includes the three parties that had participated in governments since the constitution of 1976: PSD, PS and CDS-PP. According to Richard Gunther (2005, p. 270), the party landscape is dominated by a catch-all party model¹⁰⁹ with a relatively low barrier between left and right. Lack of consistent and coherent ideological stand and past-coalition governments that fostered pragmatism and moderation.

When during the Portuguese crisis, the Portuguese government called for the intervention of the Troika, composed by the IMF, EC, and ECB, to give financial assistance, the Troika sought broad support among the main traditional political forces of the Portuguese establishment. The so-called Memorandum of Understanding was eventually endorsed by the three parties of the “Arch of Governance” which covered the ideological area of the right to center-left. As a radical right-wing political opposition had so far been negligible in the period of the crisis and during the previous decades, we will concentrate on left parties in Portugal for a party-focused democratic alternative.

In parliament, PCP and BE were the main opposition against austerity and the Memorandum of Understanding. Both parties refused the invitation by the Troika to discuss the MoU in April 2011¹, as they didn’t recognize the legitimacy and authority of the international institutions to impose political conditionality to the country in the first place. Their strategy was based upon principled opposition, both in Parliament and on the streets.

¹⁰⁸ This changed in the context of the crisis, with new parties entering parliament in 2015 and 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Kirchheimer’s (1966) argued that a major transformation of Western European parties and party systems was under way: parties of mass integration were transforming themselves into ideologically bland catch-all parties. Bowing to the law of the political market, parties were abandoning previous efforts at “the intellectual and moral encadrement of the masses”, downplaying or abandoning ideology, bidding for the support of interest groups, emphasizing the qualities of their leaders, and seeking support wherever it could be found. Since then, the term has become a standard concept.

These political parties on the Portuguese left were therefore unquestionably the closest link between the anti-austerity movements and representative democracy. Both BE and PCP were very present in most of the protests against austerity. They also functioned as the main voice in parliament to bring forward the demands of the movements.

According to Miguel Tiago² (personal communication, 25 March 2015), at the time one of the most well-known MP's for the PCP, Portuguese democracy is "disfigured". That is to say: the revolutionary period which started with the April Revolution, had moulded a certain form of democracy, which had been translated by the constituent assembly into the Portuguese Constitution of 1976. In the four following decades, governments have applied politics that reconstituted the privileges that are eroding the pillars of the democratic regime. On paper democracy is "formally intact", but in practice it is profoundly disfigured: it has lost its social, economic and cultural dimensions and only persists in its weakened political form. Also José Soeiro (personal communication, 15 July 2020), Member of Parliament for the Left Bloc, emphasized that from a "formal perspective, there has been no suspension of democracy, in the sense that the institutions and formalities of the democratic process, remained in place", but that there occurred an "effective emptying" of democracy through a profound blackmailing of the Southern European states and "a discourse that restricted the democratic field of choices". He considers this the "nature of Bourgeois democracy in a capitalist society".

The implication of approaching the crisis of democracy as "an emptying of democracy", implies an approach that democracy is broader than parliamentary or electoral democracy. Such approach implies however that electoral democracy – as opposed to the perspective of many of the movements – is still at the core of their perception of democracy. Both representatives mention the Portuguese Constitution and the Constitutional Court as part of the protection of democracy under threat: "Some of the governments measures were annulled by the Constitutional Court; this means that choices occur in a constitutional framework that should not be changeable by the mere result of legislative elections", Soeiro (personal communication, 15 July 2020) emphasized for example.

Both the Left Bloc and the PCP's discourse about democracy is ambiguous in the sense that it balances itself between itself between the discourses and practices of the parliamentary party and their founding ideologies as anti-capitalist parties. They are both within and without the system. Their discourse is divided between a defence of normalcy and the defence of an alternative society: that is to say, democracy must be defended from

attacks by the government and foreign intervention by the Troika. It must be defended from those that attack parties and want to implement an unaccountable technocracy.

For Miguel Tiago (personal communication, 25 March 2015), the crisis is

[...] a structural crisis of capitalist accumulation; for capital it serves as a pretext to smash popular rights with the idea that there is no money, while at the same time filling the pockets of those that produced the crisis. With the crisis as pretext; police and state repression increases, cuts are made in salaries, public services, hospitals, schools, cultures is liquidated. For communists, there is no democracy if there is no social, economic and cultural democracy. Thus the crisis serves to destroy democracy. If there is no economic sovereignty there is no political sovereignty, we are a colonized people.

Democracy is presented as the conquest of the April Revolution and the result of past struggles. The defence of democratic normality is like a defence of a utopia of the past. This comes forward in Miguel Tiago (personal communication, 25 March 2015):

Aside the four dimensions of democracy, what is important is the “practice of democracy”; which is described by the Greek concept of “laocracy”. We have laocracy in Portugal, but no name for it: it is present in the occupation of land, the workers’ control of factories, management-control, the power of Trade Unions at the workspace, popular organization in the residents commissions, all kinds of associations. This is a fundamental component of democracy. Without these, democracy is reduced to a couple of elected institutions above the people in which every four years seats turn around. That is certainly not my concept of democracy.

At the same time both the communists and the Left Bloc proclaimed an anti-capitalist program. In theory they assume that capitalism cannot cope with real democracy, and thus that liberal, parliamentary democracy should therefore be overcome in some way. The existing Democracy is approached as a “phase”. At the end of this phase the question arises as a choice between “Socialism and Barbarism”, as Miguel Tiago (personal communication, 25 March 2015) quoted Rosa Luxemburg. Barbarism is not something of the distant future; it is here and now: in “People abandoned in hospitals, going hungry to school.” The crisis brings also hope, because it is exactly in the “streets without exit” that revolutions are made.

5.3.3.2 Parties and Social Movements

In the 1990’s, the class-based mass social-democratic parties officially abandoned a socialist alternative and turned to neoliberalism. Their “third way” politics, copied from Tony Blair’s New Labour, turned them into the vanguard of neoliberal politics in most countries. The neoliberal reforms they implemented brought them often in direct confrontation with the working-class mass base. In most northern European countries, the

“masses” were left without political instruments. In the European periphery, social-democratic parties have often had less roots in the working-class movements and the Trade Unions, however. One reason is that many of the old historical social-democratic parties quickly became liberal-republican parties; and were smashed during the right-wing dictatorships which dominated southern Europe since the 1930s.

Another reason is the continued existence of Moscow-oriented communist cadre parties. Throughout the right-wing military dictatorships in Portugal, Spain and Greece, these parties not only managed to survive clandestinely due to their centralized structures but played a decisive role in the resistance against these regimes. After the collapse of the dictatorships, these parties quickly filled the vacuum and acquired a mass working class base, which they controlled through the leadership in different working class organizations, associations and Trade Unions.

In some countries, such as Greece and Portugal, these communist parties maintained an anti-capitalist discourse. Their very closed political structure made them able to survive the neoliberal hegemony of the nineties. As a consequence, they tend, however, to be quite factional regarding organizations on the left they don't control. In other countries, these communist organizations moved to a Eurocommunist line. Eurocommunism emerged as a response to the growing opposition among communists in Western Europe against the fierce political repression committed by the Soviet Union, particularly after the Prague Spring in 1968. Eurocommunists, which include the PCF, the PCI/PD, the PCE, but also splits from the Portuguese and Greek Communist parties, accepted liberal democracy as their political horizon. These Eurocommunist organizations would serve as an important base for the formation of “new left formations” such as *Syriza*, *Left Bloc*, *Izquierda Unida* (United Left – IU) – and eventually, indirectly, also *Podemos*.

In different countries, the aftermath of the financial crisis and the resistance against austerity led to what the emergence of what Kitschelt (2006) had called movement parties. Kitschelt (2006, p. 280) defined movement parties as “[...] coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition”. According to Della Porta, Fernández, Kouki and Mosca (2017), the movement parties against austerity tried to bridge the gap between protest movements and the political party form. Based upon a study of *Syriza*, *Podemos*, and *M5S*, the authors contrast the new movement parties that emerged from the anti-austerity struggles with the two different movement party models of the past:

the ideological cadre party which sought to control and steer movements, and the class-based mass party that limited movement participation to electoral mobilization.

The authors contend that contemporary movement parties against austerity are locked in a dialectical process of mutual formation with anti-austerity movements, which they view as historically unique (Della Porta *et al.*, 2017). These Movement parties tried to fill the gap left out by the social-democracy. Electorally, they were relatively successful in the years that followed the great recession of 2008. In contrast to the old Stalinist parties, movement parties against austerity were open to engage with the diverse social movements against austerity; they deliberately blurred the relations between parties and movements (Della Porta *et al.*, 2017). They never developed to mass parties however, nor did they propose an anti-systemic alternative to the crisis of capitalism or the liberal democracy.

The movement party “*par excellence*”, has been *Podemos* in Spain. *Podemos* emerged from the 15M movement. While 15M represented a general disenchantment with party politics. The distrust and lack of credibility 15M had towards politicians prevented themselves of being leaders in the new scenario (Muñoz-Sánchez & Pérez-Flores, 2016, p. 198). Launched as a completely new party in 2014, *Podemos* tried to direct 15M’s opposition to austerity and the post-Franco regime towards the political dispute of power in the form of party-politics. *Podemos* copied much of the main 15M political and organizational principles Muñoz-Sánchez and Pérez-Flores (2016, p. 198) sums up these elements: the prioritization of the idea of democracy before class antagonism, the focus on direct participation and consensus against partisanship, the focus on citizens rather than on conventional ideological notions of left and right. The bottom-up participatory structure of *Podemos*, however tended to conflict with the personalization of the party around Pablo Iglesias (Della Porta *et al.*, 2017). *Podemos*’ political strategy was very much influenced by the so-called Essex School of discourse theory, which was based on the left populism theory of Ernesto Laclau we discussed in Chapter 3.2.3 (Kioupkiolis & Katsambekis, 2018, p. 202). According to Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis (2018, p. 215), a certain reading of Laclau’s thought, based on the catalytic role of individual leadership in Latin American left-wing populism, is likely to have reinforced these vertical and centralizing tendencies in *Podemos*.

Podemos, even while it presented itself as anti-establishment, very quickly entered in a process of institutionalization. This institutionalization went through different stages, the formation of a party organization, participation in elections, the election of parliamentary representatives, and finally the sharing of government responsibility within a liber

parliamentary model of politics (Vittori, 2017). Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis (2018, p. 202) observed “[...] a gradual moderation of their discourse and politics, a move to the center-Left, the empowerment of leadership” and vertical/hierarchical structures throughout this process. Both Moñuz-Sanchez (2016) as Vittori (2017, p. 335) conclude that the institutionalization process of the 15M movement through *Podemos* was complete by 2016 to the extent that *Podemos* cannot be considered a movement party anymore.

Portugal did not see the rise of new movement parties like *Podemos* in Spain¹¹⁰ but various already existing parties engaged with the social movements against austerity. Besides the two parliamentary parties – the PCP and the Left Bloc – also extra-parliamentary party-like organizations were present at the protests. *Livre* and the radical left *Movimento Alternativa Socialista* participated in elections. Others, like *Rubra*, *Socialismo Revolucionario*, were not part of official political parties but defended the party-form as the form of organization for political change.

The democratic perspective of parties focusses on organization, power and the state. Their discourses and practices focus on social and constitutional rights, elections, history, ideology, and strategy. Parties have structures, leaderships, organizing principles and a political program. The democratic discourse of parties is thus by definition at least partly institutionalist.

In Chapter 3.3.2, we have discussed the different strategic debates around the question of democracy among socialist organizations. Based upon this overview, we could broadly categorize party-strategies towards the capitalist state and bourgeois democracy as based upon an axis between reformism and revolution. Reformist strategies tend towards immediate institutionalization within the pre-existing liberal-democratic framework; the recognition of the need of political change, but recognizing the existing institutions and abiding to its rules. Revolutionary strategies consider the existing institutions as illegitimate and therefore strive for completely different institutions and rules of the game. A continuum exists between these two poles; and parties often pass through an evolution along this axis.

The institutionalization of the anti-austerity movements in Portugal thus did not happen directly through the emergence of a New Movement Party like *Podemos* and its subsequent institutionalization. Instead, it happened in two ways: through the further institutionalization of the already existing parties and their relationship towards the social

¹¹⁰ Chapter 7.1.3 explains why.

movements on one hand and through the depoliticization and (self-)marginalization of parts of the movements on the other.

The Left Bloc has traditionally had a closer link to the newer social movement organizations, particularly in the more identarian-based movements – which always had been approached with suspicion or enmity by the PCP. Some of these movements include the Women’s movement UMAR, the precarious workers’ movement PI, the LGTB movement *Panteras Rosas* and the anti-racist movement *SOS-Racismo*. All of these organizations had members of BE at leading positions. Various of these social movements participated in the protests against austerity and in their organizing platforms. This made that the Left Bloc had naturally a closer link to these newest social movements.

For José Soeiro democratic legitimacy goes beyond strict formal democratic procedures. On the level of popular and social legitimacy of policies, the movements play an important role. He emphasized the diversity of the movements as a guideline for the approach of the party towards these movements. In our interview, he defended that social classes are crossed by different political opinions: from social democrats that aspired justice on the institutional level and the sphere of party politics, over anarchists that questioned the existence of the state itself and any form of representation, to autonomist currents that bet on micro-resistances and prefigurative politics. The role of the party is one of articulation with parts of this movement. Within this context, the member of parliament for Left Bloc – much more than PCP-MP Miguel Tiago – thus acknowledged the importance of articulation between the parliamentary parties and the new social movements in a similar way as Laclau and Mouffe¹¹¹ (2001) had proposed. In contrast to the left populist school, however, Soeiro (personal communication, 15 July 2010) still recognizes the primordality of class in addressing the social struggle:

I think social movements are a fundamental component of democracy... Parliamentary action only make sense if it has a deep connection with what happens outside Parliament... Parliament at most is a sphere of expression and deliberation. The relations of forces are built outside of the Parliament itself. In this respect, I think it is impossible to think about democracy and political institutions and representation without articulating with the class struggle, with the political action of social movements in its various spheres.

Soeiro (personal communication, 15 July 2010) also recognized the prefigurative model of democracy of the socia-movements as a viable approach, while recognizing the

¹¹¹ As we saw in Chapter 3.2.2, Mouffe’s hope for a left-populist strategy focussed on the emergence of a new type of radical populist party which articulated with the social movements – *Bloco de Esquerda* in Portugal was one of her inspirations.

difficulties the movements themselves had: “We have to try to apply internally the models of democracy that corresponds with what we proclaim we want for the rest of society”.

The PCP is for many decades the main mass party of the organized working class and civil society in Portugal. The PCP also has close ties to Portugal’s main Trade Union confederation CGTP. While officially retaining some distance, PCP thus functioned as the political party-voice of the traditional social movements, cooperatives, and professional associations in Portugal; its members occupy key positions. The PCP mostly behaved as a cadre-party towards social movements throughout its history. Very much like the CGTP confederation, the PCP had a suspicious position towards the newly emerging of social movements against austerity. Quickly, some militants of the communist party came to frame the new activists as confused petit-bourgeois radicals which only divided the movement.

It is exemplified by Miguel Tiago (personal communication, 25 March 2015): “This [the crisis] is a moment of agglutination of forces, we need a force to transform power. Now is not the time for experimentalism, adventurism or small occupations, whatsoever the individual value of these actions”. Tiago considered these movements not as “something new, but as a historical regression in time, back to utopic socialism”. “Camping on public place, voting motions and be against this and that, plant our own food..., organizing theatre and workshops... it is all very beautiful... romantic, exciting... but it neglects the fundamental question which is about taking power”... “As if the working class progressed centuries to get organized, have Trade Unions, have a party, revolutionary theory and practice” – “and now we go back into time”.

According to Miguel Tiago (personal communication, 25 March 2015), the social movements against austerity were non-party – “like student protests or union protests usually are” – rather than anti-party. He considers the anti-party discourse attributed to these movements as something constructed by the media. According to him, the anti-party-sentiment is something which favoured much more the extreme-right than the left; it creates the illusion the situation would be better off without parties, and that it would be sufficient to have just one party ruling over everything, that parties divide the people and that parties would thus be harmful for democracy.

In order to align the defence of parliamentary party-based democracy with the communist ideal of direct workers participation – or a system such as in Cuba, where parliament is elected without direct interference – by the communist party –, Miguel Tiago

approaches the Portuguese democracy as a specific “phase”. The approach follows the teleological evolution of stages (described in 3.3.2.3) some Marxists adhered to – particularly in the context of popular-front politics. Basically, liberal capitalist democracy is a phase of evolution before society is ripe for socialism. In this phase, liberal democracy should be defended against conservative right-wing and extreme-right attacks, as a class-compromise and a guarantee for communists themselves to be able to do open political work – as opposed to feudal or fascist systems.

In this current “phase”, according to Miguel Tiago (personal communication, 25 March 2015), we need to value “parties” as great organizations of people in the dispute of power: “The existence of parties is a prerequisite to have political choices”. “Even those who do not identify with parties”, Tiago continues, “should defend them because the essence of ‘party’”. At the current state of humanity, movements should “not divide”, “nor distract”, but “instead aggregate”: “What we need is that a class organizes itself and disputes power”.

In practice, at least temporarily, both the PCP as the Left Bloc, have accepted the liberal-democratic order and the rules of the game. Until 2015, both parties had remained anti-establishment parties, however; they had party-structures and a political program, they participated in parliamentary discussions, proposed and voted laws. They had however never participated in executive office and had always been opposition parties – at least on the national level. In Chapter 7 we will focus how a pressure towards a further institutionalization of these parties occurred in the aftermath of the crisis, through the strengthening of their parliamentary positions and the subsequent responsabilization in government policies.

Many activists in the anti-austerity movement looked with suspicion and enmity towards political parties – also to the left-wing parties. Some were suspicious because of ideological reasons; many of the activists had anarchist and libertarian backgrounds – but it also reflected a general anti-political and anti-party sentiment in society, which we will analyse in Chapter 6. Many were also suspicious for practical reasons. Activists were afraid that party-structures which “controlled” many activists together would influence the decision-making processes in the movement and empty the base-democratic character of the movement. The supposed revelation by the right-wing *Jornal i*, that “discovered” and publicized that 4 of the 6 members of the coordination QSLT were in some way linked to BE and PCP, played with these sentiments (Costa, 2019, p. 119). The suspicions raised many discussions within the movements; not only about the internal decision-making procedures,

but also about the acceptance of people affiliated to parties and the desirability to cooperate with parties in concrete actions and mobilizations.

The dismissive approach of the PCP and CGTP towards these movements, particularly in the beginning, also didn't help to bring old and new social movements together. The PCP and CGTP had the custom to exclude non-members from their mobilizations. Non-aligned social movements, independent flags or banners were consistently banned by party-officials. They forced these activists to "join" the demonstration behind everyone else, behind a security corridor. The organizers legitimized this approach in order to guarantee safety and avoid "provocateurs". While there has been no evidence whatsoever that there were any secret agreements between PCP and the police about the demonstrations, the fact that twice demonstrations were attacked by police-intervention after the PCP-delegations officially abandoned the scene, worsened relations of confidence between parties and movements, as some activists began spreading the idea that the PCP were traitors bought by the state. In Chapter 7, we will have a closer look upon the relation between parties social movements and elections, and their role in the institutionalization of the protest within the liberal democratic order and the temporary overcoming of the democratic crisis.

5.4 Back to Hegemony and socialist strategy

Within this chapter, we have seen that the hegemonic model of liberal democracy went through a serious crisis with the application of the austerity policies, starting from 2011. Record numbers of people mobilized in strikes, demonstrations and other forms of protests between 2011 and 2013 – among the most iconic were the *Geração à Rasca* demonstration, the general strikes, the *Que-Se-Lixe-a-Troika* demonstrations and the Occupy movement of the *indignados*. Overall, we found that people that participated in those protests seemed to have a very negative opinion of the state of democracy in those years; nearly all of our respondents considered democracy as inexistent or in bad state. Dissatisfactions with government policies are directly projected upon the idea of democracy itself. People complained about the lack of social rights, lack of accountability, lack of legitimacy, lack of freedom of speech and freedom of information, the lack of national sovereignty, lack of Participation and Lack of respect for the constitution.

A large majority of the respondents was convinced that democracy deteriorated because of the crisis and austerity. The crisis generated a great disparity between what people thought democracy should be and what it really was, effectively creating a hegemonic crisis around democracy. While people rejected the existing state of democracy, there was however not necessarily a clear idea how it should or could be different, and even if they had, democracy is often imagined as an ideal disconnected from their reality. At the same time, the overall majority of the respondent defined democracy in terms of power of “We”, “The people”, “citizens” or “population”.

Different social actors in the protests, new social movement activists, labour union activists and party-members had different discourses what the democratic alternative would be. Together with the opposition towards persisting liberal-democratic model, it is situation which can be empirically described by Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ concept of demodiversity, which we described in Chapter 3.2.4: “[...] the peaceful or conflictual coexistence of different democratic models and practices” (Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 70). The democratic discourse of the unions is linked to traditional everyday working and living conditions. Democracy, for Trade Unionists means guaranteeing decent salaries, pensions, contracts, and safety on the workplace; it also means direct and unconditional solidarity between co-workers, collective action and direct participation in union-decisions. The democratic discourse of the social movements is more utopic. It is focussed on systemic change, direct citizen participation in assemblies, horizontality, values of internationalism and solidarity, as well as practices of prefiguration. The discourse of the parties, on the other hand, is more institutionalist, focussed on organization, power and the state. It focusses on social and constitutional rights, elections, history, ideology, and strategy.

We addressed the attempts and strategies to cooperate between these different actors, as well as the difficulties and prejudices each of them encountered. Strategies for cooperation included forms of social movement Trade Unionism, the joint mobilization in the general strikes, the cooperation in mobilizing platforms such as 15O platform and QSLT, as well as the *Congresso Democrático das Alternativas*. Many of the recent analysis of the crisis of democracy have referred to Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) approach of hegemonic articulation as a framework to understand the collaboration between protest movements in Portugal (Brito, 2016; Costa, 2019; Fonseca, 2016).

“Back to Hegemonic Struggle” was the *motto* with which Laclau and Mouffe (2001) finished their introduction to the second edition of *Hegemony and socialist strategy*.

As we referred to in Chapter 3.2, Laclau and Mouffe's (2001, pp. X-XII *passim*) transition towards a post-Marxist analysis, privileges the ideas of "political articulation" and "hegemony" over what they call the "Hegelian/naturalistic" categories of traditional Marxism such as the Hegelian notion of universal class or the Marxian notion of Proletariat as a universal class. They claimed that their focus on "contingent articulation" announces the true central dimension of "politics". Hegemonic transitions are thus fully dependent on political articulation and not upon entities pre-constituted outside of the political field – they specifically refer to class interests. A political solution for the crisis thus utterly depends upon the capacities and communication strategies of Trade Unions, social movements and parties to bring about a contingent narrative that would replace the hegemony of austerity.

In Chapter 2, we proposed Marxism as the ultimate political science to solve this problem in the context of crisis. Marxism argues that crisis reveal the fundamental contradictions of capitalism – that is between capital and labour, and that socialism/communism, based upon class-interests, is the way to overcome this contradiction. In *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. 86) have rejected this approach; for them, "[...] there is no logical and necessary relation between socialist objectives and the positions of social agents in the relations of production". According to Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. 60), the constitutive character of the political – in Leninism – does not attribute any major role to superstructures – as ideology, institutions and discourse – because it is founded on a "scientific monopoly enjoyed by a given class perspective" instead of upon "[...] the efficacy of the political level in constructing social relations". Even if, since Kautsky, Marxism would have known that the socialist determination of the working class did not arise spontaneously but depended upon the political mediation of intellectuals or the revolutionary party, such mediation "[...] was not conceived as articulation – that is to say, as a political construction from dissimilar elements. It had an epistemological basis: socialist intellectuals read in the working class its objective destiny" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 85):

Leninism evidently makes no attempt to construct, through struggle, a mass identity not predetermined by any necessary law of history. On the contrary, it maintains that there is a for itself of the class accessible only to the enlightened vanguard – whose attitude towards the working class is therefore purely pedagogical. The roots of authoritarian politics lie in this interweaving of science and politics. Once every political relation is conceived as a relation of representation, a progressive substitutionism moves from class to party (representation of the objective interests of the proletariat) and from party to Soviet State (representation of the world interests of the Communist movement). A martial conception of class struggle thus concludes in an eschatological epic (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 59).

They take a rather analytical notion of class – in contrast to the Marxist-dialectical notion – to repeat the argument of Bernstein¹¹² (1909) to argue that “[...] the very unity and homogeneity of class subjects has split into a set of precariously integrated positions” (*apud* Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 85). This led to the final redoubt of class reductionism and a situation in which “[...] the logic of hegemony, as a logic of articulation and contingency, has come to determine the very identity of the hegemonic subjects” (Bernstein, 1909 *apud* Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 85). Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. XIII) thus defend their theory of hegemony based upon “structural undecidability” and the “[...] construction of a hegemonic subject articulation of those particularities in a situation of antagonism” against those that argued for going back to the working class. Those critics had argued that the left failed to listen to the working class and instead just focussed on identity and cultural struggles. While Laclau and Mouffe (2001) acknowledged that the left abandoned the working class and focussed on the middle classes – they blame the left’s lack of alternatives to neoliberalism, not the infatuation with the issues of identity. Instead they argue that these are not opposed issues: struggles against sexism, racism, struggles against sexual discrimination and environmental struggles should be articulated with those of the workers in a new left-wing hegemonic project which they called radical and plural democracy (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. XVIII).

Equivalence occurs through the articulation of those particularities in a situation of antagonism. To transcend this antagonism, one body needs to represent universality. This is what Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. XIII) called the hegemonic relation. But is the quote from Marx’s (1977) *Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right’* – which we already quoted in Chapter 2 – not the proof that the logic of Hegemony and was intrinsic to Marx’s thought, without the need of abandoning the centrality of the concept of universal class?

No class of civil society can play this role without arousing a moment of enthusiasm [...] in which it fraternizes and merges with society in general [...], and is perceived and acknowledged as its general representative, a moment in which its claims and rights are truly the claims and rights of society itself, a moment in which it is truly the social head and the social heart. Only in the name of the general rights of society can a particular class vindicate for itself general domination. For the storming of this emancipatory position, and hence for the political exploitation of all sections of society in the interests of its own section, revolutionary energy and spiritual self-feeling alone are not sufficient. For the revolution of a nation, and the emancipation of a particular class of civil society to coincide, for one estate to be acknowledged as the estate of the whole society, all the defects of society must conversely be concentrated in another class, a particular estate must be the estate of the general stumbling-block, the

¹¹² Cf. Chapter 3.3.2.2.

incorporation of the general limitation, a particular social sphere must be recognized as the notorious crime of the whole of society, so that liberation from that sphere appears as general self-liberation. For one estate to be par excellence the estate of liberation, another estate must conversely be the obvious estate of oppression (Marx, 1977, p. 140).

In Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terms, that would be: the antagonism – the differentiation between Capital and Labour revealed by the “enabling paradox” (Roitman, 2011) of the crisis – is provoked by capitalist exploitation, and obliges the affected particular subjects to collaborate. Through this antagonism, one particular position – the worker – takes the representation of universality to transcend the existing capitalist hegemony.

Let us now return to the different discourses from the perspective of the Political Science of Marxism, as we have argued in the Chapter 2: considering the discourses of democracy as part of the ideological superstructure which stands in a dialectic relation with the sub-structure of the relations of production. Such a political approach to crisis – in Schmittean terms – grasps those discourses as a moment when the “real” appears. A crisis is not only a moment of creation of knowledge and transcendental decision. At the same time, it is an affirmation of the essential antagonism between classes.

If we look upon the different democratic alternatives, we observe that there is a “void” which covers the three different discourses we have studied. Even if there are certain antagonisms between the different protest movements – like the distrust between parties, unions and social movements, in some form or another, all the three democratic opposition discourses – the Trade Union discourse, the Party-discourse and the social-movement discourse – reflect some aspects or sides of what in the past, would have been called socialism, or socialist democracy based upon class interests. Is not the historical ideology of socialism the unification of all those aspects: decent distribution of wealth, control of the work-place, solidarity, participation, solidarity, internationalism, strategy, collective action and praxis between daily needs and the utopia of a better society to come? On the opposition side, the democratic void turns out to be the missing socialist democracy as the hegemonic opposite of the dominant elite-liberal democratic discourse. What was lacking, however is the unification or articulation of those ideas.

As we have referred to in Chapter 3.2.4, Santos (2016b, p. 259; Santos & Mendes, 2017, p. 32) defends that the condition of void only exists because substantive contents have intentionally been emptied by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy... Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the success of the neoliberal TINA-doctrine; socialism has definitely disappeared from the available political alternatives – former socialist parties have

adapted to third-way politics, have focussed on other progressive issues such as ecology, feminism or migratory rights, a retreat from class (Wood, 1998) was generalized among intellectuals, even among those who claimed to be (post-)Marxists; even the radical left has adopted a reformist horizon... At the same time, during the crisis, material interests – reflecting class interests – appeared as a wandering spectre over all democratic discourses. The task of Political Science is to fill the void again with its socialist content.

In the following two chapters, we're going to further analyse the difficulties of this task through some of the contradictions within the democratic opposition discourses. We are going to expose how those contradictions enable a cooptation or integration of those discourses within the hegemonic discursive and institutional model of democracy which legitimizes capitalism.

CHAPTER 6 — POST-POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN THE PORTUGUESE ANTI-AUSTERITY DISCOURSES¹¹³

In previous chapters we have tried to explain the crisis of democracy in Portugal as a divergence of different models and discourses about democracy in the Portuguese society. An important part of this divergence was provoked by the contestation of electoral, representative democracy by the large number of new social protest movements that rose from the ashes of the continuing crisis and who reclaimed “Real democracy now!”. The crisis created an epistemological opening around the concept of democracy – a situation which we have typified by Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ (2005, p. LXIII) concept of demodiversity: “The peaceful or conflicting coexistence [...] of different models and practices of democracy”. An opportunity arose to re-articulate the discourses about democracy in a counter-hegemonic model, able to mobilize resistances for an anti-capitalist alternative to austerity.

But what happened to the social-movement discourses? Throughout the period of protests we could observe a double dynamic. The first tendency is that the big protest events became ever more organized and controlled by the organized groups on the left, in particular Trade Unions and left political parties – we deal with this aspect in the next Chapter 7. The other tendency is the evolution of those not recognizing themselves in these organizations to retract to other forms of political practices, the so-called post-protest movements.

In this chapter, we want to address the problematic “post-political” elements of the democratic discourses and practices of these new social movements that led them in a “post-protest” direction. Their parallelism with the dominant discourse about democracy made parts of the protest-discourse prone for a re-articulation within the dominant depoliticized discourses about democracy. Conscience about these elements is crucial to safeguard the critical possibilities of these movements and to build a contra-hegemonic narrative that challenges the power-position of the post-political and technocratic discourse of neoliberal democracy in the austerity context. This chapter shall recapitulate the concepts of depoliticization and post-politics and how these are part of the dominant neoliberal ideology. Then we will discuss how these post-political elements are reflected in the discourses of the new protest movements in Portugal. Finally we will discuss how these post-political

¹¹³ An earlier, less developed version of this chapter, was published in Van Vossolle (2015b).

elements are problematic, both for the analysis of the concrete situation as in the presented solutions that follow the post-political logic.

6.1 From Protest to post-Protest – Aesthetical practices

In Chapter 5, we have seen how the crisis and austerity measures provoked the surge of widespread protests. While a considerable part of the resistance against austerity during the 2011-2013 period, occurred through the traditional channels such as parties and Trade Unions, another part took the form of social movements, particularly in the form of what are since then called the “newest social movements”. These newest social movements include the Occupy and *Acampadas* movement, but also movements that organized precarious workers, unemployed and movements round the housing question. These movements comply with most of the common elements Diani (1992) synthesized from Tilly’s, Tourraine’s and Melucci’s definitions of social movements: networks of informal interaction, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, in which collective action on conflictual issues; displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life. The movements against austerity took changing forms between wider platforms, new loose organized groups, assemblies and near spontaneous demonstrations organized by a small group of individuals. The articulation between these forms of resistance was based on a shared enemy: the economic system, the Troika and the policies of the government. Due to lack of organization, lack of political consensus and perspectives – tendencies present since the beginning of the movement – most of those new forms of political organization did not survive in the long term. They disappeared in their existing form during the last 2 years of the Passos Coelho’s legislature. Some of them disintegrated and split, others were institutionalized, or their activists abandoned their activism or they became part of political parties.

Among groups and activists that engaged in the movements against austerity, some have developed strategies and behaviour that go beyond traditional ways of protest – or post-protest. One possible example of such collective initiatives is “*Academia Cidadã*”, a platform launched by people that had initiated the demonstration of 12 March 2012 – “*Geração à Rasca*” – and started the 12 March Movement – M12M. In its foundational manifesto, “*Academia Cidadã*” proclaimed to be an initiative to “go beyond protest”, through cooperation and capacitation. The goal of the initiative was to create, concrete

alternatives, moved by the “conviction that democracy and citizenship does not deplete itself in the vote”. They approach democracy as “[...] a construction, with politics, agreements, signs, conversations, pencils, projects and actions, every day and in all areas of our life” (Citizenship Academy, 2013).

Most of these transitions from protest to “beyond protest” happened on an individual level, however. Among the participants of *Acampada de Coimbra*, for example, at least four of the interviewed participants have partially moved or returned to rural lifestyles in the years after the protests. These people had a political “conscience” about their world. Some of the activists had anarchist ideas before entering the anti-austerity moments. Others had lost faith in protest and collective action as an efficient way to change their reality. The reasons for this loss of confidence in direct protest are diverse: loss of confidence in the efficiency of methods of decision making, lack of practical results, declining participation of others, loss of confidence in a particular organization, a need to really “do” something... In these circumstances some rather wanted to focus on what they could change through their own day-to-day behaviour.

6.1.1 Post-protest-movements

These collectives and individual activists have evolved to what we could call post-protest-movements. Post-protest movements are social movements in a broad sense. They comply with Diani’s (1992) definition except in the third aspect: namely on the “collective” dimension of the action, and on the “conflictual” aspect of the issues. When movements go “beyond” protest, both the collective and the conflictual dimension become very fluid to non-existent. Many activists we met during this research reflected the conclusions by Maria Fernandes-Jesus, Maria Luísa Lima and José-Manuel Sabucedo (2018) in their work on movements “beyond protest”. The activists Fernandes-Jesus *et al.* (2018) interviewed were concerned with ecologic issues: people who practiced forms of ethical consumption, practiced veganism, lived in rural communes, reduced the ecological impact of their lives, etc. Only minority of these people live these kind of live-styles, do this for non-political reasons. Most frame their actions within a political framework: they are against “the system”, they are anti-capitalist, they want an alternative society that is sustainable, take into account animal rights etc...

It is complicated to categorize their behaviour as political if we conceptualize the political in terms of the “collective” and “conflictive”. It is neither political from an Aristotelean perspective in which the political is defined as the practice of organizing the city or collective community (Aristóteles, 1998, p. 1252b), nor from a Schmittean perspective (Furner, 2014; Mouffe, 2005) in which the political is defined by the conflict with the other. Rather than on collective action, the activists, Fernandes-Jesus *et al.* (2018) interviewed, focus on their own individual behaviour: “change yourself to change the world”. Activists nevertheless insist their individual actions are political; even more political than others because they have made their whole life and body part of a political ideal. At first sight such an approach seems to put the feminist creed – “the personal is political” – on its head: “the political is personal”: with one’s individual body as the most important political field of resistance.

We have seen in Chapter 5.3.1 that prefiguration of a new desired society, was one common element of the diverse political forms in the anti-austerity movements. Their practices – like the forms of decision-making procedures based upon consensus, non-representativeness and horizontalism – were forms of political action to lead by example. This is less and less the case with these so-called post-protest movements, whose life-style activism is individualistic – or at least focussed on small groups – and does not offer any perspective – let alone a tactic – to change wider social reality. They developed from prefigurative into figurative politics: the aesthetic, the appearance, the style of lifestyle, has actually become predominant.

6.1.2 Artivism and Aesthetics

As Occupy and the *Indignados* tried to expose the possibility of an alternative society through performativity and performance, Decreus, Lievens and Braeckman (2014) defend that these movements maybe more in common with types of artistic activism – such as “Reclaim the Streets” or the “Yes Men” (Mouffe, 2014) – than with traditional political movements. After all they rather aimed for symbolic effectiveness through aesthetic and affective means. In critical social theory, artivism is usually used as a conjugation of art and activism. According to Duncombe (2016, pp. 117-118), it is difficult to conceptualize artivism because art and activism work in differently:

Activism, is the activity of challenging and changing power relations: “The common element is an activity targeted toward a discernible end: change a policy, create an institution, mobilize a population, overthrow a dictator. Simply, the goal of activism is action to generate an effect”. Art, tends not to have a clear target, as art is not necessarily for or against something but its value rather rests in showing us new perspectives and new ways to see our world: “Good art always contains a surplus of meaning: something we cannot quite describe or put our finger on, but which moves us nonetheless. Its goal, if we can even use that word, is to stimulate a feeling, move us emotionally, or alter our perception. Art is an expression that generates affect”.

For Duncombe (2016, p. 131), aesthetics and politics are intimately connected because before anyone will act in the world, one must be “moved” to act. Aesthetics are thus not enough: therefore, he proposes the term “Affective Effect” or, “Effective Affect”: Aeffect. At the same time, aesthetics and what moves us, is determined by larger social, historical, and political forces, and he warns that “without the power to attract and challenge the audience, such art is useless” (Duncombe, 2016, pp. 119-131 *passim*). Based upon the works of Gramsci, Boal, Eco, Mouffe and Benjamin, Duncombe (2016, pp. 120-123 *passim*) sums up the following possible aims of activist artist: to “foster dialogue”, to build community, to “make a place”, to invite participation, to transform environments and experiences, to reveal reality, to alter perception, to create disruption, to inspire dreaming, to provide utility, to create political expression, to encourage experimentation, to create or “maintain hegemony”, or to make nothing happen at all.

Also Mouffe (2014) highlights the decisive role played by those artistic practices in the reproduction and “disarticulation/rearticulation” that defines hegemonic and counter-hegemonic politics (Purakayastha, 2014, p. 57). Because there is an aesthetic dimension in the political and there is a political dimension in all art, Mouffe (2008) argues, in contrast to Duncombe, that politics and art should not be approached in terms of two separately constituted fields. Neither is it useful to make a distinction between political and non-political art. Every order is political and based upon some kind of exclusion.

In much of the contemporary art, this exclusion is based on capitalism; the consumption of art follows market logics and reproduces the bourgeois hegemony. Critical theorists – notably Horkheimer and Adorno – had warned us about how consumers and producers of art have been transformed in passive functions of the post-Fordist capitalist system: artists are most of the time prisoners of the culture industry dominated by private media and entertainment corporations (Mouffe, 2014). Purakayastha (2014, p. 57) quotes Mouffe (2014):

In the present conjuncture, with the decisive role played by the culture industries in the capitalist process of reproduction, the cultural and artistic terrain has become of strategic importance. Artistic and cultural production is indeed vital for capital valorisation. This is due to the increasing reliance of post-Fordist capitalism on semiotic techniques in order to create the modes of subjectivation which are necessary for its reproduction. [...]. To maintain its hegemony, the capitalist system needs to permanently mobilize people's desires and shape their identities and the cultural terrain, with its various institutions to occupy a key position in this process.

But Chantal Mouffe (2008; 2014) rejects a too pessimistic diagnostic that any form of critique would have become impossible. Therefore Mouffe (2008) turns to André Gorz (2004, p. 209):

When self-exploitation acquires a central role in the process of valorisation, the production of subjectivity becomes a terrain of the central conflict... Social relations that elude the grasp of value, competitive individualism and market exchange make the latter appear by contrast in their political dimension, as extensions of the power of capital. A front of total resistance to this power is made possible. It necessarily overflows the terrain of production of knowledge towards new practices of living, consuming and collective appropriation of common spaces and everyday culture.¹¹⁴

While artistic practices can contribute to the reproduction and diffusion of the “common sense” – in Gramscian terms – that secures a given hegemony, it can also be used for challenging it in the form of critical art: “Critical art is art that foments dissensus, that makes visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate” (Mouffe, 2008, p. 10). By putting aesthetic means at the service of political activism, “artivism” can therefore be part of a “counter-hegemonic move against the capitalist appropriation of aesthetics”. Instead of contributing to depoliticization and the existing hegemony, it can “[...] help in subverting the post-political common sense and in the creation of new subjectivities” (Mouffe, 2014). Such an approach encourages a diversity of interventions, inside and outside the traditional world of art.

Mouffe (2014) claims that in the new types of resistances – particularly in the Occupy-movements – these forms of artistic practices could make a decisive contribution. Mouffe also asserts, however, that no form of critical artistic practices, contrary to what some artists seem to believe, can bring about the end of neo-liberal hegemony. Neither can

¹¹⁴ Our translation. In the original: “*Quand l’auto-exploitation acquiert une fonction centrale dans le processus de valorisation, la production de subjectivité devient un terrain du conflit central. [...] Des rapports sociaux soustraits à l’emprise de la valeur, à l’individualisme compétitif et aux échanges marchands font apparaître ceux-ci, par contraste, dans leur dimension politique, comme des extensions du pouvoir du capital. Un front de résistance totale à ce pouvoir s’ouvre. Il déborde nécessairement du terrain de la production de connaissances vers de nouvelles pratiques de vie, de consommation, d’appropriation collective des espaces communs et de la culture du quotidien*” (Gorz, 2004, p. 209).

it realize the transformations needed for the establishment of a new alternative hegemony on its own.

6.1.3 Exodus

Mouffe's position is a critique of an artistic "strategy of exodus" she found inspired in post-operaist¹¹⁵ theorists – Hardt and Negri in particular. According to Mouffe (2014), these post-operaists:

[...] assert that the traditional structures of power organized around the national state and representative democracy have today become irrelevant and that they will progressively disappear. Hence the belief that the multitude can ignore the existing power structures and concentrate its efforts in constructing alternative social forms outside the state power network.

In *Empire* – a work which was very popular in the alter globalization movement –, Hardt and Negri (2003, pp. 210-216 *passim*) had argued that, against post-modern imperial control, in which power was defuse and the enemy was evermore difficult to identify, traditional modern forms of direct or dialectic opposition lost their effectiveness. After the failure of real existing socialism, they put their hopes in the "multitude". The multitude is a reconceptualization of democracy beyond representation and sovereignty. As a post-working-class alternative, the multitude is a paradoxical unity composed only of differences, based on a resistance to the forces that do not want the common, that block and dissolve it (Brown & Szeman, 2005, p. 378). It serves as a new form of "being-against"-republicanism based upon ideas of exodus and desertion which they considered as powerful forms of class-struggle.

Just like the barbarians who had brought down the Roman empire, Capital depends on the multitude but is at the same time constantly thrown into crisis by the multitude's resistance to capital's command and authority. The act of the multitude to refuse the relationship with the sovereign – which Hardt and Negri pose in terms of Bio-power, the sovereignty over life itself – is a kind of exodus¹¹⁶. Resistance consists in fleeing the forces of oppression, servitude, and persecution in search of freedom (Hardt & Negri, 2004, pp. 333-334). They call this process of "exodus" and mobility, a movement of "absolute

¹¹⁵ Italian *operaismo* is a political theory which from the power of the working class in the sphere of capitalist production to advocate the refusal of work a centrepiece of an anticapitalist politics.

¹¹⁶ Hardt and Negri (2004, pp. 341-342) are here inspired by the biblical myth of the Jewish exodus from Egypt.

democracy” (Hardt & Negri, 2004, pp. 90-91). They consider it a form of active politics that could bring down our current imperial world order. Inspired by these ideas, post-operairists tend to denounce collaboration with the traditional channels of politics like parties and Trade Unions. The majoritarian model of society, organized around a state, needs to be abandoned in favour of another model of organization (Mouffe, 2014).

The analysis of exodus as a form of opposition in the context of crisis is certainly not new. The big difference with these perspectives is that Hard and Negri see this exodus as an active political strategy. In his classic categorization of behaviour towards social structures, Robert Merton (1938, p. 676) classified the behaviour of such activists as “retreatism”. Retreatists don’t accept the goals, nor the institutionalized means offered by a social system, but at the same time have given up collective rebellion. Exodus, or “withdrawal” among youth – as opposed to “protest” –, is also one of the behaviours Habermas (1975a, pp. 91-92) observed as empirical evidence of the legitimation crisis of late-capitalism – which he at the time attributed to a “reaction to an overloading of personality resources”, a behavioural syndrome that Keniston (1968) has observed and examined in the “alienated” as opposed to what he called “young radicals”. According to Döbert and Nunner-Winkler (1973, p. 321), the exodus of the “alienated” was represented by “[...] hippies, Jesus-people, the drug subculture, phenomena of undermotivation in school, etc... a broad spectrum of behavioural potentials cannot be explained by recourse to the trivial psychological assumptions made in economic theories of crisis (deprivation leads to protest)”¹¹⁷.

The “crisis of authority” and the “question of the young”, is exactly the context in which Gramsci (1992, pp. 32-33) proclaimed his famous judgement about crisis being an interregnum marked by an old world which is dying and a new world cannot yet be born:

The aspect of the modern crisis... is related to the so-called “crisis of authority”. If the ruling class has lost consensus, that is, if it no longer “leads” but only “rules” – it possesses sheer coercive power – this actually means that the great masses have become detached from traditional ideologies, they no longer believe what they previously used to believe, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum, morbid phenomena of the most varied kind come to pass. This paragraph should be connected to some earlier observations about the so-called “question of the young” – a question that arises because of the “crisis of authority” of the old generation of

¹¹⁷ Our translation. In the original: “*Die retreatistische Seite wird repräsentiert durch Hippies, Jesus-People, Drogen-Subkultur, Phänomene der Untermotivation in Schulen usw. Dieses breite Spektrum von Verhaltenspotentialen kann nicht unter Rekurs auf die in ökonomischen Krisen the orien unterstellten trivialen psychologischen Annahmen (Deprivation führt zu Protest) erklärt werden*” (Döbert & Nunner-Winkler, 1973, p. 321).

leaders and because those capable of leadership are automatically barred from carrying out their mission... Will the interregnum, the crisis whose historically normal solution is blocked in this manner, necessarily be resolved in favour of a restoration of the old? Given the character of ideologies, such an outcome can be ruled out – but not in an absolute sense. Meanwhile, physical dejection will lead, in the long run, to widespread scepticism... One can also infer from this that very favourable conditions are being created for an unprecedented expansion of historical materialism¹¹⁸. The initial poverty of historical materialism – unavoidable in a theory disseminated among the masses – will enable it to expand. The death of the old ideologies manifests itself as scepticism toward all theories and general formulas.

Gramsci (1992) thus defended that without a new Marxist leadership, the crisis will lead to widespread scepticism in which “The death of the old ideologies manifests itself as skepticism toward all theories and general formulas”.

6.1.4 A symptom

Decreus *et al.* (2014) argue that this exodus observed in the Occupy movements, more than as a strategy – as defended by Hardt and Negri (2003; 2004) –, must be understood rather as a part of a performance. In many cases the idea of an outside to the existing order was performed, rather than actually pursued goal (Decreus *et al.*, 2014). Decreus *et al.* (2014) argue that the picture is more complex than the simple strategic choice between Mouffe’s counter-hegemonic strategy – based on a post-foundational political ontology – and the “exodus” strategy advocated by Hardt and Negri. We should consider the indignado and Occupy movements as symptoms of a political constellation that has dramatically changed and became increasingly complex in recent decades and in which the delineation of a clear divide between hegemonic “antagonists” has become much less evident.

They point to two possible causes: the result of neoliberal hegemony and its post-political representation of society, and the intrinsic diffuseness and complexity of the issues around which these contemporary new social movements organized like financial capitalism or climate change. According to Decreus *et al.* (2014), the diffuseness of the identities in the Occupy movements contrasts with other movements around exploitation of labour, oppression of women and sexism, whose subject-position was much easier to identify and upon which traditional leftist counter-hegemonic strategic thinking was based: Who is Wall Street now for example? Should these movements target banks, bankers, politicians, a street

¹¹⁸ To protect himself from the prison censor, Gramsci as a rule used philosophy of praxis and historical materialism to signify Marxism in general (Santucci, 2010, p. 147).

or the entire financial system? The politics of prefiguration, and occupation of public space and “everything” are fruit of this diffuseness.

The contemporary turn towards a resistance in the form of aesthetics, mirrors the “resistance” to industrial alienation took the form of romanticism, which Carl Schmitt had so fiercely criticized in the first half of the 20th century (Schmitt, 1996; 2017). As we have seen in Chapter 2.4, Schmitt accused the romanticists of becoming accommodated within liberalism as a mere form of aesthetics. Just like romanticism’s simple negation of modern technical rationality through aesthetics – neglects the fundamental struggle of ideologies (McCormick, 1999; Schmitt, 2017), contemporary refuge into arts by the new protest movements could – even if being opposed to contemporary alienation – be just a reproduction of post-political liberalism. According to Schmitt, only the Political could function as *aufhebung* between modernity and its dialectical negation, romanticism, between technology and aesthetics, between science and myth. A similar logic we find in Mouffe’s statement that arts are thus no substitute for political practices: in the construction of this new order, the strictly political moment cannot be avoided (Decreus *et al.*, 2014; Mouffe, 2013, p. 99; 2014).

6.2 Post-Democracy as a discourse

Chapters 2 and 3 illustrated how the dominant, neoliberal discourse about democracy is based upon electoral representative conception, limited by a liberal division between public and private space. Power and policies are repeatedly legitimized based on formal democratic procedures, particularly based on the law, elections, parliamentary majority, ratified treaties and constitutional judgements. At the same time, in Chapter 4.2 we have seen however how the hegemony of the neoliberal form of democracy was also based upon depoliticization and culturalization of political problems, through the use of technocratic arguments, “economist” discourse, the framing of “exceptionality”, the use of the concept “good governance”, the transfer of responsibility to other/external actors. After having mentioned the problematic character of exodus “strategy”, in the next part we will search for elements of such depoliticization in the discourses of the discourses of the protest movements.

We will use Swyngedouw’s (2009, p. 613) conception of post-political post-democracy as we have laid out in Chapter 4.2.3. The post-political conception of post-

democracy is characterized by the externalization of problems which are integral/inherent to the relations of global neoliberal capitalism, the elevation of the interest of an imaginary “the people” to a universal level, the disembodiment of an always vague, ambiguous, unnamed “enemy”, the management of potential conflict through a consensual dialogue. The post-political is present in both anti-party discourses, which reduce the possibility of organized antagonistic collective struggle, and anti-political and post-political discourses, that mainly concern the dissociation between politics and disagreement (Clarke, 2012).

6.2.1 Depolitical elements in the movements

Our analysis of such tendencies in the anti-austerity protests is based upon a selection of six of so-called “newest” social movements¹¹⁹ that surged during the crisis. All six are characterized by the fact that they were independent of the “old way of doing politics”; that is to say, independent of Trade Unions and political parties. These movements were pluralistic and involved people from a wide array of political and social backgrounds in society. Some of the involved activists had been part of political organizations and Trade Unions for years, and some had overlapping participations, but many more had their first-time experience in these broad mobilizations. The ideas and discourses of the assembly movements reflected by such a heterogeneous multitude of people are in themselves very heterogeneous, both in discourses as in personal composition. They varied according to the organizational relations inside; some being dominated by organized political groups, some by discourses of experienced individual activists, others by the ingenuous spontaneity of people that for the first time engaged with activism. Some of these movements, such as the *Geração à Rasca*, *Movimento 12 de Março* or *Que Se Lixe a Troika* have known huge demonstrations, but were organized by a relatively small group of activists. Other – assembly – movements, such as *Acampada de Coimbra*, *Acampada do Rossio* and *Indignados de Lisboa* have been much smaller; involving more horizontal debates among participants, and have had fluctuant participation.

¹¹⁹ These are: 1. The *Movimento Geração à Rasca* (2011 – GAR)/Generation on the Edge Movement; 2. *Movimento 12 Março* (2012 – M12M)/12 March Movement; 3. *Acampada de Lisboa* (2011 – AL)/Camping Occupy-movement of Lisbon; 4. *Indignados de Lisboa* (2011 – IL)/Indignados of Lisbon; 5. *Acampada de Coimbra* (2011 – AC)/Camping Occupy-movement of Lisbon; 6. *Que Se Lixe a Troika* (2013 – QSLT)/Screw the Troika.

We will limit our analysis upon the founding manifestos of these movements. Confronted with political developments and changing compositions of their participation, these movements, of course, evolved throughout the struggle. As a consequence, some of the analysed documents changed, were updated and new documents were published. As the objective of the present research of the concrete evolution of every of these movements, but rather the search for reflections of the dominant discourse in the protestor discourse, a superficial look on the founding manifestos will suffice. If we consult the founding manifestos of these movements, all have made claims about democracy. In some way or another all contest the democratic character of the government and Troika imposed policies.

The only exception is the first to emerge: the *Geração à Rasca manifesto*. It was initially focused on the rights of the young generation without a future and did not use the democracy-framework. The movements' mobilization quickly became a vehicle for wider protests, and as the protests were influenced by the *indignados* movement in Spain, the claim of "democracy" quickly became part of the discourse of its sequel: *Movimento 12 de Março*. This is clearly stated in the latter *Manifesto*: "Struggling [*à Rasca*] and outraged [*Indignados*] but with proposals: we were more than 500.000. This was the day when we claimed: We are the democracy"¹²⁰ (Labrincha, 2012).

Most of these movements presented explicit political and traditionally left-wing and anti-capitalist claims. We find references to the opposition to Troika and austerity (AL, M12, QSLT), against the law of markets governing Portuguese society (AL, IL, M12, AC, QSLT) and in defence of 25 April Revolution (M12M). In the rest of this chapter, however, we will concentrate on the discursive conceptions of democracy that could be addressed as post-political. We do not claim that these elements are a representative reconstruction of the ideas of the newest social anti-austerity movements as such; the politicized elements are as important as the depoliticized ones. But addressing and criticizing these selected depoliticized conceptions of democracy – which moreover have been considered emblematic for these kind of movements internationally – is an important step to understand "dangers" of co-optation by mainstream capitalism-legitimizing discourses.

The 6 movements could be divided in two categories: the broad mobilizing and the smaller assembly movements. The broader mobilizing movements such as GAR, M12M and

¹²⁰ Our translation. In the original: "*À rasca e indignados mas com propostas: fomos mais de 500 mil. Este foi o dia em que afirmámos: nós somos a Democracia*" (Labrincha, 2012).

QSLT were themselves organized by a smaller group of activists, many of them coming from a background of organized social movements and political organizations. QSLT for example united various activists of the Left Bloc and the Communist Party. The manifestos of these movements show considerably less “anti-political” or “anti-party” statements. It is nevertheless remarkable that none of these three manifestos explicitly mentions the traditional political forms of organization and representation, such as parties and Trade Unions. This absence is in itself a significant part of political discourse – and possibly reflects a general anti-political and anti-party mood in society.

6.2.1.1 *Geração à Rasca*

The first *Manifesto* – that appealed for the *Geração à Rasca* demonstration on 12 of March 2011 – is a good example of this rather “naïve” depolitized discourse. It reflects most dimensions of Swyngedouw’s definition of post-democracy. The manifesto, which had the title “nonpartisan, secular and pacific mobilization”, was published in February 2011 – as an appeal to end the conditions of precariousness in Portugal. It self-identifies a “we” as a “generation”: “Unemployed, five-hundred-earners, disguised slaves, subcontracted... students, mothers, fathers and children of Portugal”¹²¹ (Manifesto, 2011); although the identifications starts with a designation based upon precarious working conditions, it ultimately ends with a vague inclusion of everyone.

It does not define a clear opposing political identity. The closest it comes, is in terms of “generation”, although specifically mentioning that they do “not protest against other generations”. Although the initial aim of the manifesto was to emphasize the problem of precarious working conditions, the manifesto does not mention capitalism, nor profits nor neoliberalism. Instead it talks about capitalists as “employers” and use managerial-like language: the manifesto appeals for “opportunities” to “realize our potential” and to “improve economic conditions” and “economic success”. It condemns the “waste” of “efforts”, “investments”, “resources” and “competences”. Ultimately also the demands are depolitized and the movement expected a management of these demands through dialogical politics. The manifesto reads: “We protest so that all the responsible people for

¹²¹ Our translation. In the original: “*Nós, desempregados, ‘quinhentoseuristas’ e outros mal remunerados, escravos disfarçados, subcontratados, contratados a prazo, falsos trabalhadores independentes, trabalhadores intermitentes, estagiários, bolseiros, trabalhadores-estudantes, estudantes, mães, pais e filhos de Portugal*” (Manifesto, 2011).

our actual situation of uncertainty – politicians, employers and ourselves – act together for a quick change of this reality, which has turned up to be unsustainable [...]. We protest for a solution and want to be part of it”¹²² (Manifesto, 2011).

This depoliticization explains why the movement’s appeal was widely circulated over mainstream media and got support from people and movements on the oppositional right – in particular the youth wing of the PSD, and even the extreme right (Geração à Rasca..., 2011).

6.2.1.2 The Assembly movements

Due to their horizontal practices, refusal of representation and consensus-based decision-making processes, the agreement on common political principles was often much more time-consuming and allowed for less political clarity in the assembly movements than in other anti-austerity movements, even if the assemblies mobilized much less participation. One of the emblematic aspects of these movements was a strong opposition to party-politics. The rejection of party-politics in wider society was without doubt a consequence of post-democratic and post-political neoliberal hegemony which had reduced mainstream parties to electoral machines that offered few real political alternatives. The involvement of many activists with anarchist sympathies in those assemblies often strengthened the anti-party aspect of their discourses.

In the assembly movements of Lisbon and Coimbra we analyse here, there was a struggle between organized militants (coming from parties as *Bloco de Esquerda* and MAS and Marxist collectives such as *Rubra* and SR...) and unorganized and anarchistic activists who mistrusted any kind of organization, and particularly mistrusted their organized colleagues in such meetings. Such mistrust eventually led to the split between the *Acampada do Rossio/Lisboa* and the “*Indignados de Lisboa*”. The suspicion against party-political militants inside, a total disbelief in the legitimacy of electoral party-led democracy and widespread ideas of corruption of political organizations, was reflected in the manifestos.

¹²² Our translation. In the original: “*Protestamos para que todos os responsáveis pela nossa actual situação de incerteza – políticos, empregadores e nós mesmos – actuem em conjunto para uma alteração rápida desta realidade, que se tornou insustentável. [...]. Protestamos por uma solução e queremos ser parte dela*” (Manifesto, 2011).

It is thus probably no accident that the most anti-political and depolitized elements, come in the manifesto of “*Indignados de Lisboa*”, the assembly movement which surged as a split from the *Assembleia do Rossio*. It presents itself as follows: “This movement is open, nonpartisan and non-violent, with a horizontal structure and without leaders”¹²⁴ (Indignados Lisboa, 2011). It auto-represents itself rather vaguely:

“we” – “are common people, people with obligations, rights and responsibilities. People that raise themselves every morning to study, work or searching for work. People that have families and bills to pay. People that work hard to provide a better future for those who surround them”, “who are unprotected and voiceless” but “refuse to be slaves and hostages”. The enemy is conceived as “a privileged and corrupt political class, an electoral system closed for the people and a market-economy without ethics”¹²⁵ (Indignados Lisboa, 2011).

The focus on “corruption” is a typical example of Swyngedouw’s first dimension of post-democratic discourse. It concerns the externalization of problems through the focus on side-effects are which are in fact integral/inherent to neoliberal capitalism. When the manifestos focus on “corruption” and “political privileges” as the main explanation of “bad governance”, these discourses personify and culturalize the crisis and legitimize the hypothesis of a “corrupt culture” at its roots. This is a form of culturalization of politics, as we have explained Chapter 4.2.4, in which cultural specificity risks to focus on a vague and disembodied enemy, blind for deeper political-economic problems inherent to capitalism.

While the manifesto condemns “the political, economic and social system” and a “market-economy without rules nor ethics”, its proposals for this “systemic change” and a “refoundation” of “true democracy” are nevertheless very limited and vague. They do not include any kind of proposals for fundamental political economic change. Their proposals include a “gradual implementation of participative practices”, “transparency” combined with an “electoral reform” that would allow for non-partisan citizens candidate lists and to “end the privileges of the political class” – which would include pensions and immunities. Their most radical political proposal would be making “elected positions revocable” and electoral promises “binding, only open to change through referenda”. On the economic level, the

¹²⁴ Our translation. In the original: “*Este é um movimento aberto, apartidário e não-violento, com uma estrutura horizontal sem líderes*” (Indignados Lisboa, 2011).

¹²⁵ Our translation. In the original: “*Somos pessoas comuns. Pessoas com deveres, direitos e responsabilidades. Pessoas que se levantam todas as manhãs para estudar, trabalhar ou procurar emprego. Pessoas que têm família e contas para pagar. Pessoas que trabalham arduamente para proporcionar um futuro melhor àqueles que os rodeiam. [...]. Condenamos de forma clara o sistema político, económico e social. Recusamo-nos a ser escravos e reféns de uma classe política privilegiada e corrupta, de um sistema eleitoral fechado às pessoas, e de uma economia de mercado sem regras nem ética, que a todos nos deixa indefesos e sem voz*” (Indignados Lisboa, 2011).

proposals are limited to “effective financial regulation to avoid financial speculation”. Like in the *Geração à Rasca* manifesto, “private and financial interests” – are framed in terms of “corruption” of a “privileged and corrupt political class”. Ironically, many of the words, perspectives and proposals around “corruption”, “regulation”, “transparency”, “responsibility” and “participation”, reflect a profoundly depoliticized and culturalist judgement that could have come straight from a Troika-handbook.

Also the *Acampada de Coimbra*¹²⁶ manifesto is rather vague. Its self-description mirrors the other assembly-movements that started with the *indignados*: “We are common people. We are like you: people who get up in the morning to work, look for work or study. People who have family and friends. People who work and people who worked hard, every day, to live and give a better future to those around us”¹²⁷ (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

Like the *Indignados de Lisboa*, they also use the accusation of “corruption”, “bad management” and economic, financial and political “immoralities”. They nevertheless broaden the enemy to “politicians, businessmen and bankers” and there is a much more specific focus on “the current economic system” – thus implying, but not mentioning capitalism – in which “[...] a few fill their pockets and live like kings, while other, the majority, tighten their belts”¹²⁸ (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011). This system is labelled as a “[...] financial dictatorship that perpetuates the shameless and continuing thefts by generations of workers by banks, politicians, speculators, exploiters, etc...”, which is “Unjust, immoral, inhumane and unequal”¹²⁹ (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

Like in the traditional left and the alter-globalist discourse, the enemy projected upon the international and national institutions of global capitalism such as the IMF, ECB, WTO, NATO, G8 and the Troika. In contrast to the former, the *Acampada de Coimbra*

¹²⁶ This manifesto, published on 26th of May 2011, predates my own involvement in any activity within the *Acampada de Coimbra*.

¹²⁷ Our translation. In the original: “*Somos pessoas comuns. Somos como vocês: pessoas que se levantam pela manhã para trabalhar, procurar trabalho ou estudar. Pessoas que têm família, amigas e amigos. Pessoas que trabalham e pessoas que trabalharam no duro todos os dias para viver e dar um futuro melhor aos e às que nos rodeiam*” (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

¹²⁸ Our translation. In the original: “[...] *uns poucos encham os bolsos e vivem como reis enquanto os outros e as outras, que são a maioria, apertam os cintos*” (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

¹²⁹ Our translation. In the original: “[...] *ditadura financeira que perpetua os roubos descarados e continuados a gerações de trabalhadores e trabalhadoras por parte de bancos, políticos, especuladores, exploradores, etc...*”; “*Injusto, imoral, desumano e desigual*” (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

nevertheless keeps its anti-party character, stating: “[...] we need to fight at the margins of political parties, Trade Unions and all those who claim to represent us”. Instead it appeals for grassroots participation and a “nonpartisan, secular and pacific mobilization” to build “[...] other forms of society based upon relations of equality and solidarity”¹³⁰ (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

Among the three assembly movements, the *Acampada de Lisboa* is probably the one that shows least elements of depolitization, or at least anti-party-sentiment in its discourse, as among its members were many organized political party-activists. It presents itself as “we”, “citizens, men and women, workers, migrants, student, unemployed and pensioners, united by indignation regarding the suffocating social and political situation” that “refuse this inevitability and fight for their rights”. The enemy is the “constant oppression by the current financial-economic system”, the “financial dictatorship”, “the disinformation by the media” and the “EU and IMF which highjacked democracy”. It is this enemy which is “guilty of the crisis” – but is “saved and recapitalized”. Nevertheless, also their manifesto feels the necessity to state: “We are not against politics but we do not represent any party or Trade Union”. As an alternative to the “theft of our future horizons”, the assembly turns towards prefigurative politics: they pretend to “take control” of their lives and “effectively intervene in political, social and economic life”... This is done “here and now” through the “popular assemblies” which Occupy “the streets, the squares, every corner, below every statue”. They conclude the manifesto with: “This is only the beginning; the streets are ours!”¹³¹ (*Acampada Lisboa*, 2011).

¹³⁰ Our translation. In the original: “[...] temos que lutar nós mesmas/os à margem dos partidos, sindicatos e demais representantes que querem fazê-lo por nós”; “Queremos propôr desde as bases as raízes para construirmos sociedades onde possamos viver livremente através de relações de igualdade e solidariedade” (Assembleia Popular de Coimbra, 2011).

¹³¹ Our translation. In the original: “Nós, cidadãos e cidadãs, mulheres e homens, trabalhadores, trabalhadoras, migrantes, estudantes, pessoas desempregadas, reformadas, unidas pela indignação perante a situação política e social sufocante que nos recusamos a aceitar como inevitável, ocupámos as nossas ruas. Juntamo-nos assim àqueles que pelo mundo fora lutam hoje pelos seus direitos frente à opressão constante do sistema económico-financeiro vigente. [...] gerido por uma ditadura financeira. [...] o silêncio e a desinformação da comunicação social [...]. FMI e UE sequestrou a democracia e as nossas vidas. [...]. Recusamos aceitar o roubo de horizontes para o nosso futuro. Pretendemos assumir o controlo das nossas vidas e intervir efectivamente em todos os processos da vida política, social e económica. Estamos a fazê-lo, hoje, nas assembleias populares reunidas. Apelamos a todas as pessoas que se juntem, nas ruas, nas praças, em cada esquina, sob a sombra de cada estátua, para que, unidas e unidos, possamos mudar de vez as regras viciadas deste jogo. Isto é só o início. As ruas são nossas” (*Acampada Lisboa*, 2011).

6.2.1.3 *Movimento 12 de Março*

After the 12th of March 2011 – the day of the *Geração à Rasca* demonstration, which eventually had led to the fall of the Sócrates’ government –, its four founding organizers launched its successor movement: *Movimento 12 de Março*, or M12M. 1 year after the original demonstration, in March 2012, they published a new manifesto. In it, the “we” identification was somewhat clarified: it would include immigrants, pensioners, the poor... and it changed the original “mothers, fathers and children of Portugal” in the *Geração à Rasca* manifesto to “all those who were daily confronted with serious limitations of their dignity and liberty”¹³² (Labrincha, 2012). Still, no word of capitalism in the manifesto, nor any claim around the idea of class.

The manifesto continues to reflect a profoundly moralistic and depoliticized approach to the state: “States exist because *we trust them* with the duty to organize basic rights like education, health, justice, security, mobility, protection of natural resources, social assistance to all, and particularly the most disfavoured”. “The Portuguese state needs to be the warrant of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution and international law”¹³³ (Labrincha, 2012).

“Democratic states are the people, not the markets”. It follows “we are the democracy!”, which is contrasted with the “anti-democratic Troika” and “the imposed austerity measures”. In the middle of a profound economic crisis and depression and the imposition of hard austerity measures, some elements of an economic critique thus entered the Manifesto. It claims that the austerity measures have a more profound impact on poorer than richer people. But the manifesto also reads that Portugal – apparently distinct from the rest of the OECD – is an “economic dictatorship” in which “defenceless people are put to pay for the corruption and privileges of local, regional and international mafia’s”¹³⁴ (Labrincha, 2012). Again, we see the primary focus corruption, the cultural specification of

¹³² Our translation. In the original: “[...] *todas e todos que se confrontam diariamente com limitações graves à sua dignidade e à sua liberdade*” (Labrincha, 2012).

¹³³ Our translation. In the original: “*Os Estados existem porque lhes confiamos o dever de organizar direitos básicos como a educação, a saúde, a justiça, a segurança, a mobilidade, a protecção dos recursos naturais, o apoio social a todas e todos e sobretudo aos mais desfavorecidos. [...]. O Estado português tem de ser o garante dos direitos fundamentais consagrados na Constituição e no Direito Internacional*” (Labrincha, 2012).

¹³⁴ Our translation. In the original: “[...] *os Estados democráticos são as pessoas, não são os mercados*”; “[...] *nós somos a Democracia*”; “*Desde a chegada antidemocrática da troika, estamos a sofrer com um plano de austeridade que nos asfixia*”; “[...] *onde se obrigam as pessoas mais indefesas a pagar a corrupção, as regalias das máfias locais, regionais e internacionais*” (Labrincha, 2012).

Portugal and the idea of an obscure vague mafia-rule which blinds the deeper political-economic problems inherent to capitalism.

The depoliticized approach towards the state seems to reflect in a frustration of hope towards those same elites the *Geração à Rasca* manifesto had appealed to the year before. The manifesto reads: “The policy-makers have not *listened* to us!”. The alternative lies in a renewed appeal for “civic participation”: “We showed that it is possible to decide and act. That we overcome ourselves every time, every generation, when *we* cooperate”. Eventually the manifesto also brings practical “proposals to change society for the better”, which consists in: 1. “every person writing his/her own ideas on a paper, poster or white cloth... and hanging them on windows, balconies, workplaces, schools, cars, blogs, twitter or facebook” in order to “exchange dreams”, “show we are not alone” and “join for discussion”. 2. “Groups of people should join in movements to assault local power”, an appeal to create “independent lists of candidates” In the next local elections, as “the moment arrived to lose fear and *win responsibility*”¹³⁵ (Labrincha, 2012). Besides the apparent renewed hope in representative democracy, one should note the problematic depoliticized character of these finishing lines of the manifesto, which not only reproduce the neoliberal mantra of “responsibility”, but they appeal for a representative electoral participation without any specified political or ideological content.

6.2.1.4 *Que se lixe a Troika*

This is different in the manifesto of QSLT. Its manifesto is the one with least post-political discursive elements. As we have seen in Chapter 5.2, a group 29 activists launched “*Que Se Lixe a Troika, Queremos nossas vidas de volta*”¹³⁶ as a new appeal for a

¹³⁵ Our translation. In the original: “*Os governantes não nos ouviram*”; “*Mostrámos que é possível, que conseguimos decidir e fazer. Que nos superamos a cada momento, a cada geração, quando cooperamos*”; “[...] *cada pessoa escreva as suas ideias para melhorar o país numa folha, num cartaz, num pano branco... Coloquem nas janelas, nas varandas, nos locais de trabalho, nas escolas, nos carros, nas peças de roupa, nos emails, nos blogues, murais de facebook, twitter e noutras redes sociais. Que todas e todos voltem a trocar sonhos, a partilhar visões do mundo. Vamos mostrar que não estamos sós, que é possível resistir construindo. Para que amigas e amigos, família, vizinhas e vizinhos, colegas de trabalho ou da fila do centro de emprego se juntem a discutir o que querem para as suas vidas e o façam acontecer!*”; “[...] *grupos de pessoas se juntem em movimentos e assaltem o poder local. Desafiamos todas e todos os que não se revêem nesta forma de governar, a criar listas independentes para candidatar às Câmaras Municipais e Juntas de Freguesia de todo o país. É hora de ganharmos responsabilidade e de perdermos o medo*” (Labrincha, 2012).

¹³⁶ “Fuck/Screw Troika, we want our lives back”.

demonstration during the summer of 2013. The appeal would quickly transform into a platform that organized various of the demonstrations which included the demonstrations on 2nd of March 2013 and 26th of October 2013, as well as cultural demonstrations such as internationally articulated “Global Noise” on the 13th of October 2012 and a longer period of symbolic actions, called “*Grandoladas*”.

The “*Grandoladas*” were a new form activist activism: *Grandolar* is a verb, purposely invented to designate the protest-activity of singing “*Grândola*” during political speeches of pro-austerity policymakers. *Grândola* – named after a small town in the Alentejo region – is a song by the iconic singer song-writer José (Zeca) Afonso. This protest song “*Grândola, Vila Morena*” has gained very strong symbolic meaning for Portuguese democracy, freedom and equality, as it was one of the two heroic songs used to announce the military coup which started the carnation revolution, as we have referred to in Chapter 1.1.2. Since 1974, it became a kind of hymn of liberation and is traditionally sung at commemorations of the Portuguese Revolution.

Starting on the 15th of February 2013, by initiative of the QSLT-movement, protestors begun to use this song as a manner of protest. It was also meant to serve as a way to publicize the 2nd of March demonstration. Protestors managed to disturb at least a dozen speeches of members of Portuguese government¹³⁷, including prime minister Pedro Passos Coelho¹³⁸, ministers Miguel Relvas and Vítor Gaspar, president of parliament Assunção Esteves, and IMF president Christine Lagarde.

Que Se Lixe a Troika is a typical example of political articulation as conceptualized by Chantal Mouffe. The enemy is very clearly defined as “The Troika” – composed by the IMF, ECB and EC – and its “collaborative governments”, which are responsible for

¹³⁷ While protestors were often remove by physical force, in the form of police, security and or moderators, they were also criticized for not respecting the procedures of a democracy, and even of not respecting the freedom of speech of the executive.

¹³⁸ In a reaction against a *Grandolada*, Pedro Passos Coelho affirmed that “We should not accept that the sacrifices, the difficulties and the sentiments of the people in Portugal and in other European countries would be kidnapped by irrational proposals that don’t think about the future and by promises that are never realistic alternatives with a beginning middle and end”, and “not only can anyone claim the monopoly of consternation towards the difficulties and the hardships of the people, also indignation is not enough to constitute a political answer to the crisis” (Público & Lusa, 2013; Our translation. In the original: “*Não podemos aceitar que os sacrifícios, as dificuldades e o sentimento das pessoas em Portugal e noutros países europeus sejam raptados por propostas impensadas que não fazem contas ao futuro ou por promessas que nunca chegam a ser alternativas realistas com princípio, meio e fim. [...] não só ninguém se pode arrogar o monopólio da consternação perante as dificuldades e os sofrimentos das pessoas, como também a indignação por si só não é suficiente para constituir uma política de resposta à crise*”).

“criminal austerity”. The “we” is identified by all those who suffer from the Troika policies: “each of us” who is slaughtered by the Troika in terms of “our society, our rights, our schools, our hospitals, our water, our culture, our art, every aspect of our life”. The platform is presented as the place of articulation of all these victims; “a place of encounter of the various democratic anti-troika currents”, even if cautiously stating that “We don’t have the pretension of representing organizations or social sectors... We want to discuss and bring together initiatives with the aim of bringing down the government and all the future governments collaboration with the Troika-programs”. For the movement it was “our responsibility to participate actively in the construction of [...] one unified voice and one unified struggle with all the peoples which are kept hostage by financial speculation” in order to “overthrow this government and all governments that collaborate with the Troika programs”¹³⁹ (Que se lixe a Troika, 2013).

They claim that the Troika policies only exist to “guarantee the payment of the debt – a ruthless theft” – which only serves “to continue to save banks and bankers and to keep feeding private partners”. These Troika policies only propose “more unemployment, ever worthless pensions, less public services, more destruction of the national healthcare and public education, more ruin and misery”. The QSLT discourse counters the “inevitability of destruction and misery”, present in the Tina discourse, and affirms the belief that a “more just society is possible”. This struggle against inevitability finds its culmination in the slogan of the second big demonstration organized by QSLT on October 2013 which read: “There are no dead-end roads”¹⁴⁰ (Que se lixe a Troika, 2013).

As mentioned before, the organizing core of *Que Se Lixe a Troika* included several supposedly “hidden” activists of the PCP and the Left Bloc. This certainly had an impact on

¹³⁹ Our translation. In the original: “A austeridade criminosa a mando da troika e dos seus governos abate-se sem contemplanções sobre cada um e cada uma de nós, sobre a estrutura da nossa sociedade, sobre os nossos direitos, as nossas escolas, os nossos hospitais, a nossa água, a nossa cultura, a nossa arte, sobre toda a nossa vida. [...] somos hoje um lugar de encontro das várias correntes democráticas anti-troika. Não temos a pretensão de representar organizações ou sectores sociais. Queremos fazer a discussão e a confluência de iniciativas com vista ao derrube deste governo e de todos os governos colaboracionistas com os programas da troika. [...]. A nossa luta terá de ser maior do que o ataque que sofreremos. Por toda a parte faremos ouvir as nossas vozes e as nossas justas reivindicações. Por toda a parte construiremos, a uma só voz, uma única luta, com todos os povos reféns da especulação financeira. Em todo o mundo estaremos presentes no combate às ditaduras financeiras do FMI e dos seus aliados, contra todas as políticas austeritárias e ilegítimas de agressão” (Que se lixe a Troika, 2013).

¹⁴⁰ Our translation. In the original: “Para garantir o pagamento de juros de dívida que são um roubo impiedoso, para continuar a salvar bancos e banqueiros, para continuar a alimentar parceiros privados, o FMI propõe mais desemprego, reformas cada vez menos dignas, menos serviço público, maior destruição do SNS e da Escola Pública, mais ruína e mais miséria. [...]. Contrariando a inevitabilidade da destruição e da miséria, acreditamos que uma sociedade mais justa é possível” (Que se lixe a Troika, 2013).

the “politicized” positions of the platform in relation to the other protest movements. In the next chapter we will further analyse the relation between parties, elections and social movements for Portuguese democracy. Here it suffices to mention that despite these activists – who participated in individual name in QSLT – never hid their party-allegiance to their peers, the newspaper “I” tried to use their party-connection to brand the social movements as a leftwing party-led conspiracy. The fact that the press tried to “reveal” their identities – and the relatively widespread suspicion this revelation provoked among non-partizan activists – equally says a lot about the general anti-party sentiment and post-political pressures within the movement and in wider Portuguese society.

It is also noteworthy to mention that the term “capitalism” itself is not used in the founding manifesto. The crisis is accepted as a debt-crisis – which Mylonas (2012) had proposed as one of the first elements of the depoliticizing discourse on the nature of the crisis.

6.2.2 A critique of ideology

Typical for these newest social movements is that they often appeal or self-identify to a non-ideological and vague political subject. They are movements of “persons” and “citizens” instead of identifying as people with a defined political, economic or ideological position: “We – citizens” often followed by a broad summing up of different identities where anyone could be part of. This phenomenon is recurrent in the different manifestos of *Geração à Rasca*, *Movimento 12 de Março*, *Acampada de Lisboa*, *Indignados Lisboa* etc... These forms of self-identification is also present in the Spanish 15M-movement which unquestionably inspired the later the assembly-movements in Portugal. 15M auto-identified as “a group of citizens of different ages and social strata” who were “revolted” “with their non-representation and with the treasons committed in the name of democracy”¹⁴¹ (Manifiesto Plural, 2011). This form of self-identification was seen as a critique in which “ideology” was seen as the “old way of doing politics” (Díez García, 2014, p. 208; Perugorría & Tejerina, 2013, p. 433). Such approach to ideology assumes it as a relatively well-defined body of ideas and values that frame the world; such as liberalism, socialism, fascism etc.

¹⁴¹ Our translation. In the original: “*Un grupo de ciudadanos de diferentes edades y extracciones sociales [...] CABREADOS con su falta de representación y las traiciones que se llevan a cabo en nombre de la democracia*” (Manifiesto Plural, 2011).

Such an approach to ideology resonated in a society characterized by a generalized political distrust among citizens, as well as a mistrust towards political organizations and between them. It reflects a hegemonic social consensus that ideologies have failed and that we would need some kind of non-ideological resistance; beyond left and right, beyond culture, beyond class.

Throughout this thesis we have used a different approach however, according to which ideology refers to the medium through which all consciousness and meaningfulness operates (Therborn, 1999, p. 2). Ideology refers to how human beings live their life as conscious actors, making sense of their own actions and those of others. To exist as a subject and to mobilize, any subject needs ideology to give meaning to the material conditions it finds itself in. Ideology is thus a precondition of recognizing – to have knowledge, to measure, to compare – and ultimately to consciously transform reality. Ideology is needed to link the contradictions of the economy – unemployment, degrading living conditions, loss of public services – to the idea that things should not be as they are. Any form of social action is impossible to practice or interpret without ideology.

Given that it is nearly impossible for a conscient being and acting within a collective, outside ideology, the only possible answer to Díez García's (2014) question “do these movements have an ideology?” is “yes”. Or as Slavoj Žižek (2000, p. 185) defended: Even if one doesn't claim an ideology, one does have one... Non-ideology is nothing but the form of appearance, the formal distortion/displacement, of ideology itself. The power of ideology achieves its highest point, its hegemonic position, when its subjects do not recognize it as ideology, but assume it as an unquestionable truth or common sense.

The question thus rather is: “Which ideology did these movements have?”. Here the self-assertion that the new social movements would be beyond ideology thus becomes problematic. It is a well-known paradox about ideology – such as defended by Slavoj Žižek, Göran Therborn, Eric Swyngedouw and others – that “the non-ideology” or “apolitical position” is not only one possible ideology, but it is “the” ideology of our time. It reflects the post-1989 belief that we would have left the “big stories of the XXth century” behind and moved on; somehow accepting the end of ideology. Precisely at the moment when Global capitalism was confronted with its biggest crisis in 80 years, it seems that the resistance that emerged from it, in some way became more Fukuyamaist than Francis Fukuyama (1989) himself.

While the anti-austerity movements were a reaction to the global capitalist crisis and neoliberal policies – and elements of this anti-capitalist and anti-austerity critique are present in their discourses – the discourse also reflects elements of the neoliberal post-political hegemony. At the core of their discourse about democracy lies an idea that it blames “politics” for the crisis and “mismanagement”. Many of the people involved in the anti-austerity movement associate “politics”, with rather private matters such as corruption, careerism and “politique politicienne”, personal conflicts between parties and politicians that would disregard the common good. They do not differentiate, as Chantal Mouffe (1994) does between “*la politique*” – a depoliticized, unpolitical, domesticated politics – and “*le politique*” – the antagonism between ideologies and the struggles for justice. By blaming “politics” for the crisis, such discourse depoliticizes the causality of the crisis. By concentrating on matters of corruption and mismanagement of the political leaders, it leaves out the structural causes of the crisis, the contradictions of the capitalist economy, the structural imbalances of the Eurozone and the neoliberal design of the European Union etc.¹⁴². This is reflected in the proposed solutions and lack of concrete political alternatives.

In his analysis of the post-cold war protest movements, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Bonet, 2010) had already explained that in detriment of any “real alternatives” to the capitalist system – since the collapse of “real existing socialism” in 1989, anti-capitalist protest movements had resorted to rather vague demands of “more democracy”. The slogan of “Real democracy now!”, so emblematic for many of the anti-austerity movements, is a reflection of this phenomenon. The political-economic crisis, which results in a legitimacy crisis of the capitalist governance structures, is perceived as a crisis of representative democracy: representatives of the people do not really represent the people, but are caught in personal careerism, party-discipline, corruption and lack of power to control the financial markets.

As an answer to democratic emptiness created by neoliberal reforms, opposition movements have tried to give the emptied democratic signifier – described by Laclau (2005) and Žižek (2006) – an emancipatory potential by introducing an alternative participatory content. “*Democracia Real Ya*” (Real democracy now!) came to mean “participatory democracy” – a demand linked to the very prefigurative participative horizontal practices

¹⁴² This reflects and reproduces the North-European racist framing of the Southern populations, as described in earlier work (Van Vossle, 2016a). Addressing the “political culture” ultimately is an example of what Wendy Brown called the culturalization of politics; the racialization of a people, stripping it of its social and historical context, class-relations, contradictions etc.

that characterized these new assembly movements. Despite its pretended emancipatory goal, “participatory democracy” is however not necessarily a “political” alternative. Nor does it by itself present a solution to the political economic origins of the democratic crisis. Like democracy itself, participation does not have an inherent social meaning/ideological interpretation independent from the historical and material context. Elements of participation have been successfully used in the past for social and political emancipation – for example in the revolutionary period in Portugal, as we mentioned in Chapter 1. But this is not necessarily the case¹⁴³: since the end of the 1990’s, the participatory idea has been recuperated by the World Bank, and made it into a cornerstone of neoliberal economic “structural” reforms and “development” projects in the form of “participatory budgets” and “participation of the stakeholders”. Participative democracy thus remains a historically and socially disputed concept that waits for a hegemonic interpretation, one which could have perfectly been part of Austerity interventions of the Troika in the PIGS; as part of “good governance practices”.

6.3 Conclusions

This chapter focussed on the evolution of the democratic social-movement discourses that did not recognize themselves in pre-existing organizations and parties and retracted to other forms of political practices. The purpose was to try to uncover different contradictions and weaknesses in those discourses that could make them prone to a rearticulation in the predominant liberal-democratic framework, as well as some discursive aspects that reproduced elements of the hegemonic perspective upon democracy.

In the first part of the chapter we focussed on the esthetical dimensions of the beyond-protests movements. We framed the figurative practices of those movements within the debate between Mouffe’s post-foundational political counter-hegemonic strategy and Hardt and Negri’s post-operaist “exodus” strategy. We have come to the conclusion that the aesthetic or symbolic turn, present in the post-protest movements is a symptom a political constellation marked by neoliberal hegemony, its post-political representation of society, and the intrinsic diffuseness and complexity of defining antagonism around complex issue.

¹⁴³ Within this context Slavoj Žižek (2006, p. 334) provocatively affirms: “Better to do nothing than to engage in localized acts whose ultimate function is to make the system run more smoothly. The threat today is not passivity, but pseudo-activity, the urge to ‘be active’, to ‘participate’”.

Aesthetics can have an important role in the mobilization of protests, but eventually requires a wider political articulation, instead of isolation. Else the resistance in the form of aesthetics, just mirrors the “resistance” in the form of romanticism that Carl Schmitt had so fiercely criticized in his works on the political.

In the second part of the chapter, we focussed on post-political and post-democratic elements in the democratic discourse of the new social protest movements against austerity. Post-democratic discourses are marked by the focus on side-effects which are inherent to capitalism, populist politics that foreclose spaces that permit the universalizing of the claims of particular groups or classes, a disembodied, vague, ambiguous, unnamed “enemy” and the manageability through a consensual dialogical politics. We analysed the manifestos of 6 of the most representative movements in Portugal and selected the elements that could reflect anti-political ideas. Some of these post-political elements include the vague self-identification of the political subject, the focus on side-effects of capitalism such as corruption, tendencies of culturalization of politics, the focus on participation without clear political economic content or alternatives, and the silencing or the distancing towards parties politics and ideology in general. We have laid out how those anti-ideological and anti-political elements are de facto ideological and political and are a reflection of the neoliberal post-political post-democracy.

This does not mean that there are no politicizing elements as well, on the contrary. These movements have mobilized against austerity – and thus had a political enemy in mind. The engaged thousands of people in public debates and certainly created a growing political consciousness through participation. The deliberations within those movements were moreover often very political. Many of the participants were politically organized activists from different organizations and many have been trying to politicize the anti-austerity movements and influence the decision-making processes from their own ideological perspectives. Often this was not very successful, particularly when ill-thought and bureaucratic strategies were used – such as one or other pre-organized collective trying to impose their decisions by their own numeric control.

When the assembly-movement eventually weakened, the protest seemed to follow the two different directions, we have laid out from the start... articulation and exodus. Some movements evolved to post-protest movements and individual projects to change their own living. One could say that this movement was marked by elements of deinstitutionalization and depoliticization, at least if institutions and political organization are considered on the

broader, national, and collective scale. These activists abandoned big protest movements and embraced the idea of building local communitarian or even individual alternatives – such as community gardening, permaculture, and squats. Others, such as QSLT and its sequels, have tended to articulate with the politically organized left of parties and Trade Unions and to present ever clearer an anti-neo-liberal agenda. In Greece and Spain these movements have even given rise to electoral successes of *Syriza* and *Podemos*. The overcoming of the post-political elements – such as a technocratic approach of the debt-question – and the distrust between and around parties and movements of the left in a clear unified discourse and practice against the neoliberal and technocratic European policies, were the articulation challenges for this tendency in Portugal. A critical analysis of these articulations will be the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7 — REINSTITUTIONALIZING DEMOCRACY THROUGH ELECTIONS¹⁴⁴

In previous chapters we have argued that social struggles led to a democratic legitimacy crisis. The previously existing consensus about what democracy was, had disappeared. Protest movements and national and international policy makers held radically different perspectives about what democracy was and should have been. While Pedro Passos Coelho, then prime minister, proclaimed “Screw elections!” and entered into direct conflict with the constitutional court, protest movements in the streets – in line with international movements such as *Indignados*, Occupy Wall Street, and others – demanded “Real democracy now!”. Throughout this chapter, we will analyse the role that the different electoral moments of 2013, 2014, and 2015 had on the evolution of the situation of democratic legitimacy crisis and how they played a role in the re-articulation of a renewed democratic hegemony.

In his defence of the formalist perspective on democracy, Joseph Schumpeter (1976) – and with him people that defend the minimalist perspective in democratic theory such as Adam Przeworski (1999) – argued that the big fallacy of classical democratic theory lay in that it defends a model of democracy based upon the “will of the people”, but also that there never *is* a “will of the people”: a “will of the people” needs political actors and institutions to be represented in order to be known. Schumpeter (1976) prescribed a minimal form of democracy to be based on the idea of “representation” – in his perspective this solely meant “free elections in a multi-party system” – as the best form to express and form this “will of the people”. His theory was inspired on a business-efficiency model, based on the idea that competition between different political parties, in which the client would choose his favourite product, and aggregate demand, in the form of an elected majority, would define policies.

A considerable part of the critical literature on democratic theory has been based upon critiques and pitfalls of such a formalist perspective as a prescriptive theory for democracy. In Chapter 2, we summarized, historicized, defended, and extended many of these critiques. In the following section however, we will use Schumpeters’ (1976) approach as a descriptive – rather than prescriptive – approach to show how elections themselves affect and rearticulate different democratic discourses – how they create their own “will of the

¹⁴⁴ An earlier version of this chapter was published in Van Vossolle (2020).

people” – bringing it back within the acceptable limits of liberal democracy. This will be based on an analysis of the local, European, and national parliamentary elections in Portugal between 2011 and 2015. The concepts of hegemony and political articulation are borrowed from Gramsci, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s (2001) work. Hegemony occurs when a “[...] particular social force assumes the representation of a totality that is radically incommensurable with it”. A political community can only reach such a form of “hegemonic universality” through contingent political articulations and new universalities (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, pp. X-XII *passim*).

Elections play the role of institutionalizing “wills” of the people and thus formalize and institutionalize the hegemony of liberal democracy. This chapter will show how the elections and consecutive formation of the *Geringonça*’s government (the popular nickname for the left-wing Costa’s government) institutionalized and therefore deradicalized the protest against austerity. A considerable part of this chapter will be a critical dialogue with André Freire’s (2017) *Para lá da ‘Geringonça’*. Freire’s book was one of the first major analysis of the *Geringonça* phenomenon and defended the agreement as a true “democratic revolution”. Did the consecutive post-crisis elections really lead to a revolution? And what kind of democracy filled its content?

7.1 The Portuguese party landscape on the left during the crisis

We have seen how the eruption of the crisis in 2011 coincided with the appearance of a wide range of new social movements in which the unorganized, precarious youth played the leading role. In the immediate aftermath of the crisis that started in 2011, these protest movements, or at least the people active in them, moved in two separate directions. One part has been a movement that radically retracted from society as we know it. The other movement has been one of institutionalization and politicization of the protest movements in broad mobilizing platforms around the organized left groups and parties. This happened in particular through QSLT, the 15 October platform and *Precários Inflexíveis*. Over time, the radical left parties became the political representatives of these movements.

As we have seen in the first chapter, the three main traditional parties of the *Arco de Governação* (“Arch of Governance”) – Socialist Party (PS), Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Social Democratic Center-Popular Party (CDS-PP) – have dominated

governmental politics in Portugal since 1976. In analysing the sources of reconfiguration of democracy, this chapter will thus primarily look towards the left-wing opposition, which itself went through a process of fragmentation during the crisis (Freire, 2017, p. 189), and due to its ideological and practical role in the protests during the crisis played a key part in the reconfiguration process of Portuguese democracy.

At the height of the crisis there are two main parliamentary parties to the left of the pro-austerity parties: the Communist Party and Left Bloc. The Communist Party (PCP) has been the main party on the Portuguese left since the 1974 revolution. It has a broad membership and strong ties to the traditional working class and Trade Unions. During the last three decades, there were various attempts to change the PCP from within and a process of profound deradicalization took place (Freire, 2017, p. 40). The party still remains one of the most orthodox communist parties in Europe, however (Freire, 2017, p. 199). The PCP usually participates in elections through an electoral front called CDU (*Coligação Democrática Unitária* or Unitary Democratic Coalition), with the Ecological and Green Party (PEV) and independents. Throughout the years the party has had a very stable electorate of around 10%.

In 1999, three radical left organizations – the Trotskyist *Partido Socialista Revolucionário* (Revolutionary Socialist Party – PSR) and the Maoist *União Democrática Popular* (Popular Democratic Union – UDP) – and the communist reformist movement – *Política XXI* – founded a new party. *Bloco de Esquerda* (Left Bloc, also referred to as BE or *Bloco*) has had a relatively unstable electorate before the crisis, mainly an urban and young electorate. While the PCP has always had its strongest base in the traditionally organized, and older, working class, Left Bloc has tended to concentrate on the younger “precarious” generation.

Based upon its positive attitude towards the USSR and theoretical critique of liberal democracy, the PCP could be characterized more as “extreme” left by André Freire (2017, p. 40). The Left Bloc is more critical towards the historical experience of the USSR and is accordingly to be considered more “radical left”. Over time the PCP has given less importance to the ideas of “revolution” and “utopia” as immediate political goals – although referrals to “faithfulness” and “deepening out” the April Revolution remain a recurring theme in the party’s discourse. The main difference between both parties in the period before the crisis would be their approach towards governance. The PCP theoretically defended a classical Marxist-Leninist approach towards democracy. It accepts liberal democracy and

defends the 1976 constitution as a transitional phase but rejects it as a final political goal because “real democracy” cannot be based upon a free-market economy. Due to its internal divisions between different political currents, Left Bloc tends to be less clear on this point. While certain internal currents defend a perspective similar to, or even more radical than, the PCP, in practice BE tends to propose reforms in order to broaden democracy without a necessary rupture with liberal institutions. BE tends to be more alter-globalist and the PCP more patriotic. In their relations towards the European Union – at least until the outbreak of the crisis and the imposition of austerity measures – this is translated in Left Bloc aiming to reform the EU and the PCP being more radically Eurosceptic (Freire, 2017, pp. 190-192 *passim*).

The crisis has radicalized the left and enabled a clear coming together between BE and PCP. The PCP has linked the crisis with 40 years of right-wing governance, increased its Euroscepticism, and has emphasized the need to nationalize strategic sectors of the economy as well as to the need to renegotiate the debt. The BE has also defended the nationalization of the banking sector and privatized public services, a partial rejection of the debt, and has adopted a much more critical position towards the EU (Freire, 2017, pp. 193-195 *passim*).

Freire (2017, p. 40) defends that most of the programmatic proposals of both BE and PCP remain all but radical since they mainly defend the programme of the “old” social democracy. Rather than pledging for a social revolution and the expropriation of capital, both parties have mostly focussed on the need of decent salaries, pensions and working conditions, as well as on the defence of social conquests of the past like the national health service and public education. The change in “radicality” of the very same concrete programmatic proposals is the consequence of the change in historical political context.

The old social-democratic programme – defended by the reformist leadership of the historical labour movement in Europe, inclusively the Socialist Party during the revolutionary period, PREC – had a pragmatic, reformist and deradicalizing role in a context of revolutionary upheavals and communist threats. Throughout the last three decades, as the former social-democratic parties have surrendered to neoliberalism – and to its radicalized form of austerity more recently – the defence of their former Keynesian proposals of state intervention, has gained a radical connotation. For the rest, its extreme or radical character is mainly characterized by their historical critique of representative governments and historical lack of will to compromise with other political actors.

The next section will analyse how the party-configuration was affected by the different elections Portugal went through since the implementation of austerity measures and the peak of the street protests: the local elections of 2013, the European elections of 2014, and then, most importantly, the legislative elections of 2015. We will mainly focus on purely electoral shifts and how they are a reflection of the institutionalization of the movements against austerity.

7.1.1 The local elections of 2013

Local politics is the political level in which representativeness is closest to direct and participative forms of democracy, given the closer, more personal proximity between the electorate and the elected. In Portugal participative democracy is anchored in the constitution. The local level is the level where those participative dimensions of democracy – in the form of participatory budgets, for example – are strongest from an institutional perspective. It is also the only level – beyond presidential elections – that opens the possibility for candidates outside the recognised political parties to be elected (Almeida, 2016).

While there are many specific local aspects structuring the results in local elections, the local elections of 29 September 2013 stands out as having been affected by a “nationalised campaign” (Freire, 2017, pp. 49-50). It was the first electoral moment since the government of Passos Coelho took power and the implementation of the Troika memorandum. Antonio José Seguro, then Socialist Party general secretary and official opposition leader, had appealed for “a vote against the government”.

These elections marked a historic defeat for the ruling PSD/CDS-PP coalition. Local lists involving at least one of the two government parties, or parts of them (PSD, PPD, CDS-PP), decreased from 2.3 to 1.6 million, or from 41.8% to 31.8% of the vote. This also resulted in a reduction in the number of mayors, from 140 to 106¹⁴⁵.

The right certainly lost the election, but the left did not exactly win either (Freire, 2017, p. 50). PCP – which increased its vote from 9.8% to 11.1% and its number of mayors from 28 to 34 – can be considered an exception. The other parties of the parliamentary

¹⁴⁵ The electoral results can be found on the website of the Portuguese Ministry of Internal affairs. Cf. *Autárquicas 2013 – Resultados* (2013).

opposition would barely profit from the delegitimisation of the right-wing government's policies. While everything played in favour of a big victory of PS – and even though the party proclaimed itself as the winner of the elections – PS was not able to capitalise on the nation's discontent (Freire, 2017, pp. 49-54 *passim*). In fact, PS saw its number of votes decrease from 2.1 to 1.8 million; 37.7% of the popular vote in 2009 compared to 36.3% in 2013. However, due to even worse results of candidacies linked to the government coalition, PS saw its number of mayors rise from 132 to 149.

The Left Bloc saw its number of votes decrease from 3% to 2.4%, losing the only mayor it had won in Salvaterra de Magos in 2009. Besides the Left Bloc's political problems at the national level and the rise of abstention resulting from the emigration of young, unemployed people, another explanation for the party's apparent decrease in votes could be found in the relative success of independent and locally supported citizens' candidacies – such as Citizens for Coimbra (CPC), a movement in the Portuguese city of Coimbra. The Left Bloc participated under the banner of such “independent lists” in many local constituencies and, as those were not counted on the aggregate national level, its national results are somewhat misleading.

While there was a generalized dissatisfaction with the government's policies, there reigned a general sentiment that there were no credible alternatives. A poll by CESOP¹⁴⁶, carried out prior to elections in 2013, showed that while citizens were dissatisfied with government policies, 61% of respondents believed that the opposition parties would not do any better (Freire, 2017, p. 54). The first elections following the democratic crisis were marked by a decrease of electoral participation, as well as the surge of new small parties and “independent” lists of candidates. Freire (2017, p. 51) argued that polarised discontent was rather channelled towards citizens' lists, than to the political parties on the left. The number of votes decreased from 59% to 52.6% while the number of blank votes (1.7% to 3.9%) and invalid votes (1.3% to 3%) more than doubled. “Citizen Groups”, the overarching category that groups the number of votes cast for independent citizen lists, increased from 4.1 to 6.9% (226,111 to 344,531 votes), nearly doubling its number of elected representatives and mayors from 2009 to 2013.

Could this increase of votes for citizens' lists, together with the increased popularity of participatory budgeting initiatives at the local level, be seen as a sign of the decreased

¹⁴⁶ Centro de Estudos e Sondagens de Opinião (CESOP), from Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

legitimacy of traditional parties, and their replacement by active citizen participation on the local level? In the last chapter we saw that by 2013, some of the protest-movements had shifted to this idea of citizen-participation through electoral politics and had appealed for activists to present independent candidacies. But it is also worthy to point out that the “independency” of various lists could be very well put into doubt. Many of the “independent” candidates were, in fact, consequence of local party-dissent, or were even supported by parties themselves. Some examples are the winning candidacy for mayor of Rui Moreira in Porto, which was supported by CDS-PP, or the Citizens for Coimbra list (CPC) which was supported by the Left Bloc and included many Left Bloc members. Interpreting the 6.9% of “citizen groups” as a reflection of a generalized success of a “participative alternative” to the democratic crisis – would be certainly a huge exaggeration. But through joint participation in citizens lists, which engendered relatively positive results, these elections served as a platform for what would be a first trial in the articulation between social movements and parties in electoral alliances.

7.1.2 The European elections of 2014

In the European elections of 25 May 2014, a similar pattern to that of the local elections can be observed. The European crisis transformed the European elections, which are usually seen as second-order, into an important issue. While overall electoral programmes did not change fundamentally on European issues, the crisis had strengthened Euroscepticism and eroded support for European integration. This shifted Portugal from being one of the most Europhile member states to one of the most Eurosceptic (Freire, 2017, p. 122). Prior to the elections, only 42% of voters evaluated EU-membership positively (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015). When election day came, perhaps to no surprise, the lowest turnout ever was registered: 33.7%, with a record 7.5% blank and invalid votes (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015).

When comparing the results to the 2013 local elections, again it is possible to observe an electoral reckoning with the government parties and their austerity policies. For these elections, the two government parties – PSD and CDS-PP – participated jointly under a unified list possessing the name *Aliança Portugal* (Portugal Alliance), this as a strategy to diminish the electoral damage of the unpopular austerity measures and save the smallest partner (CDS-PP) from electoral decimation. The votes for both forces combined,

nevertheless, decreased from 39.1% (separately in 2009) to 27.7% (losing half-a-million votes), having decreased their combined number of members in European Parliament (MEP) from ten to seven.

The main opposition party (PS), nonetheless, would hardly profit from this, gaining around 85,000 votes and adding one more MEP in what was a narrow victory over *Aliança Portugal*. While the Socialist Party did come out on top, they did so whilst attaining the party's second lowest result – the exception being the *annus horribilis* of 2009 – in Portugal's democratic history (Freire, 2017, p. 125). Due to the decreasing total amount of votes, the relative number of votes for PS still rose from 26.2% to 31.5%, but it lost a massive share of its vote – 22.7%, compared to 2011's parliamentary elections. According to Freire and Santana-Perreira (2015), PS would not capitalise on the governing coalition's losses due to the party's requisite role at a times of severe crisis that included its decision to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Troika.

As Freire (2017, p. 129) points out, since the intervention of the Troika, the PS had been unable to differentiate itself from the right and showed an incapacity to lead the opposition. The perceived pyrrhic victory would eventually, in the context of austerity politics, be framed as a loss for the secretary general of PS, António Seguro, and would trigger a leadership contest by Lisbon mayor António Costa. According to Freire (2017, p. 129), one of the key differences António Costa had shown that he preferred and was able to build alliances on its left as mayor of Lisbon: between 2007 and 2009 for example, Costa led a minority cabinet with the support of candidates elected for the Left Bloc and CPL (*Cidadãos por Lisboa*, a independent citizen candidacy). Apart from being a more credible voice in the opposition against austerity, this background would eventually enable him to articulate alliances at the national level.

The results of the European elections can nevertheless be seen as a protest against the European consensus and the mainstream political establishment. One of the effects was electoral “fragmentation” (Freire & Santana-Pereira 2015) or a new step towards the end of the so-called bipartidarismo, the alternating monopolistic power position of PS and PSD. Protest against the European Union, the government, and austerity measures would mainly be channelled towards the Communist Party and MPT (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015). The Communist Party, which defended a clear anti-austerity and anti-European position, would increase its vote from 380,000 to a historic 416,000 votes in the European elections – a relative increase of 12.68% with its number of MEPs rising from two to three.

Left Bloc's campaign, on the other hand, led by leading public figure Marisa Matias under the slogan "*De Pé! Não somos a Dívida*" ("Arise! We are not the debt"), would have disastrous results. Matias was unable to rescue more than her own seat while Left Bloc lost two of the three European seats it won in 2009. Despite Matias' personal popularity in the media – which would be proven in the presidential election of 2016 – Left Bloc lost more than half of its votes, attaining only 4.56 %, compared to 10.73% in 2009. The limited growth of PCP and the disastrous results for Left Bloc, despite potentially favourable conditions, were partially explained by the strong division among the left and the reasonable results of new micro-parties such as PAN, *Livre* and MPT that marked the European elections of 2014 (Freire, 2017, p. 123). The success of these small parties with populist, anti-institutionalist, and social movement orientations, reflected the inability of Left Bloc to represent the grassroots discontent felt "on the streets". Two other factors were *Bloco's* unclear political positions towards the EU, in which the party changed positions between federalism and Euroscepticism, and a crisis within the party leadership following the departure of its former leader, Francisco Louçã (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015, pp. 102-103). During this crisis, internal struggles often led to a politics of the greatest common divisor and sharp political turns. The result was a campaign that combined an anti-austerity programme with a very pro-European perspective, which focused on the need for "Euro-bonds", European rating agencies and a renegotiation of the public debt. The fact that the Left Bloc presented political alternatives based on a strengthening of Europe in a context wherein European institutions went through a profound legitimacy crisis, could have alienated more radicalized layers of its electorate.

Apart from the traditional divide between the Communist Party and the Left Bloc, 12 other smaller parties participated in the elections. European elections have been traditionally very open for new parties to participate and gain good results (Freire, 2017, p. 58). Two new parties emerged from the internal splits of Left Bloc and participated in the elections for the first time: MAS (*Movimento Alternativa Socialista*) and *Livre* (Free) (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015, p. 100). MAS, a Trotskyist-Morenoite radical left-wing organisation led by Gil Garcia, was initially known as *Ruptura* (meaning "slit"), was born out of its namesake from the Left Bloc during the upswing of the anti-austerity movements and in the aftermath of its electoral collapse in 2011. It had a very active role within the social movements and thought it could electorally capitalise on the crisis in Left Bloc by defending a more radical and populist perspective against the EU and the political

establishment in general with electoral slogans such as: “Prison for those who robbed the country” and “Stop the privileges of the politicians”.

Livre, on the other hand, is a “left-wing green and libertarian party” led by Rui Tavares, a former member of the European Parliament (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015). Rui Tavares had been elected as an independent candidate on a BE list in 2009. He eventually resigned from Left Bloc and the GUE (*Gauche Unitaire Européenne*/United European Left) fraction to join the green fraction in the European Parliament. According to Freire (2017, p. 58), *Livre* could fill in a green-left libertarian gap in the Portuguese political landscape, functioning as a “mediator” between leftist parties, occupying a space between PS and the Left Bloc, with a pro-European federalist perspective that combined a critique of austerity with the open defence of the need for collaboration with PS.

None of these splits from the Left Bloc were very successful, however. MAS got 0.38%, *Livre* remained at 2.18% and could not re-elect Rui Tavares to the European Parliament. Nor could the MRPP, the historically Maoist party, which hoped for an electoral breakthrough under austerity conditions under the slogan “Death to the traitors”, which would get only 1.66% of the vote. The 2014 campaign was dominated by the weakness of the left, a lack of cooperation and credible political alternatives to the crisis, as well as a lack of practical perspectives in the struggle to achieve an anti-saving alternative. The result of all this was that of cynicism and non-participation marking these elections.

While left-wing parties had been functioning in previous decades as aggregators of popular discontent and had an important role in channelling this discontent into popular demonstrations, thus efficiently “occupying the streets” and most protest spaces, this time, it would be the MPT which would largely benefit from the discontent (Salgado, 2019b). *Movimento Partido Terra*, or Earth Party, is a “conservative ecologist party” (Freire & Santana-Pereira, 2015) which, despite a poor record in earlier elections, claimed a prominent role in these elections through its leader António Marinho Pinto, a public figure known for being a television commentator and head of the Portuguese Bar Association of lawyers.

Marinho Pinto would be the first populist TV-commentator, projected by the private media concerns, to become an agenda-setting politician in Portugal, based upon a general populist discourse. He projected himself as against the “establishment” and “anti-elite” and advocated system-change in order to root out corruption (Salgado, 2019a). Its discourse was comparable with the ideas advanced by *5 Stelle*, the Five Star movement in Italy led by

Beppe Grillo (Salgado, 2019b, p. 57). Its electoral performance would be the big surprise of the elections. MPT surpassed Left Bloc with 7.14% and elected two MEPs. While positioning itself in the political centre, MPT was the first expression of a populist electoral alternative. After disagreements with the MPT party leader, Marinho Pinto decided to create his own political party (PDR – Democratic Republican Party) just before the 2015 election. A number of internal strifes and political scandals affected the party's credibility. In the 2015 general election his new party was only able to secure 1.14% of the votes (Salgado, 2019a). Its success nevertheless opened the way for extreme-right-wing populism in Portugal, which would know its breakthrough with *Chega* in the 2019 elections.

7.1.3 The Legislative elections of 2015¹⁴⁷

“Conservatives win Portuguese elections” was the main message in both the Portuguese and international media shortly after elections results were revealed on 5 October, 2015. The “victory” of the right-wing conservative government coalition, this time called *Portugal à Frente* (PàF) – a renaming of the alliance known as *Aliança Portugal* during the 2014 elections – composed of the Christian-conservative CDS and the right-wing liberal PSD came as a surprise (Freire, 2017, p. 160). It was compared to the surprising victory of David Cameron in Britain in May of the same year. PàF emerged as the biggest political force in the polls despite the continuous demonstrations against the Troika-imposed austerity policies implemented by incumbent Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho. Freire (2017, p. 160) attributes this surprising fact to four factors: international pressure – from the EU and the financial markets – to continue with austerity policies; the message of PàF that there was no alternative and that “the worst was done”; a *quasi-total* alignment of the media in favour of the incumbent government; and what Freire terms the “*Syriza* antidote” – the notion that even if the people elected an anti-austerity government it would attain nothing and lead to disaster.

A deeper analysis of the results and subsequent events shows that they were in line with those of the previous elections. PàF made a strong comeback compared to the European elections of 2014 and disproved the results of polls carried out a few months before the elections. It also remained the largest electoral formation with 38.3%. But the coalition of

¹⁴⁷ Parts of this section were earlier published in Van Vossolle (2016b) and Van Vossolle (2015a).

the former government parties lost a large number of votes, voting percentages, seats, as well as its parliamentary majority. Its proclaimed “victory”, in fact, equalled a loss of around 700,000 votes (a 12% decrease) in comparison to 2011 parliamentary elections (Freire, 2017, p. 163), equalling 24 fewer members of parliament. These losses, however, were again limited due to the creative use of the unified list *Portugal à Frente* – for 38.5% of the votes, PàF received 46.5% of the seats in parliament (Freire, 2017, p. 199). Given the high real electoral threshold in the smaller provinces and the D’Hondt method of seat distribution, adding the two government parties together created the perception that it would remain the largest political force.

The left-wing opposition parties received 61.4% of the vote. The parties considered to be radical left received nearly 20%. The electoral victory of the left was thus “divided”. PS had failed to cast itself as the true vote against austerity. The real “winners” were the radical left parties (Freire, 2017, p. 161). Making a remarkable comeback compared to the European elections, the biggest electoral gains went to the Left Bloc. After two successive electoral defeats and a series of internal splits, the party rose from eight to 19 seats. Like in the European election, its split-offs – the more centre-oriented *Livre* and the populist left *Agir* PTP-MAS – failed to deliver.

The splits, in fact, enabled the party to unify itself and bring a more coherent narrative against austerity. Early on in the campaign, Left Bloc distanced itself from the U-turn of its Greek sister-party *Syriza*. After failed negotiations with the EU, the *Syriza* government led by Alex Tsipras had continued the austerity policies of previous governments. Even though Tsipras’ failure was constantly thrown at Catarina Martins during electoral TV debates, the spokesperson of Left Bloc managed to win every debate. Resultingly, *Bloco de Esquerda* emerged as the third largest party in parliament.

Despite the great success of its direct electoral competitor on the left, the Portuguese Communist Party also succeeded in making progress, though limited. Less than hoped for, and considerably less than the gains made in the European elections, PCP still extended its vote, with PCP-PEV winning 17 seats compared to 16 in 2011.

For the first time in Portuguese democratic history – with the exception of 1985 – the right had a relative majority, while the combined left had an absolute majority (Freire, 2017, p. 168). The strengthening of the radical left ensured that, for the first time in 40 years, the system of “alternation” between the two “regime-parties” of PS and PSD was broken.

Under the leadership of António Costa, the Socialist Party had set a target to attain an absolute majority. A year after having won the European elections against the same coalition with a margin of 31% to 28%, it failed to get more than the government coalition (PàF). Nevertheless, given its historically low result in the 2011 parliamentary elections (28.1%), PS still managed to improve its parliamentary representation. With 32.4%, the Socialist Party gained 11 seats, increasing to 85 in total. Freire (2017, pp. 161-162) attributed this disappointing result to PS's "tacticisms", having followed a defensive strategy and refused to take on the leadership of the opposition in the context of crisis and austerity.

Rather than "tacticisms", the PS was compressed between its role as a traditional regime party, primarily faithful to the interests of Portuguese capital, which required economic stability and compliance with the European agreements on one hand and the social pressure against austerity which sought a representative expression on the other. This dilemma made it impossible to take up the role of leadership of the social protest. Taking into account the crisis context and the unpopularity of the incumbent government, the PS's minor electoral progress was portrayed as a defeat. In the media, by the PàF-coalition as well as by the opposition inside the party itself, the Socialist Party was portrayed as the true loser of the elections.

The internal opposition demanded for the resignation of PS leader António Costa, as António Costa himself had done the year before in relation to former PS leader António Seguro. These demands – whose loudest voice came from PS MEP Francisco Assis – reflected an internal political tension and division inside the party. Some, leaned to the left and possessing a tendency to join the anti-cuts agenda of BE and PCP. Having learned the lessons of Greece and fearing "Passokization"¹⁴⁸, they were especially aware of the risk of being outflanked electorally on the left. Others, on the other hand, a more right-wing leaning section of the party represented by Assis, possessing closer links with systemic power and a historical enmity towards the radical left, systematically favoured a coalition with the right (Freire, 2017, p. 175). This group painted itself as being "responsible", arguing in favour of a defined a priority: to keep to the agreements with the Troika and the EU.

Costa refused the demands for resignation as secretary general. Although there was disappointment within the Socialist Party, in the case of PSD, they would not suffer the

¹⁴⁸ "Passokization" refers to the electoral disaster of the social democratic party *Passok*, punished for what was framed as "responsible governance" – the continuation of austerity-policies during the Greek crisis.

losses of its sister parties in Greece (*Passok*), Spain (PSOE), the Netherlands (PVDA) or France (PS). Neither did Portugal see the surge of a new anti-establishment force linked to the anti-austerity movements – like the “movement parties” of *Podemos*, *Syriza*, or *M5S*, that were able to connect with the anti-austerity movements through frameworks, structures, and repertoires of action (Della Porta *et al.*, 2017). The more influential movements outside the traditional parties – like *Congresso Democrático das Alternativas* – were never real anti-establishment alternatives, but tended to focus on the collaboration among the left, including PS. Santana-Pereira (2016) explains this based on three factors: 1) PS left office before the agreement with the Troika came into full force and could, therefore, position itself as an opposition force against the most draconian austerity measures, which compressed the space for the radical left; 2) the pre-existence – even pre-crisis – of radical left forces, which have consistently come to gather more than 10% of the votes over time, making it more difficult for a new party – that would be dependent on the same discontent electoral base – to rise in popularity; 3) the existence of differences in political culture; with lower politicisation and participation levels in Portugal compared to other crisis-ridden countries like Spain or Greece.

7.1.4 Possible coalitions

The coalition negotiations in the aftermath of the 2015 elections had an important role in restructuring perspectives of democracy in Portugal. The ruling PàF-coalition’s absolute majority loss opened the door for a number of parliamentary alternatives, along with the reconnection of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary perspectives. The new balance of power ensured that a parliamentary majority was only possible by a coalition of both regime parties or through an agreement between PS and the “radical” leftist parties.

At first glance, government participation of the Left Bloc and the Communist Party seemed highly unlikely. The parties on the radical left had never participated in governments in the 40 years of Portuguese democracy and the PS had never made any agreements with coalition partners to its left, at the national level. The left had always been excluded from the so-called *Arco de Governação* (Arch of Governance) which denominates the three parties which have constituted the governments of the last 40 years: PS, PSD, and CDS-PP. During the Cold War, such exclusion of the radical left had been the general rule in most European states. But in the years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, when radical left forces

entered governments in France, Italy, in the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere, the Portuguese case had become an exception (Freire, 2017, p. 107).

Freire and Estanque (2013) enumerate three main reasons for the historical lack of convergence on the left. First, there was the historical enmity around the *Período Revolucionário em curso* (PREC), the revolutionary process between the fall of the authoritarian regime on 25 April 1974 and the democratic “normalisation”. Following this period, the left branded PS as “traitors” of the revolution, as the latter intended to keep Portugal within a liberal democratic, European sphere. PCP and the radical left, on the other hand, were branded as authoritarian forces that wanted to implement a USSR-style dictatorship. A second reason, according to Freire and Estanque (2013), is the way that Portuguese Trade Unions are organised. In many European countries, a unified Trade Union movement is key factor for pushing towards a collaboration of the left; in Portugal, however, such movement are divided along party lines. A third factor is the political differences between the left-wing parties, with PS being traditionally aligned to the right and more pro-European, while the “radical” left, and in particular PCP, possess a much more Eurosceptic position. Before the elections, the radical left parties had stated that they would continue to resist any government coalition that continued with austerity policies. It seemed unlikely that PS would agree to a number of crucial conditions for this purpose, not least among them the renegotiation of the debt, reassessing European fiscal rules, and an end to austerity policies.

The parties that signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Troika – PS, PSD, and CDS-PP – gained more than two-thirds of the seats in parliament. Historically and politically, these parties agreed on important topics such as fidelity to international agreements, the fiscal compact, the Maastricht criteria, and the Euro. The most likely scenarios for the formation process, according to Freire (2015), thus relied on a partnership between the incumbent PàF government coalition – or parts thereof – with PS: a monster coalition of PSD/PS/CDS-PP or a continuation of the PàF government with parliamentary support from PS.

PS and PSD are also, nevertheless, each other’s biggest opponents, especially when it comes to the small politics of distribution of political appointments and influence in the deep state. A big coalition – a “*Bloco Central-coalition*”, in Portuguese terms – between the regime parties, would also offer a monopoly on the opposition to the radical left and could pose the risk of delegitimising all regime parties. Such a scenario would also put CDS-PP in

a difficult position. The main reason why it had remained in the unpopular PSD-led austerity government was to impose a conservative ethical agenda – blocking abortion law and gay rights, for example. In the newly-elected parliament, with a progressive ethical majority, it could easily get side-lined.

The PàF-alliance of CDS-PP and PSD thus preferred the continuation of their, now minority, government. Its political strategy consisted in framing it as a question of “democracy” as they had “won” the elections. They also legitimised this solution based upon the tradition of the “Arch of Governance” – the historical cordon sanitaire around the radical left which has existed since 1975. Less than two days after the elections, without any consultation with a perspective of a parliamentary majority, PSD and CDS-PP announced a coalition agreement for the continuation of the Passos Coelho’s government. For its enabling they counted on the sitting right-wing president Cavaco Silva, the idea of “political stability”, and parliamentary support from a divided PS, in the form of abstentions or disloyalty, as “responsible” opposition.

Various factors obstructed this solution: one factor is that a PSD-led minority government would prolong its monopoly right to positions in the deep state. Another was the ideological inflexibility of the right. Despite negative economic results in terms of public debt and public deficits, Passos Coelho persisted with policies that PS had framed as “more Troikist than the Troika”. A continuation of these policies had been contested by historical figures of PSD itself, including Manuela Ferreira Leite and José Pacheco Pereira. Moreover, PSD/CDS-PP government coalition, had continuously legitimised its unpopular austerity policies, as being the consequence of the “excesses” of the past PS government lead by former prime minister José Sócrates.

In addition, António Costa himself had no interest in making the collaboration between PS and PàF viable (Freire, 2017, p. 205). In doing so, he would have immediately broken his key electoral promise that he would not support a new austerity budget by the incumbent government parties. Another factor was the internal divisions within PS. Several figures within PS were demanding Costa’s resignation after the elections. Costa would probably not have saved his position as president of PS if the party continued on in the role of opposition. The premiership and access to state governance after four years of exclusion had all the makings for party reunification under his leadership, all the while saving his position.

The relations between PSD and PS worsened with the controversial decision by president Cavaco Silva to reappoint Passos Coelho. The president invoked the tradition to appoint the leader of the largest electoral formation as formateur, despite having proclaimed before the elections that he favoured a government with a large majority and a stable coalition (Freire, 2017, pp. 167-168). The president's accompanying controversial speech overtly attacked the left-wing parliamentary majority. In the presidential declaration, he tried to impose a cordon sanitaire against the leftist parties BE and PCP because of their Eurosceptic and anti-NATO positions that would harm the image and interests of Portugal vis-à-vis the European Union and the financial markets (Freire, 2017, p. 167). He overtly summoned the members of parliament of PS to ignore party discipline at the vote of confidence.

Allowing PS, BE and PCP to respond to the president's unilateral decision would only mean a loss of time which would only harm the financial situation of the country and its credibility in international markets. The speech was framed as the unacceptable and unconstitutional behaviour of an authoritarian president. According to Freire (2017, p. 167), the speech revealed incoherence, paroquialism, and lack of democratic political culture. It had the opposite effect of the intended purpose. Instead of dividing the left, it led to greater unity, both within PS – where the internal opposition would almost unanimously rally behind Costa and gave him a mandate to negotiate with BE and PCP – and between PS and the parties on the left. Even the employers' federation CIP (Industrial Confederation of Portugal) criticised the “unnecessarily polarising speech” of the president.

The removal of PSD and Passos Coelho became the top priority for the opposition. After Cavaco Silva's speech, PS announced that it would present a motion of no confidence, something that, up until then and during the electoral campaign, it had maintained a hardened stance against the possibility of such a motion, indorsing an alternative parliamentary majority agreement instead. In the newly-constituted parliament, the new balance of forces immediately crystalised with the election of PS member of parliament Ferro Rodrigues as parliamentary president.

By the moment the government was announced, it was already clear that the presidential initiative to form a minority government was condemned. Eleven days after its appointment, a motion of no confidence was passed through parliament and the newly-formed twentieth constitutional government led by Passos Coelho becoming a demissionary

cabinet. By that time, António Costa had a political agreement for a parliamentary majority with BE, PCP and PEV to support a PS government.

At first instance, President Aníbal Cavaco Silva – who was also approaching the end of his mandate and thus had reduced powers – refused to appoint António Costa. Some even expected that he could maintain the government of Passos Coelho in current affairs, with a budget based on provisional twelfths until new parliamentary elections could be called after the presidential elections.

The danger of a regime crisis, the potential form of dual power between the parliament and the government, a government without budget unable to meet its European obligations, combined with the potential for social mobilisation backed by a parliamentary majority, all combined would eventually led the president to accept PS government. The *Geringonça* solution was born ending the 27 days of the shortest government in the history of Portuguese democracy.

7.2 *Geringonça* as an articulation on the left

The term *Geringonça* can be loosely defined as “[...] something that is badly constructed”, a “hazardously functioning fragile structure”¹⁴⁹ (Houaiss, 2001, p. 353), a “contraption or gadget”, or a “misconceived plan” (Geringonça, 2018, p. 532). The term *Geringonça* was used by critical opinion-makers to frame the agreement for the formation of the twenty-first constitutional government of Portugal. The term, previously used in a way to disparage the new coalition, would eventually be reclaimed by the government and its supporters. It would be chosen as the Portuguese word of the year in 2016.

The *Geringonça*, therefore, would be made up of a minority government consisting of PS, led by António Costa, with parliamentary support from PCP, BE, and PEV. The agreement would signify an important change in the Portuguese parliamentary tradition, particularly the unwritten rule of the *Arco de Governação* which excludes the left from government participation. The protest movements against austerity were an important precondition for these political developments. Not only did the protest express itself in more electoral weight to the left parties BE and PCP which had been the main parliamentary voice

¹⁴⁹ Our translation. In the original: “[...] o que é malfeito, com estrutura frágil e funcionamento precário” (Houaiss, 2001, p. 353).

of the struggles against the cuts during the previous executive. It also had given a stronger social legitimacy to revindications of those parties among the general public; forcing the PS to take them seriously. The social pressure to form a governmental alternative to a continuation of the PàF-government also led to an unexpected turning point in the attitude of the Left parties, forcing them into a constructive position of dialogue with the PS. Already during the election campaign, Catarina Martins, spokeswoman for Left Bloc, put forward three minimum conditions for dialogue with PS: it had to abandon its plan to save an additional 1.6 billion in pensions, abandon the new labour regime that would facilitate layoffs and forsake its plans to reduce corporate taxes.

Immediately after the elections, both leaders of PCP and BE expressed that they were ready to collaborate with PS to avoid a Passos Coelho's government. Both PCP General Secretary Jerónimo de Sousa and *Bloco de Esquerda* spokeswoman Catarina Martins stated that they would submit a motion of censure to the right-wing government of Passos Coelho and that its survival would solely depend upon PS. As a regime party "in bed" with possible coalition partners on both the left and the right, PS suddenly found itself in a relatively comfortable position despite the party's disappointing electoral results.

Responding to the expressed intentions of BE and PCP during the first week after the elections – while Cavaco Silva tried to sustain the PàF-solution – negotiators of the three parties started talks to work out a possible coalition. During the formation process, António Costa met independently with the leaders of the radical left parliamentary forces. These talks did not go without their fair share of problems.

Many attributed to Martins a genius strategy that would either unmask the Socialists or open the way for a progressive coalition. There was yet also internal criticism towards this strategy – a tension revealing the difficulties of building an alliance involving people involved with the previous protest movements. The tension was expressed in the form of opposition towards the three terms for negotiations which did not address any of the structural problems behind the crisis; after all, Martins had made no mention of the renegotiation of the debt and the agreements on the budget. It was also expressed in the accusation of a lack of open internal democratic consultation over these terms. In the end, none of the representatives of the national board of the Left Bloc, voted against the negotiations with the PS, however.

The negotiations with PCP were expected to be of greater difficulty. Although the communists had made it clear that they were open to cooperation on the left and that failure to form a Costa-led government based on the basis of a left-wing majority in parliament, would be the sole responsibility of PS itself. Still, PCP seemed very reluctant to give legislative guarantees. Much to the horror of the Europhiles in PS and the anti-communist opinion leaders in the Portuguese media, PCP's MEPs also proposed a bill that enabled countries to exit the Eurozone in the week of the negotiations.

Separate agreements were eventually signed with BE, PCP and PEV that would guide the policy principles of the government in exchange for a vote of confidence and support for the government's budget. These agreements, among others, included: an increase of the minimum salary from €485 to €600 over the four-year legislation period; the reintroduction of pensions which had been frozen by the Passos Coelho's government; the recovery of salaries in the public sector; combating precarious contracts, with particular attention given to the contracts of "fake" independent workers; a reduction of VAT for restaurants; and bringing to a halt the ongoing the privatisations of public transport and public services.

This agreement was received with surprise and horror by both commenters and politicians on the Portuguese right, who claimed that Costa's solution was anti-democratic (Freire, 2017, p. 163). Manuela Ferreira Leite, former president of PSD, accused Costa of fooling the people and organising a *coup d'état* (Antena 1, 2016). Marco António Costa, another leading figure in PSD, framed the new government solution on the left as "democratically illegitimate" (Sá, 2015). On his part, right-wing opinion-maker Rui Ramos (2015) spoke about "post-electoral fraud". If the party or alliance that won the elections cannot form a government coalition – a "relative majority" – the possibility should be given to the second biggest party to do so. This is common practice in most European parliamentary systems and is also in conformity with the Portuguese constitution. But in 40 years of Portuguese democracy, it had never been practiced before (Freire, 2017, p. 163).

For many on the left, both in Portugal and around the European Union, the agreement was welcomed with hope and enthusiasm. The *Geringonça* was presented as a democratic alternative to neoliberalism and as an example of the success of left-wing policies in Europe.

7.3 Democratic Revolution or *Thermidor*?

What exactly has been the impact of the *Geringonça* solution on democracy in Portugal? In his book *Para lá da 'Geringonça'*, Freire (2017, pp. 218-220 *passim*) makes a positive evaluation of the *Geringonça*'s first years focusing on the fact that the agreement permits the Portuguese government to implement the necessary policy changes, all the while, staying in conformity with EU laws. It is a satisfying solution for the electorate, evidenced by the rising approval ratings in the polls during 2016 and 2017. For Freire, the *Geringonça* is a “real democratic revolution” for three reasons:

1) The inclusion of 18% of the population – which voted PCP or BE – who were previously marginalised, restored the principle of one person, one vote (Freire, 2017, p. 165). At the institutional level, the participation of the radical parliamentary left of PCP, PEV and Left Bloc in the government solution has democratised the representative institutions. Electoral democracy has been broadened as more political parties and political programmes, again, became available for voters, with the reasonable expectation that they could participate in coalition formations, thus broadening the “useful vote” and the *Arco de Governação*;

2) The improvement of the quality of representation on two levels, as finally, left-wing political elites are finally doing what the left-wing electorate across all parties expect them to do. Recent polls show that the electorate of PS, BE and PCP prefer a collaboration between left parties instead of the traditional collaboration with the right. The formation process also clarified different political options and increased political choice, taking PS to the left (Freire, 2017, pp. 218-220 *passim*). This brought a break from the “no alternative” discourse that had been used by Pedro Passos Coelho and the Troika. Under pressure from PCP and BE, the government pushed for limited reforms that broke with the idea of the inevitability of austerity policies, such as increasing the minimum salary to €557 in 2017, reintroducing previously scrapped holidays, and bringing to a stop the privatisation of the transport sector. All this served to question the idea that economic recovery would only be possible through further cuts in salaries and working conditions;

3) Freire (2017, pp. 21-22) believes the government can have a positive effect on Europe, perhaps even becoming an inspiration for other countries around the continent by playing an important role in ending the neoliberal status quo at an international level. The *Geringonça*, therefore, can signify a veritable democratic revolution.

Some problems remain, nevertheless. Given that the government's policies remained fiscally conservative, fact of the matter is they have not ended austerity outright. Even Freire (2017, p. 214) points out that the accusations stating that “[...] the government and radical left parties lied to the electorate when they promised to end austerity”¹⁵³ are partially true. This, in part, is explained by the restrictions imposed by the EU. As the government is not inclined to radically change the macroeconomic and macro-political environment, the origins of the crisis remain in place.

Meanwhile, due to political pressure from parties on the left, the burden of austerity has been more evenly distributed between capital and labour (Freire, 2017), yet still no structural answers have been given. No solution is given to the structural imbalances in the Eurozone, to the structural disadvantage of peripheral areas, to the lack of democratic legitimacy of the EU institutions, to the pro-market/pro-capital bias of the EU structure, nor to the problem of public and private debt unsustainability.

Within a context of economic growth – although precarious in nature – primarily driven by the tourism sector – a sector with many underlying problems such as precariousness of salaries and working conditions, external dependency and seasonality – the electorate approves of the government's policies according to the polls (Freire, 2017, p. 214). While these policies of more “equitable” austerity are democratically legitimate, at the same time, the *Geringonça* solution has decreased the available political parliamentary options. As a result, PCP and BE have partially lost their anti-establishment character and have softened their political discourses and radical critiques.

This is particularly important to consider given that these parties previously functioned as the parliamentary voice behind many of the demands of the extra-parliamentary protest movements in the first phases of the crisis. Through the *Geringonça*, some of those demands were fused into government policy. But, at the same time, the allegiance of BE and PCP to the government solution affects their ability to be representatives and stimulators of those movements. Resulting from this, no credible opposition voice with social and political representability is left that clearly defends the cancelation of the debt, the nationalisation of the banking sector, or the exit from the Eurozone, for example.

¹⁵³ Our translation. In the original: “[...] o governo e os PER são acusados de terem mentido aos eleitores – prometeram acabar com a austeridade, mas têm sido muito conservadores em termos fiscais e, na prática, não puseram fim à austeridade. Isso é parcialmente verdade...” (Freire, 2017, p. 214).

The Portuguese Socialist have so far not been confronted with a so-called “Passokization” – the total electoral wipe-out of social democratic parties – like its Greek sister-organisation *Passok*, the PSOE, or, more recently, the Dutch PVDA and the French PS. The *Geringonça* solution not only gave social democracy the chance to remain in power without being decimated for the application of harsh austerity measures, but also kept it alive as a legitimate electoral option, preventing a more polarised political landscape. The situation may prove electorally dangerous for PCP and, particularly, for Left Bloc which, traditionally, has a more unstable electorate. The local elections of 2017 were the first test to this theory. Although local dynamics – particularly outside of the big urban areas – are relatively independent from what happens at the national level, the trend is illustrative. PCP suffered considerable losses, losing one-third of its positions. At the same time, the Left Bloc was unable to locally consolidate the electoral progress it had made at the national level during the legislative and presidential elections of 2015 and 2016 respectively.

This could be the consequence of another factor which, according to Freire (2017), contributes to the positive tendency towards democratic revolution – that *Geringonça* obliged the radical left to take responsibility for its political propositions in adverse conditions. Recent polls have shown that PS and Costa have come to profit the most from the current government solution. The *Geringonça* has also strengthened the trend towards social peace that started in the year before the elections (Martins, 2016). The massive apartidarian street protests, demonstrations, and *Acampadas* against austerity, had lost momentum due to lack of organisation and outlook. Those who were better organised – namely around *Que Se Lixe a Toika* (QSLT) – were institutionalised through the integration of its leadership in the left-wing party-oriented forces and dynamics, which, over time, would shift its focus to electoral and parliamentary struggles.

After the lost confrontation between the CGTP union leadership and the government around the demonstration of *Ponte-a-pé* in the Autumn of 2013, no new large-scale demonstrations or strikes were registered. Also, the union’s hope for political change would be channelled towards electoral change instead of street mobilisation. If social struggles and mobilisation are considered an essential part of democracy and democratisation – particularly in its participative dimensions – it seems that the increased “representative quality” has seriously affected the participative and popular character of Portuguese democracy.

All these aspects should raise at least some concern about the contradictions of the so-called “democratic revolution”. Counterbalancing the concept of “revolution” with that of a “*thermidor*” can be perhaps bring about a more enlightening perspective. *Thermidor* was the name given to the process of reaction in the aftermath of the French Revolution, at the moment Robespierre was to be executed and the revolutionary process reverted back to normality, signifying a retreat from the most radical objectives of the revolution. The term *thermidor* was later popularised by Leon Trotsky (1991) in his *The revolution betrayed* to characterise the way in which bureaucracy put an end to the Russian revolutionary process and the participation of the masses in forms of participatory democracy – the Soviet system – which had emerged in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The *thermidor* put an end to this revolutionary and emancipatory process, taking away the initiative of the revolutionary movements of the working class and institutionalising a new normality led by the Stalinist bureaucracy, not only formally retreating, but also in many of the substantive dimensions of Soviet democracy, such as access to social and equal rights for women and the LGBT community, for example.

Of course the concepts of “revolution” and “*thermidor*” are of purely metaphorical use here. Just as the concept of “revolution” in Freire’s work can only be metaphorically compared with the October Revolution of 1917, the politics of *Geringonça* do not equate to a policy of Stalinist reaction. Still it is key to ask: is the electoral process, within the limits of bourgeois democracy, not playing the same role as the thermidor if compared to the emergence of protests, social movements and alternative discourses on democracy in the face of the crisis?

In many respects, *Geringonça* is a return to a situation of “normality” – pacifying the radical elements that emerged during the crisis through a relatively stable government that respects the rules of the Eurozone and the European Union. Is this situation so much different from Greece? Ranabir Samaddar (2016) described how *Syriza* – as the political representative of the anti-austerity struggles in Greece – betrayed its electoral programme and then neglected the result of the referendum on EU-imposed austerity, leading the author to conclude that institutionalised democracy would, from now on, be the route from where passive revolution would begin. The “radical” left, that during the protests formed the political expression of the social movements, abandoned (if at least temporarily) its radical positions towards a radical social transformation. The anti-austerity protests and the prospect of a radically different democracy vanished. At least for now...

7.4 Contemporary Socialist perspectives

An analysis of Portugal's electoral cycles since the protests of 2011 and the formation of the *Geringonça* government reveals how the protest movement eventually vanished and how its energy and hopes were channelled towards electoral processes. This chapter has argued that this process did not end in a radical change, neither in terms of electoral representation, nor in terms of policies. This leads to question: is this form of pacification and the co-optation of social movement leaderships inevitable under liberal representative democracy? Was Michels (1968, p. 355) right in his Iron Law of Oligarchy when he proclaimed that:

History seems to teach us that no popular movement, however energetic and vigorous, is capable of producing profound and permanent changes in the social organism of the civilized world. The preponderant elements of the movement, the men who lead and nourish it, end by undergoing a gradual detachment from the masses, and are attracted within the orbit of the "political class". They perhaps contribute to this class a certain number of "New ideas", but they also endow it with more creative energy and enhanced practical intelligence, thus providing for the ruling class an ever-renewed youth.

While the practical conclusions of the crisis in Portugal point in the direction of such co-option, our case provides also some hopeful elements. The crisis also provided openings for a critique of the electoral system as such. Many of the protestors involved in the *Acampadas* and *Indignados* were at the centre of the critique of liberal democracy. These groups were originally largely constituted by highly-educated, precariously employed youth – the so-called *Geração à Rasca* (Generation on the Edge) – and were the main voice behind the call for "Real democracy now!". During the crisis they were the standard bearers of alternative forms of democracy, pre-figurative democratic politics and council democracy.

In the post-crisis period, the tactics of the opposition to austerity mostly followed the logic of the popular front we exposed in Chapter 3. The danger of the continuation of the ultra-austerity politics of the Passos Coelho's government played the unifying role the danger of fascism played in the unification of an inter-class alliance which this time involved the more "progressive" forces of the bourgeoisie, in first instance the PS, but also some right-wing intellectuals critical to austerity, and the parliamentary left, which had the support of the working class organizations. The political horizon of this alliance never crossed the logic of parliamentary negotiations, nor put it into question the systemic features of capitalism which were at the basis of the crisis as it pledged loyalty to the international agreements which formed the straightjacket of austerity. The co-optation of the social

movements and the integration of the radical left did only bring structural answers to many of their social demands.

How could an alternative socialist tactic regarding the democratic crisis have looked like? While the anti-austerity movements had historical proportions, they never reached the levels political involvement like similar movements had in the Arab World. Class consciousness did not overcome the levels of political confusion and depoliticization that were fruit of 30 years of working-class defeats and neoliberal hegemony. Despite some experiences of popular participations in the assembly-movements, these remained at the fringes of society, even within the protest movement. While some theorists have drawn theoretical comparisons between the camp-movement with historical experiences of direct participation such as the Paris Commune or the Russian Soviet nowhere this phenomenon reached any meaningful levels of dual power, let alone raising the possibilities of popular insurrection. Within this political situation, some of the alternative historical tactics discussed in Chapter 3 regarding socialist democratic strategy could have served as an inspiration for alternative outcomes to the restauration of liberal parliamentary democracy accompanied by austerity/light.

From the theory of uneven and combined development, we already demonstrated in Chapter 1 that due to its peripheral and dependent political-economic position, the Portuguese bourgeoisie was never able to implement a real sovereign bourgeois democracy modelled by the systems in countries like France, United Kingdom or Germany. As Portuguese capital always remained extremely dependent on its core peers, its politics would always remain imprisoned to these interests. The transition to a relatively stable parliamentary democracy was only possible through the integration in the European Union. The accompanying loss of political economic instruments fundamentally limited the capacities of the legislature to answer to the social and economic needs of the population. Within the context of the revolutionary period of 1974-1975, only a socialist transformation led by the interests of the working class, independent and against the interests of Portuguese capital could have established real popular sovereignty. This is a lesson which should have been taken up by the Portuguese left in the democratic crisis which erupted in 2011. Instead of being guided by the tactic of the popular front; the socialist opposition in Portugal could have developed an alternative strategy based upon the tactic of the United Front. As we have seen, the tactic of the United Front was also developed to face a situation of major defeats for the socialist forces in Europe and unfavourable conditions for a socialist transformation

of society. The tactic advised for a broad collaboration of different organizations based upon working class interests; a tactic that combined parliamentary methods and electoral alliances with extra-parliamentary class struggle. The idea was that this method would have a pedagogic effect on the consciousness of the working class and show the limits of any political alternatives within the framework of capitalism. How could such a tactic have been applied in this concrete situation?

The left should have created a united front in the face of the elections of 2015 based upon a clear anti-austerity program with the minimal aim of turning back all the neoliberal measures of the Passos Coelho's government, including cuts in social benefits and rights, cuts in education and health sector, privatizations, a cancelation of public debt, and a socialist plan to recover the economy. This unity should have avoided the possibility of the leadership of the PS to negotiate separately with the different forces on its left. It could have guaranteed the investiture of the PS government without guaranteeing the approval of the state-budgets for four years. Instead of back-door negotiations, it could have proposed open negotiations of which any agreements needed final approval of the unions and social movements. It could have used its influence in the Trade Unions and social movements and call for popular mobilizations to pressure for government concessions. The PS could of course always make agreements with the right to approve further austerity budgets; but this would fragilize the government, show the limits of the budgetary framework within the European Union and strengthen the left opposition with a clear democratic alternative.

In the end, *Geringonça* did not bring any structural solutions for the problems of the European economy that lay behind the crisis. While softening austerity and creating some concessions for the working class; it demobilized the left-wing opposition. It created a situation which can be fertile for other, reactionary ways to express social anger. The election of the first extreme-right member of parliament since the revolution in the 2019 election, at the end of four years of *Geringonça* stability is a warning. As the structural problems of the crisis remain fundamentally unresolved, one can expect that the alternative democratic aspirations will emerge again, in which form only the future can tell.

CHAPTER 8 — FINAL REMARKS

8.1 Summary

1.

We have seen how Portugal's transition towards democracy has been marked by various contradictions. Until 25th of April 1974, Europe's longest-living dictatorship and colonial power seemed anachronic, a few weeks later the country was the world's hotspot of democratic, revolutionary, and socialist experimentalism marked by nationalizations, land reform and citizen-participation. In the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution, the project of European integration proved essential to guarantee the triumph of a relatively stable parliamentary liberal democracy over other alternative perspectives upon democracy that had emerged. The newly established constitution guaranteed many of the social conquests of the revolution – such as free education and healthcare. Portugal tried to build up a social democratic welfare state at the exact moment when the neoliberal revolution started to sweep over Europe. European integration would soon be accompanied by a neoliberal agenda of widespread privatisations and liberalisations that would re-constitute the countries' financial economic elites and quickly become a fetter for social and economic democracy. The process of integration of the European Union and the Eurozone – as a peripheral economy – brought Portugal in a profound process of deindustrialization and loss of political economic sovereignty. The country not only transferred legal and political competences to the communitarian level; its economic policy would become ever more dependent in question of debt, finance, European subsidies, emigration and tourism. With the integration in the Eurozone, it would further lose essential political economic instruments, such as monetary policy.

Portuguese democracy – like other European democracies – already suffered for years of increasing legitimacy problems. Electoral participation dwindled. Belief in parties, the justice and political institutions had been corroded by depoliticization, corruption and inequality. As the European project entered in its worst crisis so far and austerity policies dealt hard blows to social rights, public services and living conditions, also the legitimacy of liberal parliamentary form of democracy seemed to enter in a serious legitimacy crisis.

Democratic legitimacy is built upon hegemonic consensus on the way of interpreting “Democracy”. Our first sub-hypothesis was therefore that democracy is an

ideological concept. Ideology refers to the medium through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate; to how human beings live their life as conscious actors, making sense of their own actions and those of others (Therborn, 1999, p. 2). Our second sub-hypothesis is that crisis emerges the “fundamental contradictions in society”; breaking up the hegemonic consensus. As diverging potentially legitimate interests emerge, the dissensus in society is concentrated in the conceptualization of democracy itself, producing divergent narratives and perspectives of it.

2.

Crisis plays a central role in the emergence of those contradictions. The clarifying potentiality in the contradiction originates in the old meaning of the Greek concept of crisis – or *kritein* – which involves both an objective and subjective dimension, a moment of choice. Instead of seeing the contradiction as an ambiguity, a confusing element and thus a limit to its scientific usefulness, we have argued – on the basis of a historical analysis of the concepts of crisis and critique in dialectical thinking from Socrates to Marx – that understanding and using the contradictory concept of crisis enables us to approach two fields of knowledge that are often seen as standing in an epistemological opposition towards science; namely the field of history and the field of politics. We saw how crisis offered a way out of the *methodenstreit* between the arguments of historical particularities of knowledge and the search for universal laws by the positivists. Crisis marks the temporal coincidence of the political need of universal truths, as well as the knowledge of their own historical particularity, and with it the possibility of political change.

Crisis marks a breakdown of hegemony in which the post-political consensus is no longer possible, and the true antagonistic political conflict emerges. Carl Schmitt has been the major inspiration for addressing antagonistic political conflict in many contemporary social theorists – among them Habermas, Mouffe, Laclau, Žižek, Agamben, Derrida and Arendt. Schmitt’s concept of the political locates meaning in the realm of antagonistic collective identifications: the “distinction of friend and enemy” itself produces meaning. His concept of the “Political” served as a critique of the declining liberal hegemony which functions as the *aufhebung* between the “soulless” technicism of modernity and its simple negation in the form of aesthetics – romanticism, between technology and aesthetics, between science and myth. Accordingly, the “truth” is always partial; “obscuration” – defending the friend-perspective and disconsidering the legitimacy of the enemy one – should be approached as an enabling blind spot for the production of knowledge. Schmitt’s

idea of the political would enable Laclau and Mouffe (2001) to transcend the universality of capital, and instead focus to build alliances between different identities in changing common struggles in a pluralist democratization. While these contradictions can be canalized in different forms of identities (of class, race, nationality, ideology); they become at least temporarily irreconcilable. The potentiality of crisis to reintroduce the political and the historical in scientific knowledge is important in the context of declining neoliberal hegemony which had portrayed our reality as post-historical and post-political. More than in any other context, crisis opens the way for a historical and political form of science.

Crisis is not emancipatory as such though. As much as it presents the possibility for a “new world to be born”, it is also “a time of Monsters” (Gramsci, 1992, p. 33). Despite the important theoretical contributions for the critique of liberalism and the conceptualization of the Political; Schmitt’s own political stance also showed that crisis, the state of exception and the political can be profoundly reactionary. Let’s not forget the European refugee crisis or the rise of nationalism and populism in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. Crisis has also been used to legitimize further neoliberal policies – rather than a dying of the old society, “the time of monsters” can be a temporal strengthening of the old. Naomi Klein’s (2008) *The shock doctrine* was a first example of how neoliberal globalization used exceptionalism and crisis-situations to further the interests of global financial capital. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2005) and José Manuel Pureza’s (2015b) also made this case in their analysis of Portuguese austerity. In his book *Linhas vermelhas*, Pureza (2015b) for example defends the hypothesis that austerity and the Euro crisis represent a new configuration between crisis and exception which he denominates as “crisis-as-politics”: instead of crisis being a “moment of disruption of the normal”, crisis became a political strategy by the elites to destroy an existent normativity: under the disguise of a momentous exception, exceptionalism is normalized and becomes permanent. Crisis ultimately oblige us of choosing sides in science. Schmitt equalized liberalism with science and modernity. In Schmittean terms, a real “Political Science” would therefore be impossible, and Political knowledge is condemned to mythical meanings. Not so for Marx, Marx is more than just Political. We therefore propose a “Schmittean reading of Marx” with the radical opposition between Capital and Labour – as the ontological kernel of a Marxist political science. By “politicizing economics” – through the focus on labour – Marx introduced class-struggle into the very heart of economic critique of capitalist reproduction and able to historicize

capitalism. The question of objective truth becomes a practical question of a political strategy to prove the truth.

3.

Democracy has been an essentially contested concept throughout modern history. For centuries, theorists have engaged with democracy – as ideal or materiality, as utopia or dystopia – and developed dozens of theories and approaches; among them classical republicanism, utilitarianism, elitism, constitutionalism, anti-colonialism, empiricism, liberalism, deliberative approaches, participatory approaches, agonism and socialism.

If we start from the premise that today's “[...] struggle for democracy... is in what it will mean” (Žižek, 2006, p. 37) or that democratization consists in “[...] a dispute on the meaning of democracy” (Santos & Avritzer, 2005, p. XLV); Ellen Wood (1998, p. 134) reminds us that we should not forget that the struggle between capitalism and socialism can be conceived as a struggle between different forms of democracy. Particularly at the end of a period of 30 years of neoliberal hegemony, with capitalism going through a severe crisis in which the crisis requires choosing sides; the Marxist literature on democracy becomes relevant again. In the contemporary crisis of democracy, the theorist is challenged to lead the crisis of democracy back to an opposition between capital and labour, and between capitalism and socialism. The struggle between capital and labour has been mediated through democracy. Representative democracy and the separation of the political from the economy tends to be in the oligarchic interest of capital; the composition of the individual liberal citizenship mimics the composition of the alienated worker.

Since the mid-1980s, “discourse” became the central issue for scholars of social movements and democratic theory. Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) *Hegemony and socialist strategy* has been the groundbreaking work, which is still very influential until these days. They defend a post-Marxist analysis in which the social is conceived as a discursive space; privileging the idea of “political articulation” and “hegemony” over the “Hegelian/naturalistic” categories of traditional Marxism such as the Hegelian notion of Universal class or the Marxian notion of Proletariat as a universal class. In her polemic against this perspective, Ellen Meiksins Wood proposes that the problem of analysis of democracy and political strategy is much more than a linguistic problem. The task of the theorist is not to empty democracy from the specific content of the ideological formulas but to explain the specificity and particularity of their content. Only as such one exposes that

what seems to be universal – capitalist democracy – is in fact particular. That is, one should not abstract the ideological concept from its own specific historical conditions that represent particular class interests into so-called universal principles accessible to rearticulation. Instead one must explore the historical conditions that made possible the generalization of a certain interest of a particular class and conferred it universality. The line separating one democracy from the other lies at the point where fundamental class interests diverge. The very diversity of meanings of the concept of democracy shows us the differences between bourgeois democracy and other forms. The capitalist claim of exclusive ownership over democracy rests on the conflation of the various meanings. The objective of this thesis is to come to a strategy of how to get to an alternative universal notion of democracy and alert for the dangers of co-optation and ideological confusion.

Several historical debates provide the background for such a discussion about socialism, strategy, and democracy. We highlighted the debates about the utility of the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat, the choice between reformism and revolution, the dynamics of imperialism and periphery, the question of parliamentarianism and the debate between the tactic of popular front versus united front. Ellen Wood's historical analysis of the relation between capitalism and democracy reminds us that the opposition towards political dictatorship – liberalism – was the fruit of an oligarchic and aristocratic reaction against the absolutism and centralization at the onset of modernity. While the term dictatorship of the proletariat has gained controversial connotations due to its association with Stalinist authoritarianism, it is important – particularly in our conceptual context of crisis and exception – to remind that in Marxist theory there is not necessarily an opposition between democracy and dictatorship. This dictatorship, synonymous for socialist democracy, consists in the “manner of applying democracy”, not in its “elimination”. It is conceptualized as an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, while it imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors as long as they are oppressors. The class-character of democracy is essential in the dilemma between Popular and United Front tactics. The Popular Front found its origin in the defence of liberal democracy against fascism and proposed an alliance between the working-class organizations and liberal democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie. Given the imperialist structure of capitalism, and the dependency of national elites regarding international capital, in the periphery these liberal cannot provide a basis for popular sovereignty. Given that only the oppressed have real social and economic interests in

sovereign emancipation, a democratic tactic based upon the United Front and a class-perspective is probably the most adequate.

4.

In the context of the Portuguese crisis between 2011 and 2015, the implementation of the austerity measures, has not been accompanied by a discursive abandonment of the idea of democracy by policymakers. Throughout the crisis-period and in the interviews, policymakers have generally claimed democratic legitimacy for those measures, and upheld them against criticism. Instead, policy-makers – like our interviewees, IMF-representative Selassie and ex-finance minister Albuquerque – tried to articulate the meanings and practices of democracy with their perceived need to implement harsh austerity measures in a “democratic discourse of Austerity” that legitimized these same policies. They are legitimised through the depoliticization and culturalization of political problems, and through the neoliberal discourse of inevitability. The arguments are then articulated through the incorporation into the formal and substantive democratic dimensions of democracy. Elements of depoliticization and formal democratic legitimation are predominant. Depoliticization can be found in technocratic arguments, “economist” discourse, the framing of “exceptionality”, the use of the concept “good governance”, the transfer of responsibility to other/external actors (to Troika, national government of financial markets), and the irrationalization of any political alternative... Policies are repeatedly legitimized based on formal democratic procedures, particularly on the basis of the law, elections, parliamentary majorities, ratified treaties and constitutional judgements. Substantial elements on the other hand, are very limited as “circumstances” of crisis don’t allow such legitimation.

The Austerity-model of democracy reflects the liberal-democratic model which had been hegemonic since the 1990’s: while the acceptable political spectrum is reduced through the “Golden Straitjacket” of the financial markets, this form of democracy is presented at the same time as universal and non-ideological. It fits into the post-political and post-democratic and low-intensity form of the democratic ideal. At the same time, it reflects the exceptionalism naturalized by the crisis-perspective, which legitimizes the “necessary” transformation of society and democracy towards a new normal – giving policymakers sovereign powers that supersede existing democracy.

5.

Record numbers of people mobilized against austerity policies in strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of protests between 2011 and 2013. Among the most iconic were the *Geração à Rasca* demonstration, the general strikes, the *Que-Se-Lixe-a-Troika* demonstrations and the Occupy movement of the *Indignados*. Overall, people that participated in those protests seemed to have a very negative opinion of the state of democracy; 89% of our interviewees considered democracy as inexistent or in bad state. Dissatisfaction with government policies is directly projected upon the idea of democracy itself. People complained about the lack of social rights, lack of accountability, lack of legitimacy, lack of freedom of speech and freedom of information, the lack of national sovereignty, lack of participation and lack of respect for the constitution. A large majority was convinced that democracy deteriorated because of the crisis and austerity. The crisis generated a great disparity between what people thought democracy should be and what it really was, effectively creating a hegemonic crisis around democracy. While people rejected the existing state of democracy, there was however not necessarily a clear idea how it should or could be different. Even if they had, democracy was often imagined as an ideal disconnected from their reality.

Different social actors in the protests, new social movement activists, labour union activists and party-members had different discourses about what the democratic alternative would be. This led to situation which could be empirically described by Santos' (2005, p. LXIII) concept of demodiversity: "The peaceful or conflictual coexistence of different democratic models and practices". The democratic discourse of the unions is linked to traditional everyday working and living conditions. Democracy, for the Trade Unionists meant guaranteeing decent salaries, pensions, contracts, and safety on the workplace. It also meant direct and unconditional solidarity between co-workers, collective action, and direct participation in union-decisions. The democratic discourse of the social movements was more utopic. It was focussed on systemic change, direct citizen participation in assemblies, horizontality, values of internationalism and solidarity, as well as practices of prefiguration. The discourse of the parties, on the other hand, was more institutionalist, focussed on organization, power, and the state. They focussed on social and constitutional rights, elections, history, ideology, and strategy.

Many recent analyses of the democratic crisis have used Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) approach of hegemonic articulation as a framework to understand the collaboration

between protest movements in Portugal. Accordingly, hegemonic transitions are fully dependent on political articulation and not upon entities pre-constituted outside of the political field – they specifically oppose the universality of class interests. A political solution for the crisis utterly depends upon the capacities and communication strategies of Trade Unions, social movements, and parties to bring about a contingent narrative that would replace the hegemony of austerity. We addressed the attempts and strategies to cooperate – including forms of social movement Trade Unionism, the joint mobilization in the general strikes, the cooperation in mobilizing platforms such as 15O platform and QSLT, the *Congresso Democrático das Alternativas...* – as well as the difficulties and prejudices each of them encountered.

Laclau and Mouffe (2001) reject the Marxist thesis that crises reveal the fundamental contradictions of capitalism between Capital and Labour: for them there is no logical and necessary relation between socialist objectives and the positions of social agents in the relations of production. The Leninist attempt to attribute mass identity to a necessary law of history and the interweaving of science and politics, restricts knowledge to an enlightened vanguard and is accordingly at the roots of authoritarian politics which risks a progressive substitutionism from class to party to state. While Laclau and Mouffe (2001) acknowledged that the left abandoned the working class and focussed on the middle classes – they blame the left’s lack of alternatives to neoliberalism, not the infatuation with the issues of identity. Instead they argue that these are not opposed issues: struggles against sexism, racism, struggles against sexual discrimination and environmental struggles should be articulated with those of the workers in a new left-wing hegemonic project which they called radical and plural democracy.

Equivalence occurs through the articulation of those particularities in a situation of antagonism. To transcend this antagonism, one body needs to represent universality. This is what Laclau and Mouffe (2001) called the hegemonic relation. But “the logic of Hegemony and the Political already existed in” Marx’s (1977) *Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right’* “without the need of abandoning the centrality of the concept of universal class”. In Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) terms, that would be: the antagonism – the differentiation between Capital and Labour revealed by the “enabling paradox” of the crisis – is provoked by capitalist exploitation, and obliges the affected particular subjects to collaborate. Through this antagonism, one particular position – the worker – takes the representation of universality to transcend the existing capitalist hegemony. Such a political approach to crisis

– in Schmittean terms – that considers the discourses of democracy as part of the ideological superstructure which stands in a dialectic relation with the sub-structure of the relations of production, grasps those discourses as a moment when the “real” appears. A crisis is thus not only a moment of creation of knowledge and transcendental decisionism, at the same time it is also an affirmation of the essential antagonism between classes.

If we look upon the three different discourses we have studied, we observe that there is a “void”. Despite the antagonisms between the different protest movements – like the distrust between parties, unions and social movements – all the three democratic opposition discourses reflect some aspects or sides of what in the past would have been called socialism, or socialist democracy based upon class interests. Is not the historical ideology of democratic socialism the unification of all those aspects: decent distribution of wealth, control of the work-place, solidarity, participation, solidarity, internationalism, strategy, collective action and praxis between daily needs and the utopia of a better society to come? What was lacking, however is the unification or articulation of those ideas as the hegemonic opposite of the dominant elite-liberal democratic discourse.

The void only exists because substantive contents have intentionally been emptied by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy... Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the success of the neoliberal TINA-doctrine; socialism has apparently disappeared from the available political alternatives – former socialist parties have adapted to third-way politics, have focussed on other progressive issues such as ecology, feminism or migratory rights. A “Retreat from Class” was generalized among intellectuals, even among those who claimed to be (post-)Marxists... At the same time, during the crisis, class interests appeared as a wandering spectre over all democratic discourses. The task of a Political Science is to fill the void again with its socialist content and alert to possible pitfalls. What are the difficulties of this task? Some of the contradictions within the democratic discourses enable a reactionary co-optation or integration of those discourses within the hegemonic discursive and institutional model of democracy which legitimizes capitalism. The purpose was to try to uncover these different contradictions and weaknesses that made them prone to a co-optation and reproduced elements of the hegemonic perspective upon democracy.

6.

Some activists and collectives did not recognize themselves in pre-existing organizations and parties and retracted to other forms of political practices: the so-called

post-protest movements. The reasons for this loss of confidence in direct protest are diverse: loss of confidence in the efficiency of methods of decision-making, lack of practical results, declining participation, loss of confidence in a particular organization, a need to really “do” something... They would rather focus on what they could change through their own day-to-day behaviour. The debate between Mouffe’s post-foundational political counter-hegemonic strategy and Hardt and Negri’s post-operaist “exodus” strategy offers a pedagogic framework of analysis of the esthetical dimensions and figurative practices of the beyond-protests movements.

According to Mouffe, the social movement’s attempt – particularly by the *Acampadas* – to expose the possibility of an alternative society through performance, through aesthetic and affective means, makes them more similar to types of artistic activism than to traditional political movements. She warns however against the post-operaist strategy of exodus, proposed by the likes of Hardt and Negri, which considers fleeing the forces of oppression, servitude, and persecution in search of freedom as a form of active politics that could bring down our current imperial world order. The post-operaists tend to denounce the collaboration with the traditional channels of politics like parties and Trade Unions and call for the abandonment of the majoritarian model of society, organized around a state. Mouffe asserts, that no form of critical artistic practices, can bring about the end of neo-liberal hegemony and realize the needed transformations on its own. Arts are thus no substitute for political practices; the strictly political moment cannot be avoided. The almost exclusive aesthetic or symbolic turn, present in the post-protest movements, is a symptom a political constellation marked by neoliberal hegemony, its post-political representation of society, and the intrinsic diffuseness and complexity of defining antagonisms around complex issues like financial capitalism. Aesthetics can have an important role in the mobilization of protests, but eventually requires a wider political articulation, instead of isolation. Else the resistance in the form of aesthetics, just mirrors the “resistance” in the form of romanticism that Carl Schmitt had so fiercely criticized in his works on the political.

Post-political – or post-democratic – discourses are marked by the focus on side-effects which are inherent to capitalism, populist politics that foreclose spaces that permit the universalizing of the claims of particular groups or classes, a disembodied, vague, ambiguous, unnamed “enemy” and the manageability through a consensual dialogical politics. An analysis of 6 manifestos of the new social protest movements against austerity in Portugal reflect some of these post-political elements. These include the vague self-

identification of the political subject, the focus on side-effects of capitalism such as corruption, tendencies of culturalization of politics, the focus on participation without clear political economic content or alternatives, and the silencing or the distancing towards parties, politics and ideologies in general. Rather than anti-ideological and anti-political, they reflect the neoliberal post-political post-democracy.

This does not mean that there are no politicizing elements as well, on the contrary: these movements have mobilized against austerity – and defined a political enemy in practice. They engaged thousands of people in public debates and certainly created a growing political consciousness through participation. The deliberations within those movements were moreover often very political. Many of the participants were politically organized activists from different organizations and many have been trying to politicize the anti-austerity movements and influence the decision-making processes from their own ideological perspectives. Often this was not very successful, particularly when ill-thought and bureaucratic strategies were used – such as one or other pre-organized collective tried to impose their decisions by their own numeric control.

When the assembly-movement eventually weakened, the protest eventually followed the two different directions, we have laid out: articulation and exodus. Some movements evolved to post-protest movements and individual projects to change their own living. Others, such as QSLT and its sequels, have tended to articulate with the politically organized left of parties and Trade Unions and to present ever clearer an anti-neo-liberal agenda. The overcoming of the post-political elements – such as a technocratic approach of the debt-question – and the distrust between and around parties and movements of the left in a clear unified discourse and practice against the neoliberal and technocratic European policies, were the articulation-challenges for this tendency in Portugal.

7.

From the parties represented in parliament, only the left-wing opposition parties Left Bloc and the Communist Party coalition, fundamentally opposed the austerity measures in the Memorandum of Understanding. Due to their ideological and practical role in the protests during the crisis, they played a key part in the reconfiguration process of Portuguese democracy. While the PCP went through a profound process deradicalization, the party still remained one of the most orthodox communist parties in Europe, and at least theoretically defended a classical Marxist-Leninist approach. It accepts liberal democracy as a transitional

phase but rejects it as a final political goal: “real democracy” cannot be based upon a free-market economy. The more pluralist Left Bloc involves internal currents that defend a similar perspective, but overall the Left Bloc tends to propose reforms in order to broaden democracy without a necessary rupture with liberal institutions. BE tends to be more alter-globalist and the PCP more patriotic. The crisis appeared to radicalize the left – insofar that their traditional social democratic programme seemed evermore radical in the context of austerity and led to a convergence between BE and PCP, particularly towards a common Euro critical position.

The local elections of 2013 were the first opportunity to hand an electoral blow against the pro-austerity parties, they were also the first trial to articulate social movements and parties in electoral alliances. While the right-wing government parties lost, the left-wing opposition could not profit. On the local level, polarized discontent turned towards citizens’ lists, rather than towards the party-political left. These citizens-list included some independent initiatives and initiatives of collaboration of social movements with the left bloc, but also right-wing populist initiatives.

The European crisis strengthened Euroscepticism and eroded support for European integration, transforming Portugal from being one of the most Europhile member states to one of the most Eurosceptic. The 2014 European elections saw their lowest turnout ever and proved an electoral reckoning with the government parties and their austerity policies. The PS won these elections in relative terms, despite losing votes in absolute numbers. The disappointing results of the opposition would trigger a leadership contest in the PS that would be won by Lisbon mayor António Costa. António Costa had shown that he was able to build alliances on his left as mayor of Lisbon, opening the way to articulate alliances to its left at the national level. The Left Bloc had a disastrous electoral result which could be attributed to changing political positions towards the EU, a renewal in the party leadership, internal struggles, and two splits which eventually would participate independently, albeit without reaching the electoral threshold. Protest the European Union, the government, and austerity measures would mainly be channelled towards the Communist Party and a reasonable success of new micro-parties with a populist, anti-institutionalist, or social movement orientation such PAN, *Livre* and MPT. The new populist-conservative anti-establishment ecologist MPT – in some respects comparable to the Italian *5 Stelle* – knew an electoral breakthrough conquering 2 MEP-seats. Different from Spain and Greece, Portugal saw no breakthrough of a new left-wing formation based upon the anti-austerity

movements. This is partially explained by the pre-existence, of considerable radical left forces, which consistently used to gather more than 10% of the votes over time, making it more difficult for a new party – that would be dependent on the same discontent electoral base – to rise.

The right-wing government alliance PàF, composed by PSD and CDS, emerged as the biggest political force in the 2015 general elections. International pressure - from the EU and the financial markets – to continue with austerity policies, the belief that there was no alternative and that “the worst was done”; and the “*Syriza* antidote” – the idea that even if elected, an anti-austerity government would lead to disaster –, help explain this surprising result. In comparison with 2011, its proclaimed “victory” however equalled a loss of around 700,000 votes, a loss of twelve percentage points and 24 members of parliament – and most importantly: its parliamentary majority. The appearance of victory only existed because the electoral victory of the left was “divided”. The real “winners” were the radical left parties who received nearly 20% of the votes. The biggest electoral gains went to Left Bloc who made a remarkable comeback compared to the European elections, rising from 8 to 19 seats. The previous splits had eventually enabled to unite the party. Early in the campaign, Left Bloc had distanced itself from the U-turn of its Greek sister-party *Syriza*.

The strengthening of the radical left ensured that for the first time in 40 years, the system of “alternation” between the two “regime-parties” (PS and PSD) was broken. The coalition negotiations in the aftermath of the 2015 elections had an important role in restructuring perspectives on democracy in Portugal. At the beginning, government participation of Left Bloc and the Communist Party seemed highly unlikely, as the left had always been barred of taking part of government solutions for the previous 40 years. The lack of collaboration among the left is a heritage of the historical enmity during the revolutionary period, enmity on the Trade Union front, and differing perspectives on Europe. But during the campaign there was an unexpected turning point in the attitude of the left parties BE and PCP – which had been the main parliamentary voice of the struggles against the cuts. Avoiding a continuation of the right-wing government became the primary objective. Also, other influential movements outside the traditional parties – pressed for a collaboration among the left, including the PS – to stop a continuation of the right-wing austerity government. One part of the PS – lead by Costa – leaned towards a collaboration with the left and tended to join the anti-cuts agenda of BE and PCP. Having learned the

lessons of Greece and fearing “Pasokization”, they were especially aware of the risk of being outflanked electorally on the left.

This would eventually lead to the *Geringonça* solution; a minority government of the PS, led by António Costa, with parliamentary support from PCP, BE, and PEV. *Geringonça* signified an important change in the Portuguese parliamentary tradition, particularly the unwritten rule of the *Arco de Governação* which excluded the left from government participation. Separate agreements were signed with BE, PCP and PEV that included: an increase of the minimum salary, the recovery of the pensions, increasing salaries in the public sector; fighting precarious contracts, with particular attention to the contracts of fake independent workers; a reduction of VAT for restaurants; and a stop to the ongoing the privatizations of public transport and public services. The *Geringonça* was presented as a democratic alternative to neoliberalism and as an example of the success of left-wing policies in Europe.

Freire (2017) presented *Geringonça* as a real democratic revolution in Portugal, due to the inclusion of 18% of the population – which voted PCP or BE – and used to be marginalized, due to the clarification of political options and an end to the TINA-narrative, and because it could become an inspiration for other countries around Europe. But the PS-led government was not inclined to radically change the macroeconomic and macro-political environment; the origins of the crisis would remain in place. The restrictions imposed by the EU meant an unavoidable continuity of austerity in many areas. *Geringonça* obliged the radical left to take responsibility for its political propositions in adverse conditions.

We have seen how, after the massive street protests, demonstrations, and *Acampadas* against austerity, had lost momentum, some – namely around *Que Se Lixe a Toika* (QSLT) – were institutionalized through the integration of its leaderships in the left party-oriented forces and dynamics, which over time would focus them upon electoral and parliamentary struggles. Also, within the unions hope for political change would eventually be channelled towards electoral change instead of street mobilization. If social struggles and mobilization are considered an essential part of democracy and democratization – particularly in its participative dimensions – it seems that the increased “representative quality” of Freire’s democratic revolution has seriously affected the participative and popular character of Portuguese democracy.

Against the idea of this democratic revolution, we proposed the concept of *thermidor*, which put an end to a potentially revolutionary and emancipatory process, taking away the initiative of the revolutionary movements of the exploited classes and institutionalizing a new normality. In many respects, *Geringonça* is a return to a situation of “normality” – pacifying the radical elements that emerged during the crisis through a relatively stable government that respects the rules of the Eurozone and the European Union. The radical parliamentary left, which during the protests formed the political expression of the social movements, at least temporarily abandoned its radical positions towards social transformation. The anti-austerity protests and the prospect of a radically different democracy vanished. At least for now...

An analysis of Portugal’s electoral cycles since the protests of 2011 and the formation of the *Geringonça* government reveals how the protest movement eventually vanished and how its energy and hopes were channelled towards electoral processes. This process did not end in a radical change, neither in terms of electoral representation, nor in terms of policies. Is this form of pacification and the co-option of social movement leaderships inevitable under liberal representative democracy? A socialist alternative could have been presented as an alternative to the restoration of liberal parliamentary democracy. Such socialist alternative understands that Portuguese bourgeoisie can never by itself, due to its dependence on foreign Capital, guarantee real sovereign bourgeois democracy modelled by the European core.

8.2 Conclusions

Like in Greece, and Spain, widespread contestation of the austerity policies led to a profound social debate on questions of democracy, both in public and academic sphere. The initial aim of this dissertation was to analyze the influence of the Euro crisis and the austerity measures on the legitimacy of democracy. In this debate – and within the scientific research in particular – the definition of the concept of democracy itself became a central problem regarding empirical research. The fluidity of the concept obliged me to abandon the idea of using a fixed concept of democracy. Instead the main focus of our research became the interaction of the crisis with the conceptualization of democracy itself.

Throughout this thesis we have proposed and developed a theoretical framework that recovered a Marxist political ontology for the analysis and explanation. It entails various

advantages, not only compared to the traditional empiricist and comparative methods in political science, but also compared to some of the more popular traditional critical approaches. The Historical Materialist methodology of Marxism lets us understand the present in the context of past and present struggles and power relations; it integrates the struggle about democracy in a universal theory which accounts for logics of class, periphery, legitimacy, political economy, crisis. We believe that Marxism is the theory par excellence to analyze social phenomena in the context of capitalist political economy. As a crisis-theory of capitalism, this is even more the case when this political economy is confronted with a deep crisis. Consequently, democracy is approached as a contested concept, not just within the academic literature of democratic theory. This thesis exposed how theoretical uncertainty is the ideological product of historical and contemporary social struggles that give body to its meaning.

This Marxist approach to democracy, based upon an ontological politicization – upon the category of labour – is indispensable in the global context of depoliticization which has marked the last 30 years of neoliberal hegemony. At the same time, this politicization – in contrast to the original conservative-nationalist politicization found in Schmitt – offers a perspective of universal social emancipation. Until the crisis, Portugal’s consensual interpretation of democracy, was based on a trans-class agreement that combined some of social conquests of the revolutionary period of 1974-75 with European integration and economic development. The integration in the European Union in the context of neoliberal globalization led to a long-term process of a relative deterioration of the social rights legitimized by a technocratic management of the political economy. The crisis of the Euro project and the Troika-imposed austerity measures led to legitimation crisis in which fundamental contradictions in society were re-politicized. Divergent socioeconomic interests led to a social dissensus that crystallized in the conceptualization of democracy, producing divergent irreconcilable democratic narratives, practices and perspectives.

This thesis provided new empirical material regarding the perspectives of democracy by different sides of the social conflict in Portugal. A comparison between democratic discourses of policy-makers and protest movements confirmed our original research hypothesis. A vast majority of the interviewed protestors rejected the liberal democratic framework defended by policymakers. They projected a negative judgement about the impact of austerity upon the quality of democracy, but framed their opposition to the crisis-governance within the democratic framework, in the form of alternative

democratic perspectives. The crisis created a situation of “demodiversity” of competing democratic practices and discourses: those executing austerity policies have a rather formalistic, technocratic perspective, while the institutionalized left seems to defend a more substantive practical approach based on social rights and welfare. Besides the Trade Unions, who’s democratic perspective combines work-place participation with workers’ rights and solidarity, the newest social movements, such as the *Indignados* and the assemblies, defended more participative and deliberative citizen-focused perspectives. Between each of these democratic discourses and practices several contradictions and possibilities to converge appeared.

Last but not least, this thesis underlines that Marxism fundamentally links up analysis and science with historical and political practice that opens the road for social and political emancipation. Our analysis of democracy links up the scientific debate with the question of political tactics and strategies for change. This tactical perspective provides us with a measurement that goes further than the mere description of social injustices and rejects the monopoly of agency in the hands of the victors of political processes. Throughout this thesis we have analyzed different alternative democratic practices and strategies of resistance. It has been possible to recognize the potential elements of democratic practices and alternatives: from the horizontalist prefiguration of the *Acampada* movement to social-movement Trade Unionism. Tactics concern the articulation or non-articulation of these movements in order to “win”. The two poles of those strategies can be caught in the theoretical opposition between Laclau and Mouffe’s Strategy of Hegemonic articulation and Negri and Hardt’s strategy of Exodus. The strategy of “exodus” – or at least the discourse that defends to go beyond current democracy, beyond parties and unions – risks not only being compatible with neoliberalism as an aesthetic element and achieve no collective structural responses to the crisis of neoliberalism, but it also risks to be just a reflection of various elements of depoliticization present in the dominant discourse. The strategy of hegemony creates an opening of change, but not without pitfalls. The pitfalls reflect the problems of the tactic of the popular front practiced since the 1930’s; it is primarily focused on, and thus limited within, the defence of liberal democracy. This is problematic in a context where the crisis of capitalism is intimately linked with liberal democracy itself. Applied upon the Portuguese case, Laclau and Mouffe’s approach articulation provided a comprehensive framework to understand the convergence resistances against austerity – such as in the collaboration between unions and social movements. But the articulation around electoral

strategies also risked co-opting opposition movements back into representative parliamentary democracy without any structural change. I thus conclude that the tactic based on the ideas of a united front, based on class-identity could have been a more fruitful approach. In contrast to the exodus-strategy, it engages politically with the structural problems of the crisis. At the same time, a renewed focus on class, as the basis for unity – in contrast to Laclau and Mouffe – makes that it doesn't limit itself to the liberal-democratic horizon.

8.3 Significance

We believe this thesis is an important contribution to understand the way how democracy works and is perceived in crisis periods. Not only did it develop and explain the particularities of democracy in Portugal, its history and the most recent complexity and contradictions, but also provided a framework to analyse the crises of democracy that can be applied in a great many other circumstances and places. The divergence of perspectives on democracy revealed by the social struggles created a hegemonic crisis. This makes it possible to understand the reasons why institutions can be considered to be democratic by one of the sides and anti-democratic by another, providing levels of legitimacy to be overthrown or neglected even in spite a generalized public support for a democratic ideal.

At the theoretical level, this thesis provides a general framework to understand different democratic theories. It provides a defence of historical materialism as a method of analysis and democratic action. It highlights some of the limits of the main critical democratic theories. For socialists and opponents of austerity, this thesis exposes some of the pitfalls of the democratic struggles so far. It also provides some possible guideline for democratic tactics. Even for those that will not follow the general theoretical framework of this thesis – that is the argument of crisis as object/subject to re-establish a Marxist political scientific approach to democracy – our research has provided new and vital empirical materials on the discourses and perspectives of democracy – based upon interviews with key-players in the political conflict.

8.4 Shortcomings

The process of a doctoral research is learning process, a maturation of ideas and of the personal maturation of the researcher. The process of this maturation leaves us time to rethink and adapt many theoretical, methodological, and textual aspects throughout the research. Some things can however never be corrected, not just by limited resources, but mostly because one is working on the analysis of contemporary events which have passed. The critical theorist finds himself – as Žižek (2012, p. 220) put it – between the owl of Minerva – German contemplative philosophy in which being precedes thought – and the singing of the Gaelic rooster – French revolutionary thought in which thought precedes being – which announces the proletarian revolution. Hegel’s famous statement “The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk” teaches us that we only get a better knowledge about the subject of research whence it has passed. From hindsight thus many problems and errors appear. A conclusion of a thesis is therefore also an exercise in self-criticism.

Many major structural shortcomings are inherent to the science and the form of a thesis as such. They involve among others the limits of scientific discourse and norms of scientific practices, the balance between objectivity and subjectivity, the balance between knowledge and practice, the limitation of resources... The heterodox design of this thesis, particularly regarding the approach towards crisis, science and politics, tried to stretch some of these limits, and may have even crossed some of them.

From a practical methodological perspective – some of the interviews could have been better planned and better executed. While we would not expect very different results, more qualitative interviews should have been conducted to cover a wider range of discourses, particularly among the protest movements, unions and opposition parties. Regarding the shorter interviews, a more thoughtful design should have been used from the start; not only did we need to include a new question halfway along the research – based upon the findings during the process. Also – even though we wouldn’t expect different results, we should have had a more robust, and pre-planned design on the specific random criteria we used to select the interviewees on the protests.

Our research closed in upon the class-contradiction as a universal lens to understand the crisis and different narratives and discourses of democracy. Given the political economic nature of the crisis, the theoretical framework we used, and the prevailing political discourses

we encountered in the context of economic crisis, such focus was quasi unavoidable. From a critical theoretical point however, some important contradictions which are fundamentally interlinked with capitalism have mostly been left out. We did not focus on the oppression of gender and race in our approach towards democratic discourses, even if the crisis disproportionately impacted certain parts of society due to those forms of oppression. This has been a shortcoming on an empirical and theoretical level.

We focussed on some parallel aspects of colonialism and racism when we analysed the peripheral properties of the Portuguese economy within the eurozone and the colonial-like way the country was treated by the European Union and the international institutions. We mentioned the racism and culturalist framework that moulded some of the discourses of the crisis. We did however not give enough attention to the problem of mass-emigration of unemployed youth, and how this affected those peoples view of citizenship and democracy. Neither did we focus upon the racism within Portuguese society itself, and how austerity measures disproportionately affected immigrant and minority communities – like East-European immigrants, or Roma and black communities – due to cuts in public policies and the economic effect of rising unemployment on informal and precarious workers. These discourses were certainly present in the movements against austerity – even if marginalized. Migrant workers and illegal immigrants often participated in the demonstrations against austerity, demanding citizenship, fighting discrimination, and demanding equal rights.

This was probably even more the case regarding the issue of women and sexism. Austerity disproportionately affected so-called reproductive sectors of the economy; particularly public services like education and healthcare, jobs which are overwhelmingly occupied by women. Women also suffered from increased physical violence in the crisis context. Some movements specifically focussed on the problems of women during the crisis. Moreover, the Occupy movement incorporated several dimensions of social care – intimately linked to the problems of women – in the prefigurative protest-repertoire. While we interviewed many women for this research, the questions did not specifically focus on these issues, and the answers did not raise these important dimensions as part of the democratic discourses, while they should have been.

8.5 Future research

8.5.1 Gender, Race and Crisis

It would have been interesting to widen our initial theoretical perspective on crisis from a Marxist perspective by incorporating women and racialized subjects. The articulation of the resistance of these subjects is important for the formulation of viable anti-capitalist and socialist democratic alternatives to austerity, neoliberalism and capitalism. Contrary to Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) assumption, this does not require a post-foundational theory, but can be achieved by incorporating the corresponding notions of reproduction and primitive accumulation into the process of the production of capital. It is important to stress that such inclusion, from my perspective, does not fundamentally alter the importance of the Marxist perspective as the most adequate method of analysis. In contrast to what many theorists, particularly in the fields of post-colonial and feminist studies, have argued. We believe the methodological and ontological perspective of Marxism which we defended in this thesis – from its establishment – has been open to the integrate the issues of patriarchy and colonialism as essential for the reproduction of capitalism.

Marx and Engels did themselves refer to the importance of the struggles around race and gender in the sphere of capitalism. Marx (1982) took a clear position regarding the emancipation of African Americans in the United States, when he wrote in *Capital* that “Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin” (p. 414) and provided the theory of primitive accumulation of capital “[...] written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire” (p. 873), which would serve as the basis for Luxemburg's theory of imperialism, colonialism and primitive accumulation. In *Capital*, volume 1, Marx (1982) also writes:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation (p. 915).

The colonial system, public debts, heavy taxes, protection, commercial wars, etc., these offshoots of the period of manufacture swell to gigantic proportions during the period of infancy of large scale industry (p. 992).

It is in tropical culture, where annual profits often equal the whole capital of plantations, that negro life is most recklessly sacrificed (p. 377).

Many posterior Marxists, or writers in the Marxist tradition, have later deepened and enriched the political relation between capitalism and colonialism and between class and

race, such as CLR James, Frantz Fanon (2005), Walter Rodney (1975), Amílcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah (1965).

A similar point can be made for the concept of gender and the role of patriarchy within the system of capitalist reproduction. Friedrich Engels' (2010) *The origin of the family, private property and the state*, is one of the first historical analysis of the role of women in the capitalist political economy, and how reproductive labour of women in the family-economy serves the accumulation of capital. Together with the adaptation of Rosa Luxemburg's approach towards primitive accumulation; this served as the theoretical bases of many posterior socialist feminists; like Maria Mies (1994) and Silvia Federici (2004).

Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) theory on political articulation has often been proposed as an integrated struggle based upon race, gender and class, among others in a post-foundational socialism. Socialism would be a rearticulation of those "equivalent struggles", and the identities of race and gender are taken disregarding class-antagonisms within them. Given Laclau's (2005) intimate link with the theories of populism – it is no accident that their theory – which considers race, class and gender as equivalent – has many resemblances with the popular front tactic: the defence of a more democratic society involves all possible oppressed identities, including bourgeois and liberal influences.

Alternatively, like in this thesis, we propose to approach the question of articulation of race, gender and class within a crisis, based upon the logics found in the Marxist tactics opposed to the popular front: permanent revolution and the united front. This means; recognizing the need for an articulation of struggles on the basis of class. That is, other issues of identity and social struggles should not only not be ignored by the left; they should be put forward as the worst oppression and most urgent forms of exploitation within the – colonial and patriarchal-capitalist society but should be politicized in terms of universal class. Racism, Sexism and the environmental struggle should be approach "as" class struggle – excluding bourgeois elements. It enables us to assume the struggles of the majority of genderized and racialized subjects as an essential component of class struggle, while filtering out those identity-struggles which are mobilized by and confined to a small privileged minority of people. It follows a parallel logic as when Rodney (1975) claimed on the question of African Liberation struggles: "The petty bourgeois cannot fulfil these historical tasks. For national liberation requires a socialist ideology. We cannot separate the two". But that is material for another thesis...

8.5.2 A new crisis: COVID-19

At the moment when I was finishing this thesis, world capitalism was going through a new, deep political economic crisis. The global COVID-19 pandemic pushed the world into unprecedented measures and economic recession. The pandemic crisis has shown us, once again, the weaknesses of capitalism, and the neoliberal truths that have been taught to us over the past 30 years. The crisis showed the market's inability to respond; apart from Bolsonaro and Trump, few lunatic libertarians today defend the state's inaction in the face of this crisis. Public health services have regained their prominence for the common good, while private ones have been unmasked for what they are: speculators who do not care about health. It will be difficult to legitimize privatizations in this sector in the coming years, and medical personnel will have social support to demand better conditions.

The fight against the disease demanded an almost complete paralysis of the capitalist economy. The quarantine functioned practically as a social strike – often imposed by the state – that affected all sectors of society. This paralysis and the subsequent economic collapse reminded us of the fact that wealth is mainly produced by male and female workers. Invested capital, “creative entrepreneurship”, managers, advertising: all of this is completely useless without the exploitation of work. The pandemic also showed us who performs the essential tasks in society: they are the ones who cannot stop and have had to take an unknown life risk for the common good: they are the food producers, the supermarket workers, cleaning workers, logistics and transport personnel and medical personnel. Often these essential workers are the people who suffer the most from exploitation, who are subject to the greatest insecurity and the worst wages. Often, it is also the workers who suffer the greatest oppression: for example, women and workers who are racialized, in addition to exploitation, suffer from sexism and racism.

It is these men and women workers who deserve to be highlighted. Their integration and struggle is one of the greatest contemporary challenges of the workers' movement. They are from sectors with less tradition of unionization due to their great precariousness. The old union organizations have had – at least until now – great difficulties to enter these sectors. But these are also the strategic sectors in a capitalist economy increasingly focused on services and just-in-time production, and, as such, these sectors have very great potential power. Some sectors have already discovered this power; remember the impact of the powerful struggles of dockers, oil truck drivers and nurses in Portugal last year. It will be a

pedagogical process with many contradictions and errors – due to the lack of traditions and organization – but essential for everyone.

In the context of the pandemic, governments all over the world, imposed emergency measures. Even much more than in the case of austerity, a state of exception was imposed that gave unrestricted power to the sovereign governments. The emergency measures gave governments power to severely restrict citizens liberties. Curfews were imposed, freedoms of movement were restricted, social networks censored opinions in unprecedented ways. Governments imposed forms of digital oversight that increasingly endangered citizen's privacy. Such emergency measures became increasingly normalized to an extent that the Portuguese government even proposed to legalize emergency as a preventive measure.

These measures, combined with economic and social hardship, induced an increasing legitimacy crisis for governments. Increasingly fuelled by conspiracy theories, people mobilized in demonstrations, not only against government-imposed policies, but also against the political system, against science and reason itself.

One of the reasons for this legitimacy crisis, is that the imposed measures over time revealed a clear class character. While citizens freedoms and workers' rights were restricted to halt the pandemic, governments did everything possible to keep "the economy" going. Recognizing the failures of the free market did not necessarily bring us policies for the common good; rather, it meant "socialism of the rich", which is mainly concerned with finding a mega "ventilator" for the financial sector and large companies. If industry ever halted production due to worker's safety, big industries quickly restarted and workers were forced to keep on labouring despite increased risks of contagion in large collective production units and overcrowded public transports.

In addition, among the winners of this crisis, will be the most exploitative sectors of the advanced capitalist economy: platform economies – such as Amazon, Uber and Glovo –, large supermarkets and large food industries. The crisis and the imposed quarantines strengthened their positions: instead of being stopped, their capital accumulation skyrocketed while their small-scale alternatives, small local commerce dependent on direct interaction with customers and limited access to new digital technologies will suffer destruction of their capital and will have enormous difficulties to survive.

Again, this crisis raises a large number of questions around the idea of democracy. What is democratic in this crisis? What about the wide-spread imposition of the state of

emergency? Can we limit civil rights, and in whose interests? Is private scientific knowledge sustainable? Is public healthcare a democratic right or should the market rule efficient governance? How does ideology frame people's perceptions of the crisis? Should we bail out private companies and banks, or should we prioritize the most vulnerable? The theoretical framework we started to develop in this thesis, could serve as a good starting point for analysis.

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ATTACHEMENTS

I. Interview with Mr. Abebe Selassie

Mr. Sellasie was a leading figure of the Troika, chair of the IMF delegation in Portugal. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossolle, at Ritz Hotel in Lisbon on Wednesday 13th of March 2013.

What do you think about the state of democracy in Portugal?

[silence] I think relatively healthy, but clearly – I guess I came to frame things through an economic lens. I guess the crisis being as deep as it is, is putting strain on the body politic, you know. From what I have read, and I tried to follow, in normal times, this seems a very harmonious, very consensual society. My sense is that the depth of the economic crisis is putting a strain on the political discourse... [despite] my limited knowledge of the politics and what I think is going on.

How did you think that the crisis influenced democracy?

I don't know if it is influencing democracy *per se*. [...]. If we define democracy like; the institutions are still there, right? I think the crisis is maybe creating more differences between parties, more distance between parties on how to resolve [the problems]... Maybe [there is] a little bit of a blame game going on, but I think this is not abnormal... [...]. When economic conditions are OK, when countries are not being challenged, I think it's relatively easier to see the path forward. But when you have as big an economic crisis as you have had here, I think it's not. I guess it is OK, it is consistent with that.

I have to say [that] what strikes me most; is how broad based the consensus here has been for some elements of the program. I think that's something that stands Portugal well and probably differentiates Portugal from other countries that have gone through this kind of a crisis. So that fabric, that consensus, that I talked about earlier, although under strain, I think it remains in place as far as I can see. [...]. The food bank, caritas... there seem to be networks in place that although not very political, are community-based networks that do

serve, that do show the kind of the fabric of support, is there over and above what the state provides.

How does the opposition to austerity reforms affect the democracy?

[silence] I don't know how, frankly. I mean: does it affect democracy *per se*? Again, the institutions are [there, they] remain in place; you know, the democratic institutions. If we think in terms of parliament, freedom of speech, constitutional court checks, checks and balances..., those remain in place. Am I right or?...

What do you think about the “Grandoladas” that were [a manifestation of protest] in which ministers were interrupted [by] people stopping their speeches, [through the singing of the traditional revolutionary song]? In some media they were attacked as some kind of end of freedom of speech for the government.

You know, [laughter] there are various ways of protesting. One thing that I certainly I'm very cognizant of, is the difficult economic circumstances that you see here, right now. What you basically have had here is a drying up of financing flows that has been gradually restored. When an economy is like this, heavily reliant on financing flows, [and] comes to a grinding hold, that causes a very deep economic crisis. We are here to try and to provide temporary financing while the government, and households and companies reduce their imbalances so you can go back to the normal way of financing oneself. So, what has happened to unemployment; inequality tends to increase when unemployment goes up, household incomes have been squeezed because of increases in taxes, user fees... These are all kind of unfortunate, but they were unavoidable. So, the protest that you saw here the other day, these are all very understandable. The suffering, the pain is definitely out there, so whether they manifest themselves with [the singings of] *Grândola* or other forms of protest that are taking place; the circumstances are difficult. [...]. My sense again, I'm not an expert. Ask me what the export number are today, and I'll tell you. I'm not the good person to have picked to discuss.

I'm interviewing both sides of the political conflict [...] I want to have technicians and politicians from the government confronted with the views of the people who are

protesting. My research [focusses on] how the crisis influences the discourses and the body politic [...] because there is no economic growth to sustain a consensus.

You know, a very important element of our work here is to try ... [but]... it's just not possible to try and stay away from those issues, discussions that are deeply domestic. I'll give you an example. We have a strong view on what the deficit path should be: those are related to the causes of the crisis. So, if you have the deficit path, we form judgements on what is reasonable and what is not reasonable, on other countries' experiences, what kind of financing there is... But how you get there, whether you get there through mobilizing more taxes or savings, generating savings from government spending. [That] ultimately is a decision that has to come from here. Just to give you an example; in September when the 2013 budget was done, we had a kind of a principle or a target when the program was initiated. The government set a target [that] two thirds of the budget deficit reduction would come from the expenditure side, and one third on the revenue side. In the event, when it came to formulate the 2013 budgets, the government relied a lot more on revenue, on taxes... That is a political decision, that is what the council of ministers, government, wanted to do. So you know, we accepted that. I mean there are risks relying excessively on spending, on tax-revenues. But this was what was reasonable, so we moved forward on that. But you also remember the backlash that that generated. The strong push-back on taxes [being] too high. That also shifted the dialogue now towards spending, towards savings on the spending side. Again, we have been asked for technical assistance, and what to provide, how and where savings could come from etc... We have done an exercise to try and benchmark areas where savings can come from. We compared Portuguese spending on particular areas, wages etc.... with other countries, and we did a technical assistance report, [that] was published in December or January. That report has been published, but again; it's for the government to have this debate and come to decide which one to have. I think we leave it to the government. A point I make always in my remarks: if it is the Portuguese will – if it is the governments' will, parliament's will – [that] you want to have – shall we say a Nordic type of welfare – not welfare, but like society with a broader safety net... Maybe that is what Portugal wants, because you see very strong consensus... If that is the kind of structure Portugal wants, that's fine. It means high taxes. But you also need to pay for those taxes. [For] a high level of taxation, [...] you need to marry [that] with a dynamic export-sector that is going to generate economic growth and the taxes that you are going to require to be able to pay [...] these are rules...

The government here in Portugal tends to legitimize its policies always with the technocratic advice of the Troika. Doesn't this give the image of being more a technocracy than a democracy?

[silence 20 sec.] well, the difference between technocracy and democracy..., I mean wasn't the government democratically elected? [...]. When you say technocracy, for me it is kind of something [...] as you had recently in Italy. Recently, the Mario Monti's government in Italy – I see as a technocracy, right? [...] were the elected government, [and] stepped aside and people that haven't been elected came in. That's not at all the case here. So I don't know how relevant the question is.

When you have no means to finance yourself, when you basically you have a crisis and you have been shut out from markets, you have no option but to rely on generating more taxes or savings, at least with respect to the government budget deficit, right? I mean, whether it is a technocratic government or a democratic government, you just have very limited budgetary tools. The policies you have to take to overcome the crisis would be the same. [...].

According to Interviews I did with protestors; most associate democracy with its substantive definition, linking democracy with social welfare, social rights and social protection, exactly the things which are endangered by cuts of the government.

Again, I take a little bit of an issue there. Again, the program has sought [not to affect] the minimum levels of benefits, the minimum levels of pensions. If you look at the way the government structured even the kind of the taxes that have been imposed; it has been trying to protect the lowest levels of pensions, at the lower ends, as much as possible. Bigger cuts [have been made] on higher levels. The sensitivity maybe comes from the mere fact that [people are] looking at large areas of spending that the government has, like social security payments etc. I think that makes it seem as if an axe has been taken to it without any, any, any consideration of these kind of principles, equity and alike. I think the government is very aware of that. I think maybe they have been trying to use a filter of making sure that it's not just producing savings. Doing [the cuts] in a manner which maintains equity, which ensures social protection is at the core of helping the poor. It's a little bit unfair to characterize the government as not [taking up these issues].

What is your opinion about the second of March demonstration which had the title “Fuck the Troika, we want our lives back – the power to the people”?

Again I think [this is] a reflection of the economic difficulties that are prevailing at the moment: the frustration, the high unemployment numbers. These manifestations have to be seen through that prism.

Recent IMF-studies strengthened the argumentation of neo-Keynesian critics of austerity such as Krugman and De Grauwe, how do you respond?

The IMF has been at the forefront in doing this kind of work. Actually if you look at this whole debate about fiscal multipliers, the work that was done by the IMF, by our colleagues. The insights from that work have very much been internalized in our work here. If you remember, I don't know, last September, when the 2013 budget was being discussed, the targets for this year were relaxed very substantially. The target was here what, three? – right? It was relaxed to four and a half, exactly because of the concern that too strong an adjustment, could have a too strong a drag on growth. This is all very much part of internalizing the work that's going on: growth being lower than we envisaged, unemployment being higher... The easing of the pace of adjustment is very much a reflection of that. [...]. It makes sense to have a much more gradual pace of adjustment, but if you have a financing constraint, [...] then the ability that you have to have a much more gradual adjustment is not there. That is the primary constraint here in Portugal. And number two is the level of debt. These are the binding constraints on the pace of adjustment. Of course austerity has an adverse effect on economic outcomes, but the question is, how do you finance a higher deficit?

Isn't that a structural problem of the eurozone? Where normally this kind of problems would be solved by currency devaluation, and within a currency zone, by fiscal transfers; this is not the case in the euro-zone.

There are clearly issues related to the architecture of the Eurozone. Like the need for a banking union, fiscal union, to strengthen the foundations of the zone. We have done quite a bit of paper work at the IMF on exactly this issue. If you go to the webpage and click for papers on the banking union. [You will find recommendations on] the strength and the foundations, the fabric of the Eurozone... to make it more robust to crises like these.

Are the measures that are proposed to the Portuguese government, before, tested on democratic feasibility and legitimacy?

The deficit target of course is Portugal's commitment under the stability program and the fiscal compact about the pace of adjustment. Also, the financing envelope that you have, is another anchor on how much of the deficit Portugal can afford to have. Importantly, these deficit numbers are endorsed by parliament, right? Both the budget framework law – [with] for example, the adoption of the fiscal compact, – [...] and of course the annual budget, are approved and ratified by parliament, right?

II. Interview with Mrs. Maria Luís Albuquerque

Mrs. Albuquerque was Minister of Finance of the Passos Coelho's government. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossle, at the Portuguese parliament in Lisbon on the 3rd of March 2017.

Qual a sua opinião sobre o estado da democracia Portuguesa hoje?

Começando por falar da democracia parlamentar, ou melhor, da manifestação parlamentar da nossa democracia. Infelizmente, e o meu partido já o tem dito várias vezes, não tem estado a correr como deveria correr. Houve uma alteração de governo em Portugal, no resultado das eleições, e nós não questionamos a legitimidade da solução, mas aquilo que tem sido o contexto parlamentar tem evidenciado do nosso ponto de vista um desrespeito para com os partidos que hoje estão na oposição e uma utilização da força da maioria para bloquear direitos das minorias. Nós já tivemos vários incidentes que o demonstram e já temos tido opinião de o expressar publicamente, entendemos que as maiorias ou minorias são conjunturais e as regras devem ser sempre respeitadas para defender, para proteger os direitos das minorias que hoje são o PSD e o CDS. Antes eram os partidos mais à esquerda e amanhã provavelmente voltarão a ser, porque essa é a regra da alternância democrática. E a forma como as regras têm estado reinterpretadas e aplicadas no debate no parlamento parece nos configurar um problema democrático e de respeito democrático pelas minorias. Que ainda por cima é uma minoria que tem quase metade dos deputados no parlamento, mas mesmo que não tivesse, os seus direitos teriam de ser defendidos na mesma, portanto

estamos preocupados com a forma como tem sido gerida a questão democrática no debate parlamentar.

Qual a sua ideia sobre o estado da democracia no período que você estava no governo?

Em termos do debate parlamentar, houve múltiplas discussões, houve sempre – por definição é assim que deve ser – uma total disponibilidade por parte dos membros do governo para prestar esclarecimentos à Assembleia da República, tivemos uma atitude de grande respeito e de prestar sempre contas à AR. Um exemplo que a atual maioria sempre usa contra nós e que eu não consigo entender o argumento dum ponto de vista democrático por exemplo que o facto que temos apresentado ao longo do período de governação quatro orçamentos rectificativos. E algo que é apontado sempre como demonstrativo de falhas ou de erros por parte do governo anterior, quando eu acho que orçamentos rectificativos resultam precisamente do respeito à AR, o orçamento é definido três meses antes se quer o ano se iniciar. E, portanto, é normal que ao longo da sua execução orçamental e do ano haja alterações de circunstâncias que motivam voltar ao parlamento e voltar a submeter ao parlamento as alterações que se mostrem necessárias. Parece-me um procedimento muito mais democrático e transparente do que aquele que tem sido utilizado atualmente que é simplesmente não cumprir o orçamento que foi aprovado, fazer coisas diferentes, introduzir medidas extraordinárias, sem que passem pela AR e o parlamento, e portanto são manifestamente visões diferentes daquilo que é e deve ser do escrutínio parlamentar.

Qual a sua opinião sobre o impacto da crise económica sobre a democracia em Portugal?

O contexto de crise económica, em particular o programa de ajustamento, ou seja, o facto de nos termos visto na necessidade de recorrer a um programa que assegurava o financiamento do estado durante um determinado período. Impôs regras, mas eu não diria que essas regras foram um entrave ou prejuízo para a democracia. No seguinte sentido: o programa foi pedido e negociado pelo partido que estava então no governo, foi aceite e o compromisso foi também assumido pelos dois partidos que vieram a formar governo entre 2011 e 2015. As eleições de 2011 realizaram-se já depois da celebração do programa e os partidos que apoiavam o programa tinham no parlamento 85% dos deputados. Portanto, juntando o PS, o PSD e o CDS. Portanto, os partidos tinham 85% dos deputados, que significa que, do ponto

de vista do voto popular, o programa e sua execução foi legitimado neste sentido. As pessoas conheciam o programa e os compromissos dos vários partidos antes de votarem, quando votaram deram a maioria a dois dos partidos que subscreviam o programa ainda que não ao partido que tinha originalmente pedido e negociado. A perda de soberania em algumas decisões em consequência do programa. E algo que foi aceite e que é consequência da pré-bancarota a que o país chegou. E, portanto, foi a alternativa que foi encontrada a uma situação onde o país deixou de ter capacidade de se financiar e isso sim é uma ameaça real à democracia. Quando um país deixa de ter capacidade de se financiar autonomamente porque conduziu as políticas, política económica da forma a levar o país a uma situação de quase falência, aí tudo quanto são os valores democráticos podem ser postos em causa, daquilo quanto do meu ponto de vista constituiu uma ameaça à democracia, foram os erros de política cometidos que deixaram o país nesta situação. A execução do programa, tendo limites à liberdade de decisão e aos graus de liberdade de decisão, foi algo que o país se comprometeu e que foi até democraticamente legitimado nos votos das eleições de 2011.

Queria fazer duas questões extras no seguimento desta resposta: há as críticas de outros partidos no parlamento que dizem que as eleições de 2011 que levaram o governo do PSD e CDS ao poder de facto foram legitimados por maioria, mas ao mesmo tempo estes não cumpriram os seus programas eleitorais; e nesse sentido essas eleições não produziram maioria legítima; o que responde a isso?

Por acaso vi um estudo recente – confesso que agora não consigo citar de quem – sobre o grau de cumprimento dos programas eleitorais e que tinham resultado relativamente surpreendentes, ou seja, todos os governos recentes tinham cumprido mais de metade das propostas. E, portanto, como – até era mais positivo daquilo que era a precessão geral das pessoas. Não me consigo recordar ao certo de qual era o estudo que estou a citar, mas vi num alerta de imprensa. Primeiro nós tínhamos um programa com múltiplos objetivos, mas naturalmente que a execução do programa de governo tinha como elemento central o cumprimento do programa de ajustamento e a sua conclusão com sucesso. E era algo que estava muito evidente, porque era um compromisso a que Portugal no seu conjunto estava ligado, e que tinha assumido voluntariamente, ainda que numa situação de dificuldade extrema, e eu diria que ter cumprido o programa com sucesso dentro do prazo previsto, conseguindo aquilo que se veio a chamar como saída limpa que tem sido interpretado de múltiplas formas mas o que representa de facto é voltar a ter capacidade de financiamento

nos mercados. Porque é essa a definição do que é que é saída limpa. E aliás foi a perda de financiamento que levou ao programa originalmente e eu diria que o cumprimento deste programa com sucesso é, era porque não poderia deixar de ser o objetivo central da governação, mas para além disso fizemos muitas outras coisas, pusemos em prática muitas outras reformas, que no nosso entendimento são fundamentais para corrigir problemas estruturais da economia portuguesa e do estado de direito e que criam as bases para um crescimento sustentado e para evitar a repetição de erros passados. Houve uma alteração, enfim, das circunstâncias, houve necessidade de adaptar o programa ao longo da sua execução, porque as previsões são previsões, e depois quando somos confrontados com a realidade ao longo do tempo é necessário fazer ajustamentos e esses ajustamentos foram feitos. Mas eu acho que dizer que o governo anterior não cumpriu o seu programa e, portanto, perdeu legitimidade parece-me claramente abusivo e sobretudo parece-me um argumento de quem pretende não assumir a responsabilidade das políticas que levaram à necessidade do programa, não é? O programa não aparece por acaso e não foram as instituições internacionais que nos obrigaram a aceitar dinheiro e aceitar condições. Fomos nós que nos pusemos na situação de precisar de pedir dinheiro e de ter de negociar as condições com que o dinheiro nos era emprestado.

Como definiria “Democracia”?

Não tentando nenhuma definição teórica, mas democracia, no sentido de democracia representativa ocidental como aquela em que Portugal se revê, e o resto da União Europeia, e muitos dos outros países, é um regime em que os representantes do povo são escolhidos em eleições livres, e que em função desse mandato eleitoral exercem o poder. Com um regime de “*checks and balances*” – eu acho que não há nenhuma expressão suficientemente feliz em Português, mas enfim pesos e contrapesos – que permite que as várias instituições que constituem, que são pilares do regime democrático, nenhuma delas tenha um poder absoluto. Portanto, existem instrumentos para que a atuação das várias instituições do poder executivo, do poder legislativo, portanto estamos a falar do governo, da Assembleia da República, da Presidência da República, das entidades independentes, reguladoras, e não só. De forma a que haja um controlo exercido de forma transparente e democrática também, no sentido que estes poderes, muitos deles resultam também de eleições livres e democráticas para escolha dos representantes. Portanto, é este sistema em que o povo elege os seus representantes para as diversas instâncias. E que permite que haja controlos entre as várias

instâncias que limitam o poder de cada uma que o controlam em nome do povo. Eu diria que esse é o modelo de regime democrático, das democracias ocidentais, nas quais Portugal se inclui.

No contexto de crise, vários movimentos de protesto surgiram, que questionaram a legitimação democrática em vigor (sistema eleitoral baseado em partidos e a falta de soberania nacional). Qual sua opinião sobre estes movimentos e suas posições?

Primeiro acho normal uma reação em situações de crise, porque as situações de crise têm sempre múltiplas vítimas que são quase por definição os mais desprotegidos e por isso é que é muito importante que as políticas desenhadas em situações de crise tenham em atenção que há grupos que são particularmente vulneráveis que tem de ser especialmente protegidos e isso é um elemento fundamental mas aquilo que alguns grupos, e não vou aqui particularizar nenhum, mas que alguns grupos que surgiram – e não estou a falar até especificamente de Portugal mas em termos mais abrangentes, e que defendem um romper com o regime e passar de uma democracia representativa para uma democracia direta ou mais direta. Esse não é o modelo que foi seguido com assinalável sucesso nas democracias ocidentais porque nunca é demais referir que o modelo de democracia ocidental que temos é aquele que mais gerou prosperidade, paz, segurança, garantias de direitos humanos, igualdade de oportunidades. Não há nenhum regime atual, nem passado que tenha um resultado tão positivo em termos do que são as condições de vida dos cidadãos como os modelos de democracia ocidental como o que Portugal tem desde a quarenta e poucos anos e portanto a ideia de contrariar a existência dum regime propondo uma rutura total com o regime, a mim parece-me errada e perigosa, o regime seguramente precisa de ser avaliado, precisará de correções – mas não me parece que seja razoável, ou no interesse dos cidadãos, que se rompa com o regime, que como digo de todos os testados até agora é claramente – e aqui no regime incluo também aquilo que é designado como o capitalismo, mas é claramente o regime político e económico que gerou mais bem-estar de forma mais consistente simultaneamente garantindo paz e segurança a centenas de milhões de pessoas e portanto entendo que os movimentos que pretendem quebrar este regime numa lógica revolucionária propor modelos alternativos, nalguns casos propõe alternativas que no passado provaram muito mal, e noutros casos não se percebe que o que propõem. São contra tudo sem se perceber exatamente que alternativa de modelo é que pretendiam, e isso em sociedades organizadas é um caminho que pode ser muito perigoso.

No contexto de crise na Europa, vimos o surgimento de movimentos extraparlamentares, novos partidos populistas, muitas vezes com ideias xenófobas, de extrema-direita. Em Portugal não se tem verificado isso até agora. Tem alguma explicação para isso?

Tem a ver com o facto de Portugal ser ideologicamente um país muito de esquerda. Provavelmente pela nossa história recente. Por uma reação àquilo que era o regime anterior antes do 25 de abril que foi conotado com a direita. Era um regime totalitário e os regimes totalitários são todos maus, independente de serem de direita ou de esquerda. Mas parece-me que há aqui uma reação que ainda perdura ainda ao fim destas mais de quatro décadas de negar a direita democrática por haver uma conotação negativa de direita associada ao regime anterior. Além disso, acho que em Portugal há questões culturais, mas até geográficas que não geraram o tipo de pressões que em outros países fizeram crescer a extrema-direita. Portugal é um país, de ponto de vista cultural, foi tradicionalmente sempre aberto. Enfim, temos períodos na nossa história que são menos positivos desse ponto de vista, mas comparando com os pares e cada momento no tempo fomos sempre um país mais aberto, mas ao mesmo tempo somos um país que pela sua posição geográfica e pela sua condição económica, não afetado pelos fluxos migratórios mais recentes, e pelas questões quer económicas, quer de segurança, que vieram associadas. Eu não estou aqui a dizer que os problemas de segurança da Europa resultam dos imigrantes, não quero ser mal interpretada. Mas a ideia de haver entrada de múltiplos, de muitos, refugiados, nomeadamente agora nos últimos anos, que vêm da Síria, mas também do Norte de África, migrantes económicos e migrantes que fogem de cenários de guerra e que nos últimos anos têm constituído um afluxo de pessoas ao centro da Europa, que é particularmente forte. Associando-se a isto o recente, o crescente receio de terrorismo e os múltiplos atentados que vamos vendo, estão criadas as condições para que a xenofobia para que essa ideologia de extrema-direita comece a encontrar mais adeptos. O medo é o pior dos conselheiros em qualquer regime. O medo é uma ameaça real à democracia, porque as pessoas, quando têm medo, medo pela sua segurança física, medo pela sua segurança económica, medo pela segurança do emprego, reagem de forma primitiva, instintiva, e isso significa que muitos dos valores que damos como adquiridos são postos em causa. Essa pressão em Portugal, nos últimos anos, de facto não existe. Antes pelo contrário, nós tivemos vagas de imigrantes para Portugal no passado, por exemplo vindo do leste Europeu, na altura que tínhamos muitas obras públicas e mão-de-obra para esses trabalhos, tivemos muita imigração brasileira também para Portugal, mas

no início da crise, aliás um bocado, isto é bastante antes esses imigrantes em grande número regressaram às suas origens. Continuamos a ter comunidades, nem sei se podemos ainda chamar imigrantes que vieram de África, dos antigos países de língua, das antigas colónias portuguesas, mas que já estão integrados e que não é um fenómeno recente, e portanto os portugueses não sentiram a ameaça que outros países sentem. Eu não estou com isto a legitimar a extrema-direita em resultado disso, estou a tentar encontrar uma explicação sociológica para o facto do fenómeno em Portugal não ter adesão. Eu acho que as condições, por um lado, da nossa forma de estar e da nossa cultura, mas também das nossas condições objetivas, de não estarmos sujeitos a uma pressão como estão os restantes países, não geraram as condições para aparecer uma extrema-direita. Em compensação, temos uma extrema-esquerda que não fica a dever nada ao que se passa no resto da Europa. Ainda hoje tivemos mais uma demonstração no parlamento. Nós temos um partido comunista como já não existe em lado nenhum. Ou seja, um partido comunista que continua a lamentar a queda do muro de Berlin, o fim do regime da União Soviética e a negar, como hoje foi patente numa discussão num voto no parlamento, as atrocidades que foram cometidas pelo regime anterior, nomeadamente aquela que matou milhões de pessoas à fome na Ucrânia. O nosso partido comunista continua a negar essas questões e, portanto, estamos a falar dum extrema-esquerda ortodoxa, no caso comunista, que eu julgo que já não tem paralelo em lado nenhum, os partidos comunistas no resto da Europa evoluíram, têm hoje uma posição diferente. E, portanto, o facto de nós não termos extrema-direita xenófoba não significa que tenhamos extremos no espectro político e que eles não sejam igualmente perigosos, são é diferentes. Têm, precisamente porque não reagem ao mesmo tipo de ameaças. Aquilo que nós vemos no leste europeu é uma reação muito negativa à esquerda. Porque a memória negativa é dum regime de esquerda, e, portanto, temos mais partidos na direita. Aqui a nossa memória negativa é de partidos de direita, e, portanto, os partidos encostam-se mais à esquerda do espectro político. Extremos infelizmente temos todos e, como digo, acho que são igualmente perigosos de um lado ou de outro.

[...]. Se é verdade que foram cometidos erros, há algumas acusações que foram feitas que acho que são injustas e que não têm fundamento. Que são as ideias de que haveria algum intuito de castigar os países que precisaram de ajuda, alguma agenda ideológica escondida, essas acusações entendo que são injustas e que não têm de facto fundamento. O que se fez desde o início, ao meu entendimento, foi procurar identificar quais eram as principais fragilidades que cada país evidenciava. No caso de Portugal, tínhamos todos os problemas,

ou seja: tínhamos dívida pública, dívida externa, dívida privada, incapacidade de financiamento, contas públicas descontroladas, base do sistema financeiro fragilizado, quer dizer, basicamente do cardápio de problemas nós tínhamos todos. E não é fácil desenhar, para um prazo de 3 anos, um programa em que se tenha de fazer uma correção tão profunda, ou pelo menos um início de correção tão profunda dum conjunto tão vasto de problemas, não utilizando um instrumento que o FMI sempre utilizou em programas de ajustamento que é a desvalorização cambial. A desvalorização real é muito mais difícil de fazer, até do ponto de vista político. E, portanto, sendo certo que houve medidas que não foram bem desenhadas. Para Portugal como para os outros países. É verdade que um programa desenhado hoje seria provavelmente muito melhor, mas isso é com aquilo que já aprendemos, agora, pretender utilizar o conhecimento adquirido antes de ele ter sido adquirido é que é uma expectativa que não faz sentido. Como digo: muita da crítica que é feita é atribuída a uma agenda ideológica de austeridade por austeridade e de espírito castigador, que eu entendo que não é correta. E que não tem fundamento. Os erros que foram cometidos, eu diria, foram cometidos de boa-fé, ou seja, com o que se sabia, conhecia, sabia à data da tomada dessas decisões, a imposição daquelas condições, e aquela que quem impunha essas condições acreditava que eram as melhores para recolocar os países no caminho do crescimento, claro, como digo, houve erros, houve coisas que funcionaram, houve coisas que não funcionaram. E eu acho que o reconhecimento por parte do FMI, até oficialmente, de que houve políticas que não estavam corretas, é resultado dessa aprendizagem. Mas isso tem sido apresentado como um *mea culpa*, como agora estivessem libertos da ideologia da austeridade. Do meu ponto de vista, não é nada disso; é uma reflexão feita sobre um conhecimento adquirido que antes não existia, que as pessoas pensam que o FMI, por ter muita experiência, sabe preparar programas de ajustamento para todas as situações. E a verdade é que a vastíssima experiência do FMI até à crise do Euro foi sempre com países que tinham política monetária autónoma, e portanto política monetária cambial, e utilizavam esses instrumentos para promover a competitividade, como aliás em Portugal. Nós já tínhamos dois programas do FMI anteriores. Sem esse instrumento é tudo mais difícil de desenhar, e numa zona monetária única onde não há fronteiras, onde não há restrições a movimentos de capitais, onde não há restrições aos movimentos de pessoas ou mercadorias. A complexidade dos efeitos de primeira, de segunda e de terceira ordem é muito maior. E, portanto, parece-me normal que algumas das coisas tenham resultado menos bem. E que haja um reconhecimento como aprendizagem para o futuro. Ora transformar isto numa coisa de: “foram maus e perversos e

quiseram foi castigar as pessoas e tratar toda a gente mal e agora estão arrependidos”. Acho que é simplista e roça ao insultuoso para qualquer pessoa inteligente que pense no assunto.

III. Interview with Mr. José Soeiro

Mr. José Soeiro is member of parliament for *Bloco de Esquerda* since 2005. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossole, via Zoom on the 15th of July 2020.

Qual a tua opinião sobre o estado da democracia após a crise de 2011?

Já aconteceu tanta coisa depois de 2011. Já houve tantas outras peripécias e tantas outras crises depois de 2011. Mas, eu acho que desde 2011 foi um bom exemplo... Na altura até se falava do golpe de estado financeiro; o modo como os mercados tinham submetido a democracia aos seus movimentos e a forma como tinham transformado uma crise financeira numa crise das dívidas soberanas...

Ficou muito evidente que os deputados estavam completamente manietados pelo capital financeiro. O que se vê pelas medidas que depois foram tomadas, nomeadamente nesse período... 2011, 2012, 2013, foram escolhas políticas que foram tomadas que serviam à soberania do capital financeiro e sua posição democrática.

Isso configurou objetivamente um esvaziamento da democracia, com a ideia de que não havia alternativas. Não havia outros caminhos possíveis e nós no fundo estávamos nas mãos claramente e explicitamente de poderes não eleitos e de instâncias de regulação que existiam. Eram as instâncias de regulação do próprio mercado: as agências de *rating* e de processos... Essas instituições transnacionais, esses fluxos transnacionais não são democráticos, porque não estão minimamente submetidos a qualquer espécie de controle de práticas, ou sequer de fiscalização democrática.

Então, achas que houve de facto um impacto da crise económica sobre a democracia em Portugal?

Houve, mas de um ponto de vista formal, não houve propriamente uma suspensão da democracia no sentido das instituições e das formalidades do processo democrático. Mas houve um abaloamento da democracia por via do seu esvaziamento efetivo, e houve um

discurso que procurou restringir ao máximo o campo de escolha democrática no qual os próprios Estados foram profundamente chantageados... Isso foi evidente em Portugal, foi evidente que todos os países do Sul – mais evidente na Grécia – em que os próprios Estados foram chantageados no sentido de que qualquer comportamento que se desviasse da ortodoxia liberal, da submissão aos mercados financeiros tinham em contrapartida uma punição por parte desses mesmos mercados que no âmbito das políticas económicas não permitia.... Ou pretendia impor uma orientação económica liberal, como todo aquele processo de transferência de rendimento do capital do trabalho para o capital e, portanto, objetivamente eu acho que esse período foi um período de esvaziamento democrático. Formalmente os procedimentos democráticos se mantiveram, mas lhes foi tirado o conteúdo das escolhas, em uma sociedade capitalista essa é a natureza da democracia burguesa. Sim, em certa medida sim, mas quero dizer nesse período a compressão democrática foi muito acentuada. Pelo menos é assim que tendo olhar para ele.

Como definirias democracia?

Uma aspiração igualitária essencialmente... Ou seja, poderíamos ter horas de conversa, mas eu tentaria definir a democracia como uma aspiração igualitária, e como uma aspiração da extensão desse princípio de igualdade às várias esferas da vida humana. Digamos assim: quando digo inspiração, é porque vejo a democracia ao mesmo tempo com um pressuposto de uma aspiração. Ou seja, temos que pressupor que essa igualdade não está lá, mas por outro lado aspirar à igualdade. Eu acho que a democracia são muitas outras coisas... Eu entendo de um lado os procedimentos formais que asseguram a capacidade de um povo dispor de si mesmo, e por outro lado também associo o conteúdo social e económico que dá materialidade – que realiza essa própria igualdade dos direitos humanos.

No contexto dos protestos contra a austeridade, membros do Governo de Passos Coelho afirmaram por várias vezes que as medidas do Governo tinham legitimidade democrática porque estavam assentes em maioria parlamentar. O que achas disso?

É um argumento puramente formal.

Como se fosse a única instância de legitimidade democrática, fosse a aritmética eleitoral, sem que houvessem outras formas de exprimir a vontade popular. Ou seja, é uma concepção da democracia que parece querer evacuar a própria dinâmica democrática da luta social, dos

movimentos sociais, das formas de expressão política. Estas não são apenas expressão eleitoral. É como se um determinado resultado eleitoral permitisse depois o exercício de qualquer decisão, de qualquer escolha, independentemente da sua correspondência a uma vontade popular... Portanto, formalmente, a partir do momento em que havia uma eleição do Parlamento, essa instituição estava legitimada para tomar determinadas decisões, mas essas decisões são tomadas num vazio social, têm, por um lado, limites formais, legais – como a Constituição, que frequentemente foi desrespeitada por esse governo. Aliás, houve medidas deste Governo que foram anuladas pelo próprio Tribunal Constitucional, o que significa que as escolhas tornam-se hoje num quadro constitucional que não é alterável como um mero resultado nas eleições legislativas e, por outro lado, a democracia tem muitos outros aspectos, muitas outras dimensões para além da dimensão da aritmética eleitoral, à qual convinha esse governo reduzir para legitimar os seus próprios atos que no fundo correspondiam a decisões que beneficiavam determinadas minorias de poder financeiro, de poder económico em detrimento do que parece ser o bem comum, mas isso em si mesmo é uma disputa democrática de leituras políticas sobre as opções que foram tomadas, e a sua legitimidade social e popular para além da sua legitimidade eleitoral.

No contexto da crise, vários movimentos de protesto que surgiram questionaram a legitimidade democrática em vigor, nomeadamente o sistema eleitoral baseado em partidos e a falta de soberania nacional. Qual a opinião sobre esses movimentos e a sua posição?

Quando dizes nesses movimentos, estamos a falar de coisas muito diferentes, porque esses próprios movimentos não são homogéneos. Estes movimentos tinham partes e nesse sentido tinham também eles partidos diferentes na medida em que tinham pessoas com posições diferentes, e um partido na sua concepção mais primária, se quisermos, ou mais elementar. É precisamente o conjunto de pessoas que toma uma determinada parte de uma discussão – o importante é que esses próprios movimentos eram atravessados por diferentes opiniões, por diferentes posições, inclusivamente sobre a relação com o Estado, sobre a relação com as instituições, sobre a relação com política eleitoral, e portanto é difícil...

Penso que seria um exercício de pouca atenção a esses próprios movimentos, procurar reduzi-los a uma determinada corrente, a uma determinada componente... Na própria simbologia, por exemplo, dos movimentos das praças na Grécia, ou no movimento das

Acampadas, os Indignados em Espanha, foram identificáveis diferentes componentes. Me parece que esses movimentos tinham várias correntes, várias sensibilidades. Correntes e sensibilidades – se quisermos mais sociais democratas e democratas – que procuravam, digamos, refundar organizações e até criar novas organizações que permitissem canalizar as aspirações de justiça para o campo de estudo institucional e a esfera da política partidária... Até correntes mais próximas da tradição anarquista – que dentro dessa mesma tradição procuravam desenvolver a ideia de que o problema não era apenas a desigualdade do sistema capitalista. Antes era a própria existência do Estado e das formas de representação... Até correntes mais autonomistas que procuravam apostar em micro-resistências e formas de política pré-figurativa que procuravam criar pequenas bolsas de resistência que não vislumbravam necessariamente um sistema alternativo, mas a multiplicação de resistências dentro do sistema. Portanto, havia combinações várias entre isto, ou seja, havia também um mundo em que estas várias sensibilidades se combinavam. Penso que é muito, muito difícil sequer afirmar que estes movimentos pensavam isto ou aquilo da política institucional do Estado ou das formas democráticas que temos. Há uma coisa que me parece certa, que é uma convicção que eu tenho a partir da experiência e da minha vivência desses próprios movimentos: é que eles foram sempre atravessados por diferenças políticas. A forma de exprimir essas diferenças é a garantia da própria democracia dos movimentos, ou seja, eu acho que toda a tentação de uma política em que eu só posso falar por mim próprio e, portanto, não existe a dimensão do coletivo que implica necessariamente a dimensão da representação.

Quando eu digo representação aqui, não estou a falar de política institucional do Parlamento, estou a falar das formas de representação desde logo quando nós enunciamos determinado sujeito coletivo. Ou seja, formas de representação simbólica de um coletivo. Portanto, acho que a política democrática exige sempre a possibilidade do confronto entre partes, não há sujeitos homogêneos e sobretudo não há uma correspondência entre um determinado sujeito social e uma determinada posição política. Isso é, digamos assim, a velha tese estalinista de que cada classe corresponde apenas a uma opinião política, quando as próprias classes são atravessadas por diferentes opiniões políticas, diferentes partidos nesse sentido, não no sentido de partidos políticos, mas no sentido de diferentes opiniões sobre um determinado assunto.

Muitos dos movimentos anti-austeridade, nomeadamente os assembleares, como as Acampadas, os Indignados em Lisboa, reclamavam a democracia interna como um exemplo para a sociedade. O que achas dessa posição?

Acho que é uma aspiração justa.

Ou seja, nós devemos procurar aplicar internamente modelos de funcionamento e democracia que correspondam ao que nós dizemos querer que aconteça na sociedade. Sendo que também parece que os próprios movimentos das Acampadas, os movimentos, sendo diários, se confrontaram com as dificuldades de um modelo de Assembleia Permanente e da forma como esse modelo pode produzir desigualdades e exclusões.

Como vêes a relação entre a democracia parlamentar e esses movimentos sociais?

Acho que os movimentos sociais são uma componente fundamental da democracia. O Parlamento, a ação parlamentar só faz sentido se tiver uma ligação profunda com o que acontece fora do Parlamento, ou seja, o Parlamento quando muito é uma esfera de expressão e de liberação, claro, de relações de forças que são construídas fora do próprio Parlamento. Nesse aspecto, acho que é impossível pensar a democracia e as instituições políticas e a representação sem nos articularmos com a luta de classes, com a ação política dos movimentos sociais nas suas diversas esferas.

IV. Interview with Mr. Miguel Tiago

Mr. Miguel Tiago was member of parliament for the Portuguese Communist Party between 2005 and 2018. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossole, at the Portuguese Parliament in Lisbon on the 25th March 2015.

Qual é a tua opinião sobre o estado da democracia hoje?

O estado da democracia portuguesa hoje é de uma democracia profundamente desfigurada, tendo em conta aquilo que era o seu projeto inicial que resultou da Constituição de 1976. Portanto, o processo revolucionário molda uma determinada democracia, a constituinte traduz essa democracia numa Constituição em 1976, mas são 38 anos após, ou 39 anos após isso, sucedem-se governos que aplicam uma política de reconstituição de privilégios e esses

privilégios vão minando os próprios pilares do regime democrático. E, portanto, o estado da democracia hoje em Portugal é de uma democracia que formalmente está quase intacto no papel – apesar de ter algumas amputações, tendo em conta a constituição original – mas que na prática está profundamente desfigurada. Portanto o estado era um estado inicialmente concebido para assegurar a democracia em vários patamares: política social, económica e cultural. E hoje em dia a única democracia que ainda se pode dizer que persiste é política. O problema é que para nós comunistas não há uma democracia política pura ou inteira se não houver as outras; se não houver a cultural, social e económica. Porque se não estivermos todos no pé de igualdade perante a política e se não estivermos todos com acesso à cultura, acesso aos mecanismos sociais do estado e à economia – e, portanto, não desempenharmos um papel na economia em pé de igualdade – então também não estamos em pé de igualdade perante a política. Portanto neste momento democracia cultural já não há, democracia social já não há, democracia económica muito menos. Resta-nos, portanto, a democracia política que está enfraquecida porque as outras todas já não existem.

Qual o impacto da crise económica sobre a democracia em Portugal?

O meu camarada Álvaro Cunhal escreveu a determinada altura que quando a direita mais reaccionária quiser destruir o regime democrático vai começar por destruir a economia. Ou seja, a economia é o substrato do regime democrático. O bem-estar das pessoas depende da economia. A chamada crise económica, que é na verdade uma crise estrutural do sistema capitalista, é uma crise de acumulação capitalista. É uma crise de sobreprodução na prática. Esta crise de sobreprodução serviu – como aliás as outras serviram – para que o capitalismo desse um salto na acumulação. Ou seja, a pretexto da crise esmaga os direitos das populações com a ideia de que não há dinheiro. Esfolia os povos e os seus estados para encher os bolsos daqueles que provocaram a crise; precisamente aqueles que sobreproduziram. Portanto, a pretexto da crise, liquidaram-se direitos culturais, direitos sociais, direitos económicos... Estão a liquidar-se direitos políticos. A pretexto da crise, aumenta a repressão policial, do estado, aumenta a perseguição e o clima hipervigilante policial. A pretexto da crise corta-se nos salários, cortes no financiamento dos serviços públicos, hospitais, escolas... A pretexto da crise, liquida-se a cultura. E portanto a crise económica, ao mesmo tempo que os grandes grupos económicos conseguem amassar cada vez mais capital, serve como pretexto para destruir a democracia. Portugal sempre esteve em crise na prática. Porque desde 1976 até hoje todos os governos apostaram na destruição da nossa

economia. Ora se nós não produzimos, não temos soberania económica, logo não podemos ter soberania política, porque um povo que está colonizado por outro povo não é um povo livre. Um povo que está colonizado por interesses económicos não é um povo livre. E se não temos autonomia, temos de ser colonizados por outros povos, interesses. E, portanto, estamos à mercê desses interesses. Não temos autonomia. A nossa democracia fica cativa do nosso sub-desenvolvimento económico. Se não temos crescimento, não temos como assegurar a democracia. Nós, para podermos decidir seja o que for, temos que ter os recursos para distribuir. Se não temos os recursos para distribuir, estamos reféns daqueles que nos exploram.

Como definiria a democracia?

É uma pergunta muito interessante, porque nós comunistas temos um conceito que democracia é o exercício da vontade do povo através da conjugação daquelas quatro vertentes que te falei. Ou seja, não há um conceito só de democracia. Há quatro vertentes da democracia, que são interdependentes e interpenetrantes. Sem uma delas, as outras não podem existir. E todas elas se reforçam mutuamente: a cultural, social, económica e política. Nenhuma delas existe sem a outra. Este é um conceito de democracia que nós adotamos no nosso dia-a-dia para termos uma visão sobre as dimensões que deve comportar a democracia. Eu pessoalmente concebo também a democracia em algumas ramificações disto. A nossa Constituição tem algumas delas vertidas: o controlo de gestão, o poder das organizações dos trabalhadores... isso pode de certa forma depois estar dentro da democracia económica. Mas são expressões mais diretas da democracia, digamos assim. Portanto eu acho que uma democracia que só seja representativa está condenada ao falhanço. Uma democracia que não tem a componente representativa provavelmente terá mais sucesso. Ainda assim faltará sempre uma organização social maior. Portanto, como eu defini, a democracia é a interpenetração entre essas quatro vertentes, construídas a partir de baixo para cima; portanto do povo para o poder político. Há um conceito de democracia – quase república, é o mesmo na prática; um conceito grego que é muito bonito e que nós em Portugal não temos. É laocracia: laocracia é a prática da democracia. Uma coisa é a democracia, o sistema, a arquitetura. Outra coisa é a laocracia, que é o poder das pessoas. Enquanto que a democracia é o poder do povo, a laocracia é o poder das pessoas. Por exemplo: a ocupação das terras, a gestão operária das fábricas, o controle operário, controlo da gestão, o poder dos sindicatos na organização no local de trabalho, a organização popular de base nas comissões dos

moradores, as associações. Nós em Portugal também temos isso, mas não temos um nome. Essa democracia que em Portugal também chamamos de democracia é uma componente fundamental de todas as outras. Por exemplo: se as comissões de moradores não organizarem os bairros, se os sindicatos não definirem as regras no local de trabalho, se os operários não tiverem participação no controlo de gestão e no controlo das empresas... a democracia fica reduzida a um órgão cá em cima. Um conjunto de órgãos eleitos cá em cima, que de quatro em quatro anos rodam nas cadeiras. Certamente isso não é o meu conceito de democracia.

No contexto dos protestos contra a austeridade, membros do Governo de Passos Coelho afirmaram por várias vezes que as medidas do Governo tinham legitimidade democrática porque estavam assentes em maioria parlamentar. O que achas disso?

Em primeiro lugar, o único partido que denunciou o verdadeiro programa do governo foi o partido comunista português. Porque dissemos que o PS, o PSD e o CDS não tinham programa do governo. O programa deles era o programa da Troika. Mas eles nunca disseram isso. Portanto repara. Eu lembro que Passos Coelho prometeu não subir impostos, prometeu não despedir pessoas, prometeu uma reforma estrutural da economia, prometeu não cortar os subsídios. Acho que chegou mesmo a dizer que não seria preciso fazer cortes de salários maiores do que os que já estavam concretizados por Sócrates. Lembro-me que o pretexto pelo qual o PSD chumbou o PEC IV era precisamente porque não era possível mais austeridade. Portanto, havia limites para austeridade. Eles tinham aprovado o PEC I, o PEC II, o PEC III, mas quando chegaram ao PEC IV, disseram: “Não dá, chegamos a um limite!” Ora, quando assumem o poder, ainda com uma maioria parlamentar, exercem-no no sentido oposto. E vão cumprir o pacto da Troika. Claro que o PCP sabia que eles iam cumprir o pacto da Troika. A questão é: as pessoas que votaram neles, foi com outra promessa. Portanto, eles não tinham uma legitimidade moral, nem sequer democrática. Podem ter uma legitimidade formal. Mas eles não têm legitimidade democrática nem moral. Porque fizeram no governo exatamente o contrário daquilo que disseram que iam fazer. Se aceitamos que quem quer que ganha depois pode fazer o que quiser, então há legitimidade para tudo.

Muitos dos movimentos anti-austeridade, nomeadamente os assembleares, como as Acampadas, os Indignados em Lisboa, reclamavam a democracia interna como um exemplo para a sociedade. O que achas dessa posição?

Eu acho que não foram os movimentos a questionar os partidos. Aliás não me lembro de nenhum movimento questionar os partidos. Houve manifestações que alguns movimentos fizeram questão em chamar de não-partidárias. Mas não eram contra os partidos. Eu fui a todas estas manifestações. Eu estive em todas estas manifestações. Em nenhuma delas eu sentia hostilidade aos partidos. Havia era uma necessidade das pessoas saírem à rua sem ter que ser sob a bandeira do partido. É legítimo; aliás é legítimo e é comum. Quando os estudantes saem à rua são manifestações sem partido. Quando os trabalhadores de uma determinada empresa fazem uma manifestação, é sem partido. Mesmo as manifestações dos sindicatos são sem partido... É muito raro haver manifestações convocadas por partidos em Portugal. Aquelas manifestações na prática fizeram concluir um conjunto de setores e não vinham de um partido. Mas não eram contra os partidos. Particpei em todas e não vi nada contra os partidos.

Agora, surgiu subjacente a isso uma campanha mediática contra os partidos, que se tenta associar a esses movimentos. Ou seja, aqueles movimentos são de pessoas, não são de partidos. Tem lá pessoas de vários partidos. Há lá pessoas do PCP, há lá pessoas do BE, haverá de outros. Mas não é do partido, o movimento não é do partido: as pessoas criam-no. Como não é do partido, houve alguém alimentar aquela campanha anti-partidos. A campanha anti-partidos – na minha opinião – serve muito mais a extrema direita do que a esquerda. Cria a ilusão que isto sem partidos é que era bom, que basta um partido para mandar nisto tudo, e que os partidos dividem o povo, que os partidos são o mal da democracia. Não; o mal da democracia é as pessoas sempre votarem nos mesmos partidos. O que é diferente na minha opinião.

Agora eu sei que existem tipos de democracia diferentes. Até existem tipos de democracia em que os partidos não intervêm nas eleições, como é o caso de Cuba. As pessoas candidatam-se. O partido comunista de Cuba não tem nada a ver com isto. Não interfere no processo. E há outros países assim. No entanto, para a fase de democracia que estamos em Portugal, devemos valorizar o papel das grandes organizações que são os partidos. Os partidos são grandes organizações de pessoas, que disputam o poder. E, portanto, aquelas pessoas que não se reveem em nenhum dos partidos criados devem defender os partidos, porque a essência de partidos é a única garantia que essas pessoas têm de que também podem

fazer um. Se nós lutamos contra os partidos, estamos a lutar contra o nosso próprio poder de nos candidatarmos. Portanto, [temos de] defender a existência de partidos, valorizar a sua existência, mas acusar aqueles que são responsáveis pela destruição do regime democrático. Porque vamos lá ver; “os partidos” não é tudo uma massa uniforme. [...]. Dentro dos partidos há escolhas. É essa a concepção de partidos; poder haver escolhas. [São] grupos de pessoas que se organizam para apresentar uma escolha. A essência de partidos é a garantia que eu tenho de que se eu não concordar com nenhum, faço outro. Se não houver partidos, eu fico limitado em todas as minhas liberdades.

Eu já participei em movimento ocupa. Eu tenho o maior respeito pela organização e exercício direto da democracia. Mas eu acho que o momento que a humanidade está confrontada é o momento não de pulverização do movimento, mas de agregação do movimento. Ou seja, nós não podemos neste momento nos dar ao luxo de pulverizar as nossas forças, nem de criar distrações. Eu sou comunista. Eu continuo a querer que a força transformadora da sociedade são os trabalhadores. E que portanto é com os trabalhadores que se vai operar a transformação e a revolução. A organização meramente de protesto – por mais democrática que seja –, a utilização de mecanismos de decisão direta em assembleias de rua abertas... Enfim, isto pode ser muito romântico, mas o que nós precisamos é que uma classe se organize e dispute o poder. Essa classe são os trabalhadores. Os trabalhadores têm de se organizar, disputar o poder. Isto tira respeito a estes movimentos? Não! Tenho respeito, só que puro e simplesmente acho que este é o momento de aglutinação de forças, de uma força capaz de transformar o poder e não é propriamente o momento para experimentalismos ou aventurismos ou pequenas ocupações, quanto mais valor que essas ações comportem.

Eu, por exemplo, participei numa ocupação e ensinou-me imenso. Transformei uma rua de uma cidade, uma rua de uma cidade, é um facto. E enriqueceu muitos dos quais participaram. Mas qual é a solução que pode advir daí para que o proletariado português tome o poder? Não consigo [ver]... Nós temos que ultrapassar as formas incipientes da organização. Em 1700, antes da Comuna de Paris, eu acredito que uma coisa dessas fosse em si mesmo uma revolução. A Comuna de Paris, em que os operários de uma cidade fazem eles as suas próprias leis, isso é um ato revolucionário. Acampar numa praça e decidir moções disto e daquilo, e dizer que somos contra isto e contra aquilo, e que a partir de agora não devemos comer animais ou que a partir de agora só devemos plantar as nossas próprias plantas... Ok é bonito. É giro, fazemos teatro, fazemos *workshops*, mas quer dizer, há uma questão fundamental: tomar o poder. Para tomar o poder é preciso organização, tática... E é

preciso mais do que isso tudo um programa. A Comuna de Paris tinha um programa, só que era muito pequenino: era tomar o poder. Temos de ter um programa que é um pouco maior do que isso: que é tomar o poder e construir alguma coisa. Que coisa?

Portanto, todo o que seja uma forma de organização mais incipiente. Na minha opinião, é apesar de bonito, romântico e até exaltante, é retroceder. É como se o movimento operário andou séculos até ter uma organização – até ter Sindicatos, até ter partido, até ter a teoria revolucionária, a prática revolucionária – e agora regredíamos, por exemplo, ao socialismo utópico. O socialismo utópico é bonito nos livros, mas nós já percorremos um caminho. Não vamos voltar ao socialismo utópico. Enfim, os capitalistas sabem bem que não vão voltar aos primórdios da Revolução Industrial. Pelo contrário, estão sempre em frente. Eles já estão na fase de fusão entre capital industrial e capital financeiro, e não vão voltar à fase da supremacia do capital industrial. É evidente porque eles sabem que a marcha deles é em frente. Os trabalhadores também têm que saber que a marcha deles é em frente. Portanto, não é ir buscar, por mais bonito que seja... Não vou hoje ser Bakunista para resolver os problemas que tenho hoje. Porque seria um retrocesso ideológico e prático.

Qual a sua perspetiva para o futuro da democracia em Portugal?

A minha perspetiva para a democracia em Portugal é um bocado como dizia a Rosa Luxemburgo. O mundo só tem duas soluções: o socialismo ou a barbárie. Nós estamos cada vez mais próximas da barbárie em Portugal. Há coisas que se estão a passar hoje que nós cinco anos atrás nunca aceitaríamos. As crianças a irem com fome para a escola, os idosos sozinhos, uma revolta das pessoas que já não vão votar... enfim, há cinco anos atrás tudo isso seria desumano. Ou pessoas abandonadas nos corredores dos hospitais, pessoas que morrem sem atendimento... enfim, um conjunto de coisas que seriam muito difíceis de aceitar. No entanto, em cinco anos eles tiraram-nos esta dignidade toda. Portanto estamos muito à beira da barbárie. A partir do momento que as pessoas se imunizam, ficam imunes a estas catástrofes. Então a barbárie está muito próxima. Quando eu vejo uma injustiça e olho para o lado é porque já estamos muito próximos da catástrofe, da barbárie. Mas ainda assim a outra solução continua, a do socialismo. E há uma frase que vem até desses movimentos dos apartidários – acho que foi do Que Se Lixe a Troika – que é bastante bonita que é: “As revoluções fazem-se nos Becos sem saída”, ou “Nos Becos sem saída que se encontram os caminhos para a revolução”... uma coisa assim. Não há Becos sem saída.

Portanto, se é verdade que estamos muito próximos da barbárie, eu também quero crer que as potencialidades de revolta também são muito grandes, não é? O PCP costuma dizer que estamos numa fase crítica da humanidade, não é só em Portugal, que é de grandes perigos: de reconstituição de monopólios, de exercício do fascismo, de repressão, de guerra, mas também de grandes potencialidades, grande revolta, uma classe operária mais consciente – pelo menos uma camada dentro da classe operária – com uma visão ideológica mais avançada do que alguns anos atrás. Partidos progressistas por todo o mundo, também eles [estão] mais fortes do que nos anos ‘90. Portanto, se é verdade que há grandes ameaças, também há grandes potencialidades. É impossível eu dizer para que lado é que isto vai pender, mas eu quero crer que a história não se repete. Eu acho que a história não se repete. Marx dizia que se repete primeiro como farsa e depois como tragédia, mas com isso ele quer dizer que a história não se repete, não é? Eu também quero crer que não se repete. Eu acho que, enfim, temos condições para não permitir que o capitalismo, para se salvar, cria novamente o fascismo. Temos condições para agora sermos nós a salvarmo-nos do capitalismo.

V. Interview with Mr. António Mariano

Mr. António Mariano is president of the Dockers’ Union SEAL-SETC. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossolle, at SEAL’s office in Lisbon on the 25th March 2015.

Qual é a tua opinião sobre o estado da democracia hoje?

Julgo que não existe democracia. Basicamente existe um grupo de interesses que tomou conta do poder e que faz e que legisla. Aliás, o nosso conflito tem a ver disso: com legislação que foi elaborada a partir dos grupos económicos que eles representam. Não há propriamente aqui uma legitimidade em todo este tipo de [políticas] que vimos ultimamente acontecer. Nomeadamente, eu vi hoje [uma notícia] ao sair de casa, de que havia uma lista para determinadas empresas, para os mesmos que estão a dizer que não há lista. Eram os principais beneficiários dessa desigualdade entre os cidadãos. Portanto, basicamente, o que assistimos nos últimos anos foi uma atuação que não teve nada a ver com, digamos, o programa eleitoral ou com as promessas eleitorais que os colocaram no poder. Digamos que a democracia... estamos muito longe dela aqui em Portugal, não é? Em termos genéricos.

Qual o impacto da crise económica sobre a democracia em Portugal?

É evidente que a crise económica tem vindo a provocar uma série de efeitos na população: nos direitos dos cidadãos, nas oportunidades de emprego... Tudo isto – toda esta crise – tem vindo a aumentar o grau de miséria da população: a destruição do estado social, a fuga dos portugueses... Tudo isto são fatores que de alguma forma minam a capacidade que os Portugueses deveriam ter de decidir o seu destino, de participar na sua vida, na vida da sociedade em que estão inseridos. Quando as alternativas são fugir dessa mesma sociedade, abandonar o país por não ter direito a direitos básicos na existência das pessoas, como saúde e educação.

Quando se seguem políticas viradas para o exterior, viradas para os grupos económicos que dominam o país e não para as populações. Temos aí exemplos frequentes. Temos os cofres cheios, mas temos as dívidas a aumentar em milhares de milhões. O dinheiro serve para tudo menos para satisfazer as necessidades das populações. Como eu também ouvi hoje de manhã: “Não podemos pensar que a economia vai recuperar a custo do consumo da população”. Isso quer dizer termos que continuar a apostar na exportação. Continuamos assim a preferir faturar ao estrangeiro em vez de satisfazer as necessidades básicas da população. Isso não é prioritário. Todas essas políticas têm levado para um estado que de democracia tem pouco, porque as pessoas se sentem mais afastadas da capacidade de decidir sobre o seu futuro. Portanto, isso não tem nada a ver com democracia. Isso tem mais a ver com o aparelho de estado ter sido tomado por determinados interesses que não representam a população, nem os interesses da população. Isso tem sido uma consequência destas políticas, o afastamento das pessoas.

Como definiria a democracia?

Governo do povo, para o povo. Entendo a democracia como... Eu estou num meio muito específico. No meio dessa democracia, há possibilidade dos trabalhadores se organizarem, de discutirem o seu futuro, as suas condições, segurança de emprego, as condições financeiras; [ou seja] como poderão encarar a sua vida. Nós praticamos-la aqui. E quando ela não se pratica, caminhamos sempre para realidades que não dominamos. Neste sindicalismo que nós praticamos aqui nos estivadores, as decisões mais importantes são tomadas sempre em assembleias. Portanto, vamos às bases... No dia 1 de abril, [vamos] aprovar as contas e falar sobre o ponto de situação da negociação coletiva. [É] um aspeto

importante no poder que os sindicatos têm, que o nosso sindicato tem; nós temos poder exatamente por irmos às bases. Às vezes, inclusivamente o outro lado – o lado patronal – desvaloriza essa nossa posição. [Alegam que] não temos poder para afinar. Nós temos, estamos mandatados por quem nos elegeu, mas temos mais poder se formos às bases perguntar o que eles querem. A democracia é isto: “A possibilidade de aqueles que são afetados pelas decisões políticas terem participação nelas”. É discutirem [as propostas], argumentarem, explicarem ou convencerem aqueles que têm o poder; de que não é esse o caminho, que o caminho poderá ser diferente. Se fazemos a nível sindical, claro que a nível político, nas instituições políticas governamentais, essa deveria ser a prática. E não passar por cima dos direitos dos cidadãos que os elegeram ou que foram enganados para os elegerem. A democracia é isso: é participação; a participação das pessoas nas decisões. Quanto mais afastado [as pessoas] estiverem delas e mais estiverem insatisfeitas com a execução desses processos de decisão, mais afastados estaremos dessa democracia teórica.

No contexto dos protestos contra a austeridade, membros do Governo de Passos Coelho afirmaram por várias vezes que as medidas do Governo tinham legitimidade democrática porque estavam assentes em maioria parlamentar. O que achas disso?

Esse é o problema da democracia segundo este tipo de políticos que temos há alguns anos. Partem do princípio que a democracia acaba no dia em que as eleições acontecem e que o povo escolhe. Ela deveria funcionar. Claro que defendo a existência de partidos e defendo a existência de eleições. Ou defenderia; mas não dessa forma como elas acontecem, em que realmente o poder dos cidadãos acaba no dia em que são contados os votos. Depois temos vários cenários. Cenários de maioria absoluta – como às vezes aconteceram neste país – são um exemplo acabado de final da democracia, porque nada mais é discutido, o parlamento é uma figura decorativa, como já é o presidente da república. Então a democracia acaba aí. Não é assim como eu entendo. Mas é na prática a maneira como ela tem funcionado em Portugal nos últimos anos. Os resultados eleitorais resultam de campanhas baseadas em promessas que ninguém vem cumprir mais à frente. Também ninguém é responsabilizado por essa mentira e por toda essa encenação que foi montada. Não há aqui a possibilidade da própria população de o demitir, de fazer o *impeachment* como fazem os americanos. O que podem fazer dos políticos que mentem e que não cumprem aquilo que prometeram e que está na base da sua eleição? Portanto, essa é uma democracia viciada. São umas eleições que à partida conduzem a resultados viciados, pois não são sindicáveis *a posteriori*.

No contexto de crise, vários movimentos de protesto surgiram, que questionaram a legitimidade democrática em vigor, por exemplo as Acampadas, os Indignados... Questionar o sistema eleitoral baseado em partidos e falta de soberania nacional. Qual a tua opinião sobre esses movimentos e a sua posição?

Nós estivemos muito próximos deles, nos nossos processos de luta. Há uma tradição do movimento sindical de se manter um pouco afastado dos movimentos sociais. Foi algo que nós fizemos diferente – fizemos muitas coisas diferentes, mas uma delas foi esse.

Aproximamos-nos desses movimentos sociais não só para darmos mais força e visibilidade à luta deles, mas também para nós próprios podermos, de uma forma mais eficiente, transmitirmos a nossa mensagem e desmontar toda a campanha que estava a ser montada contra nós. Acompanhamos em muitos aspetos as reivindicações desses movimentos sociais. Como disse; talvez não sejamos tão radicais em determinados aspetos anti-partidos e anti-parlamento, mas em termos de processos de luta e de pressão contínua sobre o poder político, estamos bastante alinhados.

Não terá sido o caso agora nos últimos meses, porque estamos no processo negocial que já se arrasta quase um ano para um novo contrato coletivo de trabalho, mas entendemos que o poder tem de ser continuamente pressionado e encurralado para ter políticas diferentes daquelas que temos, aos vários níveis. Seja a nível ambiental, ao nível de políticas que são desastrosas para a população, como os despedimentos e os despejos, movimentos contra o desemprego e a precariedade. Nessa área, sentiu-se uma identidade profunda em relação às reivindicações desses movimentos. Nós vimos a nossa realidade, o nosso processo de luta muito próximo e muito paralelo às reivindicações desses movimentos. Eu posso dizer que – e talvez isso não seja muito perceptível para o exterior –, mas nós, o coletivo dos estivadores, defende essencialmente os trabalhadores precários que também temos no nosso meio. A nossa luta mais visível, por exemplo, em 2013-2014 – já depois da legislação estar aprovada –, foi na defesa de trabalhadores que tinham sido despedidos ao fim de trabalhar 8 anos no porto. Imagina que fossem precários nessa altura, uns já estavam a um mês de estarem efetivos, outros tinham um regime mais precário. A nossa luta nos últimos dois anos – já depois da lei aprovada – foi exigir a integração deles, e não poderem ser substituídos por outros trabalhadores. Enfim, é isso que o capital quer: estar sempre em rotação com os trabalhadores, um exército de desempregados para nos substituir a todos. Essa foi a nossa luta e é a nossa luta. Às vezes, não é muito perceptível e não é muito seguido por outros sectores de atividade infelizmente. O que nós defendemos é a continuidade da profissão.

Portanto, não aceitamos como às vezes nos colocam nas mesas de negociações: “Nós vamos garantir determinadas condições, mas esquecem quem vem a seguir”. Nós acabamos liminarmente com essas teorias. Nós não aceitamos situações diferenciadas e queremos essencialmente integração dos trabalhadores precários. É um aspeto da nossa luta que é diferente a outros setores de atividade. Não aceitamos condições diferentes para o futuro. É um aspeto diferente que nos faz sentir muito em sintonia com muitas as reivindicações dos movimentos precários e que lutam contra o desemprego. Aliás, nós lutamos inclusivamente, para muitos desses aspetos na negociação do contrato coletivo de trabalho. Tenta-se criar condições, por exemplo – aspetos que estamos a negociar agora –, que tem a ver com a nossa relação de autolimitação, mas que tem de ser negociada com o patrão – do volume de trabalho suplementar. Sabemos que a diminuição do trabalho suplementar vai automaticamente criar abertura para – estamos a falar do porto de Lisboa agora – umas dezenas de postos de trabalho permanentes no porto. O que nós queremos é exatamente limitar. Essa é a nossa política, uma política que caminha para um pleno emprego, operar uma melhor empregabilidade em Portugal ou em Lisboa. Mesmo que não podemos mudar o país, nem o mundo... no nosso universo onde podemos interferir, fazemo-lo neste sentido.

Muitos dos movimentos anti-austeridade, nomeadamente os assembleares, como as Acampadas, os Indignados em Lisboa, reclamavam a democracia interna como um exemplo para a sociedade. O que achas dessa posição?

Ela é totalmente praticável. Num dos períodos mais interessantes da nossa história, ela praticou-se. Inclusive hoje, ainda em alguns pontos do mundo, ela é praticável. Claro que para nós – pensando no nosso circunscrito onde nos movimentamos, aqui do sindicato dos estivadores – ela é praticável e é exigível, para o desenvolvimento equilibrado das relações na sociedade. Dito de outra forma, nós lutamos exatamente contra a tentativa de retirar direitos aos sindicatos, à organização sindical, limitar a possibilidade de negociar em termos coletivos com as empresas. Basicamente, limitar bastante o direito à negociação coletiva. Isso cria um mundo desequilibrado, porque assim tudo funciona em função do capital e dos interesses do capital. [...]. Se quem representa o trabalho não tem possibilidade de regulamentar essas relações, tudo vai desequilibrar-se. A participação dos trabalhadores, através de suas organizações de classe com decisões assembleares, como defendemos no movimento, [são sua] única forma de poder. Talvez no nosso caso seja evidente isso. [...]. Acaba por resultar, por esta forma de funcionar que nós temos. Conseguimos ter uma

sindicalização de 100% dos trabalhadores que para aqui vem. E, no entanto, não somos nós que os selecionamos a 30 anos: do processo de seleção, os sindicatos já se afastaram muitas décadas. No entanto, o nosso tipo de organização, aquilo que defendemos e o envolvimento dos próprios trabalhadores nos processos de decisão, fazem com que essa sindicalização seja universal. Não digo que todos vão às assembleias; isso já tem a ver com as dinâmicas pessoais, como se levantar da cama para ir a uma assembleia ou ficar a descansar porque trabalhou toda a noite. Era bom que fossem mais participadas, mas a filiação é de 100%. Discutimos tudo, podem ser de extrema esquerda ou de extrema direita. Temos aqui o painel todo da sociedade, porque não os selecionamos. Nem queremos saber as opções partidárias ou religiosas ou outras dos trabalhadores. Claro que temos aqui diferentes sensibilidades sociais e políticas. Mas isso não invalida que consigamos discutir tudo internamente. Os outros aspetos são deixados para o exterior e aqui participamos e discutimos coletivamente o nosso futuro. Enfim, se não nos agrada aquilo que o patrão nos quer obrigar, evidentemente estamos em luta e entramos em situação de confronto.

Qual a sua perspetiva para o futuro da democracia em Portugal?

Isso é uma pergunta... Face ao cenário que temos, a minha perspetiva é um pouco pessimista, nos tempos mais próximos pelo menos. Estamos a assistir alguns exemplos de mudança noutros países, com outras dinâmicas em termos sociais, como a Grécia, como esperamos que venha a ser a Espanha... Mas em termos de Portugal, eu diria que estamos com *timings* um pouco atrasados para entrarmos no mesmo processo de alternativa política, aquilo que temos vivido até agora: do bipartidarismo e de uma alternância entre os mesmos. [...]. As coisas só poderão mudar se houver uma melhor consciencialização das populações. [É preciso] se motivarem mais, participarem mais. Os últimos tempos não têm sido propriamente muito positivos nesse aspeto. Depois das grandes mobilizações que houve em 2011 ou até 2012, a participação da sociedade tem vindo a decrescer bastante em termos de rua. Não digo que não tenham sido criados movimentos diversos, mas estamos num estado talvez ainda um pouco atrasado para mudarmos as coisas. Há que continuar a fazer esse trabalho. Para mim, a única forma de o fazer é – voltando ao movimento sindical, o mundo onde nos movemos – tentar que as políticas obtenham as formas de estar e de ação que nós defendemos e que resultam possam ser adotadas por outros.

Em termos de participação, [é] um absurdo aquilo que se passa em Portugal. [É] o resultado destas políticas, dos órgãos de comunicação – todos controlados pelo poder económico –, mas estamos a chegar a percentagens de sindicalização perfeitamente absurdas. Enquanto que no norte da Europa ainda há uma sindicalização ao nível dos 60-70% – acima dos 50 –, aqui em Portugal já vamos na casa dos 10%. Pequenos desvios são compreensíveis da sociedade. Agora, aquilo que se passa em Portugal é um descalabro exemplo da organização da sociedade em termos sindicais. Se calhar, estamos a falar do mesmo: de um grande divórcio da população em relação à participação e à intervenção. Enquanto não mudar essa mentalidade – enquanto as pessoas vão continuar a ser bombardeadas com determinados tipos de mensagens –, vão continuar-se a manter afastadas. Não sei o que as vai fazer mobilizar. Sinceramente, não sei. Nós tentamos com o nosso exemplo mostrar uma outra forma de estar. Às vezes, vemos isso em algumas reuniões, [por exemplo] nos professores. Tem havido um grande afastamento dos professores, talvez por alguns processos em que se sentiram desiludidos com algumas decisões. Não estou habilitado a falar de outros sectores. Mas o caminho não é esse. O caminho é exatamente as pessoas sindicalizarem-se para mover estruturas a tomar posições. Se não, elas podem fragmentar-se em iniciativas de sindicatos que eu também tenho aqui no setor portuário: sindicatos construídos por iniciativa patronal. É uma guerra constante, é um processo dinâmico muito complexo, mas o caminho é esse. O caminho é esse de as pessoas se organizarem, participarem e tomarem decisões. Sim, tomar o destino nas suas mãos ou pelo menos terem mais peso nessas decisões.

VI. Interview with Mr. Mário Nogueira

Mr. Mário Nogueira is president of the Teacher's Union FENPROF. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossolle, at the office of the Teachers Trade Union of the Centro Region in Coimbra on the 28th September 2020.

Qual é a tua opinião sobre o estado da democracia após a crise de 2011?

Eu penso que em alguns aspetos – não tão pouco relevantes – houve de facto condicionamentos, houve constrangimentos. Nós mesmos, a nível do nosso sector e do ponto de vista sindical... Se a negociação já, de facto – e a contratação coletiva, mesmo no caso da administração pública, que é onde participo mais –, já tinha grande limitações, as

justificações sobre a situação económica, social, que elas eram as imposições comunitárias também, levaram a que nós tivéssemos sentido que efetivamente em muitos movimentos passou quase a ser uma prática. Aquilo que tinha a ver com processos negociais, democráticos, legalmente consagrados, deixaram de ser respeitados, porque havia, digamos, havia sempre a necessidade de tomar determinadas medidas. E, portanto, essas medidas acabaram por passar por cima em alguns momentos – eu até diria – daquelas que eram por vezes posições mais ou menos de uma abertura dos próprios governantes. Para passarem até por imposições que iam chegando da Comissão Europeia para depois até abandonarem algumas dessas posições, por exemplo em negociação. No nosso caso, vemos muito a questão do tempo de serviço dos professores, que partimos duma negociação em que era algo que nós deveríamos vir a conseguir encontrar – ainda de forma faseada – para depois passarmos daí para o nada e do nada para umas migalhinhas, para ver se acalmava as pessoas. Mas mesmo ao que se passou a nível dos cortes nos salários das pessoas na administração pública e no sector privado, congelamentos de carreiras, aumento de precariedade, desemprego a disparar. Portanto, tudo isso que acabou por afetar as pessoas. Enfim, isto foram medidas impostas nesse período e que aliás de alguma forma hoje parecem ou começam a estar de volta outra vez. Vamos ver como vai ser o orçamento de 2021, mas tememos muito por isso, pelo seu teor. De facto, nós sentimos que do ponto de vista democrático – e aqui por democrático eu diria o relacionamento institucional entre o poder e os sindicatos, patrões e os sindicatos – claramente houve um estreitamento dessa relação. Isso aí nós sentimos-lho e de que forma. E, de uma forma geral, o país também. Se a democracia não passa apenas pela democracia representativa e por esse relacionamento com as organizações representativas de trabalhadores, mas passa por aquilo que é também o dia a dia das pessoas, as respostas que elas têm, nomeadamente as mais fragilizadas ao nível de serviços públicos, ao nível de saúde, educação... Estes serviços também sofreram muito nesse período e as pessoas deixaram de poder contar com respostas que, numa sociedade democrática, deverão existir sempre, ser para todos e ter qualidade. E houve quebras efetivamente notórias dessas respostas com a qualidade que se exigia.

Apesar de nesta fase até terem sido esses serviços públicos que conseguiram fazer a diferença, mas muito fragilizados e muito a conta ou a custa dos seus profissionais e do seu trabalho e daquilo que eles tiveram de fazer para ultrapassar dificuldades que ainda eram maiores quando chegamos ao final desse período 2011-2017, pronto, e depois em 2018 a situação começou-se a alterar um bocadinho, mas evidentemente que não chegou a ter a

alteração significativa que se esperava e hoje ainda vivemos um pouco disso, penso eu que com o agravamento que vamos todos dentro de poucos dias conhecer, quando tivermos aí os dados de finais do que aquilo que foi 2020 e quais são as respostas do governo para os anos seguintes.

Como definirias democracia?

Democracia é um pouco – como eu estava a dizer –, a democracia tem a ver, por um lado, com a possibilidade de os cidadãos se poderem estar representados em determinados níveis, nomeadamente no parlamento, o poderem ter uma palavra que é decisiva na escolha dos governos, mas a democracia não pode limitar-se a essa representação. Aliás a democracia tem de ser muito mais que isso, e democracia passa por ser possível por um lado a todo tempo – isto é os partidos e designadamente aqueles que estão no poder não acharem que estando legitimados para o exercerem entre eleições, acharem que não têm de dar satisfação a ninguém. Portanto, essa legitimação permite-lhes, em sua opinião, por vezes fazer tudo e esse tudo não indo ao encontro daqueles que são os anseios que são as necessidades que as pessoas têm, acabam até por levar ao descrédito a própria democracia, e hoje quando nós começamos a assistir a fenómenos como o populismo e de extrema direita quererem afirmar-se, evidentemente que a isso não são alheias as limitações e restrições que afetam a democracia enquanto participação. A democracia participativa, a possibilidade de as pessoas terem voz, a possibilidade ou a necessidade de verem cumpridas e respeitadas as expectativas, também tendo em conta os compromissos que com ela foram assumidos e depois também a capacidade que o estado tem de ter e que infelizmente nem sempre tem, para poder fazer a diferença e dar resposta a todos que sejam respostas, que sejam por um lado inclusivas, por outro lado de qualidade, e que por outro lado discriminam positivamente os mais fragilizados. Respostas essas que podem ser ao nível de saúde, da educação, dos apoios sociais, enfim, do conjunto de necessidades que as pessoas têm para poderem terem de facto uma vida melhor. E eu acho que é precisamente porque não tem sido assim e as frustrações são enormes e das pessoas e as expectativas acabam muitas vezes por se frustrarem, expectativas que são legítimas porque são criadas em base de compromissos que depois as pessoas, desacreditando na potencialidade da democracia, acabam por, ou se desinteressar, e meterem-se à margem do que seria normal acontecer, o que seria a sua participação. E até por vezes por optarem por soluções que não vão resolver os problemas, que são soluções de protesto, que não são mais que isso e que muitas vezes acabam por ser

concretizadas por populistas e por gente que não tem grandes princípios mas que acabam por levar muitas pessoas atrás, mas que não seja precisamente por que estão insatisfeitas e portanto é um pouco isso. Ou seja, a democracia não pode ser apenas uma representação das pessoas de forma regular e periódica. A democracia tem de ser algo que as envolva a todo tempo e que lhes permita sentir que a sua vida melhora e não que se vive apenas num faz de conta em que se vota, e que a partir daí não se pode ter mais... não há qualquer outro tipo de solicitação ou de envolvimento que lhe seja apresentado. E digamos quase um desprezo sobre as pessoas, que eu acho que é muito negativo para a própria democracia.

No contexto dos protestos contra a austeridade, membros do Governo Passos Coelho afirmaram, por várias vezes, que as medidas do governo tinham legitimidade democrática porque assentavam em maioria parlamentar.

É isso mesmo que eu estava a dizer. Os partidos em particular, os chamados partidos do poder, aqueles que têm estado nos governos e que conseguem, num quadro de alternância política, conseguem e conseguem ter maioria dessas maiorias... a partir do momento em que obtenha essas maiorias, eles entendem que estão legitimados para fazer tudo e mais alguma coisa. Algumas dessas medidas e dessas políticas. É verdade que estão nos seus programas eleitorais. Isso aí reconhece-se, mas também é verdade que são por norma omitidos nos seus discursos, nomeadamente em campanha. E como sabemos, as pessoas não passam propriamente o seu tempo a ir ler os programas eleitorais. Em muitos casos porque não têm tempo, em muitos casos não é possível também porque existe... porque existe, do ponto de vista político, sabemos, iliteracia relevante na própria população e portanto as pessoas acabam por votar muitas vezes atrás de uma figura que os mobiliza ou um discurso que omite aquilo que é de fundo e que é o mais importante. Ou seja, estamos a lembrar – já que falou de Passos Coelho, por exemplo –, relativamente à questão salarial. Passos Coelho disse antes das eleições que jamais haveria qualquer tipo de corte salarial, e até questionado por uma aluna de uma escola relativamente aos salários ele disse que essa não era a preocupação, esse não seria... não seria solução, e rapidamente foi das primeiras medidas que acabámos por ter. Portanto, o facto de se ganhar eleições e ter maioria e chegar-se ao poder sozinho com maioria absoluta ou coligado não dá às pessoas – neste caso os partidos – o direito, ou quem chega ao poder – não está legitimado para durante quatro anos fazer o que lhe apetecer. Infelizmente, isso tem acontecido e as pessoas acabam por desanimar, por se afastar, por se sentirem apenas utilizadas para o voto e que a partir daí ninguém quer saber delas. E acho

que isto também está na origem, por exemplo, da grande abstenção que vamos tendo e tem vindo a crescer e espero que a baixar não seja para ir atrás de propostas que também elas não vão, de forma alguma, ao encontro daquilo que são, digamos, os princípios democráticos que devem reger a sociedade.

No contexto da crise, vários movimentos de protesto surgiram questionar a legitimidade democrática em vigor, nomeadamente no sistema eleitoral baseado em partidos e falta de soberania nacional. Qual a tua opinião sobre estes movimentos?

Eu acho que tudo o que seja, digamos, tudo aquilo que reclame melhores condições de vida, melhores condições de trabalho, portanto melhores condições de vida melhor e que reclame, portanto, uma vida melhor e mais justa para as pessoas, é sempre bem vindo. Não é essa a questão. Agora, como nós podemos verificar, a maior parte desses movimentos tem uma vida curta, porque de facto, e eu penso que isso é que distingue muito o movimento sindical desse tipo de movimentos, é o facto de o movimento sindical ter uma organização, assentar numa organização e numa estrutura que consegue, se mantém e, portanto, mesmo nos momentos mais difíceis, eu diria até que o movimento sindical ganha ainda maior importância nesses momentos. Ele está presente e tem que dar a cara, tem que ir à luta e tem que vir a terreiro e a público para poder denunciar e para poder exigir, porque noutros momentos, normalmente os momentos em que mais facilmente surgem esses movimentos, as coisas acabam por ser mais fáceis, são momentos em que as pessoas estão mais atentas, estão mais disponíveis com facilidade, vem pra rua, e portanto se mobilizam e portanto esse eu diria que nem são os momentos mais difíceis para o protesto, porque são aqueles em que as pessoas estão mais disponíveis para protestar. E portanto esses movimentos – lembro-me de alguns que apareceram, claro que há de tudo; alguns que surgem por oportunismo para em determinados contextos e portanto acabam por conseguir mobilizar, e depois conforme aparecem desaparecem; há outros com alguma consistência a mais – aliás, alguns até se mantêm ainda hoje – mas eu diria que de uma forma geral tem tendência para encher muito e depois também com muita rapidez se esvaziam e até desaparecem. Portanto, eu diria que, sem hostilizar – e não hostilizo de forma alguma – os movimentos ditos espontâneos que surgem em determinados momentos, é sempre bom que nós, antes de embarcar indo neles, indo mobilizados por eles, verificamos exatamente ao que vai, o que pretendem e o que defendem. Porque por vezes isso também não é claro.

Agora tudo o que for justo no protesto, no que for protesto justo e sobretudo um protesto que seja acompanhado de proposta – porque também protestar só por si também não é grande coisa. Nada contra. Mas de fato esses movimentos não substituem de forma alguma o movimento sindical tendo em conta que os sindicatos de facto, e, como eu disse, estão nesses momentos em que o protesto é maior, mas mantêm-se nos momentos em que o protesto é mais difícil e que as pessoas estão mais resignadas nos casos, estão mais afastados por motivos diversos em outros casos, nomeadamente por descontentamento. E o movimento sindical vai estando presente e não vive de fluxos. Portanto, é diferente em minha opinião, valorizo-o mais, não só por ser também dirigente sindical, porque penso que a resposta que os sindicatos dão é uma resposta permanente e as pessoas precisam dessa resposta todo o tempo.

Muitos movimentos anti-austeridade, nomeadamente assembleares, como a Acampada de Coimbra e os Indignados Lisboa, reclamavam na altura a democracia interna como um exemplo para a sociedade. O que acha dessa afirmação?

Nada em especial, embora que nós, o que verificámos na altura, foi que de facto a adesão a esse tipo de iniciativas... eu lembro-me, por exemplo, que alguns desses movimentos que de quando em vez iam realizando as chamadas “assembleias populares” e que, portanto, as pessoas estavam presentes e tinham a possibilidade de dizer que entendiam poder decidir naquele momento aquilo que havia de se fazer ou o que se havia de defender. Nunca tiveram uma participação e um envolvimento muito grande, muito forte das próprias pessoas e, portanto, a adesão... eram pequenos movimentos e, portanto, numa organização com poucas pessoas é fácil fazer este tipo de gestão, porque são poucas, porque também a sua responsabilidade em termos sociais não é propriamente elevada,. Mas evidentemente que o que nós precisamos são estruturas e organizações que defendam para a sociedade, e acho bem, um envolvimento permanente das pessoas, nomeadamente na tomada de decisões. Mas penso que aquilo que foi possível pelo menos, que foi possível observar, foi que as pessoas não tinham uma grande participação ou um grande envolvimento nesse tipo de organização, digamos, mais informal e em que todos podiam participar. Eu lembro-me, por exemplo, na altura, um movimento grande, importante, mobilizador como foi o “Que Se Lixe a Troika”, que pouco tempo, nessa fase mesmo, nessa fase mais relevante que em assembleias que veio a marcar, procurando ter muita gente envolvida, depois as pessoas que apareciam eram muito poucas. E outros movimentos mesmo, por exemplo no âmbito dos professores, lembro-me

que movimentos que depois viviam muito nas redes sociais e no *Facebook* e daquilo que são as confirmações das pessoas no seu grande envolvimento estão a lembrar de um movimento, por exemplo. Em que o seu grande dinamizador – era um movimento ligado às questões da precariedade no Ensino – marcou um dia um plenário pelas redes sociais em que teve uma confirmação de alguns milhares de pessoas. Apareceram 11 e ele hoje está no Ministério da Educação e, portanto, ligado ao poder. Portanto, eu sei valorizar os movimentos e esse tipo de organização.

Penso que tem dificuldades, e que tem, de facto, enfim, são experiências, mas que eu acho que não são fáceis de ser estendidas para uma sociedade. São fáceis de ser desenvolvidas, por exemplo, a um nível mais restrito do próprio movimento, mas depois são difíceis de fazer a transposição para o plano social geral. Porque, na verdade, nós podemos achar que os partidos têm muitos defeitos – e têm – que cometem erros – e cometem – que se comprometem e não cumprem, é verdade, tudo isto é inegável – mas na verdade, apesar de tudo, são organizações que têm regras que nos permitem verificar como funcionam, como se organizam, e que, portanto, nesse caso, falando nos partidos, a quem se pode pedir responsabilidades também. Agora é preciso que as pessoas também utilizem os direitos que têm, nomeadamente nos momentos das eleições e nos momentos entre eleições, quando também têm a obrigação de se mobilizar, de protestar, de pressionar e de exigir. Aliás, uma sociedade sem os partidos, e portanto assente em algo inorgânico que funciona de uma forma que não se consegue perceber e também fiscalizar e controlar democraticamente, tem todas as possibilidades de, a certa altura, poder acabar por descambar para soluções bem pouco democráticas ou nada democráticas, e que ainda por cima passíveis de poder levar gente atrás. É preciso cuidado com aquilo que não é escrutinável. Penso que em alguns casos desses movimentos eles não são nada escrutináveis; é evidente que não falo de todos, mas de boa parte sim.

Como vê a relação entre democracia sindical, a democracia parlamentar e estes movimentos sociais?

Do ponto de vista dos sindicatos, falo dos nossos sindicatos e daqueles que eu participo mais – nós somos dirigentes que somos eleitos com o processo eleitoral e com candidaturas e processos eleitorais. No caso do Sindicato, de três em três anos. Depois, temos as nossas federações, porque juntam sindicatos vários e que também se organizam para tentar

encontrar soluções de consenso em termos de direção – que depois são eleitas nos seus congressos – e depois temos esta relação permanente com os professores, e no caso dos sindicatos da FENPROF, dos nossos sindicatos. Penso que esse reconhecimento dos professores existe. Nós temos cerca de 50 mil associados, ou seja, nós temos uma taxa de sindicalização bem mais elevada do que, por exemplo, a taxa geral no nosso país. Temos uma taxa de sindicalização nos professores mais elevada do que acontece, por exemplo, em outros países; estou-me a lembrar da Espanha, com uma taxa na ordem dos 10 por cento, e outros. Portanto, isso também tem muito a ver com o trabalho. Acho que democracia sindical se exerce não apenas – embora também – nas eleições e nas propostas eleitorais que nós apresentamos aos colegas para quando chegam a eleições. Mas, sobretudo, exerce-se como um trabalho permanente junto àqueles que nós representamos, e, por isso, os sindicatos, se forem organizações democráticas, como devem ser, têm que ter um trabalho muito orientado para o terreno, para os locais de trabalho, para um permanente envolvimento com os professores, com ligação direta com os professores, os trabalhadores, com ligação direta aos locais de trabalho através dos delegados eleitos e não nomeados pelas direções, mas eleitos pela base, eleitos pelos núcleos sindicais. Ter uma informação permanentemente em circulação. Isso é que acaba por ser importante e fazer a diferença em momentos de mobilização e movimentos de protesto fortes como aqueles que nós também temos tido, pois toda a relação que existe também deve existir com o poder, com o Parlamento, com o governo. Com o governo, já vimos através da negociação coletiva, no caso da administração pública, que é no entanto um processo muito, muito, muito complicado, porque, ao contrário, até um pouco da contratação aqui não há, até em caso de empate, em caso de chegarmos a soluções em que não se avança, e portanto em que o Governo procura – o governo que é a entidade empregadora –, procura impor a sua solução. O árbitro, no caso de nós recorrermos a essa arbitragem chamada negociação suplementar e o próprio governo e, portanto, digamos, joga na equipa da casa. Portanto, isso é complicado. Mais do que até no setor privado, do ponto de vista da lei, embora depois curiosamente também é verdade que no setor público há uma mobilização maior do que no setor privado, onde o patrão está mais próximo e as pessoas acabam por ter mais medo. O que também significa que a democracia de facto está ausente em muitos dos locais de trabalho. Nós sentimos isso muito, por exemplo, nos colégios privados e em algumas escolas onde os diretores se comportam como verdadeiros donos da escola nas escolas públicas, mas muito menos que nos privados onde dificilmente as pessoas vão à reunião sindical, porque têm medo de ser vistas onde são

sindicalizadas, mas pedem-nos para não enviarmos nada em seu nome para os estabelecimentos. Portanto, isso é muito complicado e dificulta muito nosso trabalho.

Em relação ao Parlamento, aquilo que nós temos é a relação que temos com os grupos parlamentares. É uma relação institucional normal, em que nós com alguma regularidade reunimos com eles. Pedimos reuniões e enviamos-lhes informação da nossa perspectiva. Eles também muitas vezes nos pedem informação e nos contactam nesse sentido. Agora vem aí o Orçamento do Estado e é uma fase em que é muito importante essa relação com os partidos... porque as nossas propostas queremos também, se não for através da negociação com o governo, possam ainda ser acolhidas na Assembleia através dos grupos parlamentares.

Em relação aos movimentos e à nossa relação com eles, nós recebemos, muitas vezes, e estamos presentes em iniciativas conjuntas ou participando nelas ou até convidando dirigentes de muitos dos movimentos, que não são organizações sindicais, mas que existem em sociedade. Temos participado e estado presentes e cooperando em alguns momentos com movimentos, como, por exemplo, os Precários Inflexíveis ou com a Associação de Bolseiros de Investigação Científica (ABIC), com organizações ligadas às questões do clima também, também com organizações, por exemplo – no caso concreto das escolas e na remoção do amianto –, com movimentos ligados às questões ambientais. Claro que quando nos pedem reuniões, para podermos conversar sobre aspetos vários em que atuam esses movimentos, por norma essas reuniões realizam-se sempre. Depois quando nos fazem propostas de trabalho conjunto, de cooperação, de participação em iniciativas, nós normalmente apreciamos um a um aquilo que nos é sugerido. E se for ao encontro das nossas preocupações e das nossas posições, pois temos também participado e temos também colaborado. Não temos nenhum problema com isso.

Muitas vezes até alguns desses movimentos tem participação, neles participam ativamente colegas que são nossos sindicalizados, por vezes até dirigentes. Não é para nós um problema, nem vemos como concorrente, é um adversário, pelo contrário. Se conseguirmos convergir nas posições e tornar essas posições mais fortes ainda, é bem-vinda essa cooperação; sem problema nenhum.

Qual a sua perspectiva para o futuro da democracia em Portugal?

Vamos ver. Eu acho que é aquilo que as pessoas também estiverem disponíveis. Quer dizer: eu acho que se os portugueses, desanimados como andam, se forem afastando, forem,

digamos, prescindindo de direitos que lhes são reconhecidos – até constitucionalmente reconhecidos –, se forem afastando da vida política, se passem a ignorar momentos importantes também, em que podem fazer a sua escolha, se limitarem a reclamar – no transporte público, ou for onde for no caminho –, mas depois acabam por não se envolver também naquilo que é de facto um direito seu de exigir melhores condições de vida, de exigir que os compromissos sejam respeitados, sejam cumpridos por parte de quem os faz... Quer dizer: aí temo que nós possamos, um dia destes, quando dermos por isso, um dia destes – acho que não será assim já no imediato –, mas que podemos estar a caminhar numa direcção que não é propriamente a mais aconselhável do ponto de vista democrático.

Agora aqui acho que isso passa por também haver uma consciencialização das pessoas que, se não é perfeita, digamos... – e outra coisa também que eu acho que é importante, as pessoas, muitas vezes, acabam por ser, e são, manipuladas até pela própria comunicação social. Nós sentimos isso. Não é a comunicação social, os jornalistas, mas os comentadores que nela andam. Por exemplo, nós sentimos isso quando há momentos em que as pessoas, de uma forma correta, de uma forma legal, de uma forma democrática, vêm para a rua, vêm colocar as suas exigências, vêm lutar, nós imediatamente sentimos que isso – quer por parte de alguns comentadores que têm influência nas pessoas, quer depois toda aquela selvageria que muitas vezes nós encontramos nas redes sociais – acaba por manipular a cabeça das pessoas, parecendo que aqueles que, legitimamente, democraticamente e constitucionalmente, reclamam, e vêm para a rua fazê-lo, são uns malandros, são, digamos, alguém que está a reclamar aquilo que é ilegítimo, são pessoas que são depois insultadas, injuriadas e, portanto, com campanhas por vezes feitas em relação àqueles que dão a cara, que estão na primeira linha deste protesto. Portanto, eu acho que há gente – nomeadamente alguns desses comentadores e outros; eu percebo que alguns deles estão ao serviço do poder, mas, ainda assim, são pessoas que eu acho que de forma alguma valorizam a própria democracia. Porque o problema aqui não é de estarem a favor ou contra o protesto, a favor ou contra a posição que era reclamada.

O problema é a forma como põem, em que quase criam, ou tentam criar mesmo, estigmas em relação àqueles que protestam e que dão a cara, criando dificuldades até que esse exercício saudável da democracia que é vir para a rua e exigir, protestar, reclamar, quando isso justifica. Isso passa quase como se estivéssemos a falar de malandragem e de bandidos, como se este país não tivesse os bandidos suficientes que andam a roubar por todo lado, na banca em outros sítios, não é? Portanto, aqueles que exigem, digamos, melhores condições

de vida e de trabalho, muitas vezes são apontados dessa forma. Isso faz com que algumas pessoas se afastem: quer algumas das que não resistem tanto a esse tipo de ataque e que, portanto, quebram – e eles sabem; é por isso que fazem o que fazem –, quer outras pessoas, que viriam também para a rua, e que estariam disponíveis para estar ali no protesto e na exigência, e que acabam por não querer para também não ficarem mal vistas para não estarem ali metidas, digamos, interminável iniciativa que depois é tão criticada por alguns desses comentadores publicamente. E isso é que eu temo que faça mal à democracia. Provavelmente essa coisa de se votar de quatro em quatro anos para as autarquias, de quatro em quatro anos para o governo, enfim para a presidência e por aí fora, provavelmente não estará propriamente em risco. Eu acho que está em risco é depois a possibilidade das pessoas poderem entre esses períodos também manifestar aqueles que são discursos, opiniões, e aquelas que são os seus sentimentos. Porque, na verdade, a não ser quando é, digamos, de uma forma mais inorgânica e, portanto, menos sustentada, ou quando é no sentido que até o próprio poder interessa. Quando não é assim, de facto, os ataques são violentíssimos. Eu temo que eles acabem por afastar muita gente desse exercício saudável da democracia que é o organizarem-se e virem para a rua protestar quando isso se justifica. É nesse aspeto que temos que de fato nós um dia destes possamos estar a ter aí alguns condicionamentos e que a própria qualidade da democracia se venha a degradar também ao nível daquela que é a intervenção das pessoas no dia a dia. E, portanto, pondo a público aquelas que são suas opiniões, posições e exigências, que eu acho que é importante para a democracia que isso possa continuar a acontecer e que quem faz não seja imediatamente apontado como um malandro e como alguém que nunca está satisfeito. E, portanto, isso nós temos ouvido. Basta depois ouvir os comentadores na televisão que acabam por ter influência na opinião pública e por manipular boa parte da população. Isso não é bom para a democracia. Claramente, não é! Leva à degradação da própria democracia, na minha opinião, sobretudo da democracia participativa e não apenas da representativa. Esta, se calhar, vai sempre manter-se, mas de facto a participativa é importante também.

VII. Interview with Mrs. CD

Mrs. CD was a participant of the *Acampada de Coimbra* and subsequently of the Popular Assembly of Coimbra. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossole, in Coimbra on the 19th Februari 2015.

Qual a sua opinião sobre o estado da democracia Portuguesa hoje?

Só há verdadeira democracia quando há consciência política. Não é uma pergunta fácil. Em termos visíveis, se a democracia for limitar-se: eu acho que é muito diminuto. É limitado ao voto e tu eleges quem achas que queres. Então vivemos num estado democrático. Eu acho que há muita fantasia à volta deste conceito. Porque só se pode escolher bem quando te interessas pelo assunto e te tentas informar. Quando vês esse ato – que supostamente segura o estado de direito, a democracia – [...] como única e exclusivamente de quatro em quatro anos ires votar... acho que isso é muito diminuto para o que é de facto a democracia. Agora como está em Portugal? Está um bocadinho pior do que já esteve. As pessoas afastam-se [cada vez] mais desta sujeira que é política no nosso país e em geral.

Qual a sua opinião sobre o impacto da crise económica sobre a democracia em Portugal?

Talvez [o facto] de haver crise económica e muitos cortes e afins tenha levado muita gente a questionar-se, porque está-lhes a doer na pele. Nesse sentido, até pode ser um banho para a democracia, porque implica que as pessoas se interessem mais [e] que tenham mais atenção, que consigam filtrar melhor. Teoricamente, pode haver algo positivo nisso, mas isto é tão ambíguo. Depois pode dar precisamente o oposto. Pode [...] alimentar ódios, coisas que nada tem a ver com uma atitude consciente que é tomar uma decisão democrática ou seres democrata. [São] definições de política que são muito insuficientes. Eu posso [estar a] dizer muitas asneiras: é só o meu conceito muito *naïve* do que é a democracia.

Como definiria “Democracia”?

Eu sei que isto vem de uma palavra de origem grega, certo? Tenho medo de dizer asneiras. A democracia é um estado em que vive uma comunidade na qual tem liberdade de escolher o seu futuro na base dum sistema – no sistema atual, com representantes. Mas a verdadeira democracia devia ter uma escolha mais livre de que aquilo que temos. No fundo limita-se a escolher uma pessoa de um grupo político que escolheu para ser escolhida, digamos assim. Queria mais uma coisa da raiz. Para mim uma verdadeira democracia não cria carreiras políticas.

No contexto dos protestos contra a austeridade, membros do Governo de Passos Coelho afirmaram, por várias vezes, que as medidas do Governo tinham legitimidade democrática porque estavam assentes em maioria parlamentar. O que achas disso?

Acho essa afirmação falsa. Não lhe reconheço legitimidade. A maioria foi feita por uma coligação. Desta vez votamos na coligação? Não me lembro, acho que não. Portanto acho falso. Da maneira como as coisas estão, estão feitas de propósito para que tu tenhas precisamente esta desculpa. Eles fazem os joguinhos entre eles. Conseguem arranjar maneira – de que quando [lhes chega] a sede do poder – de se juntarem. E depois quando és tu que escolheste – apesar de tudo – estás a escolher, como eu disse a bocado, alguém que foi escolhido para tu escolheres. Portanto a escolha é quase nada. Não acho que haja legitimidade nenhuma aí.

No contexto da crise, vários movimentos de protesto que surgiram questionaram a legitimidade democrática em vigor, nomeadamente o sistema eleitoral baseado em partidos e a falta de soberania nacional. Qual a opinião sobre esses movimentos e a sua posição?

Eu acho que estes movimentos foram uma coisa muito positiva desta crise. Pessoas que nunca estiveram metidas em nada e continuam a não estar metidas. Mas conseguiram achar iguais e tentar abrir olhos. Abriram os próprios olhos com debates de ideias e tentaram visualizar novos caminhos. Eu, pelo menos, que nunca estive muito metido em nada e nunca sei quem é de quem: se havia pessoas infiltradas, se havia deste partido, se havia daquele. Congratulo-me por isso, porque é-se muito mais livre quando não se conhece as pessoas que estão ao teu lado. Partimos todos da mesma base. Não sabes se aquele é daquele partido, ou que aquele está a servir, ou que aquilo que ele está a dizer é só porque pertence a não sei quantos. Isso deixa-me muito livre para poder falar com qualquer um deles e concordar ou discordar de uma forma que não está preconcebida [...]. Com o passar do tempo comecei a perceber [que nos] movimentos também havia várias pessoas que já tinham partidos, que tinham vida partidária ou [o eram] tendencialmente. Mas também encontrei muitos anarquistas que não conhecia. Não conhecia nenhum. Passei a conhecer uma data deles. Tinha uma ideia muito ruim de anarquistas: tipo aquilo que se calhar muita gente também tem de comunistas – que também comiam criancinhas e roubavam aos velhotes. Considero que foi uma experiência muito enriquecedora. Deu para libertar dos demônios. Porque nós

queríamos dizer alguma coisa. Estávamos descontentes, e durante o tempo que nos encontrávamos, discutíamos e dizíamos mal. Deitávamos cá para fora. Sei lá, era uma espécie de purgação momentânea. Acho que foi muito bom esses grupos se terem juntado e terem existido. Acho que, mais uma vez, isso, na minha opinião, pode modificar aquilo que nós chamamos de democracia. A necessidade fez com que as pessoas se juntassem e pensassem em conjunto. Ou quisessem pensar em conjunto. E se há muitas [pessoas] que se tentavam aproveitar [os movimentos] e que podiam tentar moldar opiniões, havia outras que estavam ali mesmo genuinamente e que não [tinham] esse o objetivo. Acho que já há várias coisas da nossa volta que nos dizem que alguma coisa mudou.

Muitos dos movimentos anti-austeridade, nomeadamente os assembleares, como as Acampadas, os Indignados em Lisboa, reclamavam a democracia interna como um exemplo para a sociedade. O que achas dessa posição?

Acho que sim, que havia pessoas que achavam que isso podia ser um exemplo para a sociedade. Mas estando lá metida, posso dizer que é extremamente complicado. Ou seja, na forma assemblear que nós tínhamos. Nós éramos pouquíssimos. Portanto, a coisa ainda se ia fazendo, mais ou menos bem. Agora é preciso pensar muito bem como fazer isto a nível do país – ou quer que seja –, porque é extremamente complicado. [...]. É quase a roçar o impossível. Isto é uma opinião de fora mas baseada em factos vividos. Não me agrada nada este sistema viciado [no qual] escolhem os escolhidos para serem escolhidos. Não me agrada porque o sistema está podre. Mas vejo como é extremamente difícil fazer uma coisa do tipo de assembleia. Acho que é muito complicado, difícil mesmo. Não é por acaso que dizem que as esquerdas, para se lixarem umas às outras, nem precisam da direita. Se bem que isto de direita ou esquerda também é uma coisa que me atrofia um bocado, porque isso é mais uma [forma] de desacordo para catalogar pessoas. Acho que cada vez mais... que o indivíduo deve ser visto como um todo.

Eu acho que [os termos de] esquerda e direita são usados mesmo para terminar discussões e para não aprofundar problemas. [...]. Mas é verdade que se calhar há mais criatividade de Esquerda, porque pensam um tanto fora da *box* ou tentam; alguns pelo menos. Lá está, mais uma vez, a minha cultura política a nível de livros e de onde é que vem os partidos e afins, aqui conta zero. É quase nula. Mas do que me rodeia, as pessoas têm uma cabeça muito mais

aberta. E tentam pensar de facto fora da *box*, fora daquilo que lhes é imposto. Eu acho que isso é uma vantagem. [Mas] é necessário haver um equilíbrio.

Qual a sua perspetiva para o futuro da democracia em Portugal?

É para eu adivinhar o futuro? Ou o que eu gostava? Olha, eu gostava que deixasse de ser tabu falar em política. É uma coisa que já vem de há 40 anos. Como não se falava antes, com aquele medo; ficou entranhado quase [de forma] genética. Passou de geração para geração e [fez ignorar] os grandes problemas para a sociedade em si. É um dos melhores truques das elites. Quanto mais ignorante, quanto menos falarem as bases – digamos assim – mais eles podem fazer o que quiserem. Portanto, uma das coisas que eu gostava de ver era essa abertura e esse falar sem problemas. Como se fala de sei lá – não vou dizer como se fala de futebol, porque esse é um dos males da política; as pessoas cegamente defenderem um partido tal como defendem um clube de futebol, só porque sim. [Ficam] incapazes de ver um pênalti, incapazes de ver a porcaria que eles fazem. [Devia-se] falar como se fala de chocolate: se está bom, se está mal, que na Bélgica é melhor por isto ou por aquilo, pronto... Eu nunca provei o [chocolate] da Bélgica mas eu ouço-te e tu provas e podes-me dizer. Esta troca sem “é só porque tu gostas de chocolate belga porque tens a mania”... Isto é uma mudança das pessoas. É o mais difícil de acontecer. O melhor é difícil, mas vai acontecer necessariamente. Demora mais tempo, eu nem sei se vou ver. Estou à espera mas tenho esperança que sim. Isto faz-se todos os dias também.

Nos próximos tempos, gostava de ter aqui um gajo como o Varoufakis. Não me perguntes porquê, mas eu gosto de pessoas com determinação que – a mal ou a bem – conseguem traçar um plano, terem uma ideia daquilo que querem e lutam por aquilo que querem. E explicá-lo; explicar [o seu plano] às pessoas que estão a ouvir – explicar preto no branco tudo o que está a passar. Dar a conhecer sem que há frases que ficam só ditas; tentar ser o mais claro possível. Não vejo cá nenhum político que seja capaz de enfrentar os grandes interesses como ele. Eu gostava também que as eleições na Espanha fossem para o mês que vem, porque eu acho que a Troika não se estaria a comportar como está se as eleições em Espanha fossem para o mês que vem. Acho que estariam [com] medo. Mas olha que quase todos os meus amigos são de direita. Eu fui para a Acampada com uma necessidade quase física de não aguentar mais o que eu ouvia. [Precisava] falar com alguém que tivesse também essa

inquietação. Amigos amigos não viram as costas, isso não aconteceu, mas lixaram-me a cabeça – para não dizer asneiras – e eu não mudei nada.

VIII. Interview with Mrs. CVB

Mrs. CVB was a participant of the *Acampada de Coimbra* and subsequently of the Popular Assembly of Coimbra. The interview was conducted by Jonas Van Vossole in Coimbra on the 26th February 2015.

Qual a sua opinião sobre o estado da democracia Portuguesa hoje?

Quando tenho estas conversas, costumam já ser integrados em outras coisas. Agora é muito mais difícil de organizar o pensamento. Acho que [existe] um afastamento entre aquilo que são os órgãos de poder e as pessoas. A partir daí, obviamente que a democracia é colocada em causa. Não há um poder real das pessoas. Esse suposto poder se resume a [...] uma anedota. É claramente isso; o voto define muito pouco. Nós votamos nos caramelos – não posso dizer caramelos, tenho de dizer outra coisa. Nós votamos em pessoas que são escolhidas por outras pessoas. Depois nem sequer vão aplicar as coisas que dizem que vão aplicar. Neste momento ainda por cima estão sujeitos a ordens que nem sequer fazem parte. [As decisões] são feitas por pessoas que nós nem sequer escolhemos. [...]. Portanto, de uma forma geral, a democracia neste momento é uma palavra bonita. Na prática, vê-se muito pouco. Na prática, o que é que nós temos democrático? Nada: temos o voto de quatro em quatro anos. Mas não se efetiva em porra nenhuma.

Qual a sua opinião sobre o impacto da crise económica sobre a democracia em Portugal?

Ora bem, por um lado – em termos de órgãos da política, do governo etc. –, a crise é uma desculpa para retirar poder democrático às pessoas. Precisamente por estas questões; não podemos fazer A porque estamos com uma dívida muito grande – sei-se lá a quem; não podemos fazer B etcetera... Por outro lado, surgiram montes de movimentos sociais. [Em] termos de participação política de pessoas se calhar [foi bom]. Se não tivessem sido confrontadas com uma situação tão extrema, e calhar nunca teriam ido a uma manifestação.

Claro que depois na prática, isso traduz-se em muito pouco. Nós tivemos aquelas manifestações gigantes. Tivemos muita coisa, mas na prática pouco mudou ou nada. Por isso, se calhar, o impacto foi mais negativo do que positivo. Em termos objetivos foi uma mudança para pior. Isto é; foram nos tirados poderes e possibilidades. Por outro lado, as pessoas – ou algumas pessoas –, por se terem visto confrontadas com situações extremas, ganharam um certo nível de consciência. Isso podia ter sido positivo se se tivesse desenvolvido. Não aconteceu.

Como definiria “Democracia”?

Para mim, a democracia seria todos e todas termos o mesmo poder. Seria isso. Mas eu acho que não é isso, acho que o próprio termo não é isso que diz, mas para mim seria isso, todos e todas termos o mesmo poder de decisão mesmo poder dar são mesmo poder de acesso... Seriam iguais, seriam efetivamente iguais.

No contexto dos protestos contra a austeridade, membros do Governo de Passos Coelho afirmaram por várias vezes que as medidas do Governo tinham legitimidade democrática porque estavam assentes em maioria parlamentar. O que achas disso?

Acho lindo; na verdade ridículo. Começamos pelo facto – não sei quais foram os números destas eleições especificamente – da abstenção ter sido gigante. Por isso mesmo – seguindo a lógica do sistema –, a legitimação da população em geral é muito pouca. Não houve assim tanta gente a votar neles. Depois também tem a ver com [o facto que] as pessoas, quando votam naquela pessoa, votam num projeto. O projeto que eles apresentavam antes das eleições na altura em que criticavam o governo [...] de Sócrates, não tem nada a ver com aquilo que eles agora fazem... Nem com o discurso que eles agora mantêm. Ok, eles foram eleitos, por maioria das pessoas que votaram nalgum partido. Mas não estão a cumprir aquilo que [prometeram] às pessoas, [aquilo] pelo qual as pessoas votaram neles. Por isso; OK, tem legitimidade. Têm legitimidade porque nós não temos mecanismos que nos permitam tirá-los de lá, [mesmo] eles não estarem a cumprir o que prometeram. Também não nos mexemos o suficiente para os tirarmos de lá. [É] a legitimidade que este esquema da democracia lhes dá. Pois está muito certo. Têm uma maioria parlamentar. Têm uma maioria objetiva, mas depois na prática, eles não estão a fazer o que era suposto. As pessoas também não têm forma de controlar isso, por isso não [têm legitimidade].

No contexto da crise, vários movimentos de protesto que surgiram questionaram a legitimidade democrática em vigor, nomeadamente o sistema eleitoral baseado em partidos e a falta de soberania nacional. Qual a opinião sobre esses movimentos e a sua posição?

A minha opinião pessoal é que o sistema partidário está esgotado. Isto foi de tal forma desvirtuado que já não responde, nem os partidos que têm visibilidade política – os cinco que nós conhecemos. Estes estão de tal forma deformados que é impossível confiar neles. [É] impossível esperar que eles efetivamente façam o trabalho que proclamam. Por outro lado, os outros partidos que há quem diga que são mais limpos, não têm visibilidade. Por outro lado, também é verdade que se esses partidos fossem eleitos, estavam a representar as pessoas que fazem parte dos partidos. Só aquela percentagem de pessoas estaria efetivamente ativa naquelas decisões. Isso também não faz sentido. Estaríamos sempre [com] só uma parte da população representada. Já vimos onde é que isto nos levou. Eu acho que mesmo que agora surge outro partido, [como] por exemplo essa história agora do Syriza e do Podemos [aconteceria o mesmo]. Obviamente não estou a dizer que ter o Syriza, ou ter o Podemos no poder é a mesma coisa que ter um dos outros que lá esteve até agora. Claro que eu não estou a dizer isso. O que eu acho é que no futuro tudo isso caminha no mesmo sentido. Isto é, se calhar daqui a 40 anos [...] estaríamos no mesmo ponto. Por isso sim, acho que é preciso encontrar outra forma de enquadrar a democracia.

Por outro lado, há uns tempos estava a ler um artigo que dizia: os mercados mandam e os governos gerem, e é um bocado isso. Nós nunca votamos nas pessoas que tomam as verdadeiras decisões. Eles servem propósitos que não pregam. Servem interesses que não são públicos; que as pessoas no geral não sabem. Por isso nunca podemos fazer uma escolha informada. E mesmo que a fizéssemos; a verdade é que a escolha seria sempre entre o mau e o menos mau. [É um] facto que estamos inseridos num sistema que visa o lucro, que desfaz a dignidade das pessoas, que desvaloriza aquilo que são os direitos fundamentais. A questão é que as coisas estão tão mal de cima a baixo que depois é difícil encontrar uma solução. Não quer dizer que não faça sentido procurá-la.

Muitos dos movimentos anti-austeridade, nomeadamente os assembleares, como as Acampadas, os Indignados em Lisboa, reclamavam a democracia interna como um exemplo para a sociedade. O que achas dessa posição?

Estava um pouco com receio que fizesses essa pergunta. Eu acho que é uma reivindicação que faz sentido. Acho que é um modelo que demonstrou resultados, ainda que não sem problemas. [...]. A avaliação que eu faço da minha participação na Assembleia Popular de Coimbra – e da própria Assembleia durante o tempo que eu me mexi lá dentro – é que se calhar foi mais impactante para as pessoas que participaram nela do que propriamente a nível social. Isto é, eu sei que há muitas mudanças em mim por ter participado na assembleia. Mas não sei até que [ponto] que a Assembleia teve um efetivo papel em termos sociais. Mas também acho que isto faz todo o sentido. O que é preciso é que as pessoas participem. É esse é o problema agora. O problema agora é que as pessoas não participam em nada que lhes dê poder efetivo. O que estes movimentos [...] fazem é precisamente isso: informar as pessoas, favorecer o conhecimento e a capacidade de discutir horizontalmente as questões – e todas as questões. Isto é dar o poder à toda a gente para falar de tudo. No futuro, se esse movimento crescesse – se uma percentagem significativa das pessoas participasse nesses movimentos – , então a consciência política e a consciência cívica aumentaria. Estes problemas todos que nós temos agora, se calhar nunca teriam acontecido. Isto é, nós nunca teríamos deixado as coisas chegar a este ponto. Teríamos consciência do que é que estava a passar e teríamos agido antes. Sim, eu acredito que é possível generalizar a experiência. Mas não acho que isto seja possível agora. Não acho que seja possível tirar de lá o governo e instituir um modelo assemblear.

Mas é precisamente por isso. Nós vivemos num esquema que promove o individualismo, que promove o olhar para o seu próprio umbigo. [Esse sistema] não ensina as pessoas a ter discussões horizontais. Não ensina as pessoas a interessar-se pelos temas. Não incentiva 50 por cento da população – a população feminina – a participar na discussão política. Por isso que não podemos esperar que de hoje para amanhã todas as pessoas de repente ganhem consciência política e comecem a participar ativamente nos movimentos etc. Eu acho que efetivamente no futuro seria possível generalizar esses movimentos. Mas isto só é possível através do processo pelo qual os movimentos cresceriam: o tocar das pessoas, o chamar das pessoas a participar. Porque se elas não participarem, também não estão efetivamente a beber das vantagens da Assembleia, que é precisamente a discussão que se gere na assembleia. É

através da participação e da discussão que as pessoas ganham consciência, participam e ganham poder de participação.

Qual a sua perspectiva para o futuro da democracia em Portugal?

Eu sou uma pessoa cheia de esperança. Por isso, eu acho que o futuro é positivo. O futuro há de passar talvez por uma generalização destes movimentos, ou pela generalização de outros movimentos. Mas um dia nós conseguiremos uma efetiva participação de toda a população. Agora, se isso vai acontecer nos próximos anos, se isso vai acontecer no meu tempo de vida: se calhar não, se calhar sim. Uma pessoa tem de ter esperança. A onda Syriza/Podemos qualquer coisa há de ter um efeito. Não sei, mas é um processo longo.

Nós vemos isso pela Assembleia. Eu estive ligado à Assembleia durante para aí um ano. Durante esse ano que eu estive ligado à assembleia, vieram talvez mais uma pessoa ou duas. Claro que isso leva a uma discussão muito grande, porque é que isso acontece? É por vários fatores. Obviamente é um processo longo e doloroso. Só se fará com o interesse das pessoas e se as pessoas efetivamente estiverem dispostas a isso. Obviamente as pessoas não estão dispostas a isso porque são incentivados ao contrário. Por isso é uma luta muito grande. Mas eu tenho esperança. Se eu não tivesse esperança já não andava aqui.

